

# Current Events Timeline for IAS PRE 2014

Keeping Track of the News and Events



# Current Events Timeline for IAS PRE 2014

# **Sample Material**

### **International:**

### Syrian Issue

### 08/01/14

After the series of confrontations and civil war in Syria, and the subsequent reports revealing the use of chemical weapons against protesting civilians, attempts have been made to bring the various stake-holders to the negotiating tables.

International Conference on Syria- to be held in Geneva on January 22, 2014. The Indian government has sent Mr. Sandeep Kumar, Joint Secretary (W. Asia and N. America) to Syria to get firsthand assessment of the developments. India has offered USD 1 million for use in destruction of chemical weapons and related facilities by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). India has been formally invited by the UNO to attend the Geneva II Conference. The Earlier meeting produced the Geneva Communique that backed a political transition without seeking the ouster of President Assad. India had also been a member of the West sponsored group- Friends of Syria- which had unsuccessfully tried a regime change.

19/01/2014 Syrian opposition agreed to join the international peace talks, after the Syrian government offered concessions including a ceasefire plan for the battered city of Aleppo. The main opposition group is the National Coalition, which voted for the peace talks by majority. The GENEVA-2 peace talks are aimed at setting up a transitional government to find a way out of the brutal conflict that has killed 130000 people since March 2011.

20/01/2014	Syrian President Bashar Al Assad rejected to step down, thus					
	sharpening the conflict with the opposition, which has agreed to					
	join the GENEVA-2 talks. The Opposition in Syria is externally					
	backed, and is not ready to compromise. The Opposition leader					
	Ahmad Jarba mentioned that they are sitting for the Geneva-2					
	talks only to remove the President Assad. Meanwhile, President					
	Assad has challenged the opposition to put up a candidate against					
	him in the polls. The Chances for the participation of Iran in the					
	Geneva-2 talks have dimmed lately. The UN and Russia strongly					
	favor Iran's participation in the peace talks.					
21/01/2014	Russia came out to support Iran's participation in the Geneva-2					
	Peace Conference. Around 40 countries have been invited to the					
	peace talks, including India. Iran did not endorse Geneva-I					
	communique, which calls for a transitional government in Syria					
	and we expect the invitation will be rescinded.					
23/01/2014	Geneva 2 talks- the two parties at the talks clashed over the issue					
	of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The opposition was not ready					
	to compromise with any negotiations. At the same time, Syrian					
	officials did not agree to change their stance.					
25/01/2014	Syrian government and the opposition have agreed to meet together					
	for GENEVA 2 peace talks. The UN-Arab League Envoy- Lakhdar					
	Brahimi said that the negotiations would be based on the accord					
	reached at the GENEVA 1 peace conference in 2012, which calls for					
	a transitional governing body, but does not specify Mr. Assad's role					
	in the future.					
27/01/2014	The warring sides met at Geneva peace talks to discuss the fates of					
	the thousands of jailed, kidnapped and missing people in Syria. The					
	peace talks were held in closed doors, with UN mediator Lakhdar					
	Brahimi.					
	The two sides discussed aid to be given to the besieged residents in					
	the rebel-held areas. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a					
	watchdog organization, estimates that about 17,000 people have					

gone missing in the war, with tens of thousands being held in government jails.

28/01/2014 India's Stand on Syrian Issue- the problem in Syria has political, economic, ethnic and religious dimensions. Syrian protests have largely been driven by economic frustrations due to the four-year long drought that threw millions into starvation, unemployment and poverty.

> For the US, bringing down the Assad regime would help its prodemocracy agenda, while addressing the anti-US regime by restricting the Russian-Iranian influence in the Middle East. This would also appease Israel.

> India faces a difficult balancing task, given its friendly relations with each rival- US, Russia, Iran, Syria- in the matter. However, India adopted an astute position by aligning with BRICS nations, which has eventually sided with Russia.

> The negotiation process is important for India to emerge as an important power at the global scenario, and secure a seat at the UN Security Council.

> However, Syria is moving contrary to an India-friendly path, and towards an Islamist regime. Assad's regime has been one of the few secular ones in Middle East.

> India earlier supported Syrian claim to the Golan Heights, and in exchange, Syria supported India's position on Kashmir. Such support is rare in the Middle East. While Officially the Arab League does not take a stance on Kashmir issue, it has been sympathetic to Pakistan.

Assad also supports India's bid to become a member of UNSC.

28/01/2014 Syrian government troops control the city of Homs, which was earlier, the centre of conflict. But the parts of old city are still under the rebels. Government believes that the rebels might take cover under the humanitarian actions. Syrian government has agreed that women and children could be freed, but men who wished to http://upscportal.com/civilservices/courses

leave need to be listed.

UN envoy- Lakhdar Brahimi- said that the opposition has agreed to provide lists to the government of detainees that the armed groups were holding.

The opposition has been demanding the formation of a transitional government in Damascus.

30/01/2014 UK will provide sanctuary to some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, like- victims of sexual violence and torture, women and children at risk, and those in need of urgent medical care.

> The move come in the background of the recommendations of the UNHRC to resettle about 30000 Syrian refugees, under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. However, the English programme would not subscribe to any quotas set by the UNHRC.

> An estimated 2.3 million Syrians have fled the country due to the crisis situation.

### South Sudan Crisis

### 08/01/14

serious internal hostilities in South Sudan has created humanitarian crisis in the world's youngest nation. About 2 lakh people had been displaced due to it, and more than 1000 been killed. India has important stakes in Sudan, as ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), along with China and Malaysia, are the primary players in the South Sudan's Oil sector. OVL also maintains a 741km long pipeline here. A contingent of 2200 Indian army personnel are currently deployed in S. Sudan as peacekeepers with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Meanwhile, talks and negotiations are under progress in Addis Ababa between the warring factions.

15/01/2014 rebel forces in South Sudan attacked the capital killing more than 200. There is a political dispute between the President- Salva

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	Kiir- and the former Vice-President. UN has said that more than				
	1000 have died since the fighting broke out in South Sudan on				
	December 15. this has given rise to a humanitarian crisis.				
15/01/2014	Sudan offers ONGC two oil blocks to India- Sudan has offered				
	ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) two oil and gas blocks. OVL has been				
	present in Sudan since 2003. However, India has raised concerns				
	over the issue of overdue payments and high transit fee imposed by				
	the Sudan government.				
19/01/2014	S. Sudan forces backed by Ugandan troops recaptured the strategic				
	town of Bor, defeating an army of the rebels.				
22/01/2014	S. Sudan President Salva Kiir said that the UN Mission in South				
	Sudan (UNMISS) was running a parallel government in his country,				
	adding to the increasing friction between UNMISS and his ruling				
	party. A small group of protesters opposed the UNMISS accusing				
	them of protecting the rebels.				
	International pressure has been mounting over the S. Sudan				
	government and the rebels to arrive at a ceasefire, as thousands				
	have died and millions have been displaced.				
24/01/2014	South Sudan rebels and the Government signed a ceasefire				
	agreement at Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. South Sudan				
	government also agreed to release the 11 officials close to the				
	rebels. The mediators, in these negotiations this time, is the East				
	African regional bloc (IGAD).				

## **MCQs**

### Q1. Read the following statements:

- 1. India was invited to the Geneva II Conference by the UNO to discuss the Syrian issue.
- 2. India is a member of a West sponsored group called- 'Friends of Syria' which has been unsuccessful to bring peace in Syria.

### Which of the statement (s) is/are correct.

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 and 2

(Ans. C)

### Q2. Consider the below mentioned reasons for India's support to Syria:

- 1. Syria supported India on the Kashmir Issue.
- 2. Assad regime supports India's bed to become a member of the UN Security Council.

### Which of the above statements are correct:

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 and 2

(Ans. C)

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### Q3. Consider the following statements about South Sudan:

- 1. It is the world youngest nation, having attained its independence in 2012.
- 2. India's ONGC Videsh Ltd. is one of the primary players in the South Sudan's Oil sector.
- 3. India did not participate in Peace Keeping mission in South Sudan due to differences with US.

### Which of the given statements are correct:

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

(Ans. A)

### **Environment**

### Mining Laws

### 09/01/14

Ministry of Environment and forests (MoEF) have modified its guidelines on mining in forest areas. Several projects would now undergo fresh consideration. There are proposals for exploration without the Environmental impact assessment in-

- Coal in Singrauli, in MP;
- Iron ore excavation in Saranda, in Jharkhand;
- Proposal for a 700 MW Tato-II Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Forest Advisory Committee is the statutory authority under the forest conservation act. It is headed by the Director-General of Forests. All proposals for forest clearance are assessed by it, and the Environment Ministry takes the final call on its report. Some of the proposed areas fall under Tiger reserves. Saranda area is an elephant reserve area. The Centre has not been taking the protection of elephant reserves as seriously as the tiger reserves. There is no body, like the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), for elephant protection.

The **Tato-II project** (in Arunachal Pradesh) was stopped after the appraisal of all the projects on the river basin.

### 11/01/14

<u>Vedanta's Project</u>- Environment Ministry has, meanwhile, rejected the forest clearance for Vedanta's **Bauxite mining** project in Niyamgiri Hills of Odisha. The decision was taken after the local village councils rejected the proposed project in their traditional forest lands. The Supreme Court had empowered the village councils to decide on the project, in order to protect their customary and religious rights.

### 28/01/2014

Mining in Odisha- The Shah Commission Report claimed that Odisha Mining Scam involves Rs. 59,203 crores and 22.80 crores tonnes of iron and manganese ore for nearly a decade.

The report demanded a CBI probe in the matter, warning that many powerful people, including businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians may be involved. The Government has asked not to release the report in public.

### New Environment Authority

### <u>11/01/14</u>

the **blueprint** of the new environment authority prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in 2011, gives the Ministry a veto on the decisions on clearances under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. Supreme Court has ordered that the authority be set by **March 31, 2014**. However, the government says it won't be possible. The present clearance procedures also permits the Ministry a veto on the decision of the Environment Appraisal Committees. The new authority is proposed to be independent of the government

### 22/01/2014

The idea of a New Environment Authority has been revived by the Forest Bench of the Supreme Court in the Lafarge Mining Case. The Court has ordered through Mandamus that, a new authority be set up under Section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, for appraising projects, enforcing conditions and imposing penalties on polluters.

Earlier, the Environment Ministry has communicated that it had enough means to handle the Environmental affairs under the existing framework. However, the Court was not convinced.

This development, however, is not new. Earlier the Supreme Court instructed for the establishment of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). However, the body proved ineffective in getting any concrete results.

Some other bodies framed under the Environment Protection Act (1986) are- The Biodiversity Authority; The Coastal Zone

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Management Authority; and the Authority to monitor the Ecologically Sensitive Areas.

### **Ecologically Sensitive Zone**

### 21/01/2014

Uttarakhand- environmentalists have slammed the Uttarakhand government for promoting industrial development in the ecologically sensitive zones. Dr. Prakash Joshi, founder of Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organization, attacked the Bahuguna government for harming the environment in the state. The attack was targeted against the Coca Cola's Bottling Plant in Dehradun, which has been facing opposition from the locals as well. Similarly, Cement Plants are seen as detrimental to the agricultural lands and the health of the people.

### Alaknanda Hydropower Project

### 27/01/2014

National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued a notice to the Alakananda Hydropower Company Limited (AHPCL). A case was registered with the NGT by the Srinagar Bandh Aapda Sangharsh Samiti. It demanded compensation or the damage of assets that AHPCL's project caused, due to filling of muck, silt and debris.

The sudden release of water from the dam flooded the downstream area, filling Srinagar with muck and debris.

### Western Ghats

### 29/01/2014

Ministry of Environment and forests (MoEF) has confirmed the stay order of the National Green Tribunal on fresh industrial

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and mining activities in the Western Ghats. The ban on industrial and mining activities was recommended recently by the Kasturirangan Panel Report,

# **MCQs**

### Q4. Match the following:

Project	Resource
I. Singrauli	a. Coal
ii. Saranda	b. Iron
iii. Vedanta	c. Bauxite/Aluminium

iv. Tato-II d. Hydroelectric

iv. Tato-II d. Hydroelectric

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a. i-b; ii-a; iii-c; iv-db. i-d; ii-b; iii-a; iv-cc. i-a; ii-b; iii-c; iv-d
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d. i-a; ii-d; iii-c; iv-b.

(Ans. c)

# Q5. Recently, which of the below mentioned projects were put on stay by the National Green Tribunal:

- 1. Alaknanda Hydropower Project
- 2. Coca Cola Bottling Plant, Uttarkhand
- 3. Mining Projects in Western Ghats

### **Choose the correct options:**

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

(Ans. D)

### **Defense**

### Prithvi and Agni Missile

### 08/01/14

<u>Prithvi II Test Fired</u>- Strategic Forces Command (SFC) testfired the Prithvi II, surface-to-surface strategic missile, from a mobile launcher in the <u>Integrated Test Range</u>, near Chandipur, in Odisha. The Missile can carry a nuclear warhead of 500kg and covered 350kms. However, the missile has already been inducted.

Also, the naval version of Prithvi II is **Dhanush**, capable to carry 500Kg over 250kms.

### 21/01/2014

Agni IV- India's nuclear deterrence programme gained strength as Agni IV, a surface-to-surface missile was successfully tested from Wheeler Island. Agni IV is a strategic missile that can deliver 1000 kg of warheads for about 4000 km away. This was the third successful test of the missile. It was first tested in November 2011. the army has already deployed Agni-I, II, II and Prithvi-II and Dhanush missiles. All of these missiles are nuclear capable. The missile is capable of being launched from a road-mobile launcher. Agni-IV is equipped with sophisticated avionics, fifth generation on-board computer and distributed architecture. The missile can correct and guide it's path.

### INS Arihant

### 22/01/2014

India's first indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine, INS Arihant will undergo sea trials, as its preliminary harbor acceptance trials are over. During the trials, all systems including its ballistic missiles, will be tested.

The **Sub-surface Ballistic Missiles (SSBM) submarine** would be indigenously designed, built, opertionalized and maintained. The sea trials would test the various systems in the deep sea.

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Once deployed, it will be the stabilizing force in the Indian
ocean.
Meanwhile, the Scorpene submarines are being developed at
the Mazagaon docks, and are scheduled to be inducted in 2016.

### Republic day Defense Exhibition

### 25/01/2014

Republic day parade witnessed the exhibition of the indigenously developed Main Battle Tank (MBT) MK-II, known as the 'Desert Ferrari'. The parade also exhibited other state-of-the-art defense platforms.

The highlight became the India's first indigenously built and developed **Light Combat Aircraft** (**LCA**) **Tejas**, which was developed by the DRDO. Tejas is a supersonic, highly maneuverable, multi-role smallest and lightest combat aircraft designed for the Air Force.

The DRDO tableau also displayed the **Astra** and **Helina** missiles; and a tableau on unmanned systems comprising '**Daksh**', a remotely operated vehicle; models of autonomous underwater vehicle, mini UAV- **NETRA** wheeled surveillance vehicle; Tracked surveillance vehicle **Muntra S**, unmanned aerial vehicle- **NISHANT**, mini remotely operated vehicle, confined space remotely operated vehicle and gun mounted remotely operated vehicle.

This year's chief guest was the Japanese PM Shinzo Abe.

# **MCQs**

### Q6 Consider the following statements regarding Indian Missiles:

- 1. Prithvi II Missle was fired and tested successfully, and would be inducted by 2015.
- 2. Dhanush is the Land-to-air version of Prithvi missile
- 3. Agni IV missile is a nuclear capable missile that is under the experiment phase, and has undergone three successful tests till now.

### Which of the option(s) is/are correct:

- a. All of the above
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 2 only

(Ans. C)

### Q7 INS Arihant is India's first indigenously built part of the Indian navy. It is a-

- a. Nuclear powered submarine.
- b. Nuclear powered Battleship.
- c. Nuclear powered Cruiser
- d. Nuclear powered destroyer

(Ans. a)

# Q8. 'The Desert Ferrari' was showcased in the Republic Day parade of 2014. What does it refer to-

- a. Light Combat Truck
- b. Main Battle Tank MK-II
- c. Light Combat Aircraft 'Tejas'
- d. Remotely Operated Vehicle- 'Daksha'

(Ans. b)

## Science and Technology

### 3-D Printing

### <u>10/01/1</u>

4

3D printing has been around for 25 years, but has gained popularity recently. Printers aimed at home market typically use corn-based biodegradable plastic layered and shaped using lasers and heated plates. Along with objects like figurines, chess pieces and appliance handles, printers can pump out ball bearings, gears and components for creations with moving parts.

### Param Yuva II

### 12/01/1

<u>4</u>

Param Yuva II supercomputer, developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has been voted as the most power efficient computer system in India. It stands 9<sup>th</sup> in the Asia Pacific region and 44<sup>th</sup> in the World in terms of power efficiency.

### **GSAT 14**

### <u>19/01/1</u>

<u>4</u>

India's advanced communication satellite GSAT-14 reached its destination, with the help of the GSLV-D5. The significance of the GSLV-D5 mission was that it featured an indigenous upper cryogenic stage.

### **Breast Cancer Drugs**

### <u>19/01/1</u>

<u>4</u>

<u>Bitcon Launches Cheaper Breast Cancer Drug</u>- Bitcon launched its Breast Cancer drug- CANMab, the world's first 'biosimilar' or

remake of Swiss multinational Roche's original drug 'Trastuzumab'.

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The cost is about 25% less than the original product. Roche sells the drug in India with name- 'Herceptin'. However, Bitcon's product will make the drug more cheaper and affordable and accessible for the patients with cancer-indicating HER2 (Human Epidermal Growth Factor). Patients need to take atleast three intravenous drug cycles lasting around three months before any change in the tumour can be noticed.

### **Tuberculosis**

24/01/2 014 Tuberculosis (XDR-TB) is an extremely drug-resistant strain. It is resistant to the four of the most portent anti-TB drugs available today. Thus, XDR-TB patients are left with little hope. The first priority should be to reduce the class of TB-infected people through a simple, cheap and effective ionized preventive therapy in children under 5 years of age exposed to adults with pulmonary TB. Next, priority should be that most drug-sensitive patients are diagnosed early. Further, treatment using the correct drug regimen should be initiated without delay, and the default rate should be greatly reduced. This would automatically prevent the emergence of drug-resistant forms.

# **MCQs**

### Q9. Param Yuva II, has been recently development. What is it:

- a. Supercomputer
- b. Satelitte
- c. A pharmaceutical product
- d. A spy system

(Ans. a)

# Featured: Timeline Editorials

# **Hindus in Bangladesh**

The emergence of a secular Bangladesh has risen great hope for many stake-holders. Recently, the coalition of Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami has been portraying itself as a victim of state-sponsored witch-hunting. Jamaat-e-Islami has been derecognized as a political party, for using religion in the democratic process. Much of the Jamaat leadership was actively involved in rape, arson, murder and forced conversion. Awami League government has been convincing the youth movement in Shahbag to pursue the war crimes trial seriously. Faced with such offense against itself, Jamaat response has been three-point offensive.

Jamaat has mobilized its organization and the Madarssa students to blockade Dhaka. It also carried out targeted attacks on the homes, businesses and places of worship of Hindus.

In 2001, when BNP-led coalition won the elections, murders, arson and targeted attacks against Hindus happened on a large scale. Hindus have traditionally voted for the Awami League. BNP-Jamaat partnership has been constantly threatening the life and property of the Hindu minorities. In this year's elections, Hindus were persecuted by Jamaat for coming out to vote. They were also attacked by the rebel Awami League members, for voting for the official party candidates, who belonged to the Hindu community. Under this context, the difference between the 'secular' Awami League and communal-fundamentalist BNP-Jamaat is beginning to disappear.

Violence unleashed against the Hindus this time was the worst in Jessore, Dinajpur and Satkhira. Large scale attacks on villages, businesses and places of worship took place. All these incidents brought back the memories of the 1971 riots in Bangladesh. Women were raped at gunpoint for voting in the elections.

All this raises questions over the efficability of the partition. The autocratic years of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's BAKSAL, the long years of army rule when barracks used Islam to create a veneer of political legitimacy beyond the Awami League and proliberation forces. All this gave the first priority to the religion based politics.

Pro-Pakistan organizations, which looked to faith-unity as the basis of statehood did not disappear after the Liberation war of 1971. Rather, they were broadly and transiently de-legitimized due to their role in the atrocities of 1971.

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Hindus, in Bangladesh, are not fully coterminous with ideas that conflate Bangaliness with the idea of citizenship. Their progressive numerical marginality makes this conflation project easier. Thus, they can be marginalized without being targeted. The majority can decided to be whatever it wants, and the minority has to follow suit in a modern nation-state. About the Hindus, extra territorial loyalty is the issue that is bandied about. While the Bengali Muslims easily de-Pakistanize themselves, Hindu minorities had to follow only after their Muslim brethrens. Minorities have fled from Bangladesh, in large numbers, in search of security. But there also exist a significant presence of minorities in the bureaucracy and local administration. But the administration has failed to provide security.

### **Question for Mains**

- 1. Discuss the role of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh, in shaping and influencing the Indo-Bangladesh relations. (200 words) 10 marks
- 2. Examine the role of the Hindu minority in recent developments in Bangladesh, with reference to the latest controversy regarding the Bangladesh election. (200 words) 10 marks

### **Current Events Timeline for IAS PRE 2014**



Everyone <u>reads a newspaper and magazine</u>, but sometimes, it becomes hard to keep a track of the different issues and development. Since the news items on different issues are found in a scattered form in the newspapers and magazines, it becomes a cumbersome process to memorize the important events, from an exam point of view.

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