

25 Jan 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

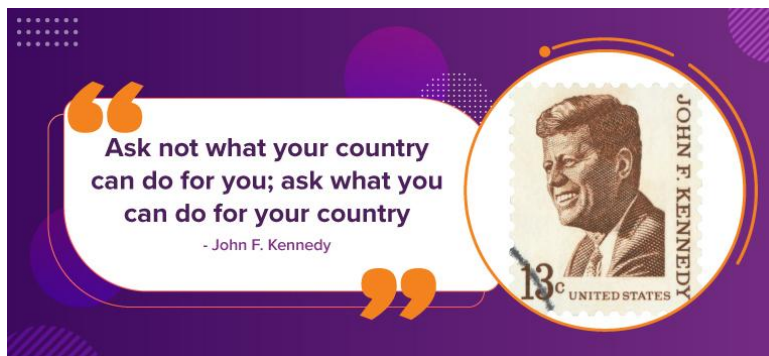


TABLE OF CONTENTS
A. GS 1 Related <i>GEOGRAPHY</i> 1. What ails the Ken-Betwa river link project?
B. GS 2 Related
C. GS 3 Related
D. GS 4 Related
E. Editorials <i>INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND POLITY</i> 1. The new and dark interpretations of 'We the People'
<i>INDIAN ECONOMY</i> 1. Working hand in hand to showcase India
<i>EDUCATION</i> 1. Developing schools without barriers
F. Prelims Facts 1. Olive Ridley Turtles
G. Tidbits 1. Purse seine fishing partially allowed outside T.N. waters
2. Services exports to cross FY23 goal of \$300 bn
H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions
I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Category: GEOGRAPHY

1. What ails the Ken-Betwa river link project?

Syllabus: Water resources and water-bodies

Prelims: Facts about Ken-Betwa river project

Mains: Concerns associated with Ken-Betwa river project and the way forward

Context: The Steering Committee of the Ken-Betwa Link Project recently held its third meeting in New Delhi.

Ken-Betwa Link Project

The Ken-Betwa Link Project was approved by the Union Government in December 2021 at a total cost of ₹44,605 crores.

The Ken-Betwa Link Project project is touted as the first river inter-link project under the revised national scheme.

The main objective of the project is to transfer excess water from the River Ken to the Betwa basin.

Under this project, the Union and Government of Madhya Pradesh will link the Ken river with the Betwa river in order to ensure water supply to the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh which is one of the most drought-affected regions in India.

The linking of the two rivers will be in the form of a canal that will be fed by the Daudhan Dam on the Ken, which is to be constructed within the Panna Tiger Reserve.

- According to the Union Government, the dam will also help generate 103 MW of hydroelectric power.

Further, the constructed canal between the two rivers will flow through Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh and Jhansi districts, and the project is expected to help irrigate 6.3 lakh hectares of land annually.

Concerns associated with the project

- **Concerns over surplus and deficit model:** Various hydrological and ecological experts have expressed displeasure over the project as they believe that the “surplus and deficit” model proposed by the government has very little scientific backing.
 - Experts feel that there may not be enough water in the Ken, which is a non-perennial river, to meet the demands of the Betwa river.

- **Concerns over the impact on Panna tiger reserve:** Additionally, environmentalists have raised concerns about the project affecting the water security of Panna Tiger Reserve.
 - Panna is regarded as an exceptional tiger habitat because of its deep gorges.
 - However, such gorges of the reserve will be drowned if a new dam is built.
 - Furthermore, the Ken Gharial Sanctuary is located downstream of the Panna national which was established to conserve critically endangered Gangetic [Gharial](#) and the destructive impact of the construction of the dam is not clear.

Clearances received by the project and associated issues

- Sections 18 and 35 of the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act 1972](#) deal with the provisions of setting aside areas of significance to wildlife as “sanctuaries” and “national parks”.
 - Further, Sections 29 and 35(6) of the Act restrict human activities within such areas without prior approval.
- Diversion or stopping of the flow of water within or outside a sanctuary or national park is not allowed unless doing so is considered necessary to improve the management of wildlife.
 - According to the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) the approval granted by the Standing Committee of the [National Board for Wildlife \(NBWL\)](#) to the project has not been proven to be necessary for the better management of the wildlife as provided in Section 35(6) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The CEC has noted that the Standing Committee of the NBWL has not considered the impact of the project on the downstream gharial sanctuary.
- The CEC has submitted this report to the Supreme Court in August 2019, and the issue has remained controversial.
- The Ken-Betwa Link Project is yet to receive full forest clearance and a petition challenging its environmental approval is also pending before the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) and NGT believes that the project must first secure forest clearance.

Way forward

- The potential adverse impacts of the proposed dam on the flow of water into and outside of the sanctuary must be studied thoroughly.
- Further, experts have also suggested that the restoration and revival of Chandel-era lakes and ponds in the Bundelkhand region will be a more economical and faster solution to the problem of water scarcity in the region as the region receives adequate annual rainfall.
- An independent hydrological study of river Ken is to be undertaken and it is to be seen that no developmental project should affect the ecology of any fragile ecosystems and important tiger reserves in the country.

***Nut graf:** Pushing and rushing important projects such as Ken-Betwa Link Project without due diligence will aggregate the issues of water conflicts between the states and impact the ecology and environment of fragile ecosystems other than resulting in huge financial losses.*

B. GS 2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

1. The new and dark interpretations of 'We the People'

Syllabus: Important features of Indian Constitution.

Mains: Separation of powers and associated challenges.

Prelims: Governor.

Context: Controversy around the Vice President's Speech at the 83rd all India conference of presiding officers' in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Details:

- The speech made by the Vice-President at the 83rd All India conference of presiding officers' in Jaipur, Rajasthan, on 11 January 2023 has raged controversy around the very meaning of 'We the People'.
- In his view the phrase 'We the People' gives primacy to elected members of [Parliament and the State legislatures](#). It was further said that the separation of powers does not equate to the three pillars of democracy (Parliament, Judiciary, and Executive) and as the judiciary and the executive are appointed (not elected by the people), they are inferior.
- It should be noted that the Constitution of India does not define 'People' but it means citizens and not any particular group or institution. It is thus suggested by the author that

to identify elected representatives in the legislature as the sole representatives of the people is a travesty.

- Furthermore, the theory of separation of powers is basic to any democratic society.

Comparison with other countries:

- In the United States, the President appoints judges (though endorsed by Congress). Moreover, as the President is directly elected, he has certain prerogative powers. There is also a provision for [Judicial review](#) to check the suitability of the nominated candidates.
- In the United Kingdom, despite the primacy of the Parliament, conventions have an inviolable tradition. The Speaker of the House of Commons is elected and becomes a non-party man.
 - The Speakers in India are reluctant to resign from their parties.
 - The first two Speakers of Parliament in Independent India G.V. Mavalankar and M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar and later Neelam Sanjiva Reddy resigned from the ruling party to ensure a sense of impartiality.

Associated Concerns:

- It is argued by the Author that the onslaught on the Judiciary is based on the Constitutional authority given to the representative Assemblies. It is further argued that several investigating agencies were derelicted of their constitutional and legal responsibilities by the ruling party.
- There is a virtual war between various state governments and [Governors](#) that has even questioned the institution of the Governor.
- It is suggested that the principle of Separation of Power which is acceptable in the Union is not applied to states. It is evident in various instances where the appointed Governor often defies both the State government and the state legislature.
- The conflict and strife between the two main authorities of the state endanger the process of Governance.
- A clear case of overreach by the legislature should be avoided and thus the [basic structure](#) of the Indian constitution should be protected.
- There are fears that divisive conflicts might emerge between religions, States, and regions.

Nut Graf: *The recent controversies and conflicts between the three pillars of democracy (legislative, executive, and judiciary) might lead the country away from the precious ideals of democracy. The need of the hour is that the basic structure of the Indian Constitution is ensured by the close cooperation and coordination between the various administrative, legislative, and judicial authorities.*

Category: INDIAN ECONOMY

1. Working hand in hand to showcase India

Syllabus: Tourism.

Mains: Government steps to boost Tourism in India.

Prelims: National Tourism Day.

Context: National Tourism Day is observed on 25th January.

Details:

- On the occasion of National Tourism Day (January 25), the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Tourism will launch the Jagannath Yatra train package.
 - The package provides an eight-day tour beginning from Delhi and traversing Kashi, Baidyanath Dham, Jagannath Puri, Bhubaneswar, and Konark. It concludes at the Vishnupad temple in Gaya.
 - It is associated with [Bharat Gaurav Trains](#) (or theme-based tourist circuit trains) that showcase India's rich cultural heritage and history.
- It should be noted that the Tourism industry has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Almost 1.84 crore domestic tourists visited Jammu and Kashmir in 2022.

Government Initiatives in the Tourism domain:

- The Ministry of Tourism is working in close coordination with more than 20 central government Ministries to promote and develop tourism in the country.
- In October 2022, the Ministry of Tourism along with the Ministry of Home Affairs organized the National Conference on Tourist Police to build tourist-specific policing. The aim of the conference was to work with the police and sensitize them to address the needs and concerns of tourists (both foreign and domestic).
- Tourism Ministry in association with the Ministry of Education is setting up 'Yuva Tourism' clubs to nurture young ambassadors of Indian tourism.
- Similarly, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways intend to make India an attractive destination for cruise tourism.
- Tourism Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs has deployed tourism officers in 20 Indian missions in countries that are the largest source of foreign tourists.
- Moreover, the Roadways Ministry and the Petroleum Ministry are taking measures clean sanitation infrastructure in highways and fuel stations.
- Ministry of Civil Aviation is also supporting Tourism by funding many commercial flight routes.

- Draft National Tourism Policy 2022 intends to include an institutional structure for taking concurrent and coordinated action across the local, State, and Union government levels.
- The government has adopted the 'whole of government approach'.
- In Copenhagen (Denmark), Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi asked the Indian diaspora to inspire at least 5 non-Indian friends to visit India (May 2022).
- Ministry of Tourism's declaration of "Visit India Year 2023" was introduced. Its objective is to promote various tourism destinations and products that can improve India's share in the global tourism market.

Conclusion:

- The tourism experience in India provides a unique opportunity to explore self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment.
- Many foreign travellers also visited India in the past. For example, Megasthenes, Hiuen-Tsang, Marco Polo, and Fa-Hien.

Nut Graf: *The Ministry of Tourism is working in close cooperation with various other Ministries to promote Tourism in India. Several initiatives have been taken in this regard. India as a tourist destination provides a unique opportunity to rekindle one's inner self.*

Category: EDUCATION

1. Developing schools without barriers

Syllabus: *Issues relating to the development and management of Education.*

Mains: *Welfare schemes for the vulnerable section of the people.*

Details:

- Children with disability/disabilities (CWD) require more care, particularly in terms of accessible spaces and guiding infrastructure.
- It was mentioned in a report by [UNESCO](#) (2019) that CWD comprises 1.7% of the total child population in India (Census 2011).
- CWD faces several issues like physical, institutional, socioeconomic, and communication barriers. Moreover, nearly 70% of five-year-olds with disabilities have never attended any educational institution. They also drop out of school while growing older.

Challenges for Children With Disabilities:

- Some of the barriers that impede their participation in accessing opportunities are inaccessible facilities like school buses, drinking water facilities, canteens, and toilets; and inappropriate infrastructure like seating, flooring, etc.

- The child's emotional development is further hampered by the attitudes and perceptions among teachers, staff, parents, and communities.
- Other challenges include a lack of teaching and learning practices that incorporates inclusive technologies and digital equipment like assistive devices to aid and assist children.
- It was highlighted at a training programme, jointly held by [UN-Habitat](#) India and IIT Kharagpur, that there is a deficit of accessible infrastructure like ramps or tactile paths within schools.

Existing Provisions and Government Initiatives:

- The existing provisions for education are: Article 21A and the [Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009](#).
- The government also launched a Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan adopting a "zero rejection policy" for children with special needs.
- Furthermore, India ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). In this direction, Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) was introduced in 2015.
- Indian government supported the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB), which is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The pilot training initiative was undertaken for enhancing accessibility and inclusion in two schools in Delhi through IIT Kharagpur and the Department of Social Welfare, Delhi government.
- Various interactive training sessions and simulation exercises have also been organized to encourage empathy-building.

Way Ahead:

- It is suggested that adequate funding should be provided for accessible infrastructure.
- Moreover, parents, caregivers, teachers, school management authorities, and the local government departments should be involved and sensitized.
- It should be noted that by establishing inclusive and accessible schools zero-rejection policy can be actualized.
- A multi-pronged participatory approach should be adopted to provide an enabling environment for the empowerment of CWD. This can include measures like:
 - Awareness and sensitization programmes.
 - Training the trainers by upskilling school faculty and special educators.
 - Provide access to modern teaching toolkits and materials.
 - Technical training for local government departments.
 - A co-learning platform for knowledge-sharing.

- Moreover, five principles of equitability, usability and durability, affordability, cultural adaptability, and aesthetic appeal should be embedded beginning in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages.

Nut Graf: *It is important to develop inclusive and accessible schools for Children with Disabilities. This will further help in actualizing the Zero rejection policy of schools and the Leave No One Behind policy.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Olive Ridley Turtles

Syllabus: GS-3; Ecology and Environment; Biodiversity

Prelims: Olive Ridley Turtles

Context

- Several Olive Ridley Turtles have been washed ashore along the coastline between Kakinada and Antarvedi in the Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh during the ongoing annual breeding season.
- Breeding grounds such as Sakhinetipalli, Malikipuram, Mamidikuduru and Allavaram have experienced mass mortality of Turtles in recent times.
- The release of effluents from the aqua ponds and the discharges from the pipelines of the onshore oil exploration facilities are said to be the main causes of the mass mortality of the Turtles.

Olive Ridley Turtles

- This Turtle species gets its name from the olive green color of its heart-shaped shell.
- Olive Ridley Turtles are among the smallest of the world's sea turtles.
- This species is found mainly in the tropical regions of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans.
- Olive Ridley Turtles are omnivorous.
- The Olive Ridley Turtles arrive at the beaches on the east coast of India, every year between November and December for nesting.
- **Gahirmatha beach** which is a part of the **Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary** in Odisha is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive Ridley Turtles in India.
- IUCN status: **Vulnerable**

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: **Schedule I**

- All five species of sea turtles found in India are legally protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

CITES Convention: **Appendix I**

G. Tidbits

1. Purse seine fishing partially allowed outside T.N. waters

- The Supreme Court has permitted purse seine fishing off the Tamil Nadu coast. However, the apex court has imposed strict rules to regulate the extent of purse seine fishing outside the 12-nautical-mile limit off Tamil Nadu. Stringent conditions include:
 - Purse seine fishing would be allowed only twice a week, i.e. on Mondays and Thursdays.
 - Further, it will be allowed only between 8 AM and 6 PM on those days.
 - Only the vessels that are registered under the marine fishing regulation laws would be permitted to undertake purse seine fishing.
 - Tracking devices will also be installed in these boats.
 - The court has further prescribed a colour code for such fishing vessels.
- Purse seine fishing is a mode of fishing that involves the use of a wide net to draw in not only the targeted fish but also endangered species such as turtles.
 - According to environmental experts, the mouth of the purse seine net is about one hectare and it has the ability to drag everything from the bowels of the sea.
- The practice of Purse seine fishing has been banned in States and UTs such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Odisha, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in their respective territorial waters of up to 12 nautical miles and States like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, West Bengal have not imposed any such prohibitions.
- The Union government has told the Supreme Court that the ban imposed by certain coastal States and UTs on purse seine fishing is not justified and sought six months duration to formulate a uniform national plan for purse seine fishing.

2. Services exports to cross FY23 goal of \$300 bn

Servicing trade

Minister Goyal says the current fiscal will be a satisfying year for exports given the gloom in the global environment

■ India is likely to record 20% growth in services exports

■ Services exports clocked \$235.81 billion in April-December 2022, compared with \$184.65 billion in the year-earlier period

■ In 2021-22, these exports touched an all-time high of \$254 billion



Image Source: The Hindu

- As per the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, the country's services exports are performing "extremely well" and the outbound shipments are expected to grow by about 20% to cross the \$300-billion target despite global economic uncertainties.
- The Minister further added that even on the merchandise front the exports were registering healthy growth in spite of a global economic recession, increasing inflationary pressure and overstocking of various commodities.
- According to reports, India's exports increased 9% year-on-year during the April-December 2022-23 time period.
- Services exports rose to \$235.81 billion during the April-December 2022-23 time period, as compared to \$184.65 billion in 2021-22.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. What is AMPHEX? (Level – Moderate)

- A. It is a technology developed by IISc to detect new species of amphibians in Western Ghats.
- B. It is a technology transfer mission with France to develop submarines.
- C. It is a tri-service combined exercise of India.
- D. It is a global initiative to protect frogs in the world.

Answer: C

Explanation:

- APHEX is a biennial Tri-Services Amphibious Exercise of India.
- AMPHEX is aimed at joint training of elements of all three services in various facets of amphibious operations to enhance interoperability and synergy.

Q2. Which statements are true regarding Norovirus? (Level – Moderate)

1. It spreads through sharing of food.
2. It causes gastroenteritis.
3. It is more common during winters.

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Norovirus mainly spreads through faecal-oral routes such as:
 - Direct contact with an infected person
 - Consuming contaminated water or food
 - Touching contaminated surfaces and using unwashed hands
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Norovirus is a human enteric pathogen that causes acute gastroenteritis.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, Norovirus is also known as “winter vomiting bug” and is common during winters.

Q3. Which of these statement(s) is/are correct? (Level – Easy)

1. DGCA is an independent agency of the Government of India.
2. It enforces the civil air safety standards in the country.

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is an **attached office of the Ministry of Civil Aviation**, Government of India.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, DGCA is the regulatory body in the field of Civil Aviation mainly dealing with safety issues.
 - DGCA is also responsible for regulation of air transport services within India and for enforcement of civil air regulations, air safety and airworthiness standards.

Q4. Which of the statements are true? (Level – Easy)

1. 2024 has been declared the “International Year of Millet” by the United Nations.
2. India is the largest producer of millet in the world.

Options:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, In March 2021, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared **2023 as the International Year of Millets**
- **Statement 2 is correct**, India is the largest producer of millets in the world.
 - The major millet producing States in India are Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Q5. With reference to forced labour (Vishti) in India during the Gupta period, which one of the following statements is correct? (Level – Difficult) PYQ 2019

- A. It was considered as a source of income for the state, a sort of tax paid by the people.
- B. It was totally absent in the Madhya Pradesh and Kathiawar region of the Gupta empire.
- C. The forced labourer was entitled to weekly wages.
- D. The eldest son of the labourer was sent as the forced labourer

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Vishti was considered as a source of income for the state, a sort of tax by the people.
- Junagarh inscription mentions Vishti as one form of tax, which indicates that it was extracted from Gujarat and Malwa region.
- Anyone could be sent as a labourer for Vishti, not necessarily the eldest son of the labourer.
- The forced labourers were not entitled to any weekly wages.
- Therefore **option a** is correct.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Discuss whether separation of power in India, as provided by the constitution, is rigorous and whether it is more of a separation of functions rather than separation of power?](#)(250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)
2. [How far has the idea of river linking worked in India? Also underline the environmental implications of the Ken-Betwa river linking project.](#) (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-1; Geography)