# Prelim Bits 02-12-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

## India's UNSC Monthly Presidency

*India assumed the monthly rotating presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for December 2022.*

- India's December presidency of UNSC is the second time in its two-year tenure as an elected member of the Council in 2021-22.
- India had earlier assumed UNSC presidency in August 2021.
- India has been an elected member of the UNSC for 8 times.
- India during its December Presidency will chair two signature events at the ministerial level on
    1. Reformed Multilateralism
    2. Counter-Terrorism

### India's gift to UN

- A bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the United Nations' headquarters will be inaugurated as a gift by India during India's Presidency of UNSC.
- This is the first time that a sculpture of the Mahatma or any world leader to be installed in the UNHQ.
- The bust was created by renowned Indian sculptor Ram Sutar who also sculpted the 'Statue of Unity'.
- A black-stone statue of the Sun God from the 11$^{th}$ century is the only other item from India inside UNHQ, gifted by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

*The UN observers Mahatma's birth anniversary (October 2) as International Day of Non-violence.*

### References

1. Indian Express - India assumes monthly presidency of UNSC
2. The Economic Times - India's UNSC Presidency

## All-woman Bench

*The Supreme Court constitutes all-women Bench to hear transfer petitions.*

- The two-judge all-women bench in Supreme Court will hear transfer cases involving matrimonial disputes and bail matters.
- The all-women bench comprising Justices Hima Kohli and Bela M Trivedi.
- This is the third occasion in the history of the Supreme Court that an all-women bench

has been constituted.
- The first all-women bench was set up in 2013 and the second time in 2018.
- The apex court currently has only 3 women judges:
    - Justices B V Nagarathna, Hima Kohli and Bela M Trivedi
- The Supreme Court now has a working strength of 27 judges, against a sanctioned strength of 34 (including CJI).

*According to the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2019, the sanctioned strength of Supreme Court of India is 33 (excluding the Chief Justice of India)*

**Women Judges of the SC**

- Justice M Fatima Beevi was the first woman judge of Supreme Court appointed in 1989.
- Since its inception in 1950, the Supreme Court has seen only 11 women judges and a maximum of 4 serving at a time.

**References**


1. The New Indian Express - All-women bench in Supreme court
2. The Hindu - All-women bench to hear matters in Supreme Court
3. Business Standard - All-women Bench to hear transfer petitions


## Baguette and Intangible Cultural Heritage

*Baguette was inscribed into the UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage (ICH).*

- UNESCO recognized the 'Artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread' as a world cultural heritage.
- The baguette is a long and thin loaf made of only 4 ingredients - flour, water, salt and yeast.
- Baguette is a staple French bread who got its official name in 1920.
- Baguette is a thin stick of crusty bread with softer insides
- The history is the baguette is uncertain.

**Intangible Cultural Heritage**

- UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was established in the year 2008.
- Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

- It aims to preserve the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next.
- There are 3 criteria for selection of an entity in ICH List. The entity must
    1. be recognized by communities as part of their cultural heritage,
    2. be transmitted from generation to generation and be constantly recreated in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history
    3. Provide them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

**India and ICH**

- There are a total of 14 representations from India in the ICH list. Few of them are

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| **Festivals** | Kolkata's Durga Puja, Kumbh Mela, Ramman of Garhwal Himalayas, Navroz |
| **Practices** | Yoga, Vedic chanting, Buddhist chanting of Ladakh |
| **Performances** | Ramlila, Mudiyettu (a ritual theatre of Kerala), Sankirtana (a ritual musical performance of Manipur) |
| **Dances** | Chhau dance, Kutiyattam (Sanskrit theatre), Kalbeliya of Rajasthan, |
| **Craft** | Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab |

- **Nominating body** - Sangeet Natak Akademi is the nodal organisation which files nominations of intangible cultural entities from India.

**References**


1. Indian Express - Baguette makes it to UNESCO
2. The Hindu - French baguettes get UNESCO heritage status
3. UNESCO - Intangible Cultural Heritage


## Zombie virus

*Scientists have revived 'zombie viruses' from frozen lake in Russia.*

- European researchers have revived 13 'zombie viruses' from Russia's Siberian permafrost.
- The viruses they revive have negligible biological risk, as these strains only infect amoeba microbes.
- **Zombie virus** - The term given to a virus that is frozen in ice but dormant.
- These viruses are 'undead' and can come back alive and active under certain circumstances.
- Climate change-induced thawing of the permanent frozen land (permafrost) in the Arctic could release these viruses into the atmosphere.
- These viruses could potentially revive and become active once again when released.
- Zombie viruses could potentially be dangerous to humans if they bring an outbreak of disease.
- **Methane Bomb** - Methane that has been trapped in permafrost's prehistoric lime

stones.
- The melting permafrost releases the trapped methane and their release is called methane bomb.

*This is not the first time frozen microbes released. Russian scientists revived zombie worms that had been frozen in the Arctic for 24,000 years in June 2021.*

### References


1. Down To Earth - Scientists revive ‘zombie virus’
2. Times of India - Scientists Revive 'Zombie Virus'


## Lake Naini

*The High Court of Uttarakhand has recently directed the state government to stop all construction activities in the Sukhatal catchment area near the Lake Naini.*

- Sukhatal, a seasonal lake, is one of the main recharge zones of the Naini Lake, Uttarakhand.
- The lake gets its name because it is ‘sukha (dry)’ for most part of the year.
- It absorbs water during the monsoons, and recharges the Naini lake during the dry seasons.



*Sukhatal Lake contributes 40-50 per cent out of the total subsurface inflow to the Naini Lake.*

### Sukhatal Beautification Plan

- In May 2021, the government began the beautification of Sukhatal Lake that involves the alleged lining of lake bed with concrete so that the lake retains water throughout the year.
- This has the potential to damage the ecology of Naini Lake and endanger the livelihood of Nainital residents.
- If the lake ended up with a cemented floor, there would be no water in the lake.
- Even if there is enough water, there will be a bloom of algae as it will be stagnant water.
- However, the government clarified that the plan was only to use a geosynthetic clay liner — factory-manufactured hydraulic barriers.
- This does not make the surface completely impermeable but increase water retention capacity.

### Naini Lake

- Naini Lake is bounded by panoramic seven hills viz, Ayarpata, Deopata, Handi Bandi,

Cheena Peak, Alma, Laria Kanta and Sher-ka-Danda.

- It has two parts namely Mallital and Tallital.
- Northern division is called as Mallital while the Southern division is known as Tallital.
- The lake boasts of a mixed flora which comprises of Coniferous, Oak trees, and the famous Bicchu Booti plant of Nainital.

**References**


1. Indian Express - Choking Sukhatal Lake
2. Down to Earth - No Construction on Sukhatal Lake
3. E-Uttaranchal - Nainital Lake


