

## 23 Mar 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



| TABLE OF CONTENTS  |
|--|
| A. GS 1 Related  |
| B. GS 2 Related<br><b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b><br>1. Russia and China vow to deepen relations |
| C. GS 3 Related  |
| D. GS 4 Related  |
| E. Editorials<br><b>SOCIAL JUSTICE</b><br>1. The road to ending tuberculosis                     |
| <b>ENVIRONMENT</b><br>1. IPCC Synthesis report   |
| F. Prelims Facts<br>1. Exercise Cobra Warrior  |
| 2. Abel Prize  |
| G. Tidbits<br>1. Indian Army to reintroduce millets in rations of soldiers                       |
| 2. Chandrayaan 3 likely to be launched in mid-2023: ISRO   |
| H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions   |
| I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions   |

## A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Russia and China vow to deepen relations

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

*Mains: Developments in Russia and China relations and their geopolitical implication*

#### Context

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Russia and held strategic meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

#### Key outcomes of the meeting

- Post the meeting the leaders of China and Russia announced a broad long-term blueprint for deepening their relations and pledged to collaborate to counter the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and any attempts to politicise multilateral platforms.
- A joint statement released after the meetings also expressed concern over [NATO](#)'s growing military-security ties with various Asia-Pacific countries and said that the two countries oppose the formation of exclusive bloc structures in the Asia-Pacific region which promotes bloc politics and camp confrontation.
  - China in the past had referred to the "[Quad](#)" as an exclusive bloc and the latest statement accused the U.S. of following "a Cold War mentality".
  - The statement also used the term "Asia-Pacific" instead of "Indo-Pacific".
- The joint statement further stated that China and Russia are committed to building an equal, open and inclusive security system in the Asia-Pacific region that does not target other countries.
- The statement has also criticised the West over their involvement in Ukraine and said that both countries are against the practice of seeking military, political and other advantages which are detrimental to the legitimate security interests of other countries.
- The countries also expressed willingness to collaborate in multilateral groupings such as [BRICS](#), and efforts to revive the dormant Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping.

## Economic cooperation

- The President of Russia and his Chinese counterpart declared an enduring economic partnership and discussed the prospects of bringing more Russian energy to China and more Chinese companies to Russia.
- The two countries also announced a “Plan to Promote the Key Elements of Russian-Chinese Economic Cooperation until 2030.”
- According to the Russian President, both sides have agreed to a package of 80 crucial and favourable bilateral projects in diverse fields worth around \$165 billion.
- Russia is a strategic supplier of oil, natural gas, LNG, coal, and electricity to China and an agreement has been reached on a second Power of Siberia gas pipeline across Mongolia.

## China’s Solomon port deal



Image Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

- Meanwhile, a state-backed Chinese company named China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation has been granted a contract to develop a key port in the Solomon Islands.
- The contract is to upgrade an international port in Honiara and the project is being funded by the [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#)
- The U.S. and its allies such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan, have raised concerns about China building a naval base in the region ever since the Solomon Islands signed a security agreement with China in 2022.

- However, both China as well as Solomon Islands have said that the pact would not lead to the establishment of a permanent Chinese naval base.

***Nut graf:** The visit of the Chinese President to Russia, following bilateral meetings and the joint pledges made post the meetings have gained significance as the differences between the U.S. and its allies on one hand and Russia and China on the opposite hand seem to be growing.*

## C. GS 3 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

#### 1. The road to ending tuberculosis

***Syllabus:** Issues Relating to Development & Management of Health*

***Mains:** Various shortcomings to end global TB epidemic*

**Context:** World Tuberculosis Day is observed on 24 March each year.

#### **Introduction:**

- [World Tuberculosis Day](#) is designed to build public awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease.
- In 2018, 10 million people fell ill with [TB](#), and 1.5 million died from the disease, mostly in low and middle-income countries. This also makes it the leading cause of death from an infectious disease.
- World TB Day is one of eleven official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).

#### **Shortfall in global TB response:**

- In 1993, the World Health Organization declared TB a global health emergency. Since then, there has been a lack of urgency in the response to the TB epidemic, despite adult

TB treatment being labelled as the best investment among all developmental interventions in the 1993 World Development Report.

- The [Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria](#) was established in 2003 to address diseases of poverty.
  - This fund is the single largest channel of additional funding for global TB control. However, the allocation of resources and funding is often politicised and influenced by various interests, rather than being based solely on the needs and priorities of those working on the ground to fight the diseases.
- The goal of ending TB by 2030 is not well defined, which makes it difficult to measure progress and determine whether the goal has been achieved.
- The [Stop TB Partnership](#) got a formal presence on the board of the Global Fund close to seven years after it was constituted.

#### **Under-served areas in global TB response:**

- Three key areas remain under-served in TB response. Without bolstering or fundamentally reimagining these crucial areas, there is a slim possibility that TB will be eradicated by 2030.
- The first area is in the development and wide use of an adult TB vaccine. The current one is delivered at birth and is useful, particularly for children. However, it is over 100 years old and has limited effectiveness in preventing pulmonary TB in adults.
  - There is a need for a new and improved TB vaccine that can provide better protection, particularly for adults who are most at risk of developing TB.
- The second area is getting newer therapeutic agents for TB. Very few new anti-TB drugs have been developed after nearly 5 decades. However, they are more expensive with limited access.
- The third and most immediate area of action is within the space of diagnostics. Governments must utilise and universally roll out new developments in AI-assisted handheld radiology with 90-second reporting and 95% plus accuracy for diagnosing TB.

#### **Way Forward:**

- Artificial Intelligence tool 'Sentinel' could be used for passive surveillance and interpretation of cough sounds for TB for unobtrusive home-level screening and monitoring and provides nudges for seeking treatment.
  - This technology is ready for larger-scale use, and could potentially change the way public spaces can be monitored along with other air quality indicators.
- Confirmatory diagnosis using nucleic acid amplification could also be utilised universally for more specific diagnoses.
- Moving to an injection-free and shorter all-oral pills regimen for TB (the current standard is for at least six months) will improve compliance and reduce patient fatigue.

- Indigenisation of Diagnostics (InDx) diagnostics coalition and other biotech startups, should be incentivised to break the complexity of molecular testing and price barriers with affordable high-quality innovations.
- India's G20 presidency in 2023, StopTB board meeting in Varanasi in March 2023, and the United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB in September 2023 provide the perfect platform for India's actions to speak loudly which could enable the world to get to the end of TB sooner.

**Nut Graf:** *There has been a lack of urgency in the response to the TB epidemic globally with various shortcomings in responses to address diseases of poverty. Government must focus on utilising affordable high quality innovations such as artificial intelligence tools to take action to end TB sooner.*

## Category: ENVIRONMENT

### 1. IPCC Synthesis report

**Syllabus:** *International Environment Agencies & Agreements*

**Mains:** *Key findings of sixth assessment report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

**Context:** The IPCC released its Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Cycle.

#### Introduction:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC](#)) released its Synthesis Report for the Sixth Assessment Cycle on March 20 in Interlaken, Switzerland.
- This Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) summarises the state of knowledge of climate change, its widespread impacts and risks, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- It integrates the main findings of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) based on contributions from the three Working Groups.
  - WG I evaluated the physical science basis of climate change; WG II evaluated the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability, and WG III evaluated the mitigation.

#### Highlights of the report:

- The report highlights the urgency of drastically reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and thereby limiting rising global temperatures by 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels, set by the [Paris Agreement](#).

- The report says that the planet's best chance to keep temperatures below 1.5°C is to ensure greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to 48% of 2019 levels by 2030 and 99% by 2050.
- The report also recognises the impact of the rise in temperature which has made people much more susceptible to food insecurity and water shortages with vulnerable populations disproportionately facing the brunt of climate change.



Image Source: IPCC

- The report, therefore, stressed the need for financial resolution for a more equitable world.
- The report stresses the need for finance to flow from developed countries to developing countries and the need to compensate countries that are poised to lose the most from climate change, to help them build resilience.
- The report also emphasised the role of financial investments to achieve climate goals and encouraged public funding through central banks, government and financial regulators to reduce emissions, scale up climate resilience and protect marginalised communities.
- The report highlighted the benefits of climate-resilient development in mitigating the effects of climate change and also in providing wider benefits.
- Access to clean energy, improving air quality, increasing employment opportunities, boosting healthcare through technology, and delivering equity are among the report's recommended goals to help adapt to climate change.

### **Implications for India:**

- The IPCC Synthesis Report underscores the urgency of action to address climate change and its impacts, particularly in countries like India that are already vulnerable to its effects.



- It highlights the need for a concerted effort by governments, businesses, and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the changing climate, and build resilience to the inevitable impacts of climate change.
- The report has been "welcomed" by India, which noted that several parts support its stance that unequal contributions are to blame for the climate crisis and that climate justice must underpin mitigation and adaptation.
- Several messages emerge in the report that are salient for India as it suggests a strategy that emphasises "climate-resilient development."
- However, India's priority should be to minimise loss and damage in terms of lives, livelihood and biodiversity, and accelerate equitable action and adaptation.
  - As a developing country, India can lower its per-capita emissions through energy efficiency policies already being implemented in almost every sector.
  - It can also decarbonise the energy sector by using cleaner options like solar and renewable energy.

**Nut Graf:** The 'Synthesis Report' from IPCC recognizes the interdependence of climate, ecosystems and biodiversity, and human societies and highlights the insufficient pace and scale of climate action to tackle climate change.

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. Exercise Cobra Warrior

**Syllabus:** GS-3; Security; Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

**Prelims:** About Exercise Cobra Warrior and Mirage-2000 aircraft

#### Context

The Indian Air Force's (IAF) Mirage-2000 aircraft have been undertaking joint training involving high intensity, large force, and tactical air war fighting operations as part of Exercise Cobra Warrior.

#### Exercise Cobra Warrior

- Exercise Cobra Warrior is the largest air exercise conducted by the Royal Air Force of the U.K.
- Exercise Cobra Warrior takes place twice a year.
- The Exercise is designed to train participants in high intensity, large force, tactical air warfighting operations.



- Apart from India, the other countries participating in the 2023 edition of the Exercise include Finland, Sweden, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., and Singapore.
  - Finland, India and Saudi Arabia have joined for the first time.
- The aim of the exercise is to participate in diverse fighter aircraft engagements and share the best practices of various Air Forces.

### **Mirage-2000 aircraft**

- Mirage 2000 is a multirole, single-engine, fourth-generation fighter jet.
- Mirage 2000 aircraft are manufactured by Dassault Aviation of France.
- India signed a deal with France in 1980 and the jet is considered IAF's strategic aircraft.
- Mirage 2000 was designed as a lightweight fighter, however, it has evolved into a multirole aircraft with various variants.
- The Mirage 2000 aircraft have played a crucial role in various operations of the IAF including in Kargil and Balakot air strikes.

## **2. Abel Prize**

### ***Syllabus: Miscellaneous***

### ***Prelims: About Abel Prize***

#### **Context**

Argentine-American Luis A. Caffarelli, an expert in “partial differential equations” which can explain phenomena such as water flow and population growth has been awarded the Abel Prize 2023.

#### **Abel Prize**

- The Abel Prize recognises pioneering achievements in the field of mathematics.
- The prize is named after Niels Henrik Abel who is considered Norway's greatest mathematician.
- The Abel Prize was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 2002, on the occasion of the 200th birth anniversary of Niels Henrik Abel.
- The Abel Prize is awarded every year to facilitate outstanding mathematicians.
- The Abel Prize is given by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, on behalf of the Ministry of Education of the Norwegian Parliament.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Indian Army to reintroduce millets in rations of soldiers

- The Indian Army is looking to reintroduce millet flour into the rations provided to soldiers.
- This decision has been taken with an aim to promote the consumption of millets and as the UN has declared 2023 as the [International Year of Millets](#).
- In this regard, the Indian Army has sought Union government sanction to procure millet flour not exceeding 25% of the authorised entitlement of cereals (rice and wheat flour) in rations for troops starting from FY 2023-24.
- The Army has stated that the procurement and issue of millets would be based on the option exercised and quantity demanded. Further, three popular varieties of millet flour namely bajra, jowar and ragi will be issued to troops considering their preferences.
- According to the statement of the Indian Army, this is a landmark decision that would help ensure that troops are supplied with native and traditional grains.

### 2. Chandrayaan 3 likely to be launched in mid-2023: ISRO

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S. Somanath announced that the launch of Chandrayaan-3 and the Aditya L1 will likely take place by the middle of 2023.
  - Chandrayaan-3 is India's third lunar mission and [Aditya L1](#) is India's first-ever solar mission.
- According to ISRO, Chandrayaan-3 which is a follow-on mission to [Chandrayaan-2](#) would demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.
- As per the ISRO Chairman, the key objective of the Chandrayaan-3 mission is to demonstrate a precise landing which requires a lot of work including building new instruments, better algorithms and strengthening the failure modes.
- ISRO is also discussing a possible mission to the moon with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- ISRO Chairman also confirmed that there is a good opportunity to launch a mission to explore Venus by 2028.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to the High Seas: (Level – Easy)

1. UNCLOS (UN convention on the Law of the Sea) defined the rights and duties of countries in the oceans, the extent of ocean areas over which countries could claim sovereignty, and the legal status of marine resources.

2. UNCLOS established exclusive economic zones (EEZ), ocean areas up to 200 miles from the coastline, where a country would have exclusive rights over all economic resources such as fish, oil, minerals, and gas.
3. The high seas are the areas beyond the EEZ of any country.

Choose the correct code:

- A. Only one statement is wrong
- B. Two statements are wrong
- C. All statements are wrong
- D. None of the statements is wrong

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, UNCLOS defined the rights and duties of countries in the oceans, the extent of ocean areas over which countries could claim sovereignty, and the legal status of marine resources.
  - UNCLOS also specified general rules for a range of activities in the oceans such as navigation, scientific research, and deep-sea mining.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The treaty established exclusive economic zones (EEZ), ocean areas up to **200 nautical miles (370 km)** from the coastline, where a country would have exclusive rights over all economic resources such as fish, oil, minerals, and gas.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The high seas are the areas beyond the EEZ of any country.

**Q2. Consider the following statements with regards to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC): (Level – Moderate)**

1. It is a reform enacted in 2016 which amalgamates various laws relating to the insolvency resolution of business firms.
2. Section 53 of the Code prescribes an order of priority in which proceeds will be distributed to the creditors based on the liquidation value.
3. Financial creditors like banks have the last claim until exhaustion.

Choose the correct code:

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

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) is the bankruptcy law of India which seeks to consolidate the existing framework by creating a single law for insolvency and bankruptcy.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Section 53 of the Code prescribes an order of priority in which proceeds will be distributed to the creditors based on the liquidation value.
  - According to this waterfall mechanism, secured financial creditors rank the highest in the order of priority followed by unsecured financial creditors, government dues and operational creditors.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, The creditors receive proceeds under the resolution plan in order of the mentioned priority and hence **financial creditors like banks have the first claim until exhaustion**.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with regards to different generations of telecom communications:** (Level – Easy)

1. 1G was launched in the 1980s and worked on analog radio signals and supported only voice calls.
2. 2G was launched in the 1990s which uses digital radio signals and supports both voice and data transmission with a bandwidth of 64 Kbps.
3. 3G was launched in the 2000s with a speed of 1 Mbps to 2 Mbps and it has the ability to transmit telephone signals including digitised voice, video calls and conferencing.

Choose the correct code:

- A. Only one statement is wrong
- B. Two statements are wrong
- C. All statements are wrong
- D. None of the statements is wrong

**Answer: D**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, 1G was launched in the 1980s and worked on analog radio signals and supported only voice calls.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, 2G was launched in the 1990s which uses digital radio signals and supports both voice and data transmission with a bandwidth of 64 Kbps.

- **Statement 3 is correct**, 3G was launched in the 2000s with a speed of 1 Mbps to 2 Mbps and it has the ability to transmit telephone signals including digitised voice, video calls and conferencing.

**Q4. Consider the following statements with regards to the Padma awards & Bharat Ratna:**  
(Level – Easy)

1. Padma awards were Instituted in 1954.
2. The Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.

Choose the correct code:

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

**Answer: A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Padma Awards were instituted in the year 1954.
  - The award is given in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of **three** in a particular year.

**Q5. The black cotton soil of India has been formed due to the weathering of** (Level – Easy)  
PYQ (2020)

- A. brown forest soil
- B. fissure volcanic rock
- C. granite and schist
- D. shale and limestone

**Answer: B**

Explanation:

- Black Cotton soil is often referred to as “regur”.
- The black cotton soil of India has been formed due to the weathering of **fissure volcanic rock**.
- Volcanic rocks that developed in the Deccan Plateau are the parent material for the majority of the black soil (Rajmahal trap and Deccan).

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. [“The road to ending the TB epidemic needs proactive intervention in key areas”](#). Discuss. (150 words; 10 marks) (GS-2; Health)
2. [Discuss how the Russia and China relationship impacts India’s interest in the Indo-Pacific](#). (150 words; 10 marks) (GS-2; International Relations)