

10 Feb 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Locating China in the Russia-Ukraine war

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries

Mains: China's stance and role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the rationale behind it

Context

This article examines and analyses China's stance and role in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

China's stand on the war

- China's official stand on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has been that "all countries deserve respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity" and that "support should be given to all efforts that are conducive to peacefully resolving the crisis".
 - China has been reiterating this stance at various global multilateral institutions.
- China with its emphasis on "all countries" seems to be showcasing itself to be equidistant from both the conflicting countries.
 - However, despite this demonstration, China's stance on the conflict has been regarded as "**pro-Russian neutrality**" by various experts.
- Further, out of the seven resolutions put to vote in global institutions such as the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, [UN Human Rights Council](#) and the World Health Organization (WHO) by the West against Russia, China has voted against in three instances and has abstained from voting in the other four occasions.
 - China however voted in favour of a UN Security Council resolution that referred to a proposal raised by Russia on humanitarian aid.
- It is well known that Russia and China are involved in a "**Comprehensive Strategic partnership of coordination for a new era**" and even during the ongoing war, China has moved forward to strengthen its relations with Russia.
- Furthermore, China on multiple occasions has supported the Russian narrative by accusing the U.S. and [NATO](#) of being the prime instigators of the crisis.
- Hence, China's narrative of being neutral has many discrepancies.

Involvement of China in the war

- China's actions to date have not been in a direct form and have been in an indirect manner.
- Ever since the onset of the conflict, China has significantly benefited from the purchase of oil and gas from Russia at cheaper prices.
 - China has replaced Germany as the largest buyer of Russian oil and Russia has displaced Saudi Arabia as China's largest supplier of crude oil.
- Apart from oil, gas and hydrocarbons the cooperation between China and Russia also extended to the exchange of materials and technology.
- As per the Wall Street Journal, China had extended covert support to Russia by accessing Russian customs data compiled by an American think tank named C4ADS.
- Reports also suggest that China's defence sector state-owned enterprises have dispatched navigation equipment, jamming technology, radar systems and fighter-jet parts to Russia.
 - Reports also claim that China had dissipated millions of chips which are a critical component of modern military equipment.
- Further, it is said that thousands of shipments of dual-use goods have been sent by China to Russia which would have otherwise been restricted due to sanctions.
- The U.S. has also imposed sanctions recently on a satellite company of China named "Spacety China" which was indirectly providing satellite imagery of Ukraine to a Russian private military force called "Wagner Group" which is involved in the conflict.
- However, China has dismissed such allegations and has held that the military dimensions of such transactions were just speculations.
- China is extending such assistance to Russia at a time when China itself is demanding that Western countries not send military aid to Ukraine as it intensifies the ongoing conflict.

Read more about - [Russia-Ukraine war](#)

Change in the stance

- As the war progressed, there seems to be a change in the Chinese stance.
- The President of China, during his meeting with the German Chancellor in November 2022 had said that the war should not cross the nuclear threshold referring to the Russian President's nuclear threats to Ukraine.
- Further, the Chinese Foreign Minister in an article said that if China knew about the crisis the war could cause, China would have tried to prevent the war.
- Additionally, there are many leaders within the Chinese governmental hierarchy who have criticised Russia's actions.
- Even during the [G-20](#) summit held at Bali in November 2022, the leaders' declaration on the war, which stated that most of the G-20 members strongly condemned the war, was not endorsed by China only because of its objections towards calling the conflict a "war".
 - But China here only opposed the terminology of "war" and did not oppose the condemnation of the conflict itself.

Path ahead

- China's direct support to Russia will affect its relations with Ukraine as well as the [European Union \(EU\)](#).
 - China is the largest trading partner for both Russia and Ukraine.
 - Ukraine is China's largest corn supplier.
 - Furthermore, Ukraine is the third largest supplier of military equipment to China and Ukraine is the biggest market for defence goods from China.
 - China's first aircraft carrier, **Liaoning**, is a refurbished aircraft carrier bought from Ukraine after the [disintegration of the Soviet Union](#).
 - China at present also has strong economic relations with the EU and cannot risk it.
- It is also important for China to ensure that Russia continues to be its close aid as Russia is China's premier ally in its larger global ambition to displace the U.S. as the global superpower.
 - Not just this, China could also use the Russian card to gain concessions from the West on the trade and technological fronts.
- The war has further provided an opportunity for China to compensate for the withdrawal of Western investment and technology in Russia.
- The prolonged conflict in Ukraine has also distracted the West from the Indo-Pacific theatre which has provided China with a chance to extend its influence in the region.

***Nut graf:** It has been nearly one year since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war and there are still no signs of de-escalation of the war. Experts in this context believe that it is in China's best interest to keep Russia and the West divided in order to prepare itself for an inevitable period of hostility with the U.S. in the coming years.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

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E. Editorials**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS****1. India-France Partnership**

Syllabus: GS-2, Bilateral Relations with France

Mains: *Significance of India-France partnership in the post-pandemic world.*

Context: 25 years of strategic partnership between India and France.

Introduction:

- India's partnership with France is built on common values and goals. Both celebrated 25 years of their strategic partnership on January 26, 2023.
- Both countries signed a strategic partnership in 1998 and a strategic dialogue in 1999.
- The strategic partnership is anchored on the bedrock of deep and consistent mutual trust, abiding faith in strategic autonomy, and commitment to international law.
- Both are committed to the shared values of democracy, fundamental freedoms, [rule of law](#) and respect for human rights.
- There is an ongoing high-level India-France political dialogue in defence, maritime, counterterrorism and the Indo-Pacific.
 - They are now forging ahead with cooperation on issues such as digitisation, cyber, green energy, blue economy, ocean sciences, and space.

Trade between India and France:

- France has emerged as a key trading partner of India with annual trade of \$12.42 billion in 2021-22.
- It is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of \$10.31 billion from April 2000 to June 2022, which represents 1.70% of the total [foreign direct investment](#) inflows into India.
- The highest FDI equity inflows are in the services sector (18.17%), with cement & gypsum products (9.43%) in the second place, followed by air transport (including air freight) (7.72%), miscellaneous industries (7.38%) and petroleum & natural gas (7.22%).
 - These five sectors represent 49.92% of the total equity inflow from France from April 2000 to June 2022.
- India-France Joint Committee for Economic & Technical Cooperation (JCETC) was set up on January 26, 1976, which is the major institutional mechanism for cooperation in the economic and technical sectors.
- A joint announcement was also signed for setting up of a FAST-TRACK system for French companies in India and Indian companies in France which was to be made operational by the end of December 2020.
- Joint Working Groups (JWGs) at the senior official level have also been constituted through MoUs to deal with specific aspects of economic cooperation, including Agriculture and Food Processing, IT & Telecommunications, Roads, Sustainable Urban Development and Energy.

Defense Partnership:

- France is a key defence partner for India; it is the second-largest defence supplier in 2017- 2021.
- France has emerged as a major strategic partner for India with crucial defence deals and increased military-to-military engagement.
- India inducted French Scorpene conventional submarines, being built in India under the technology transfer agreement of 2005.
- The Indian Air Force received 36 Rafale fighter jets in December 2022.
- The Tata group is in collaboration with Airbus to manufacture C-295 tactical transport aircraft in Vadodara, Gujarat.
 - This line is expected to be expanded into other civilian and military aircraft manufacturing in a joint venture with France.
- Both countries also have a robust network of military dialogues and regularly hold joint exercises — Varuna (navy), Garuda (air force), and [Shakti](#) (army).

Cooperation in International Forums:

- Both countries have strived to deepen and expand their collaboration as the complexities in the global geopolitical system have evolved.
- France was among the first countries with which India signed a civil nuclear deal.
- France also played a crucial role in limiting India's isolation in the non-proliferation order after the 1998 nuclear tests.
- France also supports India's bid for permanent membership of the [United Nations Security Council](#) as well as its entry into the [Nuclear Suppliers Group](#).
- India has supported France in the [Paris Agreement](#) expressing its strong commitment towards mitigating climate change impact.
- India and France, as part of their joint efforts on climate change, launched the [International Solar Alliance](#) in 2015.
- Both countries are working together to coordinate on playing a constructive role in the ongoing Ukraine war.
- Both nations have committed to cooperating in order to prevent an imbalance in the Indo-Pacific.
- They also share concerns about China's ascent and its aggressive behaviour, both regionally and globally.

Maritime Ties:

- India and France are resident powers of the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific.
- In 2018, both countries welcomed the “Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region” which presented a blueprint for a strengthening of ties.
- Operationally, combined patrolling by French and Indian ships in the Indian Ocean shows New Delhi's desire to work with allies that share its goals for enlarging its presence there.

- Maritime security has further gained momentum as both countries have articulated their common vision for a free, fair and open Indo-Pacific.
- Both countries share a comprehensive strategy for the Indo-Pacific which seeks to provide comprehensive solutions for maritime security, regional cooperation and climate change adaptation.
 - India and France in September 2022 also agreed to set up an Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund that will support sustainable innovative solutions for countries in the region.
- Both have formed a trilateral grouping with the United Arab Emirates to ensure maritime domain awareness and security from the east coast of Africa to the far Pacific.

Read more on [India-France Relations](#).

***Nut Graf:** In a post-pandemic world, India and France reaffirmed their commitment to maintain strategic autonomy and prepare for the future together by further deepening their cooperation, expanding it in new domains to meet emerging challenges and broadening their international partnership.*

Category: ECONOMY

1. India must avoid growing into a dystopia

***Syllabus:** GS-3, Indian Economy & Issues Relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development & Employment*

***Mains:** Consequences of India's Economic Growth*

Context: This article discusses the growth of the Indian economy and its consequences.

Introduction:

- The Indian economy in 2023 is predicted to be hopeful yet challenging. The [World Bank](#) has predicted economic growth at 6.6% in FY24. Hence India's march to become the third-largest economy by 2047 seems to be on track.
- As per the [2023 Economic Survey](#), the economy is expected to grow at 7% in real terms for 2022-23.
- Merchandise exports stood at US\$ 332.8 bn for April-December 2022. This was a growth of 16% from 2021.
- India is the 7th largest service exporter in the world.

- The share of exports of goods and services as a percent of GDP in the first half of 2022-23 has been the highest since 2016.
- The optimistic growth forecasts stem from a number of positives like the rebound of private consumption giving a boost to production activity, higher Capital Expenditure (Capex), near-universal vaccination coverage enabling people to spend on contact-based services, the strengthening of the balance sheets of the corporates, well-capitalised public sector banks ready to increase the credit supply and the credit growth to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.
- However, India is far from achieving its target of achieving \$5 trillion by 2024-25. India is now the 5th largest world economy – leaving behind the UK.
- The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) predicted that by 2035, India's economy would reach \$10 trillion and become the world's third-largest by 2037.

The West's self-interest in India:

- India remains a key player in the Indo-Pacific in terms of foreign and economic policy.
- Firstly, India has a large and growing labour force to emerge as one of the future alternative suppliers of manufacturing goods, reducing the world's reliance on China.
- Secondly, India has rapidly rising energy needs and thus has to be part of any realistic solution to the global climate challenge.
- Finally, India, as the world's most populous democracy in the heart of the rising Indo-Pacific region acts as a critical stabilising actor in an increasingly fragile geopolitical system.
- Western countries see a democracy-democracy partnership for the future with India's economic growth.
- If India grows into a \$10 trillion economy in 15 years, they also see India as a great market for their products and an investment destination.
- In view of the rise of China, common strategic interests between India and the West are also expected to generate new initiatives in areas such as connectivity, digitalisation, transportation and the maritime economy, which will further deepen cooperation.
- The technology transfer afforded by western countries to India will make an important contribution to the country's economic recovery in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Implications of Growth in India's Economy:

On Employment:

- The growth of the national economy has not generated equal growth in employment. India's experience of the past decade suggests that India's economy could grow without generating sufficient employment for unemployed youth, especially in rural areas.
- Government data show that in mid-2022, unemployment among urban males was much higher than it was a decade ago.

- Data from the private sector, namely Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt. Ltd., show that the number of people employed in December 2022 was less than it was in 2016.
- One of the biggest challenges facing India today and preventing the movement towards a higher per capita GDP – is the country's big informal workforce.
 - Across this informal workforce, 550 million are below the threshold of our average per capita GDP.
- Without formal employment, the workforce does not get social security benefits like maternity leaves, ESIC, EPFO and other similar social security benefits.

On Ecology:

- The environmental impact of economic growth includes the increased consumption of non-renewable resources, higher levels of pollution, global warming and the potential loss of environmental habitats.
- Rampant destruction of natural habitats, especially due to mining and infrastructure development, continued expansion and intensification of agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Deforestation resulting from economic development damages soil and makes areas more prone to drought.
- Unrestrained consumption has disrupted nature, and increased contact between wildlife, livestock, pathogens and people, setting the stage for pandemics to take hold of our lives.
- Overcrowding and uncontrolled construction, particularly in the Himalayan states have created problems of sewage and solid waste disposal as well as increased energy consumption.
 - These States have recently witnessed landslides and flooding, causing great suffering to their people.

Road Ahead:

- For the mass of the unemployed, concentrated in agriculture, employment opportunities will arise only when there is demand for goods in the production of which they can participate.
 - Increased demand for goods of mass consumption will lead to an expansion in the demand for workers.
 - The rise in food prices must be tackled in order for this demand to increase since only then would low-income households have the money to purchase more manufactured items.
- Currently, India does not have an employment policy, either at the Centre or in the States. Concerted policy focus can create the conditions for employment generation in India.
- Policymakers shall focus on the distribution of wealth across the population, especially through the formalisation of employment.
- Governments must work on policies to make sure that economic growth will generate the social and physical infrastructure necessary for a good life.

***Nut Graf:** India is projected to become the third-largest economic superpower by 2037 and a \$ 10 trillion economy by 2035. Policymakers must seek to drive this economic growth to reduce economic inequality and avoid ecological insecurity with creative economic management of the growth process.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-D2

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

Prelims: About Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-D2

Context

The [Indian Space Research Organisation \(ISRO\)](#) is undertaking the second development flight of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D2 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

Details

- SSLV-D2 is intended to place ISRO's **EOS-07**, Antaris's (U.S.-based firm) **Janus-1** and the Chennai-based space start-up Space Kidz's **AzaadiSAT-2** satellites into a 450-km circular orbit in its 15-minute flight.
- The objective of the development of the EOS-07 satellite is to design and develop payload instruments compatible with microsatellite launch vehicles and technologies that are required for future operational satellites.
- AzaadiSAT-2 has been developed by about 750 girl students across India guided by Space Kidz India start-up in Chennai.

Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D2

- The Small Satellite Launch Vehicles cater to the launch of satellites of up to 500 kgs to Low Earth Orbits on a "launch-on-demand" basis.
- SSLV is a cheaper alternative for placing small payloads in orbit and can carry multiple nano, micro and small satellites.
- SSLVs further boast of facilitating low-cost access to space, offering low turnaround time, flexibility in accommodating multiple satellites, and requiring only basic launch infrastructure.
- The Centre had sanctioned a total of ₹169 crores for the development project, which includes the cost of development, qualification of vehicle systems and flight demonstration through the three planned development flights named SSLV-D1, SSLV-D2 and SSLV-D3.
- SSLV had its maiden flight SSLV-D1 in August 2022.

- SSLV-D2 launch vehicle uses **three solid stages** which are then followed by a **liquid-fuel-based Velocity Trimming Module (VTM)** to place satellites in the intended orbits.

Read more about - [Small Satellite Launch Vehicles \(SSLV\)](#)

G. Tidbits

1. Bullet train project tunnel to bypass mangroves will raise cost to ₹10,000 crore

- Construction of a 7-km undersea tunnel for the bullet train project is being planned in order to safeguard about 12 hectares of mangrove forests in Maharashtra's Thane creek.
- The move to construct a tunnel will result in an increase in the cost of construction of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor project's 21-km stretch from Bandra Kurla Complex Station to Shilphata, from ₹100 crores to ₹10,000 crores.
- Further, the construction of the tunnel in Thane creek will also be a challenging task as it will involve two tunnel boring machines (TBMs) that will meet halfway under the sea to join two parts of the tunnel by a process called docking.
 - The key challenge is to ensure that there is no seepage in the tunnel due to water pressure.
- The total cost of the project is estimated to be ₹1.08 lakh crores, out of which the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has expended about ₹32,000 crores for the implementation of the project.

2. U.S. will not sanction India for buying Russian oil: senior American officials

- Senior American officials have said that the U.S. does not wish to sanction India over its continued purchase of Russian oil.
- According to officials, despite India not being a participant in the price cap coalition, India's purchase of Russian Urals crude oil was at rates below the "price cap" of \$60 set by [G-7](#) countries in December 2022.
 - Officials believe that this move by India has assisted the U.S.'s twin goals of ensuring there was enough oil in the market and not giving Russia a premium price for its exports.
- In spite of the increased external pressure to reduce oil purchases from Russia, the Indian government has reiterated that it would buy oil from "wherever" it needs to.
 - As per the latest data (January), India has imported about 1.27 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian Urals oil which marks a 30-fold jump as compared to the previous January when it was about 40,000 bpd.

- Russia, which was India's 17th biggest oil supplier has become the highest exporter in the past few months.
- Russia accounts for close to 28% of India's oil imports as compared to just 0.2% before the war with Ukraine.
- American officials have further rejected the calls by senior Ukrainian lawmakers for imposing secondary sanctions against countries like China and India which according to Ukraine are "financing the Russian economy and the Russian military machine".

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to President's Rule: (Level – Moderate)

1. It can be extended for a maximum period of five years with the approval of the Parliament, every six months.
2. Every resolution approving the proclamation of the President's Rule or its continuation should be passed by the Parliament by a special majority.
3. It has no effect on the Fundamental Rights of the citizens.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, The President's Rule is initially for a period of six months. Later, it can be extended for a period of **three years** with parliamentary approval, every six months.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The proclamation of the President's Rule should be approved in both Houses of Parliament within two months of its issue. The approval is through a **simple majority** i.e. majority of the members of the House present and voting.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The President's Rule has no effect on the Fundamental Rights of the citizens.

Q2. With respect to Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), which of the following statements is/are correct? (Level – Easy)

1. SSLV caters to the launch of up to 500 kg satellites to low earth orbits on a 'launch-on-demand' basis.
2. The rocket is configured with three solid propulsion stages and a velocity terminal module.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, SSLV caters to the launch of up to 500 kg satellites to Low Earth Orbits on a 'launch-on-demand' basis. It provides low-cost access to space.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, SSLV uses **three solid stages** which are then followed by a liquid-fuel-based Velocity Trimming Module (VTM) to place satellites in the intended orbits.

Q3. Consider the following pairs: (Level – Difficult)

Folk Dance	State
1. Dol Chalam	Manipur
2. Hojagiri	Tripura
3. Kalbelia	Rajasthan
4. Ottanthullal	Kerala

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a. Only one pair
- b. Only two pairs
- c. Only three pairs
- d. All four pairs

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is correct**, Dhol Cholom is a form of drum dance performed during Holi in the state of Manipur.

- **Pair 2 is correct**, Hojagiri is a tribal folk dance performed in the state of **Tripura** by the Bru Reang clan on the occasion of Hojagiri Festivals or Laxmi puja.
- **Pair 3 is correct**, Kalbelia dance is a folk dance performed by the snake charming tribe from the Thar Desert in **Rajasthan**.
- **Pair 4 is correct**, Ottanthullal is a recite-and-dance art form belonging to the state of **Kerala**.

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016? (Level – Difficult)

1. All children with benchmark disabilities between 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.
2. Special Courts would be set up in each district of the State to handle offences against persons with disabilities (PwDs).
3. 21 types of disabilities are listed in the RPwD Act and the State Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, According to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, every child with a benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, As per the Act, Special Courts are to be designated in each district to handle cases concerning the violation of the rights of persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, 21 types of disabilities are listed in the RPwD Act and the **Central Government** will have the power to add more types of disabilities.

Q5. Consider the following statements: (Level – Moderate) [PYQ 2007]

1. The Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts is appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
2. The Committee on Public Accounts comprises Members of the Lok Sabha, Members of the Rajya Sabha and a few eminent persons of industry and trade.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct,** The Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts is appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- **Statement 2 is not correct,** The Public Accounts Committee has 22 members.
- **All the members are taken from the Indian Parliament.**
- Out of 22 members, 15 are elected from Lok Sabha and 7 members are elected from the Rajya Sabha.
 - The members of the committee are elected annually by the Parliament according to the principle of Proportional Representation by means of a Single Transferable Vote (PRSTV.)

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The growing closeness between Russia and China may have a significant impact on India. Comment. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-2, IR]
2. Despite impressive growth numbers, employment hasn't risen with the same speed in India. Discuss the reasons for such lacunas. (15 marks, 250 words)[GS-3, Economy]