

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 09 AUG 2021

Mount Merapi: Indonesia's most active volcano

(Topic- GS Paper I –Geography, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Mount Merapi - Indonesia's most volatile volcano erupted on the densely populated island of Java.

About Mount Merapi

Indonesia volcano



- It is an active stratovolcano located on the border between the province of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
- It is the most active volcano in Indonesia and has erupted regularly since 1548.
- Indonesia is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because it sits along the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the ocean.

Related information

- Recently, the **Geological Agency of Indonesia** has reported that a volcano has erupted from **Mount Semeru in January 2021**.

About Mount Semeru

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- It is a **stratovolcano** located in East Java, Indonesia containing an active **Jonggring-Seloko vent** at the Mahameru summit.
- It is located in the subduction zone, where the **Indo-Australia plate subducts** under the **Eurasia plate**.
- It is the highest mountain on the **island of Java** which is also known as **Mahameru**, meaning "**The Great Mountain**" in Sanskrit.

Related Information

About Pacific Ring of Fire



- The Ring of Fire also referred to as the Circum-Pacific Belt, is a path along the Pacific Ocean characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.
- These places are dotted with 75% of Earth's all active volcanoes.
- It traces boundaries between several tectonic plates including the Pacific, Juan de Fuca, Cocos, Indian-Australian, Nazca, North American, and Philippine Plates.
- The abundance of volcanoes and earthquakes along the Ring of Fire is caused by the amount of movement of tectonic plates in the area.
- The countries affected by it are Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and other island nations like the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and many more in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

Related Terms

Cooling Ring

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- The Pacific Plate, which drives much of the tectonic activity in the Ring of Fire, is cooling off.
- Scientists have discovered that the youngest parts of the Pacific Plate (about 2 million years old) are cooling off and contracting at a faster rate than older parts of the plate (about 100 million years old).
- The younger parts of the plate are found in its northern and western parts—the most active parts of the Ring of Fire.

Pensilungpa Glacier

(Topic- GS Paper I –Geography, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- According to a study by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Pensilungpa Glacier (PG) located in Ladakh's Zaskar Valley is retreating.

The study is based on four years (2016-2019) of field observations

Key findings

- The Pensilungpa Glacier is retreating due to an increase in temperature and a decrease in precipitation during winters.

Rate of decline

- The study also said that field observations for four years (2015–2019) showed that the glacier is now retreating at an average rate of 6.7 plus/minus 3 metres per annum.

Debris cover

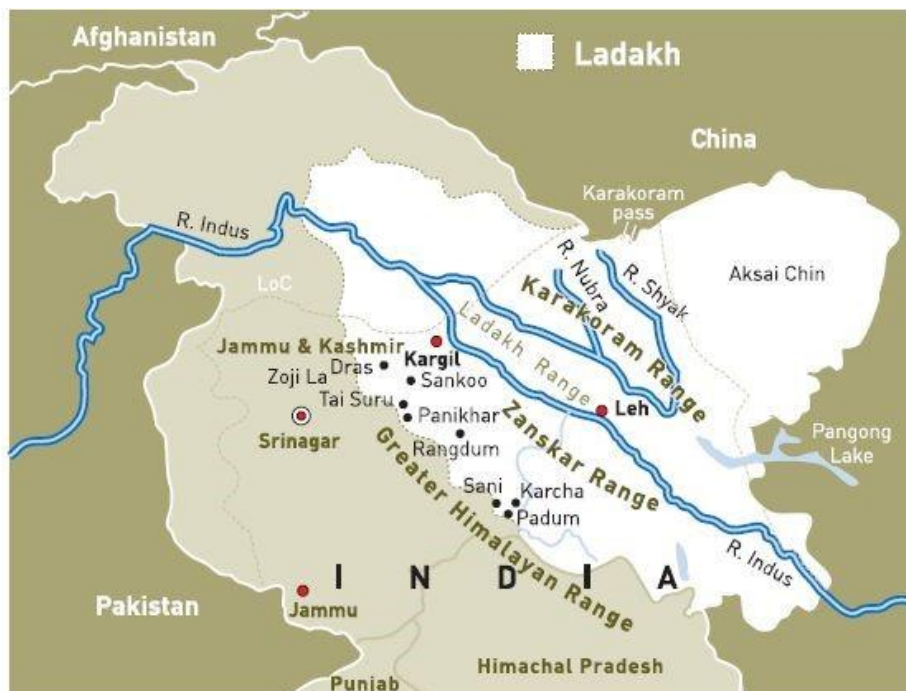
- The study also points at the significant influence of debris cover on the mass balance and retreat of the glacier's endpoint, especially in summer.

Small accumulation area ratio

- The mass balance data for the three years (2016–2019) showed a negative trend with a small accumulation area ratio.
- The study also suggests that due to continuous rise in the air temperature in line with the global trend, the melting would increase, and the precipitation of summer periods at higher altitudes may change from snow to rain, and that may influence the summer and winter pattern.

About the Pensilungpa Glacier

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- It is located in Zaskar Range, Ladakh.
- The Zaskar Range is a mountain range in the union territory of Ladakh that separates Zaskar from Ladakh.
- Geologically, the Zaskar Range is part of the Tethys Himalaya.

[Putin to join Modi in UNSC debate](#)

(Topic- GS Paper II –IR, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Russian President Vladimir Putin will join the open debate on maritime security that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside at the U.N. Security Council as India holds the Presidency for the month.

More in the news

- The current stint is the eighth time that India has held the Presidency of the top U.N. body.
- Yet out of all the tenures, it is the first in 1950-51 that left lasting lessons about how difficult international affairs can be at the level of the chair of the President.

Issue of Kashmir

- It was in 1950-51 that the issue of Kashmir took a critical turn at the Security Council which took the Indian delegation by surprise.

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- India was still struggling with the initial phase of freedom and the Kashmir issue had opened up almost immediately with the war of 1947-48.
- The issue arrived at the UN on January 1, 1948, as India urged the UNSC to discuss the battle that began with the invasion of tribal irregulars from Pakistan.
- The Indian submission marked the origin of the “Jammu and Kashmir Question”.
- **The title of the dispute was changed on January 22, 1948, to "The India-Pakistan Question".**
- The period from 1948 to 1951 was heated as far as the Kashmir issue was concerned as there was little flexibility on display by either India or Pakistan as the UN involvement through the first UN Representative Owen Dixon failed to resolve the situation.
- In this backdrop, on March 30, 1951, the UNSC took up an Anglo-American resolution on Kashmir and laid out a process of continuation that would give the Kashmir issue a long shelf life at the UNSC where it was formally taken up last time in 1971 before the August 2019 discussion on the issue by China in the backdrop of India’s abrogation of Article 370 by the government of Prime Minister Modi.

Resolution 91

- Resolution 91 decided to replace the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) with UNMOGIP (UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan).
- It also decided to appoint a UN Representative for India and Pakistan in continuation of **the role of Sir Owen Dixon.**
- **The second decision almost institutionalised the Kashmir issue in the U.N.**

PM-DAKSH’ Portal and ‘PM-DAKSH’ Mobile App

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched the ‘PM-DAKSH’ Portal and ‘PM-DAKSH’ Mobile App.

About ‘PM-DAKSH’ Portal

- It is a portal that provides all the information related to skill development training in one place.

Some of the features of this portal are as follows:

- Availability of all information related to skill development at one place for Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and Safai Karamcharis.
- Facility to register for the training institute and program of their interest.
- Facility to upload desired documents related to personal information.
- Facility to register the attendance of the trainees through face and eye scanning during the training period.

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- Monitoring facility through photo and video clip during training etc.

Related Information

About Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana

- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21.
- Under this Yojana, the eligible target groups are being provided skill development training programmes on
 - (i) Up-skilling/Re-skilling
 - (ii) Short Term Training Programme
 - (iii) Long Term Training Programme
 - (iv) Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP).
- These training programs are being implemented through Government Training Institutes, Sector Skill Councils constituted by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and other credible institutions.
- The focus of the programme would be on providing high-quality skills through good quality institutions so that the training can result in finding jobs or self-employment ventures.
- The programme also engages with skilling the Safai Karamcharis including Waste Pickers, and Women so that they can engage in self-employment activities.
- It would be implemented by the three Corporations:
 - a. National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC);
 - b. National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC); and
 - c. National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)

Major Administrative Reforms by the government

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions stated that the Government from time to time brings administrative reforms, to encourage greater efficiency, transparency and corruption-free governance, accountability and reduce the scope for discretion.
- The administrative reforms aim to encourage greater efficiency, transparent and corruption-free governance, accountability and reduce the scope for discretion

Some of the major steps are as follows:

Mission Karmayogi

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- The launch of "Mission Karmayogi"- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), a new national architecture for civil services capacity building has been launched.
- It is a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at an individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery;

e-Samiksha

- It is a real-time online system for monitoring and follows up action on the decisions taken by the Government at the Apex level in respect of the implementation of important Government programmes/projects;

e-Office

- e-Office Mission Mode Project (MMP) has been strengthened for enabling Ministries/ Departments to switch over to paperless offices and efficient decision making;

Self-certification of documents for appointments

- From June 2016, recruiting agencies to issue provisional appointment letters based on the submission of self-certified documents by the candidates;

Discontinuation of an interview in the recruitment of junior-level posts

- From January 2016, the interview has been dispensed with for recruitment to all Group 'C', Group 'B' (Non-Gazetted posts) and other equivalent posts in all Government of India Ministries/ Departments/ Attached Offices/ Subordinate Offices/ Autonomous Bodies/ Public Sector Undertakings to curb malpractices and for bringing objectivity to the selection process.

Appointment at senior positions

- Multi-source feedback for empanelment for the posts of Joint Secretary and above has been introduced;

Good Governance Index 2019

- It was launched, which assesses the Status of Governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and Union Territories (UTs).
- The objectives of GGI are to provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all States and UTs, enable States and UTs to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result-oriented approaches and administration;

National Conference on e-Governance

- It provides a platform for government to engage with experts, intellectuals from industry and academic institutions to exchange experiences relating to e-Governance initiatives;

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Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- The Government is undertaking CPGRAMS reforms in the top grievance receiving Ministries/ Departments by enabling questionnaire guided registration process and providing for automatic forwarding of grievances to field level functionaries thereby reducing the redress time;

India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives to collaborate on security

(Topic- GS Paper II –IR, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have agreed to work on “four pillars” of security cooperation in a recent virtual meeting of top security officials of the three countries.

They cover the area of

- a. marine security,
- b. human trafficking,
- c. counter-terrorism,
- d. cybersecurity,

Related Information

Colombo Security Conclave

- The ‘Colombo Security Conclave’ among the three neighbouring countries seeks to “further promote” maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- It was initiated by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2011 when he was Secretary to the Ministry of Defence.
- The initiative, grounded in military and security collaboration, assumes significance in the region, in the wake of the current geostrategic dynamic that India shares with Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- Earlier this year, India aired security concerns over China being awarded development projects in an island off Sri Lanka’s northern province, close to India’s southern border.

Engagement with Quad

- The Maldives’s engagement with members of the India-United States-Japan-Australia grouping, known as the ‘Quad’, has been growing over the last year, especially in the area of defence cooperation.

Zayed Talwar 2021

(Topic- GS Paper III –Defense, Source-AIR)

Why in the news?

- Indian Navy has recently undertaken bilateral exercise 'Zayed Talwar 2021' with UAE Navy off the coast of Abu Dhabi.

About Zayed Talwar 2021

- It is a bilateral naval exercise held between the Indian Navy and UAE Navy.

Objective

- The main objective of the 'Zayed Talwar 2021' exercise is to enhance interoperability and synergy between the two navies.

Note:

- **With the UAE, India has In-UAE BILAT (bilateral naval exercise) as well as Desert Eagle-II (bilateral air force exercise).**

Inner Line Permit

(Topic- GS Paper II –Governance, Source-The Hindu)

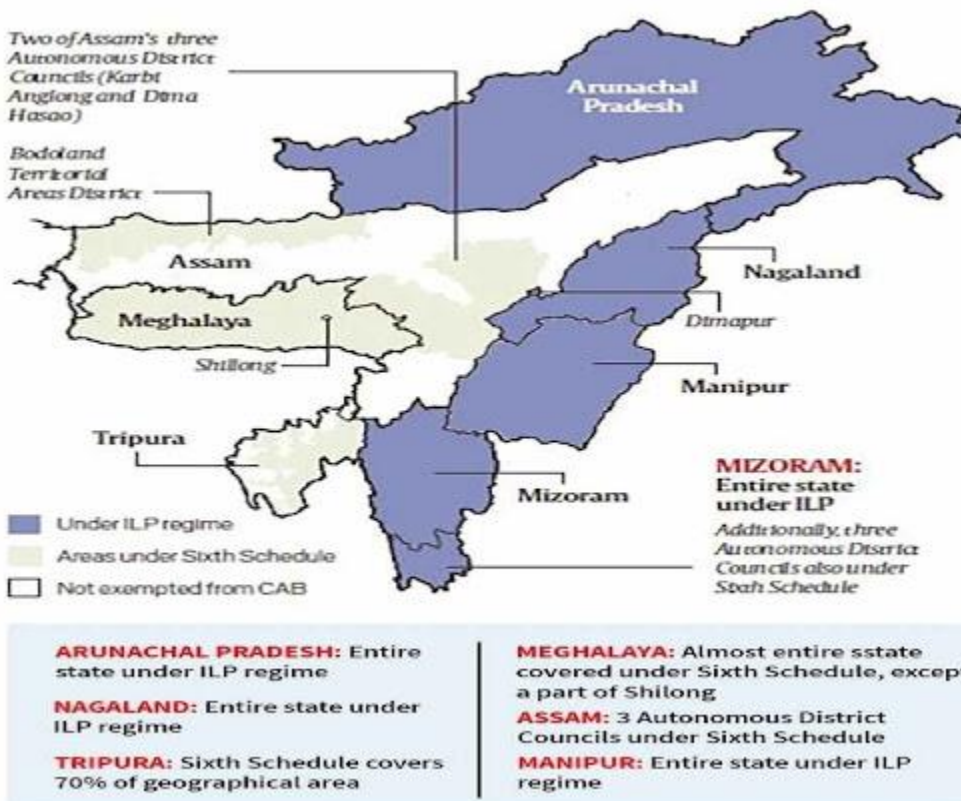
Why in the news?

- Ladakh Administration has recently done away with the need for an Inner Line Permit (ILP) for all Indian nationals to visit the protected areas of the union territory.
- As per the notification, the requirement of an Inner Line Permit for the Indian nationals, including domestic tourists and residents to visit the notified protected areas has been completely removed.

About Inner Line Permit

Background

- The Inner Line Permit is an extension of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873.
- The Britishers framed regulations restricting entry in certain designated areas.
- This was done to protect the Crown's interest in certain states by preventing "British subjects" (Indians) from trading within these regions.



About Inner Line Permit

- It is an official travel document issued by the Government of India to allow the travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period.
- It is obligatory for Indian citizens from outside certain states, to obtain such a permit.
- At present, **four Northeastern states are covered, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram are protected by the Inner Line, and lately, Manipur was added.**
- Both the duration of stay and the areas allowed to be accessed for any non-native are determined by the Inner Line Permit.
- **The ILP is issued by the concerned state government.**

China impacted by temperature rise higher than the global average: Govt. Blue Book

(Topic- GS Paper III –Environment, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- A **Blue Book on Climate Change in China 2021** has recently published by China Meteorological Administration (CMA) this week cautioned that between 1961 and 2020, extreme heavy precipitation sees a gradual rise, and since the mid-1990s extreme heat events have increased significantly in the country.

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Key Findings

- According to the Blue Book, China is a sensitive and significant area impacted by global climate change with a rise of temperature significantly higher than the global average during the same period.
- According to state media, in 2020, the **sea level in China's coastal areas was 73 mm higher than the average from 1993 to 2011, the third-highest since 1980.**
- The continued rise of sea temperature in summer has caused severe coral **bleaching in several islands in the disputed South China Sea.**
- The Blue Book points out that China's climate risk **index from 1961 to 2020 shows a tendency of increase, and in 2020 the number was 10.8, the third-highest value in that period.**
- The Bluebook provides the latest monitoring information on climate change in **China and globally, including data on the atmosphere, hydrosphere, cryosphere, terrestrial biosphere and driving factors of climate change.**

Covishield-Covaxin mix gives better protection, says ICMR


(Topic- GS Paper III –Science and technology, Source-The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently released its findings which suggest that immunisation with a combination of an adenovirus vector platform-based vaccine followed by an inactivated whole virus vaccine was not only safe but also elicited better immunogenicity.
- The immunisation programme against COVID-19 in India started with two vaccines — AstraZeneca's ChAdOx1-nCov-19 (named Covishield in India) and inactivated whole virion BBV152 (Covaxin).

A homologous prime-boost approach was followed.

Mix and match | A look at key points from the pre-print ICMR report on the immune response generated by mixing doses of Covishield and Covaxin



■ The study was conducted on 18 people who inadvertently received Covishield as the first dose and Covaxin as the second

■ It compared the safety and immune response generated in them with that in individuals who received both doses of the same vaccine. 40

persons were a part of both groups

■ Neutralising antibody response of the group which received the two different vaccines was significantly higher compared to that in groups that received two doses of the same vaccine

Those who received different vaccines also showed superior immunogenicity against the Delta variants

Shot ready: A health worker preparing a jab of Covaxin during a vaccination camp in Ahmedabad on Sunday. • AFP

Pre-print report

- However, 18 individuals in Uttar Pradesh, under the national programme, inadvertently received Covishield as the first jab and Covaxin as the second.
- **In its study, the ICMR compared the safety and immunogenicity profile of these persons against that of individuals receiving only one of the vaccines — either Covishield or Covaxin.**
- The pre-print report titled “Serendipitous COVID-19 Vaccine-Mix in Uttar Pradesh, India: Safety and Immunogenicity Assessment of a Heterologous Regime” has not been certified by peer review and should not be used to guide clinical practice.

Note:

- Previously the World Health Organisation had warned against the mixing of vaccines, saying there was very little information on the mix-and-match of vaccines.