

05 Feb 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



The greatest victory is that
which requires no battle.

- Sun Tzu



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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Cooperation in Trilateral Framework

Syllabus: International Agreements & Groupings

Mains: Significance of Multilateral Cooperation for India

Context: India joins UAE, France for trilateral initiatives on various issues.

Introduction:

- India, France and the United Arab Emirates declared their common intent to formalise a “trilateral cooperation initiative” to collaborate on nuclear energy and explore opportunities in the Indian Ocean region.
- Three countries also discussed cooperation in a trilateral framework, to promote compatibility and co-production in the defence sector and in countering infectious diseases.
- A range of trilateral events will be held in the backdrop of the Indian Presidency of the G-20 and UNFCCC COP28 to be held in UAE in November-December 2023.
- The trilateral was first discussed when the three Ministers — Dr. Jaishankar, France’s Catherine Colonna and the UAE’s Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan — had met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2022.

Cooperation to fight Climate Change:

- This trilateral cooperation initiative is with a focus on solar and nuclear energy, the fight against climate change and the protection of biodiversity.
- The initiative is expected to act as a platform to bolster cooperation on sustainable projects between the development agencies of the three countries, which will also work to align their economic, technological and social policies with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
- The three countries also agreed to expand their cooperation through initiatives such as the Mangrove Alliance for Climate led by the UAE and the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership led by India and France.

- It was agreed that the three countries should seek to focus on key issues such as single-use plastic pollution, desertification, and food security in the context of the International Year of Millets-2023.
- The three countries also underlined their keen desire to cooperate in the field of the circular economy under the aegis of India's Mission LiFE.

Towards 'One Health':

- Separately, France, India and the UAE also agreed to increase cooperation in the field of combating diseases and pandemics and joining forces in the field of vaccination.
- In this regard, cooperation in multilateral organisations such as World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi-the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund, and Unitaid will be encouraged.
- Further, the three countries are planning to attempt to identify tangible cooperation on implementing the "One Health" approach, and support the development of local capacities in biomedical innovation and production within developing countries.

Collaboration in Defence Sector:

- Foreign Ministers of three countries also discussed cooperation in a trilateral framework to promote compatibility, joint development and co-production while seeking out avenues for further collaboration and training defence forces of the three countries.
- The development of trilateral cooperation between relevant academic and research institutions and efforts to promote co-innovation projects, technology transfer, and entrepreneurship will be encouraged.

***Nut Graf:** India joins UAE, France for trilateral initiatives on various issues including fight against Climate Change, cooperation in defence sector, combating diseases and pandemics and platform to promote cultural cooperation through a range of joint projects.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMICS

1. Climate Change and Hydropower Generation

***Syllabus:** Infrastructure-Energy*

***Mains:** Impact of Climate change on hydropower generation and reservoirs in India*

Context: This article discusses the impact of climate change on hydropower generation.

Introduction:

- A two-person team from IIT Gandhinagar studied the hydroclimatic changes in the catchment areas and their implications for hydropower generation in 46 major dams located in north, central and south India. The findings have been published in the journal iScience.
- According to their study, hydropower, which accounts for 13% of total power generation, is a significant contributor to clean global electricity generation.
- The team looked at the increase in rainfall in the catchment areas and the resultant inflow into all the 46 major reservoirs in the near (2021–2040), mid (2041–2060), and far (2081–2100) periods against the reference period (1995–2014) for two shared socioeconomic pathway scenarios.

Projected Increase:

- Under a warmer climate, hydropower production is expected to increase across the country as precipitation increases, resulting in increased inflow to reservoirs.
- Based on selected hydroelectric dams, the projected increase in hydropower potential in India is 10-23%.
- A warmer and wetter climate is projected to bring about 5%-33% increased rainfall. As a result, [hydropower production](#) is very likely to increase by 9%-36% for most dams due to increased inflow (7-70%) into the dams.
- The potential hydropower generation is projected to rise by more than 50% in Tehri, Ramganga, Kadana, Omkareshwar, Maheshwar, and Sriramsagar dams in the far period.
- In south India, eight out of eleven dams are projected to experience a decline in hydropower potential.
- Dams in central India are expected to generate more hydropower than dams in the north and south of the country.
- Significant warming forecast for north India may reduce snow and glacial storage, lowering snowmelt water contribution in the long run. However, a significant increase in rainfall is more likely to compensate for the loss from snowmelt in north India.

Impact on Reservoirs:

- Extreme rainfall caused by global warming will result in an increase in extreme inflow and high reservoir storage conditions for the majority of dams.
- High and sudden inflow from extreme rainfall, particularly when reservoirs are already full, can complicate reservoir operations and create a flood-like situation due to sudden water release.
 - Chennai in 2015 and Kerala in 2018 witnessed massive flooding due to heavy inflow into already full reservoirs.
- Compared with central and south India, north India is projected to experience higher warming in the future.

- According to the study, north India will experience the greatest warming (about 5 degrees Celsius), while central and southern India will experience warming of 3-4 degrees Celsius.
- The study found that inflow to a few dams in Ganga, Mahanadi, Brahmani, and west-coast river basins is projected to decline in the future.
 - This reduction in inflow is due to increase in atmospheric water demands in response to the considerable warming compared to increase in precipitation.

***Nut Graf:** Recent study by a team from IIT Gandhinagar on the impact of climate change on hydropower generation provides crucial insights into projected changes in hydroclimate and hydropower for the major dams in India. This can be significant to guide reservoir rule curves on how much storage should be permitted at different times during the monsoon season.*

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INDIAN ECONOMY

1. Is Govt. on track on fiscal deficit targets?

***Syllabus:** Government Budgeting.*

***Mains:** Achieving Fiscal Deficit target.*

***Prelims:** Budget 2023-24.*

Details:

- The path of relative fiscal prudence is chosen by the government in the [Union Budget for 2023-24](#).
- The Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman projected a decline in fiscal deficit from 6.4% in FY23 to 5.9% of gross domestic product (GDP) in FY24.
- It was further said during the budget speech that the government is planning to continue on the path of fiscal consolidation and reach a fiscal deficit below 4.5% by 2025-26.
- To finance the fiscal deficit in 2023-24 the net market borrowings from dated securities are estimated at around ₹11.8 lakh crore, and the balance financing is expected to come from small savings and other sources. The gross market borrowings are estimated at approximately ₹15.4 lakh crore.

Statistical Details:

- The fiscal deficit to [GDP](#) is pegged at 5.9% in FY24 in Union Budget 2023-24. This has reduced from 6.4% in 2022-23 (revised estimate) and 6.7% in 2021-22 (actual).
- Revenue Budget:
 - As per the Revised Estimate(RE) of 2022-23 the deficit was 4.1% of GDP.
 - Primary Deficit (Fiscal Deficit *minus* Interest payments) was 3% of GDP in 2022-23 (RE).
 - The revenue deficit is 2.9% of GDP in the Union Budget 2023-24. Moreover, the primary deficit is pegged at 2.3% of GDP.
- Statistics associated with subsidies:

	2022-23 Budget Estimate (BE)	2022-23 Revised Estimate (RE)	2023-24 Budget Estimate (BE)
Food Subsidy	₹2,06,831 crore	₹2,87,194 crore	₹1,97,350 crore
Fertilizers Subsidy	₹1,05,222 crore	₹2,25,220 crore	₹1,75,100 crore
Petroleum Subsidy		₹9,171 crore	₹2,257 crore

Way Ahead for Growth:

- It should be noted that the interest rate management by the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) is not enough to deal with the inflation, specifically due to supply-side shocks.
- Therefore coordination of both fiscal and monetary policy is crucial for a sustained growth recovery process.
- It should be noted that the high-interest rate regime by the RBI can hurt economic growth. Thus, the fiscal policy should adopt an accommodative stance by focussing on gross capital formation with increased capital spending, particularly infrastructure investment.
- The Budget 2023-24 has proposed to raise the capital expenditure by 3.3.% of GDP. The interest-free loan of ₹1.3 lakh crore for 50 years to States would aid in boosting growth.
- The infrastructure investment has a larger multiplier effect on economic growth and employment.

Fiscal Consolidation:

- Indian Government has not deviated from the path of fiscal consolidation.

- The medium-term fiscal consolidation framework of the Budget 2023-24 states that it is important to reduce the fiscal deficit-GDP ratio to 4.5% by 2025-26 (from 6.4% currently).
- The Government of India has kept the fiscal policy “accommodative”, and has adopted capital spending to support economic growth recovery in the current scenario of revenue uncertainties (due to the pandemic, geopolitical risks, supply chain disruptions, energy price volatility, and increasing inflation).
- Notably, the primary mode of financing fiscal deficit in India is through internal market borrowings. It is also financed through securities against small savings, provident funds, and external debt.
- The Union Budget 2023 has pegged India’s external debt at ₹22,118 crore of the total fiscal deficit of ₹17,86,816 crore in 2023-24 (BE) (around 1%).
- It is also stated in the Budget that the States will have to maintain a fiscal deficit of 3.5% of GSDP of which 0.5% will be tied to power sector reforms.

Figure: Fiscal Deficit (as a percent of GDP)

Years	Budget estimates	Actual
2017-18	3.2	3.5
2018-19	3.3	3.4
2019-20	3.3	4.6
2020-21	3.5	9.2
2021-22	6.8	6.7
2022-23	6.4	-
2023-24	5.9	-

Source: The Hindu

Rating Agencies Response:

- According to Moody’s, leveraging buoyant revenues, the Indian government aims to significantly increase infrastructure investment, while cutting personal income taxes, and providing capital support for the oil sector.

- It further said that these steps are credit positive for renewable energy companies, oil marketing companies, cement and steel producers, and automobile manufacturers.
- However, Moody's added that it is unlikely to narrow down the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP by FY26.
- Fitch Ratings stated that the slow fiscal consolidation process due to the COVID-19 pandemic could leave public finances exposed in case of a further major economic shock.

Conclusion:

The government is stressing economic growth recovery through capex. The economic growth in turn would strengthen GDP. Moreover, if the denominator (GDP) expands in the fiscal deficit-GDP ratio, it will reduce the overall fiscal deficit-GDP ratio.

Nut Graf: *The Budget 2023-24 has proposed to increase capital expenditure and boost economic growth. The government has thus adopted a fiscal consolidation approach to reach the fiscal deficit target of 4.5% by 2025-26.*

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Why have mangroves got a Budget push?

Syllabus: *Environment and Biodiversity conservation.*

Mains: *Mangroves and Mangrove plantation proposed in Budget 2023-24.*

Prelims: *MISHTI.*

Context: Mangrove plantation initiative in Union Budget 2023-24.

Details:

- The Union Budget for 2023-24 has proposed Mangrove plantation along the coastline and on saltpan lands under MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes).

Significance of Mangroves:

- The salt-tolerant plant communities found in tropical and subtropical intertidal regions are called Mangroves.
- They are crucial for coastal biodiversity and act as bio-shields against extreme climatic events like floods and cyclones.
- They are very important because the threat of climate change and frequent tropical storms are increasing at exponential rates.

- Thus planting more mangroves along the coastline of India(7500 km) is a great step in the right direction.

Background Details:

- According to the ‘State of World Mangroves 2022’ report by the Global Mangrove Alliance, the total mangrove cover of the world is around 147000 sq km (14.7 million hectares).
- The report further highlights that mangroves hold up to four times more the amount of carbon than other ecosystems. It was explicitly mentioned that “the loss of even 1% of remaining mangroves could lead to the loss of 0.23 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent, equal to over 520 million barrels of oil.”
- As per the [Indian State of Forest Report \(IFSR\) 2021](#), India has nearly 4992 sq km (0.49 million hectares) of mangroves.
- In India, Mangroves are distributed across 9 States and 3 Union Territories with West Bengal having the highest mangrove cover of 2114 sq km.
- The IFSR report also showed that the mangrove cover in India has increased from 4046 sq km in 1987 to 4992 sq km in 2021.
- However, the mangrove ecosystem in India is facing challenges due to the rising population in coastal areas and the increasing demand for land, timber, fodder, fuel-wood, and other non-wood forest products like fisheries.
- The tree species in mangrove forests/ecosystems are categorized into:
 - True mangroves: They display morphological adaptations like pneumatophores, vivipary or crypto vivipary germination, and salt-secreting cells. There are 42 true mangrove species in India.
 - Mangroves associates: The species that exist side by side with the true mangroves. There are 68 mangrove associate species in India.

Challenges to Wetland Ecosystem:

- One of the biggest threats to the mangrove ecosystem is the aquaculture or fisheries along the coast that obstructs the tidal flow. For instance, in Sunderbans (the largest mangrove forest in India) several instances of clearing the mangrove forest for aquaculture has been witnessed.
- Land reclamation for agriculture and industries along the coastline also impacts the mangrove ecosystem.
- Discharge of untreated domestic and industrial effluents hampers the natural inter-tidal flow along the coast and obstructs the mixing of freshwater and saline water, which is important for the formation of the mangrove forest.

Mangrove plantation initiative:

- MISHTI will be implemented through the convergence of various schemes like MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), [CAMPA \(Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority\)](#) Fund, and other sources.
- It would further require extensive cooperation from local communities.
- It is found that the survival rate of mangrove seed plantation and saplings is 50% and 60% respectively. Moreover, it takes three years for a new plant to stabilize. Thus a contract-based one-time plantation under MGNREGS and CAMPA might not work efficiently without the local communities taking ownership of the forests.
- Moreover, MISHTI is in line with [India's Nationally Determined Contributions](#) of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent by 2030.
- Additionally, India also joined the Mangrove Alliance for Climate at COP27.

Nut Graf: *Mangrove Ecosystem is crucial for environment and biodiversity. However, it is under extreme pressure due to the rising population and increasing demand for land. In this direction, the government of India has involved the mangrove restoration in the Budget of 2023-24 through an initiative called MISHTI.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Appointment of Supreme Court Judges

Syllabus: *GS02-Polity*

Prelims: *Article 124; Collegium System*

Context: Centre clears appointment of five Supreme Court judges.

Key Details:

- President Droupadi Murmu signed the warrants of appointment of five new judges to the [Supreme Court](#) on February 04, 2023.
- Chief Justices Pankaj Mithal, Sanjay Karol and P.V. Sanjay Kumar of the Rajasthan, Patna and Manipur High Courts respectively and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah of the Patna court, and Justice Manoj Misra of the Allahabad court were appointed to the Supreme Court.
- These names were recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium on December 13.
- Once the new judges are sworn in next week, the strength of the Supreme Court will go up from 27 to 32 and only two vacancies will remain.
 - The Supreme Court has a sanctioned strength of 34 judges.

- After August 26, 2021, when nine Supreme Court judges were appointed together, this is the second time when so many judges have been appointed in one single batch.

2. E-Courts

Category: GS02-Polity

Prelims: E-technologies in Judiciary

Context: Union Budget 2023-24 allocated ₹7,000 crore for the third phase of the e-courts project.

Key Details:

- The union budget for 2023-24 has allocated Rs 7,000 crore for phase III of the e-courts project that aims at using technological solutions to reduce the pendency of cases and make justice more accessible to the common man.
 - This is a big jump from the ₹639.411 crore and ₹1,670 crore spent in the first two phases.
- The e-courts project was conceptualised under the National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary –2005 submitted by the e-committee of the Supreme Court with the aim of attuning courts with digital technology.
- The allocation for the e-courts project, in keeping with the recommendations of the e-committee headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, comes in the midst of an ongoing confrontation between the government and the judiciary with regard to the process for the appointment of judges.
- The e-courts project envisages use of artificial intelligence and machine learning for data analysis and reducing pendency of cases.
- It also focuses on developing virtual courts, going paperless by doing away with case files and digitising the entire court records.

G. Tidbits

1. CDSCO bars Global Pharma Healthcare from making eye lubricant

- The [Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation \(CDSCO\)](#) has instructed Tamil Nadu-based Global Pharma Healthcare to stop manufacturing all the products under the category of ophthalmic preparation till the completion of an investigation.
- The move came soon after the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) linked the company's eye drops to 55 adverse events in the U.S.

- CDC have warned that the eye drops supplied by the company to distributors Aru Pharma/EzriCare and Delsam Pharma in the U.S. had been linked to adverse events, including eye infections, permanent loss of vision, and a death with a bloodstream infection.
- Raw material called carboxymethylcellulose sodium was used for manufacturing the eye lubricant.
- The company, which has recalled the eye drops from the market, has been placed on the FDA's import alert list for allegedly providing an inadequate response to a records request.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding appointment of judges in the Supreme Court of India: (Level – Easy)

1. The collegium system does not provide any specific criteria for testing the candidate for the post of CJI because of which it leads to wide scope for nepotism and favouritism.
2. SC introduced the Collegium system, holding that “consultation” really meant “concurrence”.
3. Judges of the higher judiciary are appointed only through the collegium system and the government has a role only after names have been decided by the collegium.

Choose the correct code:

- A. 1 & 2 only
- B. 2 & 3 only
- C. 1 & 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct,** The Collegium system is the system of appointment and transfer of judges that has evolved through judgments of the SC, and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution.
 - The Collegium System faced a lot of criticism not only from the government but also from civil society due to its Lack of Transparency and Accountability.
 - The collegium system does not provide any specific criteria for testing the candidate for the post of CJI because of which it leads to wide scope for nepotism and favouritism.

- **Statement 02 is correct**, Second Judges Case (1993) introduced the Collegium system, holding that “consultation” really meant “concurrence”. It added that it was not the CJI's individual opinion, but an institutional opinion formed in consultation with the two senior-most judges in the Supreme Court.
- **Statement 03 is correct**, Judges of the higher judiciary are appointed only through the collegium system and the government has a role only after names have been decided by the collegium.

Q2. Which of the following will be soon named the world's first heritage University?
(Level – Moderate)

- A. Nalanda University
- B. Harvard University
- C. Visva Bharti University
- D. Takshashila University

Answer: C

Explanation:

- Founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921, Visva-Bharati University will soon get the ‘heritage’ tag from UNESCO to take the distinction of world's first living heritage university.
- Visva-Bharati is a public central university and an Institution of National Importance located in Shantiniketan, West Bengal.
- In 1922, Visva-Bharati was inaugurated as a Centre for Culture with exploration into the arts, language, humanities, music and these are reflected in diverse institutes that continue in their educational programmes, which are based on the founding principles of excellence in culture and culture studies.
- Soon after independence, the institution was given the status of a central university in 1951 by an act of the Parliament.

Q3. Consider the following statements with regards to Antrix: (Level – Moderate)

1. Antrix Corporation Limited (ACL), Bengaluru is a wholly owned Government of India Company under the administrative control of the Department of Space.
2. It is a marketing arm of ISRO for promotion and commercial exploitation of space products, technical consultancy services and transfer of technologies developed by ISRO.
3. It was incorporated as a private limited company owned by Government of India in September 1992.

Choose the correct code:

- A. 1 & 2 only
- B. 2 & 3 only
- C. 1 & 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Antrix Corporation Limited (ACL) in Bengaluru is a wholly owned Government of India Company under the administrative control of the Department of Space.
- Antrix Corporation Limited was incorporated as a private limited company owned by Government of India in September 1992 as a Marketing arm of ISRO for promotion and commercial exploitation of space products, technical consultancy services and transfer of technologies developed by ISRO.
- Another major objective is to facilitate development of space related industrial capabilities in India.
- As the commercial and marketing arm of ISRO, Antrix is engaged in providing Space products and services to international customers worldwide. With fully equipped state-of-the-art facilities, Antrix provides end-to-end solutions for many of the space products.

Q4. Which amongst the following is the official state bird of Rajasthan?(Level–Easy)

- A. Great Indian Bustard
- B. Sarus crane
- C. Indian peafowl
- D. Great hornbill

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Godawan or [Great Indian Bustard](#) is the official state bird of Rajasthan.

Q5. The term “two-state solution” is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of (Level – Easy)

- A. China
- B. Israel
- C. Iraq
- D. Yemen

Answer: B

Explanation:

- The two-state solution refers to a solution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict which calls for "two states for two groups of people." The two-state solution envisages an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, west of the Jordan River. The boundary between the two states is still subject to dispute and negotiation, with Palestinian and Arab leadership insisting on the "1967 borders", which is not accepted by Israel.
- The territory of the former Mandate Palestine which shall not form part of the Palestinian State, shall be part of Israeli territory. The framework of the solution is set out in UN resolutions on the "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", going back to 1974. The resolution calls for "two States, Israel and Palestine ... side by side within secure and recognized borders" together with "a just resolution of the refugee question in conformity with UN resolution 194". The borders of the state of Palestine are "based on the pre-1967 borders".

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [Discuss the impact of a high fiscal deficit on the nation's economy? Can it also have a positive impact in some situations? Elaborate.](#) (250 words; 15 marks)(GS-3; Economics)
2. [What makes mangroves such an important part of our efforts against climate change? Is the Government of India taking enough steps for their preservation?](#) (250 words; 15 marks)(GS-3; Environment)