INDIA FINALISES DEALS FOR CHEETAHS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AND NAMIBIA

THE CHEETAHS WILL BE RELEASED INTO THE WILD AT KUNO PALPUR IN SHEOPUR DISTRICT OF MADHYA PRADESH.

IT’S THE WORLD’S FASTEST LAND MAMMAL.

IT’S LISTED AS VULNERABLE IN THE IUCN RED LIST OF SPECIES.

JUNE 2022

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### GS Paper - 1

- Cultural significance of PM Modi’s gifts for his Quad colleagues  
- Veer Savarkar  
- Sant Kabirdas  
- Sant Tukaram:  
- Govt to tweak ancient monuments act to make it flexible  
- Yoga: Why the Post COVID-19 World Needs This Indian Export  
- New map of Earth’s tectonic plates to help understand quakes, and volcanoes better  
- Desert In Tamil Nadu  
- Afghanistan Earthquake

### GS Paper - 2

- PM CARES For Children  
- West Nile Virus Infections  
- TRIPS waiver  
- Myanmar Foreign Minister may not get ASEAN meet call  
- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):  
- International Day of UN Peacekeepers:  
- UN Habitat

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**PM-CARES FOR CHILDREN**

Launched for support & empowerment of COVID-19 affected children

- Government stands with children who lost their parents due to COVID-19
- Such children to get a monthly stipend once they turn 18 and a fund of 10 lakh when they turn 23 from PM CARES
- Free education to be ensured for children who lost their parents to COVID-19
- Children will be assisted to get an education loan for higher education & PM CARES will pay interest on the loan
- Children will get free health insurance of 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat till 18 years & premium will be paid by PM CARES

It is our duty, as a society, to care for our children and instil hope for a bright future: PM Narendra Modi

- Indus water talks between India, Pak begin in New Delhi  
- GST compensation  
- Har Ghar Tiranga  
- Caste-based census in Bihar  
- Safety of Aadhaar  
- Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP)  
- India finally holds talks with Afghanistan’s Taliban govt  
- Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LEADIT)  
- National Achievement Survey (NAS)  
- The debates around the Surrogacy Act:  
- Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA)  
- National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL)  
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation  
- How are Rajya Sabha MPs elected?  
- Draft amendments to IT Rules, 2021  
- National air sports policy  
- Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)  
- Contempt of Court  
- QS World University Rankings 2023  
- BIMSTEC
- India 7th in FDI inflows: Unctad
- IAEA board passes resolution criticizing Iran
- Interpol
- PFMS (Public Financial Management System)
- National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) Project:
- Draft anti-trafficking Bill:
- Child Labour Day:
- FATF:
- Section 33(7) of the Representation of People’s Act:
- National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021 Report:
- The ‘war on drugs’:
- OBC stir for 12% separate quota continues
- Demolition drives may challenge the rule of law
- Suspension of 7 Bengal MLAs revoked
- Public Consultation on Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy
- What is the Inter-State Council (ISC)?
- India gives emergency visas for 111 Afghan Hindus, Sikhs
- Election Commission wants people to run from one seat
- India and Bangladesh should work on river management
- What west Seti Power Project can mean for India-Nepal ties
- HC stays suspension of Rajasthan woman sarpanch
- Australia seeks to revitalize Indo-Pacific ties
- SC must not touch issues that require lawmakers role
- The absurdity of the anti-defection law
- ECI continues to nudge Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) for ensuring due regulatory compliance
- Centre mandates 3-yr health insurance plan for surrogate mothers
- Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana jobs target surpassed by 28%
- Powers of Governor, floor test law in the spotlight
- Australia says LAC assault was a warning
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- U.S. Supreme Court overturns abortion right
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- Norms to protect the rights of kids working on OTT platforms
- BRICS support dialogue between Russia, Ukraine
- Pakistan’s economic muddling and the IMF challenge
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CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PM MODI’S GIFTS FOR HIS QUAD COLLEAGUES

Context:
At the recent Quad Summit held at Tokyo, PM Modi carried with him gifts for leaders of the US, Australia and Japan showcasing India’s rich cultural heritage and art forms.

The gifts and their cultural significance:

Sanjhi Art form:
Sanjhi panel gifted to US President Joe Biden is based on the theme of Thakurani Ghat (It is one of the most famous ghats on the banks of the holy river of Yamuna in Gokul).

- This art form originated out of the cult of Krishna.
- It involves creating stencils based on incidents from the life of the deity and then hand-cutting these on thin sheets of paper using scissors.
- Sanjhi was popularised in the 15th and 16th centuries by the Vaishnava temples and was practiced by Brahmin priests.

Gond art painting for Australian PM Anthony Albanese:
The gift depicts a popular motif in Gond art — the Tree of Life, with intricate patterns and lines that are a trademark of Gond art.

Rogan painting:
PM Modi gifted the Japanese PM a hand-carved deep brown wooden box with a gold and white Rogan painting on a green cloth as its central motif.

Rogan is a form of cloth painting that is considered to be more than four centuries old and is primarily practiced in Kutch district of Gujarat.

- The word ‘rogan’ comes from Persian, meaning varnish or oil.
- The craft uses paint made from boiled oil and vegetable dyes.
- Usually, only half the fabric is painted and it is folded to create a mirror image.
- Originally only men used to practice the art form. Now several women in Gujarat also pursue it.

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
About the Art forms:
1. Sanjhi.
2. Gond Painting.
3. Rogan.
MAINS LINK:
Discuss the main style and themes of the Rajasthani school of paintings and also the main centers where the art flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Rogan is a form of cloth painting.
2. Sanjhi art form originated out of the cult of Krishna.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: C

VEER SAVARKAR

Context:
May 28th 2022 marked the 139th birth anniversary of Veer Savarkar.

Who is Veer Savarkar?
Born on May 28, 1883 in Bhagur, a city in Maharashtra’s Nashik.

Nationalism and social reforms:
- Formed a youth organization - Mitra Mela, this organization was put into place to bring in national and revolutionary ideas.
- He was against foreign goods and propagated the idea of Swadeshi.
- He championed atheism and rationality and also disapproved orthodox Hindu belief. In fact, he even dismissed cow worship as superstitious.
- He also worked on abolition of untouchability in Ratnagiri. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar also compared his work to Lord Buddha.
- Vinayak Savarkar was a president of Hindu Mahasabha from 1937 to 1943.
- When congress ministries offered resignation on 22nd oct 1939, Hindu mahasabha under his leadership cooperated with Muslim league to form government in provinces like Sindh, Bengal and NWFP.
- In Pune, Savarkar founded the “Abhinav Bharat Society”.
- He joined Tilak’s Swaraj Party.
- He founded the Free India Society. The Society celebrated important dates on the Indian calendar including festivals, freedom movement landmarks, and was dedicated to furthering discussion about Indian freedom.
- He believed and advocated the use of arms to free India from the British and created a network of Indians in England, equipped with weapons.

Important works:
2. An armed revolt against the Morley-Minto reform.

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. Who founded Mitra mela, Abhinav Bharat Society and Free India society, what are the objectives?
2. Books written by Savarkar?
3. Savarkar’s book which was published by Madam Bikaji Cama?

MAINS LINK:
Discuss Veer Savarkar’s contributions to social reforms in the country.

Q. Identify the personality based on the information given below:
1. He was a president of Hindu Mahasabha from 1937 to 1943.
2. He founded the “Abhinav Bharat Society”.
3. He founded the Free India Society.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. Veer Savarkar.
B. Bhagat Singh.
C. Jawaharlal Nehru.
D. None.

Ans: A
**SANT KABIRDAS**

**Context:**
President Ram Nath Kovind recently inaugurated the Sant Kabir Academy and Research Centre under **Swadesh Darshan Yojana** at Maghar (Uttar Pradesh).

**About Kabir:**
- Sant Kabir Das was a very renowned saint, poet and social reformer of India who lived during the 15th century. His esteemed works and poems describe the greatness and oneness of the Supreme Being.
- He was a proponent of the **Bhakti Movement**.
- He did not believe in any religious discrimination and readily accepted all the religions.
- A religious community known as ‘Kabir Panth’ was founded by him and the members of this forum are referred to as ‘Kabir Panthis’.
- Swami Ramananda influence: Kabir Das’ ideologies were greatly influenced by Vaishnava saint Swami Ramananda who accepted Kabir as his disciple.

**Nirguni tradition:**
One school within the Bhakti movement was the Nirguni tradition and Sant Kabir was a prominent member of it. In this tradition, God was understood to be a universal and formless being.

**His famous literary works:**
- Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthawali and Anurag Sagar.
- His verses are found in Sikhism’s scripture Guru Granth Sahib.
- The major part of his work was collected by the fifth Sikh guru, Guru Arjan Dev.
- The hallmark of Sant Kabirdas’ work consists of his two line couplets, popularly known as ‘Kabir Ke Dohe’.

**Against caste:**
- Kabir’s revolt against the caste system also sought to do away with the complex rituals and ceremonies performed by the Brahmins.
- He, like the other prominent saints of his time, argued that it was only through bhakti, intense love or devotion to God could one attain salvation.
- He sought to eradicate caste distinctions and attempted to create an egalitarian society.

**INSTA CURIOUS**
Did you know that The Alvars and the Nayanars were considered as the founders of the Bhakti movement in southern India? Who were Alvars and Nayanars? Read [this](#).

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. About Kabir Das.
2. His literary works.
4. Key reformers of Bhakti movement.

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss the significance of Bhakti movement.

**Q.1) Which of the following are the literary works of Sant Kabir?**
1. Bijak
2. Sakhi Granth
3. Anurag Sagar

**Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:**
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. 2 and 3 only.
D. All of the above.

Ans: D
SANT TUKARAM:

Context:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir in the temple town of Dehu in Pune district.

About Sant Tukaram:
He was the contemporary of Shivaji.
- He is considered as the greatest Maratha Bhakti reformer.
- He made the Vithoba cult popular.
- He composed devotional songs on Vithalswamy called as Abhangs.
- He preached the message of equality and universal brotherhood.
- Sant Tukaram and his work are central to the Warkari sect spread across Maharashtra.
- Sant Tukaram is credited with starting the Wari pilgrimage.
- His master was Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of the Bhakti movement.

Social reforms:
- Tukaram accepted disciples and devotees without discriminating gender.
- Tukaram taught that “pride of caste never made any man holy”, “the Vedas and Shastras have said that for the service of God, castes do not matter”, “castes do not matter, it is God’s name that matters”.

INSTALINKS:
PRELIMS LINK:
About Sant Tukaram.
Important Literary Works.
About Bhakti Movement.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of Bhakti Movement.

Q. 1) Consider the following statements:
1. Sant Tukaram was the contemporary of Shivaji.
2. He made the Vithoba cult popular.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: c
GOVT TO TWEAK ANCIENT MONUMENTS ACT TO MAKE IT FLEXIBLE

Context:
The government is working to bring amendments to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act-1958, which stipulates area around the protected monuments to make it “more flexible and friendly”.

What is AMASR Act 1958?
The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (or AMASR Act) is an act of parliament of the government of India that provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects.

Need for new amendment:
To rationalize prohibited and regulated zones following controversies over development projects pertaining to different monuments.
To give more teeth to the ASI to remove encroachments from regulated zones around the monuments and hold the local authorities liable.
To create standardization for the inclusion of site/monument in the ASI list and if the need arises, monuments can also be dropped from the list.
To recheck the reason for having 100-metre and 300-metre limits as a recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report had also alluded to the fact that there was no specific reason behind these.

Practice Question:
Q. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (10M) (UPSC CSE 2018)

YOGA: WHY THE POST COVID-19 WORLD NEEDS THIS INDIAN EXPORT

Context:
• Each year on 21 June, the world comes together to observe the International Day of Yoga, a day designated by the United Nations to celebrate the power of yoga in promoting holistic health practices worldwide.
• Yoga derives its name from the Sanskrit root ‘yuj’ which means to join or to unite. It symbolizes the unity of one’s mind, body, and spirit with the world outside, through a set of exercises that include breathing techniques, physical postures, and relaxation methods.

Theme:
The International Yoga Day 2022 will be celebrated under the theme ‘Yoga for Humanity’.

Yoga Philosophy:
Yoga process is described in eight stages (ashtanga-yoga, “eight-membered Yoga”)

External Aids:
• The first two stages are ethical preparations.
  » Yama (“restraint”), which denotes abstinence from injury falsehood, stealing, lust, and avarice;
  » Niyama (“discipline”), denotes cleanliness of body, contentment, austerity, study, and devotion to God.
• The next two stages are physical preparations.
  » Asana (“seat”), is a series of exercises to make the body supple, flexible, and healthy.
  » Pranayama (“breath control”) is a series of exercises intended to stabilize the rhythm of breathing in order to encourage complete respiratory relaxation.
• The fifth stage, pratyahara (“withdrawal of the senses”), involves control of the senses, or the ability to withdraw the attention of the senses from outward objects.

Mental or internal aids:
• Dharana (“holding on”) is the ability to hold and confine awareness of externals to one object for a long period of time.
• Dhyana (“concentrated meditation”) is the uninterrupted contemplation of the object of meditation, beyond any memory of ego.
• Samadhi (“total self-collectedness”) is the final stage and is a precondition of attaining release from samsara, or the cycle of rebirth. In this stage,
the meditator perceives or experiences the object of his meditation and himself as one.

**Eight Limbs of Yoga**

1. **Yama** (Ethical consideration)
2. **Niyama** (Self observation and Discipline)
3. **Asana** (Physical poses)
4. **Pranayama** (Breath Control)
5. **Pratyahara** (Sense Withdrawal)
6. **Dharana** (Concentration)
7. **Dhyana** (Meditation)
8. **Samadhi** (Enlightenment peace)

**Practice Questions**

Q. Which one of the following pairs does not form part of the six systems of Indian Philosophy? (UPSC CSE 2014)
(a) Mimamsa and Vedanta  
(b) Nyaya and Vaisheshika  
(c) Lokayata and Kapalika  
(d) Sankhya and Yoga

Ans: C

Q. With reference to the history of philosophical thought in India, consider the following statements regarding the Sankhya school: (UPSC 2013)

- Sankhya does not accept the theory of rebirth or the transmigration of soul.
- Sankhya holds that it is the self-knowledge that leads to liberation and not any exterior influence or agent.

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

Ans: B

**NEW MAP OF EARTH’S TECTONIC PLATES TO HELP UNDERSTAND QUAKES, AND VOLCANOES BETTER**

**Context:**
Researchers from the University of Adelaide, Australia, have carried out a new study that includes an updated map of the earth’s tectonic plates.

**Plate Tectonic:** A tectonic plate, according to the United States Geological Survey, “is a massive, irregularly shaped slab of solid rock”, made up of lithosphere or the earth’s top layer. Tectonic plate movements often lead to earthquakes and volcanoes.

**Need:**
- This will help in forming a better understanding of natural hazards like earthquakes and volcanoes.
- The plate model can be used to improve models of risks from geohazards; the orogeny model helps understand the geodynamic systems and better model Earth’s evolution and the province model can be used to improve prospecting for minerals

**Techniques Used:** To create the map, the team combined three geological models: a plate model based on already known plate boundaries, a province model based on the geology of Earth’s surface, and an orogeny model with areas deformed by mountain-building processes.

www.insightsonindia.com
Changes: The new plate model includes several new microplates including the Macquarie microplate which sits south of Tasmania and the Capricorn microplate which separates the Indian and Australian plates.

AFGHANISTAN EARTHQUAKE

Context:
Deadliest Afghanistan quake in decades kills over 1,000 people. The quake originated near the city of Khost, which is close to the country’s border with Pakistan and about 160 kilometres (100 miles) south of the Afghan capital, Kabul.

Why does Earthquake happen?
The tectonic movements
These are large, thin plates that comprise the Earth’s...
crust and the upper mantle (commonly called the “lithosphere”) and are constantly moving. Earthquakes occur along fault lines, cracks in Earth’s crust where tectonic plates meet. They occur where plates are subducting, spreading, slipping, or colliding.

What caused the quake in Afghanistan?
Hindu Kush geography

- Afghanistan is earthquake-prone because it’s located in the mountainous Hindu Kush region, which is part of the Alpide belt — the second most seismically active region in the world after the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- Slow collisions between the Indian subcontinent and the Eurasian tectonic plate are thought to be the cause of the extremely-common earthquakes in this region.
- The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has called the Hindu Kush region “one of the most seismically hazardous regions on earth”, boasting one of the highest rates of deep earthquakes in the world.

Seismic events of this nature can cause enormous devastation in places such as Afghanistan, where infrastructure is weak and people live in remote mountain villages that are difficult for emergency rescuers to reach.

Insta Links
Basics: Earthquakes

Practice Questions
Q. Which of the following earthquake waves is first recorded on the Seismograph?
(a) P-waves
(b) Rayleigh waves
(c) S-waves
(d) Love waves

Answer: (a)

Q. Discuss the factors that cause earthquakes. Why are Earthquakes more common in certain parts of the world than in others? (250 words)
PM CARES FOR CHILDREN

Context:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released benefits under the PM Cares for children scheme that supports those who lost their parents during Covid-19 pandemic.

About the scheme:
Launched in May 2021. The scheme has been launched for support & empowerment of Covid affected children.

Eligibility: All children who have lost both parents or surviving parent or legal guardian/adoptive parents due to Covid 19 will be supported under the scheme.

Features of the scheme:
1. A corpus of Rs 10 lakh for each child: This corpus will be used to give a monthly stipend from 18 years of their age, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum for personal and professional use.
2. School Education: For children under 10 years: Admission will be given in the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar.
3. School Education: for children between 11-18 years: The child will be given admission in any Central Government residential school such as Sainik School, Navodaya Vidyalaya etc.
4. Support for Higher Education: The child will be assisted in obtaining an education loan for Professional courses / Higher Education in India as per the existing Education Loan norms.
5. Health Insurance: All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakhs.

(Note: We have covered only highlights and key features of the scheme here. For complete details, please visit: https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1722719)

Need for these measures:
- As India battles a raging second wave, cases of children losing their parents to Covid-19 are also mounting.
- Also the apprehension of child trafficking in the garb of adoption has increased.
- Child Marriages have also increased in the Covid-19 induced lockdown.
West Nile Virus Infections

Context:
A man who was undergoing treatment for West Nile fever in Kerala’s Thrissur succumbed to it recently.

About the West Nile Virus:
- It is a member of the flavivirus genus and belongs to the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex of the family Flaviviridae.
- It is a single-stranded RNA virus.
- It was first isolated in a woman in the West Nile district of Uganda in 1937.
- It is commonly found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia.
- Older people, children and those with weakened immune systems are most at risk.

Transmission:
It spreads from birds to humans with the bite of an infected Culex mosquito.

WATCH THIS VIDEO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTIONS
## West Nile Virus
### What you should know

#### What is it?
West Nile virus can be a serious, even fatal, illness. It can affect people and animals.

#### How does it spread?
- A bite from an infected mosquito spreads West Nile virus.
- Contact with infected people or animals doesn’t spread West Nile virus.

#### Protect yourself.
- Drain anything that holds water twice a week.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants.
- Use mosquito repellent when outside.

#### What are the symptoms?
- West Nile virus can cause fever, headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes and muscle and joint aches.
- 20% of infected people will get sick.
- Less than 1% of infected people will get very sick.

#### What we know.
- Most infected people won’t get sick.
- Pierce County has no human cases of West Nile virus.

For more information about West Nile virus, go to www.aphis.usda.gov.

### INSTALINKS

#### PRELIMS LINK:
1. About West Nile Virus.
2. Symptoms.
3. Prevention and Treatment.

#### MAINS LINK:
Critically analyse the role played by WHO in rendering global health security during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also propose reforms to strengthen its role in handling future pandemics.

### Q. Consider the following statements:
1. West Nile Virus is a member of the flavivirus genus.
2. It is a single-stranded RNA virus.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**
- A. 1 only.
- B. 2 only.
- C. Both.
- D. None.

**Ans:** C

### TRIPS WAIVER

#### Context:
A group of non-governmental organisations has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to “proactively engage” with a draught proposal at the World Trade Organization-TRIPS in Geneva to waive intellectual property rights governing COVID vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics, which are mostly controlled by companies in the West.

#### What’s the issue?
In October 2020, at the WTO’s Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council, India and South Africa proposed that the WTO do away with certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the duration of the pandemic to facilitate access to technologies necessary for the production of vaccines and medicines.

#### Challenges ahead:
A small group of WTO members are “discussing suggestions” to exclude drug manufacturers in India and China — two major, global suppliers of medicine — from prospective waivers to IPR obligations that result from the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) which WTO members are committed to uphold.
- Also, Manufacturers want to “limit” any benefits of the waiver only to African countries, and not pave the way for Indian manufacturers who, with their large production capacities, would easily undercut Western competitors.

#### Why is there an opposition to the waiver?
What are the arguments against it?
Waiving of intellectual property rights will neither lead to increased production of vaccines or increased deployment nor practical solutions to fight the virus of COVID-19 vaccines since IP is not the barrier. Waiving of intellectual property rights could also impact patient safety by opening doors for counterfeit vaccines to enter the supply chain.

#### Need of the hour:
Our top most priority should be to address the supply side constraints, including IP barriers, to augment the manufacturing of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, essential for treatment, prevention and control of the ongoing pandemic.
What does the intellectual property waiver for Covid-19 vaccines mean?
The IP waiver might open up space for production of Covid vaccines with emergency use authorisations (EUA) — such as those developed by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Novavax, Johnson & Johnson and Bharat Biotech — on a larger scale in middle-income countries.

What are patents and IP rights?
A patent represents a powerful intellectual property right, and is an exclusive monopoly granted by a government to an inventor for a limited, pre-specified time. It provides an enforceable legal right to prevent others from copying the invention.

Patents can be either process patents or product patents:
1. A product patent ensures that the rights to the final product is protected, and anyone other than the patent holder can be restrained from manufacturing it during a specified period, even if they were to use a different process.
2. A process patent enables any person other than the patent holder to manufacture the patented product by modifying certain processes in the manufacturing exercise.

Patent regime in India:
India moved from product patenting to process patenting in the 1970s, which enabled India to become a significant producer of generic drugs at global scale, and allowed companies like Cipla to provide Africa with anti-HIV drugs in the 1990s.

- But due to obligations arising out of the TRIPS Agreement, India had to amend the Patents Act in 2005, and switch to a product patents regime across the pharma, chemicals, and biotech sectors.

What is the TRIPS Agreement?
The TRIPS agreement was negotiated in 1995 at the WTO, it requires all its signatory countries to enact domestic law.

- It guarantees minimum standards of IP protection. Such legal consistency enables innovators to monetise their intellectual property in multiple countries.

- In 2001, the WTO signed the Doha Declaration, which clarified that in a public health emergency, governments could compel companies to license their patents to manufacturers, even if they did not think the offered price was acceptable.

- This provision, commonly referred to as “compulsory licensing”, was already built into the TRIPS Agreement and the Doha declaration only clarified its usage.

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. TRIPS agreement was negotiated in 1995 at the WTO.
2. It requires all its signatory countries to enact domestic law.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: C

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. What is TRIPS?
2. Indian Patents Act, 2005.
3. Patent regime in India.

MAINS LINK:
Write a note on compulsory Licensing.

• Most production is currently concentrated in high-income countries; production by middle-income countries has been happening through licensing or technology transfer agreements.
MYANMAR FOREIGN MINISTER MAY NOT GET ASEAN MEET CALL

Context:
Indian government is unlikely to include the Myanmar Foreign Minister at the India-ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ meeting, which will be hosted by the External Affairs Ministry (EAM) in mid-June, due to international pressure on how to engage with the Myanmar military junta regime.

• India has decided follow the consensus of ASEAN countries, to invite only a “non-political”, “non-military” representative to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and US-ASEAN meetings.

What’s the issue?
There have been mass protests, armed resistance and mass killings in Myanmar since the military seized control a year ago.

• Elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been jailed after what her supporters say are show trials.
• The Myanmar military grabbed power in a coup last year– the third time in the nation’s history since its independence from British rule in 1948.

What has the international reaction been to the coup?

• The United Nations has warned of a deepening humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, with “an intensification of violence and a rapid rise in poverty”.
• US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has accused the security forces of a “reign of terror”.
• The US, UK and European Union have imposed sanctions on military officials.
• China blocked a UN Security Council statement condemning the coup, but has backed calls for a return to democratic norms.

India’s demands:
1. Myanmar’s return to democracy at the earliest.
2. Release of detainees and prisoners.
3. Resolution of issues through dialogue.
4. Complete cessation of all violence.

India is supporting ASEAN initiative on Myanmar and the ‘Five-Point Consensus’: It includes:
1. Immediate cessation of violence.
2. Dialogue among all stakeholders in Myanmar for a peaceful solution.
3. The appointment of a special Asean envoy to facilitate mediation.
4. Aid to Myanmar.
5. A visit to the country by the envoy.

A brief History of Myanmar:
When British imperialists annexed what is today’s Myanmar during the 19th century, they called it Burma after the dominant Burman (Bamar) ethnic group, and administered it as a province of colonial India.

• This arrangement continued until 1937, when Burma was separated from British India and made a separate colony.
• Even after the country became independent in 1948, it retained the same name, becoming the ‘Union of Burma’.
• In 1962, the military took over from a civilian government for the first time, and amended the official name in 1974 to the ‘Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma’.
• Then in 1988, Myanmar’s armed forces again took power in the country, after suppressing a popular uprising that led to the deaths of thousands, and reversed the official name to ‘Union of Burma’.
• But a year later, the junta adopted a law that replaced Burma with Myanmar, making the country the ‘Union of Myanmar’.

Myanmar’s military Constitution:
It was the military that drafted the 2008 Constitution, and put it to a questionable referendum in April that year.

• The Constitution was the military’s “roadmap to democracy”, which it had been forced to adopt under increasing pressure from the west.
• It was also due to its own realisation that opening up Myanmar to the outside world was now no longer an option but a dire economic necessity.
• But the military made sure to safeguard in the Constitution its own role and supremacy in national affairs.
• Under its provisions, the military reserves for itself 25 per cent of seats in both Houses of Parliament, to which it appoints serving military officials.
JAL JEEVAN MISSION (JJM):

Context:
50% of rural households in India have now been covered under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- At the time of launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, only 3.23 Crore households i.e. 17% of the rural population had access to drinking water through taps.

Performance of the scheme:
50% of rural households in India have now been covered under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Certain state and union territories such as Goa, Telangana, A&N Islands, D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry and Haryana have already achieved 100% household connections.
- Punjab, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar have coverage of more than 90% and are progressing fast towards attaining the status of ‘Har Ghar Jal (water in every household)’.

About the Jal Jeevan Mission:
JJM envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024. It is under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- It was launched in 2019.

INSTA CURIOUS
Do you remember the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project? Read Here.

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. About Myanmar.
2. Its constitution.
3. Comparison with Indian Constitution.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss India’s policy towards its neighbours.

Q.6) Which of the following countries border Myanmar?
1. China
2. Laos
3. Thailand

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Ans: D
The mission ensures:
1. Functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections.
2. Water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
3. Conjunctive use of conserved water.
5. Drinking water supply system, grey water treatment and its reuse.

It also encompasses:
1. Prioritizing provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages in drought prone and desert areas, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) villages, etc.
3. Technological interventions for removal of contaminants where water quality is an issue.

Implementation:
1. The Mission is based on a community approach to water and includes extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.
2. JJM looks to create a jan andolan for water, thereby making it everyone’s priority.
3. The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that the JJM is managed by paani samitis to plan, implement, manage, operate and maintain village water supply systems?
Reference: read this.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. Mission goal.
2. Implementation.
3. Fund allocation.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of the mission.

Q. Jal Jeevan Mission is implemented by:
A. Ministry of Jal Shakti.
B. Ministry of Rural Development.
C. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
D. None of the above.
Ans: A

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS:

Context:
International Day of UN Peacekeepers is observed globally on 29th May.
Why is it observed on 29th?
The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on 1948, May 29 when the Security Council deployed a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) with the objective to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

What is peacekeeping? Its significance?
- United Nations Peacekeeping is a joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support.
- Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council.

Composition:
1. UN peacekeepers (often referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets because of their light blue berets or helmets) can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.
2. Peacekeeping forces are contributed by member states on a voluntary basis.
3. Civilian staff of peace operations are international civil servants, recruited and deployed by the UN Secretariat.

UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles:
1. Consent of the parties.
2. Impartiality.
3. Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

How are UN Peacekeeping operations funded?
- While decisions about establishing, maintaining or expanding a peacekeeping operation are taken by the Security Council, the financing of UN Peacekeeping operations is the collective responsibility of all UN Member States.
- Every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share towards peacekeeping. This is in accordance with the provisions of Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The top 5 providers of assessed contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping operations for 2020-2021 are:
1. United States (27.89%).
2. China (15.21%).
3. Japan (8.56%).
4. Germany (6.09%).
5. United Kingdom (5.79%).

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. Who funds peacekeeping operations?
2. Role of UNSC.
3. Composition of Peacekeepers?

MAINS LINK:
Write a note on UN Peacekeeping and its significance.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. UN peacekeepers are also referred to as Red Helmets.
2. Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: B

The Largest UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2022
Personnel involved in the largest active UN peacekeeping operations as of Feb 28, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>15,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>14,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>14,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>14,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>9,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan, South Sudan</td>
<td>3,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel, Syria</td>
<td>1,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN Peacekeeping

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission? Know about the current 13 peacekeeping operations. read this.
UN HABITAT

Context:
UN-Habitat has identified various pressing issues posing challenges for urban planners of Jaipur City.

Issues highlighted include:
1. Rapid expansion of cities.
2. Weak urban mobility.
3. Extreme levels of drought during summer and also urban floods.

Recommendations:
1. Increase the green cover, strengthen urban biodiversity, and thereby enhance the quality of life for citizens.
2. Implement the idea of a compact city with re-development and re-densification of the existing urban areas.
3. To curb development on the city’s outskirts, link the distance from the main city to the development charges imposed on citizens.
4. Eco-trails with plantations along natural drainage channels and railway tracks are recommended in the city.
5. The 800 dry wells in City could be used for rainwater harvesting and raising the water table, mitigating urban floods and ensuring efficient utilisation of water resources.

About UN Habitat:
- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN–Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development.
- It was established in 1978 as an outcome of the First UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I) held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976.
- It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.
- UN-Habitat reports to the United Nations General Assembly.

Habitat Agenda:
- The mandate of UN-Habitat derives from the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996.
- The twin goals of the Habitat Agenda are adequate shelter for all and the development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. UN Habitat.
2. Habitat Agenda.

MAINS LINK:
What is UN-Habitat programme? What are its objectives? Discuss with special emphasis on role played by India with respect to it.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The mandate of UN-Habitat derives from the Habitat Agenda.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans : C

INDUS WATER TALKS BETWEEN INDIA, PAK BEGIN IN NEW DELHI

Context:
India and Pakistan have begun another round of the Permanent Indus Commission meeting that is held annually under Indus Water Treaty (IWT) 1960.
- The Indus talks have survived the freeze in ties as both countries see it as mandatory under the IWT.
- Under the provisions of the treaty, the two sides are required to meet at least once every year, alternately in India and Pakistan.
- The last meeting, held on March 23-24, 2021 in New Delhi.
About the Indus Water Treaty:
It is a Water-Distribution Treaty, signed in Karachi on 1960, between India (Pm Jawaharlal Nehru) and Pakistan (President Ayub Khan), brokered by the World Bank.

How is the Indus water share between India and Pakistan?
Under the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, all the waters of the eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi — amounting to around 33 MAF (million acre-feet) annually is allocated to India for unrestricted use.
• The waters of western rivers — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab — amounting to around 135 MAF annually are largely for Pakistan.

The right to generate hydroelectricity:
Under the Treaty, India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through a run of the river projects on the western rivers subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
• It also gives the right to Pakistan to raise concerns on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.

Permanent Indus Commission:
• The Permanent Indus Commission is a bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan, created to implement and manage goals of the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960.
• The Commission according to the treaty must meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan.
The functions of the Commission are:
• To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers.
• To solve disputes arising over water sharing.
• To arrange technical visits to projects’ sites and critical river head works.

To undertake, once in every five years, a general tour of inspection of the Rivers for ascertaining the facts.
To take necessary steps for the implementation of the provisions of the treaty.

GST COMPENSATION

Context:
The Centre has released the entire amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation payable to States up to May 31, 2022 by releasing an amount of ₹86,912 crore.
• This is being done to assist the States in managing their resources and ensuring that their programmes, especially the expenditure on capital, is carried out successfully during the financial year.
What is the GST compensation?

- The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, was the law which created the mechanism for levying a common nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- While States would receive the SGST (State GST) component of the GST, and a share of the IGST (integrated GST), it was agreed that revenue shortfalls arising from the transition to the new indirect taxes regime would be made good from a pooled GST Compensation Fund.

How is the GST Compensation Fund funded?

This corpus is funded through a compensation cess that is levied on so-called ‘demerit’ goods.

- The items are pan masala, cigarettes and tobacco products, aerated water, caffeinated beverages, coal and certain passenger motor vehicles.

Computation of the shortfall:

The computation of the shortfall is done annually by projecting a revenue assumption based on 14% compounded growth from the base year’s (2015-2016) revenue and calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in that year.

Can the deadline be extended? If so, how?

The deadline for GST compensation was set in the original legislation and so in order to extend it, the GST Council must first recommend it and the Union government must then move an amendment to the GST law allowing for a new date.

INSTA CURIOUS

Did you know that even now the compensation cess will continue to be levied well beyond the current fiscal year since the borrowings made in lieu of the shortfalls in the compensation fund would need to be met?
HAR GHAH TIRANGA

Context:
Revised Flag Code of India has come into effect. The Union government in December 2021 amended the flag code.

According to this:
• The Indian national flag or Tricolour can now be made of polyester and with the help of machines.

Background:
Earlier only hand-woven and hand-spun flags made of cotton, silk, wool or Khadi were allowed.

Har Ghar Tiranga (tricolour at every door) programme:
It proposes to cover government buildings, private offices and residences.

Rules governing the usage of National Flag:
The hoisting, use and display of the flag is governed by the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, and the Flag Code of India, 2002.

Previous amendments to the Flag Code:
• The code has been amended earlier too. The original flag code of India 1947 was amended in 2002 after a Supreme Court judgment.
• This expanded the definition of places where the flag could be displayed or hoisted. However, part one of the code that deals with the description of the flag had remained untouched.

Evolution of National flag:
• Present flag is based on the Swaraj flag, a flag of the Indian National Congress designed by Pingali Venkayya.
• After undergoing several changes, the Tricolour was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting in Karachi in 1931.

Constitutional & Statutory Provisions regarding National Flag of India:
Art 51A(a) - To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

Statutes Governing Use of Flag:
• Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950.
• Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act, 1971.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan narrated significance of National flag as:
1. The “Ashoka Chakra” is the wheel of the law of dharma. Chakra intend to show that there is LIFE IN MOVEMENT and death in stagnation.
2. The saffron color denotes renunciation of disinterestedness.
3. The white in the center is light, the path of truth to guide our conduct.
4. The green shows our relation to the soil, our relation to the plant life here, on which all other life depends.
INSTA CURIOUS

Do you know about Flag Satyagraha, the Jhanda Satyagraha? It was held in Jabalpur and Nagpur in 1923. Reference: https://www.insightsonindia.com/2021/06/19/flag-satyagraha/

INSTALINKS

Prelims Link:
1. When was the flag designed by Venkayya officially accepted by the Indian National Congress?
2. Adoption of National Flag by the Constituent Assembly.
3. Flag Code of India- overview.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the key provisions of Flag Code of India, 2002.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. India’s Present National flag is based on the Swaraj flag, a flag of the Indian National Congress designed by Pingali Venkayya.
2. The Tricolour was adopted as our national flag at a Congress Committee meeting in Karachi in 1931.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 Only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C

CASTE-BASED CENSUS IN BIHAR

Context:
An all-party meeting held in Bihar has unanimously decided to start the caste-based census very soon.

Background:
Bihar Legislature’s two resolutions demanding caste-based census had already been rejected by the Central Government because it would be a “divisive exercise”.
- The centre, however, said “States can hold caste census on their own”.

How have caste details been collected so far?
1. While SC/ST details are collected as part of the census, details of other castes are not collected by the enumerators. The main method is by self-declaration to the enumerator.
2. So far, backward classes commissions in various States have been conducting their own counts to ascertain the population of backward castes.

What kind of caste data is published in the Census?
Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste.

What is SECC 2011?
The Socio-Economic Caste Census of 2011 was a major exercise to obtain data about the socio-economic status of various communities.
- It had two components: a survey of the rural and urban households and ranking of these households based on pre-set parameters, and a caste census.
- However, only the details of the economic conditions of the people in rural and urban households were released. The caste data has not been released till now.
urban households were released. The caste data has not been released till now.
**Difference between Census & SECC:**
- The Census provides a portrait of the Indian population, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support.
- Since the Census falls under the Census Act of 1948, all data are considered confidential, whereas all the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.

**Pros of caste census:**
The precise number of the population of each caste would help tailor the reservation policy to ensure equitable representation of all of them.

**Concerns associated:**
- There is a possibility that it will lead to heartburn among some sections and spawn demands for larger or separate quotas.
- It has been alleged that the mere act of labelling persons as belonging to a caste tends to perpetuate the system.

**INSTA CURIOUS**
Did you know that ‘Ain-e-Akbari’ included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics? What were the other contents of this?

**SAFETY OF AADHAAR**

**Context:**
The [Unique Identification Development Authority of India (UIDAI)](https://www.uidai.gov.in) chose to withdraw its advisory two days after it was issued, encouraging users to desist from distributing photocopies of their Aadhaar Card.
- The notification has been withdrawn to avoid any misinterpretation.

**What did the UIDAI advisory say?**
- Holders should utilise a masked Aadhaar card instead of the traditional photocopy.
- The document must not be downloaded from a cybercafé or a public computer, and if it is, it must be wiped from the system permanently.

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. What is a census?
2. Statutory provisions in this regard.
3. How is the census carried out?

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss the need for and significance of caste based census.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993:

1. It provides under Section 11 that the Central government may every 10 years revise lists with a view to exclude those classes which have ceased to be backward and include new backward classes.
2. This exercise has not been done to date.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C
The first eight numbers of the twelve-digit ID are hidden behind ‘XXXX’ characters in ‘Masked Aadhaar.’

What does the law say on usage of Aadhar and its safety?
- The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 makes it clear that Aadhaar authentication is necessary for availing subsidies, benefits and services that are financed from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- The requesting entity would have to obtain the consent of the individual before collecting his/her identity and ensure that the information is only used for authentication purposes on the Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR).
- The Act makes it clear that confidentiality needs to be maintained and the authenticated information cannot be used for anything other than the specified purpose.
- Identity information or authentication records would only be liable to be produced pursuant to an order of the High Court or Supreme Court, or by someone of the Secretary rank or above in the interest of national security.

What are the issues associated with Aadhar? What does CAG’s audit of UIDAI say?
Reference: read this.

About UIDAI:
- The UIDAI is a statutory authority established on 12th July 2016.
- Parent body: Works under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Initially, the UIDAI was set up by the Government of India in January 2009, as an attached office under the aegis of the Planning Commission.

• Mandate: The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.
• Total: As of 31st October 2021, UIDAI had issued 131.68 crore Aadhaar numbers.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About UIDAI.
2. Aadhaar.
3. Registration of UIDAI.

MAINS LINK:
Has the concept of Aadhaar succeeded as a ‘game changer’ for India’s leaky welfare regime? Analyse.

Q.Consider the following statements: (2018)
1. Aadhaar card can be used as a proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, Aadhaar number cannot be deactivat-ed or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

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.
Ans: D

PRIME MINISTER EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAM (PMEGP):

Context:
The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has approved the extension of the Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) for five years till FY26.

About Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme:
- PMEGP is a central sector scheme administered by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME).
Q. Consider the following statements:
1. PMEGP is a central sector scheme.
2. It is administered by the Ministry of Finance.
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: A
Significance of Afghan stability:
• Can have spill over to Neighbouring central Asian countries like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc
• Taliban resurgence will revive extremism in the region and the region can become a safe sanctuary for Let, ISIS etc.
• Civil war in Afghanistan will lead to a refugee crisis in Central Asia and beyond.
• Afghanistan’s stability will help the Central Asian countries with the shortest access to the seaports of the Indian ocean.
• Afghanistan has been an important link in the regional trade, cultural, playing the role of a connecting bridge for Central and the rest of the world.

Why is it imperative now for India to engage with the Taliban?
• Taliban is now having a significant presence in Afghanistan.
• India is already having huge investments in Afghanistan. To secure assets worth $3 billion, India should engage with all parties in Afghanistan.
• Taliban engaging with Pak deep state will not be in India’s best interest.
• If India does not engage now Russia, Iran, Pakistan and China will emerge as the shapers of Afghanistan’s political and geopolitical destiny, which for sure will be detrimental to Indian interests.

Need of the hour:
• Urgent need to collectively act for the safety of Afghan civilians by checking violence by Taliban

Afghanistan should be given enough space in Central Asian architectures like SCO (Shanghai cooperation organisation)
• The USA, Iran, China, and Russia should actively involve India to maintain stability in Afghanistan.
• Unified action for the refugee crisis if it arises.
• Indian engagement with Taliban to maintain peace with immediate neighbours.

INSTA CURIOUS

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. About Taliban.
2. Afghan Crisis.
3. About NATO.
4. India’s investments in Afghanistan Projects

MAINS LINK:
Discuss why India should engage with Afghanistan now.

Q. Afghanistan is bordered by:
1. Turkmenistan
2. Uzbekistan
3. Tajikistan
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 and 2 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. All of the above.
D. None.
Ans: A
LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR INDUSTRY TRANSITION (LEADIT)

Context:
India and Sweden recently hosted the Industry Transition Dialogue in Stockholm, as a part of their joint initiative i.e. Leadership for Industry Transition (LeadIT).

About LeadIT:
- The Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) gathers countries and companies that are committed to action to achieve the Paris Agreement.
- It was launched by the governments of Sweden and India at the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 and is supported by the World Economic Forum.
- Purpose: LeadIT members subscribe to the notion that energy-intensive industry can and must progress on low-carbon pathways, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- The Management Board is made up of representatives from Sweden, India, and the World Economic Forum.
- The Secretariat is responsible for managing the work of the Leadership Group and is hosted by Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

Members:
Currently, the Group has a membership of 16 countries and 19 companies including Dalmia Cement, Mahindra Group and SpiceJet from India.

What is the significance of the LeadIT Initiative?
Industry sectors together contribute about 30% of the total CO2 emissions. Hence, initiatives like LeadIT to drive low carbon development pathways in the industry sector are critical for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About LeadIT.
2. About WEF.
3. Goals of Paris Agreement.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of Paris Agreement.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. As part of the Paris Agreement, India pledged a 33%-35% reduction in the “emissions intensity” of its economy by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.
2. Paris Agreement was adopted and came into effect in 2017.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: A
NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SURVEY (NAS):

Context:
The outcomes of the latest National Achievement Survey (NAS) were recently released.
- The first edition of NAS was carried out in 2001.

What is NAS?
- It is a periodic exercise carried out broadly in alternate years to monitor the health of the country’s school education system.
- Designed by the Ministry of Education along with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- Objectives: To provide a snapshot of learning outcomes in key subjects at the the end of Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10. These classes are generally seen to mark important stages in the development of a child's cognitive abilities.

Key findings of NAS 2021:
Compared with 2017, the national average scores of students across subjects have dropped by up to 47 marks.
- In Class 3, the average scores of students in language, maths and Environmental Science have dropped.
- In Class 5, the scores in language, maths and EVS have dropped.
- Class 8 has seen national average scores of language, maths, science and social science come down.
- In Class 10, maths, science, social science, and modern Indian language scores have dropped.

Regional-, gender-, or community-wise variations:
- Except for Punjab and Rajasthan, the performance of nearly all states have declined compared to 2017 levels.
- There were no marked differences between the scores of boys and girls. There were some variations among communities, though.
Implications of the findings:
1. The NAS findings once again highlight the need for urgent interventions to improve foundational learning levels.
2. It will help to unravel the gaps in learning and will support state/UT governments in developing long term, mid-term and short-term interventions to improve learning levels.
3. NAS findings will help in capacity building for teachers, officials involved in the delivery of education.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. NAS.
2. Parameters.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss about the latest outcomes of the latest National Achievement Survey (NAS).

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The first edition of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) was carried out in 2001.
2. It has been designed by the Ministry of Education along with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: C
THE DEBATES AROUND THE SURROGACY ACT:

Context:
Petitioners in the Delhi High Court questioned why marital status, age, or gender were the criteria for being allowed to commission or not commission surrogacy in India.

What’s the issue?
- Under the provisions of the Surrogacy Act, a petitioner, who is married, was denied a chance at commissioning surrogacy.
- As per the Surrogacy Act, a married couple can opt for surrogacy only on medical grounds.
- The law says the couple should not have a child of their own.

Overview of the Surrogacy Act, 2021:
- It came into effect in January this year.
- It allows ‘altruistic surrogacy’ — wherein only the medical expenses and insurance coverage is provided by the couple to the surrogate mother during pregnancy.
- Creates a national board to lay down and implement a code of conduct for people working at IVF clinics.
- It intends to make genetic testing of the embryo mandatory before implantation for the benefit of the child born through ART.
- It also seeks to streamline the cryo-preservation processes for sperm, oocytes and embryos.
- It also proposes to constitute a national registry and registration authority to maintain a central database and assist the national board in its functioning.

Eligibility conditions to make use of the services of a surrogate mother:
- Any couple that has ‘proven infertility’.
- The couple should be Indian citizens who have been married for at least five years.
- The female must be between 23 to 50 years and the male, 26 to 55 years.
- They cannot have any surviving children (biological, adopted or surrogate); However, this would not include a ‘child who is mentally or physically challenged or suffers from life threatening disorder or fatal illness.’

Who can be a surrogate mother?
Only a close relative of the couple can be a surrogate mother, one who is able to provide a medical fitness certificate. She should have been married, with a child of her own, and must be between 25 and 35 years, but can be a surrogate mother only once.

Need for a Surrogacy Act in India:
India has emerged as a hub for infertility treatment. This attracted many underprivileged women to rent their wombs in exchange for money. However, unscrupulous middle men started exploiting such women. This called for a proper regulation.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. ART Bill.
2. Key features.
4. Surrogacy Bill.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the concerns associated with the Surrogacy Bill.

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding the Surrogacy Act, 2021:
1. It allows ‘altruistic surrogacy’ only.
2. It proposes to constitute a national registry.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C
CAUVERY WATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (CMA)

Context:
The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) will take up the Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir-cum-Drinking Water Project of the Karnataka government for discussion at its upcoming meeting.
- The “acceptance” of the CWMA would be a “prerequisite” for consideration of the detailed project report by the Advisory Committee of the Ministry.

What is Mekedatu Project?
It is a multi-purpose balancing reservoir project over Mekedatu.
- It is aimed at solving the drinking water problems of Bengaluru.
- This project was also touted as one that could generate hydroelectricity to meet the power demand in the state.

Why does Tamil Nadu object?
1. The state contended that “the proposed reservoir would affect the natural flows of the river Cauvery.
2. It argued that Cauvery was already a deficit basin and the construction of the project, or any other project “would drastically affect the lower riparian State in getting their due share of waters.
3. The total annual quantum prescribed by the Supreme Court for Tamil Nadu is 177.25 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) in a year. Of this, 80 tmc ft is estimated to be coming from the “uncontrolled catchments” below Kabini and KRS. The Mekedatu project will interfere with the flow of this portion of the State’s due.

About CWMA:
It has been created as per the Cauvery Management Scheme earlier framed by Centre and approved by Supreme Court.

Composition and Powers of CMA:
1. The authority will comprise a chairman, a secretary and eight members.
2. Out of the eight members, two will be full time, while two will be part time members from centre’s side.
3. Rest four will be part time members from states.

Functions:
- The main mandate of the CMA will be to secure implementation and compliance of the Supreme Court’s order in relation to “storage, apportionment, regulation and control of Cauvery waters”.
- CMA will also advise the states to take suitable measures to improve water use efficiency.
- It will do so by promoting use of micro-irrigation, change in cropping patterns, improved farm practices and development of command areas.
- The CMA will also prepare an annual report covering its activities during the preceding year.

Role of Central Government:
The central government will provide help in implementation of the modified award in case of any of the state /UT parties (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Puducherry) do not cooperate in implementing the decision or direction of the tribunal. Initially, centre will contribute Rs. 2 crore for the functioning of the authority.

INSTA CURIOUS
Do you know about the Cauvery Management Scheme? What are the components of the scheme? Reference.
Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) has been created as per the Cauvery Management Scheme earlier framed by Centre and approved by Supreme Court.
2. The authority is headed by the Prime Minister.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: A

How is NARCL different from existing ARCs? How can it operate differently?

1. The proposed bad bank will have a public sector character since the idea is mooted by the government and majority ownership is likely to rest with state-owned banks.
2. At present, ARCs typically seek a steep discount on loans. With the proposed bad bank being set up, the valuation issue is unlikely to come up since this is a government initiative.
3. The government-backed ARC will have deep pockets to buy out big accounts and thus free up banks from carrying these accounts on their books.

What is an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)?

It is a specialized financial institution that buys the Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) from banks and financial institutions so that they can clean up their balance sheets. This helps banks to concentrate on normal banking activities.

- The asset reconstruction companies or ARCs are registered under the RBI.
- Legal Basis: The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 provides the legal basis for the setting up of ARCs in India.
- Capital Needs for ARCs:
  - As per amendment made in the SARFAESI Act in 2016, an ARC should have a minimum net owned fund of Rs. 2 crores. The RBI raised this amount to Rs. 100 crores in 2017.
  - The ARCs also have to maintain a capital adequacy ratio of 15% of its risk weighted assets.
- Need for:
  - The total stress in the banking system would be in excess of Rs 15 lakh crore. The banks burdened with stressed assets and limited capital will find it difficult to manage the NPAs. There is also limited capital that the government can provide. This is where the bad bank model would step in and help both the government and banks.

What is NARCL?

The National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL), set up to take over large bad loans of more than ₹500 crore from banks, will pick up the first set of such non-performing assets (NPAs) in July.

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ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

Context:
India has hit out at the Organisation of Islamic Co-Operation (OIC) after it condemned the derogatory comments made by two BJP leaders on Prophet Muhammed and Islam.

• India’s strong response came while several countries, including India’s crucial Gulf partner, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and security partners Oman and Jordan condemned the remarks.

About OIC:
• It is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states.
• It is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations.
• The organisation states that it is “the collective voice of the Muslim world” and works to “safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony “.
• The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.
• Permanent Secretariat is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Significance of OIC for India:
• OIC’s growing economic and energy interdependence with India has become important in recent times.
• Individually, India has good relations with almost all member nations. Ties with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, especially, have improved significantly in recent years.
• The OIC includes two of India’s close neighbours, Bangladesh and Maldives.

INSTALINKS
Prelims Link:
1. What are ARCs?
2. What is SARFAESI Act?
3. Sudarshan Sen committee is related to?
4. About NARCL.

Mains Link:
Discuss the roles and functions of ARCs.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL):

1. It is an asset reconstruction company (ARC) only.
2. It is an asset management company (AMC) only.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.  
B. 2 only.  
C. Both.  
D. None.

Ans: D
HOW ARE RAJYA SABHA MPS ELECTED?

Context:
On June 10, the Assemblies of 4 states will elect 16 MPs to Rajya Sabha.

Rajya Sabha - Key facts:
- It is also called the Upper House and the Council of States.
- It is a permanent House and cannot be dissolved.
- To ensure continuity, one-third of its members retire after every second year, under Article 83(1) of the Constitution, and “biennial elections” are held to fill these vacancies.
- A nominated member may join a party within six months of taking a seat.

Composition:
Out of the 245 members, 12 are nominated by the President and 233 are representatives of the States and Union territories of Delhi and Puducherry.

Term:
- The term of a member is six years.
- Vacancies arising due to resignation, death or disqualification are filled up through bypolls, and those elected serve out the remainder of their predecessors’ term.

Roles and functions of Rajya Sabha:
- Any Bill, barring those designated as Money Bills by the Lok Sabha Speaker, needs the assent of the second chamber to become law.
- It cannot amend a Money Bill, but can recommend amendments within a stipulated time, and Lok Sabha may either accept or reject all or any of these.

Election:
Rajya Sabha MPs are elected by MLAs through an indirect election.
- Article 80(4) provides that members shall be elected by the elected members of state Assemblies through a system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote.
- The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of Rajya Sabha seats to the states and Union Territories, on the basis of the population of each state.

How are the votes counted?
The number of votes a candidate requires depends on the number of vacancies and the strength of the House. Under the Election Commission’s Conduct of Election Rules, 1961::
- If there is only one vacancy, the required quota is calculated by taking the number of votes polled, dividing it by 2, and adding 1.
- If there is more than one vacancy, the equation is based on an assigned value of 100 for every first-preference vote. The values of the votes credited to all candidates are totalled. The total is divided by 1 more than the number of vacancies, and 1 is added to this quotient.

For example, if 100 members of an Assembly vote for 3 Rajya Sabha vacancies, the required quota by any candidate would be 
\[
(100 \times 100)/(3 + 1) + 1 = 2501.
\]

Second-preference votes:
If for any seat, candidates fail to get the specified number, the second-preference votes will be taken into account, but with a lower value.

Special powers enjoyed by Rajya Sabha:
1. If it passes a resolution by a majority of not less than two-thirds of members present and voting, Parliament becomes empowered to make a law on a subject.
2. When it passes a resolution recommending creation of one or more All India Services common to the Union and the states. Parliament becomes empowered to create such services.
3. Emergency proclamation has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament within a stipulated period.
4. If a proclamation is issued at a time when Lok Sabha has been dissolved or the dissolution of Lok Sabha takes place within the period allowed for its approval, then the proclamation remains effective, if the resolution approving it is passed by Rajya Sabha within the period specified under Articles 352, 356 and 360 of the Constitution.

INSTA CURIOUS
Rajya Sabha has 245 seats. Did you know that no party has reached the halfway mark of 123 so far?
DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO IT RULES, 2021

Context:
The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has published a fresh draft of amendments to the Information Technology Rules, 2021.

What are IT Rules, 2021?
1. Significant social media firms have to appoint a chief compliance officer and have a nodal contact person who can be in touch with law enforcement agencies 24/7.
2. A grievance officer: Social media platforms will also have to name a grievance officer who shall register the grievance within 24 hours.
3. Removal of content: If there are complaints against the dignity of users, particularly women - about exposed private parts of individuals or nudity or sexual act or impersonation etc - social media platforms will be required to remove that within 24 hours after a complaint is made.
4. A monthly report: They also will have to publish a monthly report about the number of complaints received and the status of redressal.

What is a significant social media intermediary and benefits obtained under it?
Social media companies with more than 50 lakh registered users will be considered ‘significant social media intermediaries’, as per the new norms.

Latest amendments:
1. Appeal committees: Government-appointed appeal committees will be created that will be able to veto content-moderation decisions taken by social media intermediaries like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
2. Composition of Appeal committees: Appellate Committees shall consist of a Chairperson and such other Members, as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.
3. Additional responsibilities will be placed on grievance officers appointed by social media companies. Grievance officers will now have to expeditiously dispose the complaints within 72 hours (Earlier, it was 15 days).

What it means for an user?
In case a user is not satisfied with the content moderation decision taken by a company’s grievance officer, they can appeal that decision before the proposed government-appointed appeals committee.

Need for the amendments:
• So far, the only recourse a user had against companies’ content decisions is to approach the courts.
• Also, there have been many instances that grievance officers of intermediaries either do not address the grievances satisfactorily and/or fairly. The amendments will ensure that “Constitutional rights of Indian citizens are not contravened by any big tech platform by ensuring new accountability standards”.

Concerns associated:
The proposal to set up government-appointed committees has triggered concerns about the government overriding social media platforms’ content decisions.
INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. Overview of the new rules.
2. Who are intermediaries as per the definition?
3. What is safe harbour protection?
4. Grievance redressal mechanism as provided under the new rules.

MAINS LINK:
What are the concerns being raised against the new IT rules? Discuss ways to address these concerns.

Q. As per IT Rules, 2021:
1. Social media platforms will also have to name a grievance officer.
2. Significant social media firms have to appoint a chief compliance officer.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C

NATIONAL AIR SPORTS POLICY

Context:
The Union ministry of civil aviation (MoCA) announced the country’s first national air sports policy (NASP 2022).
- It has been launched to improve the state of aero sports in India, with a vision to make India a hub for air sports in the world by 2030.
- It aims to provide a safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable air sports ecosystem in India.

Highlights of the Policy:
Four-tier governance structure: The air sports in India will be under a four-tier governance structure. This includes: 1) Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) as the apex governing body, 2) National associations for individual air sports or a set of air sports, 3) Regional or state and union territory level units of the national air sports associations and 4) District-level air sports associations.

About ASFI: The ASFI will be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and will represent India at the Lausanne-headquartered Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) and other global platforms related to air sports. It will be chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Functions: It will provide governance over various aspects of air sports, including regulation, certification, competitions, awards and penalties, etc.

Rules and Functions of Each air sports association: Lay down its safety standards for equipment, infrastructure, personnel and training, and specify the disciplinary actions to be taken in case of non-compliance. Inability to do so may lead to penal action by the ASFI.

Coverage: It will cover 13 air sports activities like aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding, hang gliding, paramotoring, skydiving, and vintage aircraft.

Significance of the Policy:
- Besides the revenue from air sports activities, multiplier benefits in terms of growth in travel, tourism, infrastructure and local employment, especially in hilly areas of the country, are much greater.
- Creating air sports hubs across the country will bring in air sports professionals and tourists from across the world.

Need for:
The aerosports industry has expressed its displeasure that the government was not doing enough to encourage aero sports in the country despite the fact that there is a tremendous potential in the country keeping in view the diverse scenic locales.
- Aerosports create significant opportunities for growth of tourism, employment generation and interest in aviation activities.
- A growth-oriented NASP may help attract investments in latest aerosports technology, infrastructure and best practices.

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland is the world governing body for air sports?
Drum Rudolf Instalinks

**Prelims Link:**
1. Highlights of the policy.
2. About ASFI and its roles and functions.
3. About FAI.

**Mains Link:**
Discuss the need for and significance of an Aerosports policy.

Q.8) Consider the following statements:
1. India’s first national airports policy was unveiled in 2020.
2. It was unveiled by the Ministry of Defence.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: D

**NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP (NSG)**

**Context:**
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently said that India looks forward to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) by overcoming political impediments.

**About NSG:**
The 48-member NSG is an elite club of countries that deals with the trade-in nuclear technology and fissile materials besides contributing to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- It is a Group of nuclear supplier countries that seek to prevent nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials, equipment and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.
- The NSG first met in November 1975 in London, and is thus popularly referred to as the “London Club”.
- Its guidelines are not binding.

Benefits associated with NSG membership— Once admitted, an NSG member state gets:
1. Timely information on nuclear matters.
2. Contributes by way of information.
3. Has confirmed credentials.
4. Can act as an instrument of harmonization and coordination.
5. Is part of a very transparent process.

**Opposition of NSG membership bid:**
China, one of the five nuclear-weapon states, stridently opposes India’s NSG bid primarily on the grounds that New Delhi is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- Its opposition has made India’s entry into the group difficult as the NSG works on the principle of consensus.

Besides, India’s capacity to project its military power beyond the Indian Ocean region is still to be tested. Further, India heavily relies on weaponry imports from US and Russia for its military requirements.

**Insta curious**

Did you know that there are certain Criteria for membership of NSG? Reference: read this.

**Instalinks**

**Prelims Link:**
1. About NSG.
2. Composition.
3. Functions.

**Mains Link:**
Discuss the need for reforms in NSG.

Q. India is a part of:
1. MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime).
2. Australia Group.
3. The Wassenaar Arrangement.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. 1 and 2 only.
D. All of the above.

Ans: D
**CONTEMPT OF COURT**

**Context:**
The Supreme Court has threatened to initiate contempt proceedings against the chief secretary of Telangana if the state government failed to deposit a cost of ₹2.5 lakh within two weeks.

**What’s the issue?**
- The cost was imposed by the apex court in an April 2020 judgment striking down a law passed by the unified Andhra Pradesh government reserving 100% teacher posts for local scheduled tribes in schools situated in their areas within the state.
- The Telangana government had delayed paying its share of the cost as the top court in its judgment of April 22, 2020 apportioned the cost of ₹5 lakh to be paid equally by the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

**What is Contempt?**
While the basic idea of a contempt law is to punish those who do not respect the orders of the courts, in the Indian context, contempt is also used to punish speech that lowers the dignity of the court and interferes with the administration of justice.

**Contempt of court can be of two kinds:**
1. Civil, that is the willful disobedience of a court order or judgment or willful breach of an undertaking given to a court.
2. Criminal, that is written or spoken words or any act that scandalises the court or lowers its authority or prejudices or interferes with the due course of a judicial proceeding or interferes/obstructs the administration of justice.

**Issues with Contempt Law:**
Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution gives the right to freedom of speech and expression to all citizens, while “contempt provisions” curb people’s freedom to speak against the court’s functioning. The law is very subjective which might be used by the judiciary arbitrarily to suppress their criticism by the public.

**Analysis of Bhushan’s case:**
The suo motu contempt proceedings initiated by a bench of the Supreme Court against Mr. Bhushan constitutes an abuse of the court’s contempt jurisdiction, which—for good reason—is to be exercised sparingly and with circumspection. It is because, according to some experts, there is nothing in Mr. Bhushan’s tweets that qualify as contempt of Court.

**Why courts need contempt powers?**
- To ensure their orders are implemented.
- To sustain the independent nature of the judiciary itself.
  - While the judiciary issues orders, they are implemented by the government or private parties. If the courts are unable to enforce their orders, then the rule of law itself will come to grinding halt.

**Relevant provisions:**
- Article 129 and 215 of the Constitution of India empowers the Supreme Court and High Court respectively to punish people for their respective contempt.
- Section 10 of The Contempt of Courts Act of 1971 defines the power of the High Court to punish contempt of its subordinate courts.
- The Constitution also includes contempt of court as a reasonable restriction to the freedom of speech and expression under Article 19, along with elements like public order and defamation.

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. Powers of SC vs HCs wrt Contempt cases.
2. Constitutional provisions in this regard.

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss how contempt cases are handled by Supreme Court in India.
QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2023

Context:
Leading global higher education analysts QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) has released the 19th edition of one of the most-consulted international university rankings.

• It is the only international ranking to have received the approval of International Ranking Expert Group (IREG).

How are institutions ranked?
QS uses six indicators to compile the ranking: Academic reputation (AR), employer reputation (ER), citations per faculty (CPF), faculty/student ratio, international faculty ratio and international student ratio.

Performance of Indian Institutions:
• The latest edition features 41 Indian universities, of which 12 improved their positions, 12 remained stable, 10 declined and seven are new entries.
• The IISc ranks 155th globally, and is the global leader in the citations per faculty (CpF) indicator, which QS uses to evaluate the impact of the research produced by universities.
• The IISc is the fastest rising South Asian university among the top-200 universities in the QS rankings, having climbed 31 places year on year.
• The IIT Bombay, which was the top Indian university in QS World University Rankings of the previous edition, is the second best Indian institution this time and climbed five places globally to reach the 172 rank.
• The third best Indian university is the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (IITD), followed by IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur.
• P. Jindal Global University is the top-ranked private institute in India.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Article 129 and 215 of the Constitution of India empowers the Supreme Court and High Court respectively to punish people for their respective contempt.
2. Section 10 of The Contempt of Courts Act of 1971 defines the power of the High Court to punish contempt of its subordinate courts.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.  
B. 2 only.  
C. Both.  
D. None.  
Ans: C

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. QS World University Rankings is released annually by UNCTAD in association with UNICEF.
2. In the 2023rd edition, IISc ranks 155th globally.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.  
B. 2 only.  
C. Both.  
D. None.  
Ans: B

BIMSTEC

Context:
June 6 marked the completion of 25 years since the 1997 Bangkok Declaration launched a modest grouping (of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand), with the acronym, BIST-EC.

• Three countries (Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar) joined it later to make it the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Key achievements:
1. It has prioritised the sectors of cooperation, reducing them from the unwieldy 14 to the more manageable seven, with each member-state serving as the lead country for the assigned sector.
2. It has taken measures to strengthen the Secretariat, although some members are yet to extend adequate personnel support to it.

3. The grouping has also registered progress in combating terrorism, forging security cooperation, and creating mechanisms and practices for the better management of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

**Challenges ahead:**
- Continuing inability to produce a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) 18 years after the signing of the Framework Agreement.
- Only limited progress has been achieved so far in terms of connectivity, despite the adoption of the Master Plan for Connectivity supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- The movement towards establishing the BIMSTEC Development Fund is minimal.

**What is BIMSTEC?**
In an effort to integrate the region, the grouping was formed in 1997, originally with Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and later included Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.
- BIMSTEC, which now includes five countries from South Asia and two from ASEAN, is a bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia. It includes all the major countries of South Asia, except Maldives, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**Why does the region matter?**
- Over one-fifth (22%) of the world’s population live in the seven countries around it, and they have a combined GDP close to $2.7 trillion.
- The Bay also has vast untapped natural resources. One-fourth of the world’s traded goods cross the Bay every year.

**Why is BIMSTEC important for India?**
As the region’s largest economy, India has a lot at stake.
- BIMSTEC connects not only South and Southeast Asia, but also the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal.
- For India, it is a natural platform to fulfil our key foreign policy priorities of ‘Neighborhood First’ and ‘Act East’.
- For New Delhi, one key reason for engagement is in the vast potential that is unlocked with stronger connectivity. Almost 300 million people, or roughly one-quarter of India’s population, live in the four coastal states adjacent to the Bay of Bengal (Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal).
- From the strategic perspective, the Bay of Bengal, a funnel to the Malacca straits, has emerged a key theatre for an increasingly assertive China in maintaining its access route to the Indian Ocean.
- As China mounts assertive activities in the Bay of Bengal region, with increased submarine movement and ship visits in the Indian Ocean, it is in India’s interest to consolidate its internal engagement among the BIMSTEC countries.

**INSTALINKS**
**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. About BIMSTEC.
2. Members.
3. Objectives.

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss the significance of BIMSTEC for India.
**INDIA 7TH IN FDI INFLOWS: UNCTAD**

**Context:**
The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) has released the annual World Investment Report.

**Highlights of the Report:**
1. India is ranked seventh despite a 30% decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country.
2. The United States ($367 billion) remained the top recipient of FDI.
3. China ($181 billion) and Hong Kong ($141 billion) also retained second and third position respectively.
4. Among the top 10 host economies, only India saw a decline in its inflows.
5. However, outward FDI from India rose 43 per cent to $15.5 billion in 2021.

**What is FDI?**
Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment from a party in one country into a business or corporation in another country with the intention of establishing a lasting interest. With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country.

**About United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD):**
- It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
- It is part of the UN Secretariat.
- It reports to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, but has its own membership, leadership, and budget.
- It is also a part of the United Nations Development Group.

**Objectives and roles:**
- It supports developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively. Along with other UN departments and agencies.
- It also measures the progress made in the Sustainable Development Goals, as set out in Agenda 2030.

**Reports published by UNCTAD are:**
1. Trade and Development Report
2. World Investment Report
3. Technology and Innovation Report
4. Digital Economy Report

**Q. BIMSTEC doesn’t include:**
1. Maldives.
3. Pakistan.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. 1 and 3 only.
D. All of the above.

**Ans: D**

**Q. The reports released by UNCTAD include:**
1. Trade and Development Report
2. World Investment Report
3. Technology and Innovation Report
4. Digital Economy Report

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 and 2 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. 3 and 4 only.
D. All of the above.

**Ans: D**
IAEA BOARD PASSES RESOLUTION CRITICIZING IRAN

Context:
The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors has passed a resolution calling on Iran to fully cooperate with the UN inspectors’ investigation into three undeclared sites.
- The resolution was submitted by the UK, France, Germany and the US to the IAEA and was backed by 30 countries.
- Only Russia and China opposed the move. Iran condemned the resolution.

Why it matters?
It’s the first resolution of its kind passed in two years and comes after 10 weeks of stalemate in the indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

About IAEA:
- Set up as the world’s “Atoms for Peace” organization in 1957 within the United Nations family.
- Reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.
- Headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Functions:
- Works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- Seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.

Programs:
1. Program of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT).
2. Human Health Program.

INTERPOL

Context:
Preparations are afoot for the 90th Interpol General Assembly, to be held in Delhi.

What is Interpol?
- The International Criminal Police Organisation, or Interpol, is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation.
- headquartered in Lyon, France.
- Formed in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission, and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.
- India joined the organisation in 1949, and is one of its oldest members.

Interpol’s declared global policing goals include:
- Countering terrorism, promoting border integrity worldwide, protection of vulnerable communities, providing a secure cyberspace for people and businesses, curbing illicit markets, supporting environment security, and promoting global integrity.
What is the Interpol General Assembly?
- It is Interpol's supreme governing body, and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- It meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy.
- Each country is represented by one or more delegates at the Assembly, who are typically chiefs of law enforcement agencies.
- The Assembly also elects the members of the Interpol Executive Committee, the governing body which “provides guidance and direction in between sessions of the Assembly”.

Interpol and India:
- The CBI is the designated nodal body for the Interpol in India. It works in close coordination with the Interpol and other member countries for the sharing of inputs related to trans-national crimes and persons wanted by enforcement agencies across the world.
- India has been a member since 1956.
- Like any member nation, India maintains a National Central Bureau, which serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.
- The NCB is the designated contact point for the Interpol.

PFMS (PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

Context:
The Single Nodal Agency (SNA) Dashboard of PFMS (Public Financial Management System) was recently launched by the Union Ministry of Finance.

What is SNA Dashboard?
It is a major reform initiated in 2021 with regards to the manner in which funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are released, disbursed and monitored.

- Under this system, each state is required to identify and designate an SNA for every scheme.
- All funds for that State in a particular scheme are now credited in this bank account and all expenses by all other Implementing Agencies involved are affected from this account.

Significance of SNA Model:
1. Ensures timely allocation of funds.
3. Tracking of funds has become easier.

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. Who is a fugitive economic offender?
2. What is Interpol.
3. Various notices issued.
4. Overview of Interpol’s crime programmes.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of Interpol. Suggest reforms.

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that like Interpol (which is a non-UN body), there is something called The United Nations Police (UNPOL). There is an Europol.
About PFMS:
- It was previously known as Central Plan Schemes Monitoring System (CPSMS).
- It is a web-based online software application developed and implemented by the Office of Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance.
- **Objective**: To facilitate a sound Public Financial Management System for the Government of India (GoI) by establishing an efficient fund flow system as well as a payment cum accounting network.
- **Coverage**: At present, the ambit of PFMS coverage includes Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes as well as other expenditures including the Finance Commission Grants.

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. About PFMS.
2. Coverage of PFMS.
3. What is SNA Dashboard?

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss the significance of PFMS.

**NATIONAL E-VIDHAN APPLICATION (NEVA) PROJECT:**

**Context:**
A delegation of MLAs from Gujarat recently visited the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, to learn about the novel e-Vidhan system for paperless proceedings that has been recently adopted by the UP state assembly.

**What is e-Vidhan?**
- It is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the Digital India Programme.
- The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) is the ‘Nodal Ministry’ for its implementation in all the 31 States/UTs with Legislatures.
- The **funding** for e-Vidhan is provided by the MoPA and technical support by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MietY).
- The funding of NeVA is through Central Sponsored Scheme. 60:40; and 90:10 for North East & hilly States and 100% for UTs.

**Aim of the project:** To bring all the legislatures of the country together, in one platform thereby creating a massive data depository without having the complexity of multiple applications.

**Key features:**
- Paperless Assembly or e-Assembly is a concept
involving electronic means to facilitate the work of Assembly.

- It enables automation of entire law making process, tracking of decisions and documents, sharing of information.
- Through the cloud technology (Meghraj), data deployed can be accessed anywhere at any time.
- Himachal Pradesh is already the first Digital Legislature of the country.

**State Government’s Role in the implementation of e-Vidhan:**
- The State Government will appoint a Secretary level officer to be designated as the nodal officer/representative for e-Vidhan implementation in the State Legislature(s).
- State Government will bear the funds required for running of e-Vidhan MMP after 3 years.
- The State Government will ensure capacity building for the effective implementation of e-Vidhan MMP module.
- The State Government/Legislature will undertake maintenance and replacement of ICT equipment after 3 years.

**DRAFT ANTI-TRAFFICKING BILL:**

**Context:**
Activists from different part of the country are planning to travel to the national capital and press for the passage of the [Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2021](https://www.insightsonindia.com).

**Highlights of the Bill:**
- The bill proposes stringent punishments for offenders, including hefty fines and seizing of their properties.
- The Bill also extends beyond the protection of women and children as victims to now include transgenders as well as any person who may be a victim of trafficking.
- The draft also does away with the provision that a victim necessarily needs to be transported from one place to another to be defined as a victim.
- **Exploitation has been defined to include,** at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation including pornography, any act of physical exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or forced removal of organs etc.

**Applicability- The law will extend to:**
1. All citizens inside as well as outside India.
2. Persons on any ship or aircraft registered in India wherever it may be or carrying Indian citizens wherever they may be.
3. A foreign national or a stateless person who has his or her residence in India at the time of commission of offence under this Act.
4. Every offence of trafficking in persons with cross-border implications.
5. Defence personnel and government servants, doctors and paramedical staff or anyone in a position of authority.

**What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India?**
1. Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under Article 23 (1).
2. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA) is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
3. **Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013** has come into force wherein Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code has been substituted with Section 370.

**INSTALINKS:**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
National e-Vidhan Project.
What is Meghraj?
What is cloud computing?

**MAINS LINK:**
Discuss the significance of the National e-Vidhan Project.

**Q. 2) Consider the following statements:**
1. In December 2021, the Government of Dubai became the world’s first government to go 100 percent paperless.
2. The National e-Vidhan Project is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the Digital India Programme.

Which of the above Statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

**Ans:** C
and 370A IPC which provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking.

CHILD LABOUR DAY:

Context:
The United Nations observes June 12 each year as the ‘World Day Against Child Labour’ to bring attention to the evil practices of child labour across the world. The International Labour Organisation launched this day in 2002 to tackle this global issue against child labour.

Theme: “Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour”.

UN report on Child Labour:
- 160 million children are still engaged in child labour – some as young as five.
- At the beginning of 2020, one in ten children aged five and over were involved in child labour worldwide.
- The number of children in child labour declined by 85.5 million between 2000 and 2020 i.e from 16% to 9.6%.
- At the global level, national expenditure on social protection for children amounts to only 1.1% of GDP.
- Africa is the region with the largest share of children in the population.

ILO Conventions on the issue:
The ILO Convention No. 182, which deals with the worst forms of child labour as well as ILO Convention No. 138, that deals with the minimum age for employment, are the two main global conventions on the issue.

Indian Constitution provisions in this regard:
- Article 21(A) and Article 45 – The child has the right to Education i.e. the state shall provide compulsory and free education to the children of the age six to 14 years.
- Article 24 – There is a provision under which a child below the age of 14 years cannot be employed in any mine, factory or hazardous workplace.
- Article 39(f) – The child’s youth and childhood are to be protected against moral and material abandonment and exploitation.

INSTALINKS:
PRELIMS LINK:
1. Section 370 and 370A of the IPC are related to?
2. Article 23(1) of the constitution.
3. Blue Heart campaign of the UN is related to?
4. Who are first responders?
5. About World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

MAINS LINK:
What are the constitutional & legislative provisions related to Trafficking in India? Discuss.

Q. 3) Consider the following statements:
1. Criminal Law (amendment) Act 2013 has substituted Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code with Section 370 and 370A IPC.
2. 370A IPC provides for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: c
Government measures undertaken to eradicate child labour in India:
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986) to prohibit the engagement of children in certain employments and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other employments.
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016: The Amendment Act completely prohibits the employment of children below 14 years.
National Policy on Child Labour (1987), with a focus more on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations and processes, rather than on prevention.
Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 and amendment of the JJ Act in 2006: includes the working child in the category of children in need of care and protection, without any limitation of age or type of occupation.
Pencil: The government has launched a dedicated platform viz. pencil.gov.in to ensure effective enforcement of child labour laws and end child labour.
The Right to Education Act 2009 has made it mandatory for the state to ensure that all children aged six to 14 years are in school and receive free education.

Context:
Pakistan is hoping for some reprieve as the international watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will begin meetings in Berlin ahead of its plenary session.

Background:
Pakistan was put on the grey list by the Paris-based FATF in June 2018, and the country has been struggling to come out of it.
It has now completed 26 of the 27 action items given to it in 2018.

About FATF:
The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7.
It is a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.
The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

Roles and functions:
Initially it was established to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering. In April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Composition:**
The FATF currently comprises 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations, representing most major financial centres in all parts of the globe. It also has observers and associate members.

**What is a blacklist and grey list?**
**Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries.

**Grey List:** Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

**Considered in the grey list may face:**
1. Economic sanctions from IMF, World Bank, ADB.
2. Problem in getting loans from IMF, World Bank, ADB and other countries.
3. Reduction in international trade.
4. International boycott.

**INSTALINKS:**
**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. G7 vs G8 vs G20.
2. Black vs Grey list.
3. Are FATF’s decisions binding on member countries?
4. Who heads the FATF?
5. Where is its secretariat?

**MAINS LINK:**
What is the mandate and objectives of the Financial Action Task Force? Discuss.

**SECTION 33(7) OF THE REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE’S ACT:**

**Context:**
Recently, the Election Commission of India asked the Union Law Ministry to consider limiting the seats from which a candidate can contest to just one.

**Who has the power in this regard?**
Constitution allows the Parliament to make provisions in all matters relating to elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures.

In accordance, the Parliament has enacted the following laws:
1. Representation of the People Act 1950.
2. Representation of the People Act 1951.

**Section 33(7) of RPA 1951:**
Section 33(7) of the Representation of People’s Act permits a candidate to contest any election (Parliamentary, State Assembly, Biennial Council, or bye-elections) from up to two constituencies.

1. The provision was introduced in 1996 prior to which there was no bar on the number of constituencies from which a candidate could contest.
2. Section 70 bars candidates from representing two constituencies in the Lok Sabha/state.

**Why candidates should be barred from contesting from more than one seat?**
- One person, one vote & one candidate, one constituency is the dictum of democracy. However, as per the law, as it stands today, a person can contest the election for the same office from two constituencies simultaneously.

- When a candidate contests from two seats, it is imperative that he has to vacate one of the two seats if he wins both. This, apart from the consequent unavoidable financial burden on the public exchequer, government manpower and other resources for holding bye-election is also an injustice to the voters of the constituency which the candidate is quitting from.

**Alternative suggested by the Election commission:**
The ECI has alternatively suggested that if existing provisions are retained then the candidate contesting from two seats should bear the cost of the bye-election to the seat that the contestant decides to vacate in the event of his/her winning both seats. The amount in such an event could be Rs 5 lakh for assembly election and Rs 10 lakh for parliament election.

**SC’s views:**
The Supreme Court had in December 2017 issued notices seeking replies from the Election Commission and
the Centre on the issue. At the time, the Supreme Court had said the practice of one candidate contesting multiple seats was a drain on the exchequer since it necessitated bypolls. A petition has also been filed in the Supreme Court challenging Section 33(7).

INSTALINKS:
PRELIMS LINK:
1. Representation of People’s Act.
2. Section 33(7) of RPA.
3. Laws related to Contesting in more than one constituency.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of Section 33(7) of RPA.

NATIONAL E-GOVERNANCE SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT 2021 REPORT:

Context:
The second edition of the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment 2021 was released recently.

About the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA):
- Constituted in 2019 by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG).

- It is a biennial study that assesses States, Union Territories (UTs), and focuses on Central Ministries on the effectiveness of e-Governance service delivery.

Criteria:

- The assessment covered 56 mandatory services for each States & UTs and 27 services for the focus Central Ministries.

Performance of various states:
1. Among the North-East and Hill States, Meghalaya and Nagaland are the leading State Portals with an overall compliance of more than 90% across all assessment parameters.
2. Among Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir ranked the highest with an overall compliance of nearly 90%.
3. Among the Remaining States, Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh had a compliance of more than 85%.
4. Amongst all the States and UTs, Kerala had the highest overall compliance score.

Ranking of central ministries:
1. Among the focused Central Ministries, Home Affairs, Rural Development, Education, and Environment, Forest & Climate Change are the leading Ministry Portals with an overall compliance of more than 80% across all assessment parameters.
2. The Ministry Portal of Home Affairs had the highest overall compliance score.
3. The Central Public Procurement Portal, Digital Police Portal, and Bhavishya Portal are the leading Ministry Services Portals with an overall compliance of more than 85% across all assessment parameters.

INSTALINKS:
PRELIMS LINK:
1. National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA).
2. NeSDA 2021 – Highlights.
3. NeSDA – Criteria.

MAINS LINK:
What is good governance? Discuss.

Q. 5) Consider the following statements:
1. National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) was Constituted in 2019 by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG).
2. It is a biennial study.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a. 1 only.
b. 2 only.
c. Both.
d. None.
Context:
When **British Columbia** decriminalizes small amounts of some illicit drugs next year, **Canada** will join a growing number of countries that have taken strides toward removing penalties for drug use. **Canada** recently decided that from Jan. 31, adults in B.C. will be allowed to possess up to 2.5 grams of opioids, cocaine, methamphetamine and MDMA — a signal it will treat addiction as a mental health issue rather than a judicial one.

The Portuguese model:
Back in 2001, faced with a crisis of heroin overdose deaths, Portugal became the first country in the world to decriminalize the possession and use of all illegal drugs.

- Instead of sending people to court for drug possession, its model focuses on education, treatment and harm reduction.

Significance of the move:
Canada’s move is the latest among the series of policy tweaks that are being either contemplated or executed by different countries to re-adjust their response in the ongoing global ‘war on drugs’.

What is the ‘war on drugs’?
In 1961, the UN had passed the **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs** which sought to prohibit the production and supply of various substances through international cooperation.

- This marked the beginning of a global campaign to eradicate the use of illicit drugs and its production, called the ‘War on Drugs’.
- The campaign believed that prohibition of drugs would reduce consumption.

Present scenario:
- In a 2011 report, **the Global Commission on Drug Policy stated**, “The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world.”
- The report claimed that in the period that such a campaign has been in play, the global market of illegal drugs has not been curtailed, but in reality has grown.

World Drug Report 2021:
- Around 275 million people used drugs globally in the last year. Over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders.
- Rise in the use of cannabis during the pandemic has been reported by most countries.
- Non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs has also been observed in the same period.
- The latest global estimates say, about 5.5 per cent of the population between 15 and 64 years have used drugs at least once in the past year.
- Over 11 million people globally are estimated to inject drugs – half of them have Hepatitis C.
- Opioids continue to account for the largest burden of disease-linked to drug abuse.

Major Reasons for Drug Abuse:
1. To be accepted by the peers.
2. Increasing economic stress.
3. Changing cultural values.
4. Experimentation.
5. Neurotic pleasure.
6. Ineffective Policing.

Drug abuse cases and numbers in India:
- According to **the National Crime Records Bureau's Crime in India 2020 report**, a total of 59,806 cases were lodged under NDPS Act.
- In 2019, there were 3.1 crore cannabis users and 2.3 crore opioid users.

Indian Government has taken several policy and other initiatives to deal with drug trafficking problem:
1. The ‘**Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan**’ or a ‘**Drugs-Free India Campaign**’ was flagged off on 15th August 2020 across 272 districts of the country found to be most vulnerable based on the data.
available from various sources.
3. The government constituted the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in November, 2016.
4. The government has constituted a fund called “National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse” to meet the expenditure incurred in combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs; rehabilitating addicts, and educating the public against drug abuse, etc.

**INSTALINKS:**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. About UNODC.
2. Overview of scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control”.
3. Composition of Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD).

**MAINS LINK:**

India is vulnerable to narcotic drug trafficking. Critically examine its causes. Also comment on the role of Government in combating drug problem.

Q. 6) Consider the following statements:
1. The ‘Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan’ was launched in 2020.
2. The government constituted the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in 2016.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

**DEADLINE FOR FREEZING ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES EXTENDED, NO CENSUS THIS YEAR**

**Context:**
The census exercise, which was originally scheduled to take place in 2021, has been further pushed to 2023-24.

Why has census been postponed?
- Normally, before every Census, states are required to provide information on changes in the number of notified districts, villages, towns and other administrative units such as tehsils, talukas and police stations to the Registrar General of India (RGI).
- After this RGI freezes the administrative boundaries so that census tasks can begin.
- However, this time, RGI has extended the deadline for freezing administrative boundaries to December 31, 2022.
- Since the Census can only begin a few months after the administrative boundaries are frozen, the possibility of a Census in 2022 is ruled out.

**Census in India:**
- **Definition:** Population Census is the total process of collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specific time, of all persons in a country or a well-defined part of a country.
- **First Non-synchronous Census:** It was conducted in India in 1872 during the reign of Governor-General Lord Mayo.
- **First Synchronous Census:** The first synchronous census was taken under British rule on February 17, 1881, by C. Plowden (Census Commissioner of India).
- The decennial Census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Until 1951, the Census Organization was set up on an ad-hoc basis for each Census.
- The population census is a Union subject under Article 246 of India Constitution. It is listed as serial number 69 of the seventh schedule of the constitution.
- Census is conducted under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948.
- Under this act, the information collected during the population Census is considered confidential and is not even accessible to the courts of law.
- The law specifies penalties for both public and census officials for non-compliance or violation of any provision of the Act.

**Significance of Census:**
- **Source of Information:** The Indian Census is the
largest single source of a variety of statistical information on different characteristics of the people of India.

- Researchers and Demographers use census data to analyze growth and trends of population and make projections.

- **Good Governance**: The data collected through the census is used for administration, planning and policy making as well as management and evaluation of various programmes by the Government.

- **Demarcation**: Census data is also used for demarcation of constituencies and allocation of representation to Parliament, State legislative assemblies and the local bodies.

- **Better Access for Businesses**: The census data is also important for business houses and industries for strengthening and planning their business for penetration into areas, which had hitherto remained, uncovered.

- **Giving Grants**: Finance Commission provides grants to the states on the basis of population figures available from the Census data.

**Fifteenth Census (2011):**

In the 2011 Census, a significant fall in the case of EAG States (Empowered action group states: UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan & Orissa) was noticed for the first time.

**Sixteenth Census (2021):** (Postponed)

- It will be the first digital Census, also with a provision for self-enumeration.

- It is for the first time that information about households headed by a person from the Transgender Community and members living in the family will be collected.

- Earlier there was a column for males and female only.

**How is National Population Registry different from Census?**

The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country and it is “mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.” While similar data is collected through Census, according to Section 15 of the Census Act, 1948, all individual level information collected in Census is confidential and “only aggregated data are released at various administrative levels.”

- The NPR was first compiled in 2010 and updated in 2015 and it already has a database of 119 crore residents.

**Who is a usual resident?**

A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.

**Criticisms surrounding NPR:**

Many Opposition-ruled States have opposed the update of the NPR due to its link with the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

According to Citizenship Rules framed in the year 2003, NPR is the first step towards compilation of National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) or NRC.

**INSTA LINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**

1. Important data from Census 2011
2. What is NPR?
3. Who conducts census?

**MAINS LINK**

How are national census different from the National Population registry? Also, discuss the importance of the census and some of the concerns related to it. (15M)

**Q7. With reference to the census, consider the following statements:**

1. The first synchronous census was taken under British rule by Governor-General Lord Mayo.
2. In the sixteenth census, first time information of households headed by a person from the Transgender Community and members living in the family will be collected.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

**OBC STIR FOR 12% SEPARATE QUOTA CONTINUES**

**Context:**

People from five OBC communities continued to block the Jaipur-Agra Highway at Aroda village in Rajasthan Bharatpur district, demanding a separate 12% quota in jobs and higher education institutions.
OBC Reservation:
The Kalelkar Commission, set up in 1953, was the first to identify backward classes other than the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at the national level.
The Mandal Commission Report, 1980 estimated the OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities as backward.
It recommended increasing the existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include the OBCs.
The central government reserved 27% of seats in union civil posts and services for OBCs [Article 16(4)].
The quotas were subsequently enforced in central government educational institutions [Article 15 (4)].
In 2008, the Supreme Court directed the central government to exclude the creamy layer (advanced sections) among the OBC.
The 102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018 provided constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which was previously a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
NCBC has the authority to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding socially and educationally backward classes.

Article 340 of the Indian Constitution
The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties.
A Commission so appointed shall investigate the matters referred to them and present to the President a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper.
The President shall cause a copy of the report so presented together with a memorandum explaining the action taken thereon to be laid before each House of Parliament.

Q8. Consider the following statements:
1. The 102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018 provided statutory status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).
2. The Constitution empowers Parliament to appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as it thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes.
Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

17 OPPOSITION PARTIES TO FIELD A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL POLL

Context:
Consultations on putting up a joint candidate for the Presidential election, 17 Opposition parties attended a meeting hosted by West Bengal Chief Minister.

Constitutional provisions regarding President
- **Part V of the Constitution (The Union)** under Chapter I (The Executive) lists out the qualification, election and impeachment of the President of India.
- The President of India is the head of state of the Republic of India.
- The President is the formal head of the executive, legislature and judiciary of India and is also the commander-in-chief of the Indian Armed Forces.
- **Article 54**: Election of President
- **Article 55**: Manner of election of President.
- **Article 56**: Term of office of President
- **Article 57**: Eligibility for re-election.
- **Article 58**: Qualifications for election as President

How is the President elected?
- The Indian President is elected through an electoral college system, wherein the votes are cast by national and State-level lawmakers.
- The elections are conducted and overseen by the Election Commission (EC) of India.
- The **electoral college** is made up of:
  - All the elected members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs)
  - Elected Members of the Legislative Assemblies of States and Union Territories (MLAs).

Procedure:
Before the voting, comes the nomination stage, where the candidate intends to stand in the election, files the nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 seconders.
Unlike general elections, where electors vote for a single party’s candidate, the voters of the electoral college write the names of candidates on the ballot paper in the order of preference.

The President’s election is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting is by secret ballot.

**Value of each vote and how is it calculated?**

- A vote cast by each MP or MLA is not calculated as one vote.
- The fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha is 708.
- Meanwhile, the vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members in its legislative Assembly.
- The value of each MLAs vote is determined by dividing the population of the State by the number of MLAs in its legislative Assembly, and the quotient achieved is further divided by 1000.
- **Uttar Pradesh has the highest vote value for each of its MLAs, at 208.**
- The value of one MLAs vote in Maharashtra is 175, while that in Arunachal Pradesh is just 8.

**Requirements to secure a victory in Presidential election:**

- A nominated candidate does not secure victory based on a simple majority but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes.
- While counting, the EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the electoral college through paper ballots and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1.
Recommendations by India during the meeting:
Cooperation on terrorism without reservations.
Preventing the use of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) by terrorists.
Need for urgent reform of the multilateral system
Importance of resilient supply chains.

BRICS: Areas of Cooperation:
Economic Cooperation
People-to-People exchange
Political and Security Cooperation
Cooperation Mechanism

New Development Bank (NDB):
- NDB is headquartered in Shanghai.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB) by the Fortaleza Declaration.
- The NDB functions on a consultative mechanism among the BRICS members with all the member countries possessing equal rights.

Issues between India and China: Galwan Valley

• The valley refers to the land that sits between steep mountains that buffet the Galwan River.
• The river has its source in Aksai Chin, on China’s side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and it flows from the east to Ladakh, where it meets the Shyok river on India’s side of the LAC.
• The valley is strategically located between Ladhakh in the west and Aksai Chin in the east, which is currently controlled by China as part of its Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

DEMOLITION DRIVES MAY CHALLENGE THE RULE OF LAW

Context:
- The recent demolition drives in the aftermath of the row over the remarks on Prophet Muhammad may challenge certain basic tenets of law, including the right of a person to be heard first.
- The state can deprive a person of his or her property only after following due procedure and under the authority of a valid law as mandated under Article 300A of the Constitution.

Rule of Law:
- Rule of law is a legal principle that law should govern a nation, as opposed to being governed by arbitrary decisions of individual government officials.
- It primarily refers to the influence and authority of law within society, particularly as a constraint upon behavior, including behavior of government officials.
- The doctrine of rule of law has its origin in England and is given by A.V. Dicey which has 3 fundamental principles:
  1. Absence of arbitrary power, that is, no man is
punished except for a breach of law.

2. **Equality before the law**: equal subjection of all citizens (rich or poor, high or low, official or non-official) to the ordinary law of the land administered by the ordinary law courts.

3. **The primacy of the rights of individuals**, that is, the constitution is the result of the rights of the individual as defined and enforced by courts of law, rather than the constitution being the source of the individual rights.

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Some of the challenges in upholding Rule of law in a democratic country like India. (15M)

Q11. Consider the following statements:

1. Right to property was first time included within the constitution by the 44th constitutional amendment Act, 1978.
2. Right to property is a constitutional right under Article 300A.

Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?

A. 1 only  
B. 2 only  
C. Both 1 and 2  
D. Neither 1 nor 2

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**SUSPENSION OF 7 BENGAL MLAS REVKED**

**Context:**

West Bengal Legislative Assembly Speaker revoked the suspension of seven MLAs, including that of Leader of the Opposition.

**Rules of house:**

The Speaker may direct any member who refuses to obey his decision, or whose conduct is, in his opinion, grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Assembly”.

The member must absent himself during the remainder of the day’s meeting. Should any member be ordered to withdraw for a second time in the same session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself “for any period not longer than the remainder of the Session”.

**Provisions for Suspension of a Member of Parliament:**

*Rules 373, 374, and 374A of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha* provide for the withdrawal of a member whose conduct is “grossly disorderly”, and suspension of one who abuses the rules of the House or willfully obstructs its business.

The maximum suspension as per these Rules is “for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less”.

The maximum suspension for *Rajya Sabha under Rules 255 and 256 also does not exceed the remainder of the session*.

Similar Rules also are in place for *state legislative assemblies* and councils which prescribe a maximum sus-

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**Article 300A:**

- It states that no person shall be deprived of his property save by the authority of law.
- It protects an individual from interference by the State and dispossesses a person of the property unless it is in accordance with the procedure established by law.
- Right to Property is no longer a fundamental right, rather it is a Constitutional Right and now exists in Article 300A.
- Article 300A was inserted shortly after the Emergency Through the Constitution *44th Amendment Act of 1978*.
- In *T Plantation Pvt. Ltd. Vs. State of Karnataka, 2011* the SC held that public purpose was a pre-condition for deprivation of a person of his property under Article 300A of the Constitution and the right to claim compensation was also inbuilt in that Article.
- The right to property under Article 300A is a human right (former Supreme Court Judge)

**INSTA LINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**

1. Rule of Law  
2. Article 14  
3. Article 300A  
4. Prophet Mohammad in Islam

**MAINS LINK**

What do you understand by ‘Rule of Law’? Discuss
pension not exceeding the remainder of the session.

Article 212 (1):
It states that “The validity of any proceedings in the Legislature of a State shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure”.

Prelims link and Mains Link:
For how long can an MLA be suspended?

Practice Questions:
Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The maximum suspension of a member of Legislative assembly as per these Rules is for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less.
2. The Constitution provides for the withdrawal of a member whose conduct is “grossly disorderly”, and suspension of one who abuses the rules of the House or willfully obstructs its business.

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

Q. The Speaker has to remain neutral and act independently of political morality and pressure. How can we guarantee the Speaker’s impartiality? (10M)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT NATIONAL DATA GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK POLICY

Context:
The Minister of State, Electronics & Information Technology and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship highlighted the rapid digitalization and the subsequent rise in data volumes necessitating a framework for harnessing the potential of this data.
Government’s vision is to build a modern framework for Data Governance that will be a kinetic enabler of India’s Digital Economy.

Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy:
Indian Datasets programme: It calls for the creation of an India Datasets programme, which will consist of non-personal and anonymised datasets from Central government entities that have collected data from Indian citizens or those in India. Private companies will be “encouraged” to share such data.

The non-personal data housed within this programme would be accessible to start ups and Indian researchers (Non-personal data is any set of data which does not contain personally identifiable information).

India Data Management Office (IDMO): The draft also calls for creation of an India Data Management Office (IDMO), which will be in charge of designing and managing the India Datasets platform.
The IDMO will prescribe rules and standards, including anonymization standards for all entities (government and private).
For purposes of safety and trust, any non-personal data sharing by any entity can be only via platforms designated and authorized by IDMO.

No Selling of Data: The most significant change in this new draft is the omission of the most contentious provision in the old draft — selling data collected at the Central level in the open market.

Suggestions included:
Consultative process informing the functioning of the IDMO
Provisions for harnessing the future potential of integrated datasets and clarifications around the nature of engagement with private players.
Furthermore, information and clarity on the operations of the India Data Management Office
Access to annotated datasets for AI innovation
Active collaboration with private sector and social impact firms to build data capacity

Practice Question
Q 12. With reference to Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy, consider the following statements:
1. The non-personal data housed within this programme will not be accessible to start ups.
2. selling data collected at the Central level in the open market is permissible.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?
A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q. Critically analyze the recently released major provisions of the Draft National Data Governance Framework Policy. (10M)
WHAT IS THE INTER-STATE COUNCIL (ISC)?

Context:
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin wrote to Prime Minister, asking that at least three meetings of the Inter-State Council should be held every year to “strengthen the spirit of cooperative federalism”.

Other suggestions:
Discuss important bills in ISC first: Bills of national importance should be placed before the Council before being tabled in Parliament. This will enable “effective and interactive communication” between the states and the Centre on issues of common interest.

Sarkaria Commission recommendation: In 1988, the Sarkaria Commission suggested the Council should exist as a permanent body, and in 1990 it came into existence through a Presidential Order.

Effective working of ISC will reduce judicial intervention: What could be settled amicably among the executive branches is often taken to the doorsteps of the judicial branch.

Reconstitution of ISC:
Last month ISC was reconstituted: The body will now have 10 Union Ministers as permanent invitees, and the standing committee of the Council has been reconstituted with Home Minister Amit Shah as Chairman. The Finance minister and the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, UP, and Gujarat are some of the other standing committee members.

Inter-State Council
It is a mechanism that was constituted “to support Centre-State and Inter-State coordination and cooperation in India”.

Established: Under Article 263 of the Constitution, which states that the President may constitute such a body if a need is felt for it.

Function: inquiring into and advising on disputes between states, investigating and discussing subjects in which two states or states and the Union have a common interest, and making recommendations for the better coordination of policy and action.

Members: PM (chairman), Chief Ministers of all states and UTs with legislative assemblies, and Administrators of other UTs. Six Ministers of Cabinet rank in the Centre’s Council of Ministers, nominated by the Prime Min-

ister, are also its members.

Amit Shah as Chairman. The Finance minister and the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, UP, and Gujarat are some of the other standing committee members.

Issues with the ISC:
Irregular meetings: Council has met only once in the last six years — and there has been no meeting since July 2016.

Since its constitution in 1990, the body has met only 11 times, although its procedure states it should meet at least three times every year.

Recommendations are advisory in nature: non-binding in nature and therefore sometimes ignored by government and states

Lack of expertise: No presence of technical and management/administrative experts

No engagement with Civil society/NGO

Not a permanent body: President can establish it at any time if it appears to him that the public interests would be served

Standing Committee of ISC
It was set up in 1996 for continuous consultation and processing of matters for the consideration of the Council.

Members: (i) Union Home Minister as the Chairman
(ii) Five Union Cabinet Ministers (iii) Nine Chief Ministers the Council is assisted by a secretariat called the Inter-State Council Secretariat.

Since 2011, it is also functioning as the secretariat of the Zonal Councils.

Functions: Continuous consultation, monitor implementation and process all matters pertaining to centre-state relations before they are taken up for consideration in the inter-state council.

Insta Links:
Other Inter-state bodies e.g. Inter-state water disputes, Zonal Council: Click Here
To know more about Inter-state Council: Click here

Practice Questions:
Q. Discuss the need and significance of the Inter-State Council for India’s federalism. (10M)
INDIA GIVES EMERGENCY VISAS FOR 111 AFGHAN HINDUS, SIKHS

Context:
• The Union Home Ministry granted emergency visas to 111 Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan, hours after Saturday’s terror attack at a gurdwara in Kabul.
• All had applied for visas in September 2021, but the applications were cleared only after the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), a terrorist group, attacked the gurdwara.

e-emergency X-Misc Visa
• To facilitate and fast-track urgent applications for entry to India.
• e-Emergency X-Misc Visa is granted to foreigners who are not covered in the available categories of visa but need to visit India urgently due to a family emergency.
• Such a single-entry visa is issued by Indian Missions/Posts for an appropriate period of time.
• The facility is available to all Afghans irrespective of their religion. The (initial) validity of this visa would be six months.

Insta Links
What is an electronic visa (e-visa)? Click here

Practice Questions:
Q. The e-visa system is an innovation introduced by the government in 2014. Discuss the process and current status of e-visas.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. The visas are granted by the Ministry of External Affairs (GOI).
2. e-Emergency X-Misc Visa is available to Afghan Sikhs and Hindus only.
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

Ans: (d)

ELECTION COMMISSION WANTS PEOPLE TO RUN FROM ONE SEAT

Context:
• The Election Commission has made a fresh push for amending the law to bar people from contesting more than one seat.
• It said that if it cannot be done, then a hefty fine should be imposed on those vacating one of the constituencies and forcing a bypoll.
• The Legislative Department is the nodal agency in the government to deal with issues related to the EC.

Background:
As per Section 33(7) of the RPA (Representation of the People Act), 1951, one candidate can contest from a maximum of two constituencies.

Issues:
• One-Act Negates another: Since no Candidate can represent two Constituencies, the idea of this system appears to be illogical and ironic.
• By-election Strains Public Exchequer: After sacrificing one of the Constituencies, a by-election is automatically triggered immediately after the general election.
• Voters Lose Interest: Repeated elections are not only unnecessary and costly, but they will also cause voters to lose interest in the electoral process.

Recommendations of the Election Commission:
• The Election Commission recommended amending Section 33(7) to allow one candidate to contest from only one seat. It has done so in 2004, 2010, 2016 and 2018.
• A system should be devised wherein if a candidate contested from two constituencies and won both, then he or she would bear the financial burden of conducting the subsequent by-election in one of the constituencies.

Election Laws (amendment) Act 2021

De-Duplication of Electoral Roll:
1. It provides for amendment of section 23 of the Representation of People’s Act, 1950, enabling the linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem.
2. This aims to curb the menace of multiple enrolments of the same person in different places.
3. This will help in stopping bogus voting and fraudulent votes.
4. This linking is in consonance with the **105th report of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice**.

### Multiple Qualifying Dates:
1. The citizens get voting rights when they turn 18. However, many are left out of the electoral rolls even after turning 18. This is because, in the system, 1st January is the qualifying date.
2. **Four** qualifying dates will be declared for updating the voting rolls to include those who have turned 18 — the **first day of the months of January, April, July and October**.

### Bringing Gender Neutrality:
The language for registration of ‘wives of service voters’ will now be replaced by ‘spouse’. This will make the laws more “gender-neutral”.

*Service voters are those serving in the armed forces, armed police forces of a state serving outside it and government employees posted outside India.*

### Practice Questions:
**Q. Critically analyze the provisions of the Election Law(Amendment) Act, 2021.** (10M)

**Q. With reference to Election Laws(Amendment) Act, 2021, consider the following statements:**
1. The language for “wives of service voters” will be replaced by the spouse.
2. There will be four qualifying dates for updating voter rolls which include the first day of months of January, March, June and October.

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

**Ans: (a)**

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### INDIA AND BANGLADESH SHOULD WORK ON RIVER MANAGEMENT

**Context:**
- At the **seventh round** of the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission, External Affairs Minister extended India’s assistance in the management of the annual flood in Bangladesh.
- **Collaborations agreed on:** Artificial Intelligence, startups, fintech and cybersecurity.
- **Joint Statement:** Two countries remain focused on the “importance of safe, speedy, and sustainable return of forcibly displaced persons from Rakhine State Myanmar, currently being sheltered by Bangladesh”.

*Reasons for recent floods in Bangladesh:*
- Climate Change
- **Skewed Rainfall Pattern:** 80% of the precipitation takes place in the monsoon months from June to September
- **Trans-National Rivers from India example:** Bharmaputra, Teesta etc.
- Unplanned Development

**Insta Links**
- **To read RPA 1951:** Click here
- **To read about Land Boundary Agreement:** Click here
- **To read about the Teesta river dispute:** Click here

**Practice Questions:**
**Q. Examine the various impediments in Indo-Bangladesh relations. Are the steps taken sufficient?** Critically analyze. (15M)
Q. With reference to Teesta river, consider the following statements:

- Teesta river is a tributary of the Ganga river.
- It originates in the Himalayas in Sikkim and flows to the south through Assam before entering Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
A. 1 only  
B. 2 only  
C. Both 1 and 2  
D. Neither 1 nor 2  

Ans: (c)

**WHAT WEST SETI POWER PROJECT CAN MEAN FOR INDIA-NEPAL TIES**

**Context:**

- India will be taking over an ambitious hydropower project in Nepal **West Seti** nearly four years after China withdrew from it, ending a six-year engagement between 2012 and 2018.
- India’s National Hydro Power Corporation has already begun preliminary engagement of the site in far-western Nepal following Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Lumbini.

**West Seti project:**

- The proposed 750-megawatt West Seti Hydropower Project is to be built on the **Seti river in far-western Nepal**.
- West Seti and Seti river, a joint project, has the capacity to generate 1200 MW of electricity.

**India-Nepal power relations:**

- **Mahakali treaty** was signed in 1995 to produce 6480 MW.
- **Upper Karnali project**
- **900 MW Arun Three projects** in eastern Nepal’s SankhuwaSabha.

**Practice Questions:**

Consider the following statements:
1. The West Seti dam is located at the confluence of the Seti and Karnali river.
2. Seti dam lies to the east of Kathmandu.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
A. 1 only  
B. 2 only  
C. Both 1 and 2  
D. Neither 1 nor 2  

**Ans:** (c)

**HC STAYS SUSPENSION OF RAJASTHAN WOMAN SARPANCH**

**Context:**

The Rajasthan High Court has stayed the suspension order against a **woman sarpanch** and issued notices to a Minister and an MLA in the State for initiating the action against her.

**Rajasthan Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 provisions related to Sarpanch**

- **Removal and Suspension:**
  1. The State Government may, by order in writing and after giving him an opportunity of being heard and making such enquiry as may be deemed necessary, remove from office any member including a Chair-
person or a Deputy Chairperson of a Panchayati Raj Institution, who:

(a) refuses to act or becomes incapable of acting as such; or 
(b) is guilty of misconduct in the discharge of duties or any disgraceful conduct.

2. The **State Government** may suspend *any member* including a Chairperson or a Deputy Chairperson of a Panchayati Raj Institution against whom:
   - An enquiry has been initiated under
   - Against whom any criminal proceedings in regard to an offence involving moral turpitude are pending trial in a Court of law and such person shall stand debarred from taking part in any act or proceeding of the Panchayati Raj Institution concerned while being under such suspension.

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Q. The devolution of power and responsibilities to the panchayats will result in flexible and committed responses at the grass-root level. Discuss (10M)

**AUSTRALIA SEeks to Revitalize Indo-Pacific Ties**

**Context:**
- India is one of Australia’s Closest security partners and the government is focused on revitalizing Australia’s Historically deep engagement with our partners across the Indo-Pacific, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister of Australia ahead of visit to India.
- This is the first high-level visit from Australia after the formation of a new government.

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**Practice Questions:**

Q. With reference to the 73rd constitutional amendment act, consider the following statements:

1. All questions related to disqualification of members of panchayat shall be referred to such authority as the state legislature determines.
2. Superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to the panchayats shall be vested in the election commission of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?

A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

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**India-Australia Defense cooperation:**
- An MoU on Defense Cooperation has been signed as well as a Joint Declaration on Security Co-operation.
- There are frequent exchanges of visits including at the level of Service Chiefs, regular Naval, Air Force, and Army Talks; joint naval exercises; regular exchanges at each other’s training institutes and seminars.
- The India-Australia defence relationship now encompasses almost every major function of the military:
  1. Strategic dialogues, coordination, and information exchanges.
  2. Military exercises involving ground, air, and maritime forces.
  3. Exchanges and training.
  4. Defense scientific and technological cooperation.

**Insta Links**

[73rd Amendment act: click on the link](#)

[To read about Indo Pacific: click on the link](#)

[To read about India Australia relations: click on the link](#)
Practice Question
Q. Which of the following Islands is/are part of the Pacific Ocean?
1. Solomon Islands
2. Vanuatu
3. Marshall Islands
4. Savage Islands
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1, 2 and 3 only
B. 2, 3 and 4 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (a)

Q. Australia forms an important partner for India in the Indo-Pacific region. Comment. (10M)

SC MUST NOT TOUCH ISSUES THAT REQUIRE LAWMAKERS ROLE

Context:
• The Supreme Court judge said that the apex court cannot and must not transcend its role by deciding issues requiring the involvement of elected representatives.
• He also said that thinking of the Supreme Court as a “one-stop solution to resolve complicated issues of policy and society” is a reflection of the waning power of discourse and consensus-building.

Article 142:
It provides discretionary power to the Supreme Court as it states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

Cases of Judicial Overreach:
There have been several judgments of the Supreme Court wherein it has been foraying into areas which had long been forbidden to the judiciary by reason of the doctrine of ‘separation of powers’, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

Examples:
• The ban on the sale of alcohol along national and state highways.
• Imposition of Patriotism in National Anthem Case.
• Ban on Firecrackers.
• Order on sex workers

Judicial Review:
• It is the power exerted by the courts of a country to examine the actions of the legislatures, and executive and administrative arms of government and to ensure that such actions conform to the provisions of the nation’s Constitution.

Judicial Overreach:
• In simpler terms, it is when the judiciary starts interfering with the proper functioning of the legislative or executive organs of the government. Judicial Overreach is undesirable in a democracy as it breaches the principle of separation of powers.

Instances of the court straying into the legislative sphere:
• Recently, Allahabad High Court, while allowing two criminal revisions pertaining to a dowry case, took cognisance of the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
• It proposed certain safeguards and directed the State authorities of Uttar Pradesh to take the necessary steps for their implementation in a given time period.
• The directions include the constitution of a family welfare committee in each district under the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), handing over the first information report to such a committee immediately after its registration, and no arrest to be made by the police during this “cooling period” of two months.

Other cases:
• Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan (1997): The Supreme Court issued directions to enforce fundamental rights in the absence of law in certain cases of sexual harassment at the workplace.
• Social Action Forum for Manav Adhikar (supra) 1. the Court held that a third agency (i.e., the family welfare committee) had nothing to do with the CrPC, and more so installing arrest till a report is submitted by the committee.
  2. The directions to settle a case after it is registered is not a correct expression of law, the top court held.

Insta Links:
Basic structure doctrine: click here
To read about the doctrine of Separation of powers: click here
Practice Questions:
Q. Which of the following is/are part of basic structure doctrine?
1. Power of HC under Article 226
2. Federal character
3. Parliamentary system
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
a. 1 and 2 only
b. 2 and 3 only
c. 1 and 3 only
d. 1, 2 and 3
Ans: (d)

THE ABSURDITY OF THE ANTI-DEFECION LAW

Context:
- In light of the events unfolding in Maharashtra, with the government facing internal dissent from a block of 22 MLAs, the anti-defection law has again come into the spotlight.
- The events in Puducherry highlight, yet again, the absurdity of the anti-defection law.

Anti-defection law:
- The Tenth Schedule – popularly known as the Anti-Defection Act – was included in the Constitution via the 52nd Amendment Act, 1985 and sets the provisions for disqualification of elected members on the grounds of defection to another political party.
- It was a response to the toppling of multiple state governments by party-hopping MLAs after the general elections of 1967.
- However, it allows a group of MP/MLAs to join (i.e. merge with) another political party without inviting the penalty for defection. (At least two-thirds of the members of a party have to be in favour of a “merger” for it to have validity in the eyes of the law).
- It does not penalize political parties for encouraging or accepting defecting legislators.
- The decision on questions as to disqualification on the ground of defection is referred to the Chairman or the Speaker of such House, which is subject to ‘Judicial review’.

Insta Links
To read more about anti-defection law: click here

Practice Questions:
Q. Which of the following is/are grounds for anti-defection?
1. If a nominated member joins any Political party before six months.
2. When two-thirds of the members of the party are in favour of the merger.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (d)

Q. ‘Anti-defection law undermines representative and parliamentary democracy’. Critically analyze the statement (10M).
ECI CONTINUES TO NUDGE REGISTERED UNRECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES (RUPPs) FOR ENSURING DUE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Context:
- The Election Commission of India issued an order to nudge the Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs) for ensuring due compliance.
- Chief Electoral Officers were directed to initiate action for enforcing due compliances by RUPPs for relevant sections 29A and 29C of the RP Act 1951.

Registered Unrecognized Political Parties:
- Either newly registered parties or those which have not secured enough percentage of votes in the assembly or general elections to become a state party, or those which have never contested elections since being registered are considered unrecognized parties.
- They do not enjoy all the benefits extended to the recognised parties.

Recognised Political Party:
- **National party:**
  - Secure at least 6% of the valid vote in an Assembly or a Lok Sabha General Election in any four or more states and won at least 4 seats in a Lok Sabha General Election from any State or States.
  - Win at least 2% of the total Lok Sabha seats in a Lok Sabha General Election and these seats have to be won from at least 3 states.
  - The party is recognized as a State Party in at least four states.
- **State party:**
  - Secure at least 6% of the valid vote & win at least 2 seats in an Assembly General Election.
  - Secure at least 6% of the valid vote & win at least 1 seat in a Lok Sabha General Election.
  - Win at least 3% of the seats or at least 3 seats, whichever is more, in an Assembly General Election.
  - Win at least 1 out of every 25 seats from a state in a Lok Sabha General Election.
  - Secure at least 8% of the total valid vote in an Assembly or a Lok Sabha General Election.

The recognition granted by the Commission to the parties determines their right to certain privileges like allocation of the party symbols, provision of time for political broadcasts on the state-owned television and radio stations and access to electoral rolls.

Insta Links:
- To read about RPA 1951: click here
- To read about the Election Commission of India: click here

Practice Questions
Q. Consider the following statements:
1. To get recognised as a state political party, it should win at least 3% of the seats or at least 3 seats, whichever is more, in an assembly in the General Election.
2. Unrecognized Political parties enjoy all the benefits extended to the recognised parties.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct:
A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. Discuss the procedure of recognition of political parties in India (10M)

CENTRE MANDATES 3-YR HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN FOR SURROGATE MOTHERS

Context:
The government has issued fresh surrogacy rules, making it mandatory for couples who wish to become parents through surrogacy to buy health insurance plans for surrogate mothers for a period of 36 months.

Provisions:
- **Limited attempts:** The government has also ensured that the number of attempts of any surrogacy procedure on the surrogate mother shall not be more than three times.
- **Allowed abortion:** A surrogate mother may be allowed for abortion during the process of surrogacy in case of any complication as advised by the doctors.
- **Regulation of private clinics:** Every private surro-
A surrogacy clinic has to file an application for registration with a fee of ₹2 lakh which is non-refundable. However, facilities under government-run institutes are exempt from such fees.

- **Specialist availability**: Surrogacy clinics shall have at least one gynaecologist, one anaesthetist, one embryologist and one counsellor.

- **Marriage period**: The couple should be married for more than five years.

- **Consent of surrogate**: Under the Surrogacy Rules 2022, a surrogate mother has to give her consent through an agreement for giving up all her rights over the child and shall hand over the child/children as soon as she is permitted to do so by the hospital.

- **Counter view**: Some experts have highlighted that health insurance coverage for 36 months which includes the postpartum expense for surrogate mother is a long period as it will unnecessarily burden the intending couple.

### Insta Links
- **Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020**
- **The debates around the Surrogacy Act**
- **What’s in ART, Surrogacy Bills?**

### Practice Questions:
**Q. In the context of hereditary diseases, consider the following statements:** (UPSC CSE 2021)
Passing on mitochondrial diseases from parent to child can be prevented by mitochondrial replacement therapy either before or after in vitro fertilization of an egg. A child inherits mitochondrial diseases entirely from the mother and not from the father.

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: (c)**

**Q. India’s regulation of surrogacy falls short of protecting bodily autonomy and guaranteeing reproductive liberty. Critically analyse. (15M)**

### ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ROZGAR YOJANA JOBS TARGET SURPASSED BY 28%

**Context:**
- The government has surpassed the formal employment creation target set under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY)*, which incentivises employers for creating jobs.
- Latest data show 51 million jobs were created under the scheme since its notification in December 2020, over a quarter more than the initial target of 5.85 million.
- 31 million establishments have registered 7.51 million new employees under ABRY," shows an internal document of the Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), shared with the members of its Central Board of Trustees.

### Insta Links
- To read about Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY): [click here](#)
- To read about EPFO: [click here](#)

### Practice Questions
**Q. With reference to Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY), consider the following statements:**
1. An employee drawing a monthly wage of less than Rs. 15000/- who were not working in any EPFO registered establishment and did not have a Universal Account Number (UAN) can avail of this scheme.
2. The establishment that registered with EPFO after the commencement of the scheme will get a subsidy for all new employees.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

Ans: (d)

POWERS OF GOVERNOR, FLOOR TEST LAW IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Context:
- In Maharashtra as the Chief Minister possibly loses the majority, the Governor’s powers under the Constitution to call for a floor test take centre stage.
- Article 174(2)(b) of the Constitution gives powers to the Governor to dissolve the Assembly on the aid and advice of the cabinet.
- However, the Governor can apply his mind when the advice comes from a Chief Minister whose majority could be in doubt.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Governor’s Role in Calling an Assembly Session:
- Article 174: Says that the Governor shall from time to time summon the House or each House of the Legislature of the State to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit.
- The provision also puts on the Governor the responsibility of ensuring that the House is summoned at least once every six months.
- Article 163: Although it is the Governor’s prerogative to summon the House, according to Article 163, the Governor is required to act on the “aid and advice” of the Cabinet.
- So when the Governor summons the House under Article 174, this is not of his or her own will but on the aid and advice of the Cabinet.
- Exception: When the Chief Minister appears to have lost the majority and the legislative members of the House propose a no-confidence motion against the Chief Minister, then the Governor can decide on his or her own on summoning the House.
- The actions of the Governor, when using his discretionary powers, can be challenged in court.

Insta Links
To read about floor test: click here
To read more about Governor: click here

Practice Questions:
Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Under Article 174 the Governor has the power to summon the House of his own will.
2. The actions of the Governor, when using his discretionary powers, cannot be challenged in court.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

AUSTRALIA SAYS LAC ASSAULT WAS A WARNING

Context:
- The assault on Indian forces along the Line of Actual Control in 2020 was a “warning we should all heed”, and Australia stood up for India’s sovereignty, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense.
- He was referring to the standoff in eastern Ladakh and the clash in Galway Which led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers.
- India is also set to participate in Australia’s Indo-Pacific Endeavour exercise in October 2022.

Line of Actual Control(LAC):
- Demarcation Line: The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- LAC is different from the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan:
The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by the Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- The LAC, in contrast, is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the two countries, neither delineated on a map nor demarcated on the ground.
- **Length of the LAC**: India considers the LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.

**Indo-Pacific Endeavour exercise:**
- It involves exercises and cooperation with 7 countries in the IOR including Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Singapore.
- **AUSINDEX** 2019, the bilateral naval exercise between India and Australia held in April 2019 was also a part of Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2019 of Australia.

**Galway Valley:**

**Insta Links:**
- To read about Galwan valley: [click here](#)
- To read about India-Australia relations: [click here](#)

**Practice Question**
Q. Which of the following is the correct arrangement of LAC points from west to east?
- a. ShipkiLa-Dibang Valley-Pangong Tso-Barahoti
- b. Pangong Tso-ShipkiLa-Barahoti-Dibang Valley
- c. Barahoti-Pangong Tso-ShipkiLa-Dibang Valley
- d. ShipkiLa-Dibang Valley-Barahoti-Pangong Tso

**WORLD FACING A WORST GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS**

**Context:**
As per the UN, global hunger is on the rise, reversing decades of progress. Climate change, extreme weather events, conflicts and economic downturns are some of the factors driving growing food insecurity.

**Status:**
- As per the FAO report (Global Report on Food Crises): Around 193 million people in 53 countries or territories experienced acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels
  - Acute food insecurity is at a record high.
- **Hunger Hotspots**: Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen are “hunger hotspots” facing catastrophic conditions.
  - A total of 750,000 people are already facing starvation and death in Ethiopia, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan.
  - The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, the Sahel region, Sudan and Syria remain “countries of very high concern” where conditions are critical, and deteriorating.
- **Children**: Some 13.6 million children globally under the age of five are suffering from severe acute malnutrition, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).
  - Even if these children survive, they may suffer from stunting, which has life-long consequences.
- **Rising inequality and economic instability** could lead to social and political unrest in some of the worst-affected countries in the coming months.
- **Global Hunger Index 2021**: India slipped seven places to rank 101 among 116 countries. The level of hunger in India was ‘serious’ according to the report.
- **India and Food Insecurity**: India has the largest stock of grain in the world (120 million tonnes) but still accounts for a quarter of the world’s food-insecure population.
  - Estimates show that, in 2020, over 237 crore people were grappling with food insecurity globally, an increase of about 32 crores from 2019.

**Causes of worldwide hunger:**
- **Violence and conflict**: They remain the primary drivers of acute hunger, and conflict levels and vio-
 Violence against civilians have increased in 2022.

- **Displacement**: Conflict has led to new waves of displacement, forcing people to abandon their homes, land and livelihoods, reducing the amount of food locally available in their communities.
  - In the Sahel alone, close to 2.8 million people have been internally displaced.
- **Other reasons**: The war in Ukraine has combined with the climate crisis, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unequal recovery to create a perfect storm of needs in developing countries.
  
In the Sahel alone, close to 2.8 million people have been internally displaced.

- Other reasons: The war in Ukraine has combined with the climate crisis, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unequal recovery to create a perfect storm of needs in developing countries.

**Solutions:**

- ** Investing in Development**: As per the UN, it requires just $300 million — just 0.1 per cent of the overseas development aid spent in a year. To put that figure into perspective, 62 new food billionaires have been created in the past two years.
- **Stabilize the global market**: We must stabilize global markets, reduce volatility and tackle the uncertainty of commodity prices. We must restore fertilizer availability, especially for smallholder farmers now.
- **Food is a fundamental human right**: We must alleviate immediate suffering through humanitarian assistance and by investing in social protection systems. Invest in a long-term vision of a food systems transformation, (committed last year at the United Nations Food Systems Summit)
- **Country-specific responses**: In Yemen, for example, the focus is on identifying key inefficiencies in the political economy of the food system. In Haiti, the emphasis is on diversification of the economy, improved livelihoods for women and youth, and strategic partnerships for agriculture and fisheries.

**Practice Questions:**

Q. Despite various interventions to tackle hunger in the country, the issue continues to be a persistent sore in the nation’s food security, undermining its developmental goals. Comment. (250 words, 15 marks)

Q. Which of the following is/are the indicator/indicators used by IFPRI to compute the Global Hunger Index Report? (UPSC CSE 2016)

1. Undernourishment
2. Child stunting
3. Child mortality

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

A. 1 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1, 2 and 3
D. 1 and 3 only

**Answer: C**
U.S. SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS ABORTION RIGHT

Context:
• In a significant curtailment of women’s rights, the U.S Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, a 1973 landmark decision giving women in America the right to have an abortion before the foetus is viable outside the womb — before the 24-28-week mark.
• Abortion rights, which have been available to women for over two generations — will now be determined by individual States.
• Also overturned on Friday was Planned Parent-hood v. Casey, a 1992 case that upheld Roe.

Roe v. Wade Judgment:
• In 1973, in the landmark Roe vs Wade judgment, the Supreme Court of the United States made the right to abortion a constitutional right, establishing a benchmark for abortion laws across the world.
• US Supreme Court struck down laws that made abortion illegal in several states and ruled that abortion would be allowed up to the point of foetal viability, that is, the time after which a foetus can survive outside the womb.
  o Foetal viability was around 28 weeks (7 months) at the time of the Roe judgment; experts now agree that advances in medicine have brought the threshold down to 23 or 24 weeks (6 months or a little less).
• Foetal viability is often seen as the point at which the rights of the woman can be separated from the rights of the unborn foetus.
• Abortion laws across the world rely on this metric but those opposing abortions argue that this is an arbitrary timeframe that legislation and the court in Roe adopted.

Insta Links:
To read about abortion laws in India: Click here
To read about the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 2021: click here

Practice Questions:
Q. With reference to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Act, 2021, consider the following statements:
1. Opinion of one Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation.
2. It allows only married women to also terminate a pregnancy.
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
Ans: (a)

SAFETY AT A PRICE FOR DELHI’S QUEER COMMUNITY

Context:
• The pride month celebrations and the many LGBTQ+ friendly parties happening in Delhi, but queer safe spaces are rare.
• Since Section 377 of the IPC was decriminalised in 2018, Delhi has transitioned into a city where gay bashes in nightclubs, pride meets at cafes and gay-themed film festivals and book readings are routinely held.
• However, discrimination against the community is still prevalent in every stratum of society and many queer persons said they felt unsafe attending events because they feared getting “outed”.

LGBTIQ+:
• LGBTQ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning.
• These terms are used to describe a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

Difficulties Faced by LGBTIQ+ Community:
• Heterosexuality: They are experiencing intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and the threat of violence due to their sexual orientation than those that identify themselves as heterosexual.
• In-equality & Violence: They face inequality and violence in every place around the world. They face torture from people who mock them and make them realize that they are different from others.
• Deprived in Rights: In many countries, the rights enjoyed by opposite-sex couples are not enjoyed by same-sex couples. They are prohibited from those rights.
• Isolation from society: They gradually develop low self-esteem and low self-confidence and become isolated from friends and family.
• Conflict in Family itself: Lack of communication between LGBT children and their parents often leads...
to conflict in the family. Many LGBT youths are placed in foster care or end up in juvenile detention or on the streets.

- **Racial Discrimination**: Additionally, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people face poverty and racism daily. They suffer from social and economic inequalities due to continuous discrimination in the workplace.

Child Rights (NCPCR) has published draft guidelines to regulate child protection within the entertainment industry.

- While the “Guidelines to Regulate Child Participation in the Entertainment Industry” were issued by the Commission in 2011, today’s draft increases the scope of the guidelines to cover **social media and OTT platforms** for the first time.

Insta Links:

*To read about Section 377: [click here](#)*

**Practice Questions:**

Q. ‘Discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community is still prevalent in every stratum of society’. Discuss the difficulties faced by the community along with various judgments to safeguard their rights. (10M)

Q. Which of the following judgements is/are associated with the LGBTQ+ community?

1. Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India
2. Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India
3. Naz Foundation vs Government of Delhi
4. SR Bommai vs Union of India

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1, 2 and 3 only
B. 2, 3 and 4 only
C. 1 and 2 only
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (a)

**NORMS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF KIDS WORKING ON OTT PLATFORMS**

**Context:**

- The National Commission for the Protection of
• Police verification: Every person involved in the production who may be in contact with children will have to submit a medical fitness certificate ensuring that they are not carrying an obvious contagious disease and police verification of the staff also needs to be carried out.

• Child’s education: The producer also needs to ensure the child’s education under the RTE Act, to ensure no discontinuity from school or lessons as well as adequate and nutritious food, and water to the children during the process of production and medical facilities.

• Breaks: A child shall only participate in one shift per day, with a break after every three hours.

• Income: At least 20 per cent of the income earned by the child from the production or event shall be directly deposited in a fixed deposit account in a nationalized bank in the name of the child which may be credited to the child on attaining majority.

• Family enterprise: Content created by the child or his family/guardian shall be treated as children working in a family enterprise as provided under Section 3(2)(a) of the Child Labour and Adolescent Labour Act, 1986.

Insta Links:
To read about social media: click here
To read about OTT: click here
To read about NCPCR: click here

Practice questions:
Q. The new draft guidelines include stringent penal provisions for violating the guidelines. In the light of this statement critically analyze the new draft guidelines to regulate child protection working on OTT platforms. (15M)
Q. With reference to the National commission for protection of child rights(NCPCR), consider the following statements:
1. NCPCR is a statutory body under the administrative control of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
2. The commission has a chairperson and six members, of which at least two should be women.
Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (a)

BRICS SUPPORT DIALOGUE BETWEEN RUSSIA, UKRAINE

Context:
• The Russian President called for the strengthening of BRICS(Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) at a virtual summit of leaders of the grouping hosted by China.
• Indian Prime Minister focussed on the importance of BRICS in the post-pandemic global economic recovery, Chinese President called upon members to reject the “Cold War mentality” and oppose what he called “unilateral sanctions” by the U.S. and the European Union.

Key points of the meeting:
• The Indian Prime Minister said BRICS countries have a “very similar view of the governance of the global economy”.
• He hailed “practical” cooperation in areas:
  o New Development Bank
  o Satellite agreement
  o COVID Research and Development Centre set up in South Africa,
  o Mutual recognition of pharma products, including COVID vaccines and medicines.
• The Beijing summit declaration said that BRICS countries recalled their national positions as expressed at the United Nations
• PM at BRICS Business Forum meet
• Expecting a 7.5% economic growth rate this year:
  • He proposed that the BRICS Business Forum may develop a platform for regular exchanges between start-ups in BRICS countries.
  • He also called for a dialogue on “innovation-led economic recovery”.
  • Key pillar of India’s current economic recovery is
technology-led growth.

- **Innovation-friendly policies** in many areas like space, blue economy, green hydrogen, clean energy, drones, and geo-spatial data.
- **The value of the Indian digital economy will reach 1 trillion dollars by 2025.**
- **BRICS Women Business Alliance** can undertake a study on this transformative change in India.

Insta Link
To read more about BRICS: click here

**Practice Questions**

Q. **BRICS countries have a very similar view of the governance of the global economy**. Do you agree with the statement? Justify your answer. (10M)

Q. Which of the following is the correct arrangement of BRICS countries from west to east?

A. Brazil-South Africa-India-China-Russia  
B. Brazil-South Africa-Russia-India-China  
C. South Africa-Brazil-China-Russia-India  
D. Brazil-South Africa-China-Russia-India

Ans: (b)

**PAKISTAN’S ECONOMIC MUDDLING AND THE IMF CHALLENGE**

**Context:**
- The Pakistani rupee (PKR) has been falling continuously from **150 in April 2021 to 213 against the dollar on 21 June**, an all-time low.
- Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves have been depleting during the last one year.
- According to State Bank of Pakistan data, from **$17.2 billion** in June 2021, the net reserves with the SBP have come down to **$8.9 billion** in June 2022.
- Citing “heightened external vulnerability risk” and the “ability to secure additional external financing,” the rating agency **Moody’s** downgraded Pakistan’s outlook to **negative**.

**Conditions by the IMF to support Pakistan:**

- Transparency about its debt situation, including what Pakistan owes to China, as a part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- Address high Inflation and the elevated current and fiscal account deficit.
- Ensuring adequate protection for the most vulnerable.

**Insta Link**
To read about the mood rating: click here  
To read about IMF: click here

**Will Pakistan pursue macroeconomic reforms?**

- The subsides in the energy sector — fuel, oil and electricity — remain high.
- The budgets have remained populist; the economic governance declined due to corruption, lack of financial institutions independence, and the export decline.
- With the present government led by the PTI, it would have less likelihood to take any further bold decisions.

**Practice Questions**

Q. **How do rating agencies rate the economic performance of a country. What are its implications? Discuss.** (15M)

Q. With reference to International Monetary Fund (IMF), consider the following statements:

1. The IMF gives loans to member countries that are struggling to meet their international obligations.
2. It is part of the Brettenwood Conference along with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

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

Ans: (a)
GROUP WANTS NEW ORDER ON MGNREGA WORKERS REVOKED

Context:
• The Union Rural Development Ministry must withdraw its order to discontinue manual attendance for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) worksites with more than 20 workers and use a mobile phone-based application, National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS), for recording attendance, the People’s Action For Employment Guarantee (PAEG), a group of academics and activists working in the field.

Key issues:
• Violation of NREGA: The Ministry’s order of manual attendance is in violation of the NREGA law and also flagged a series of technical and sociological issues with the app.
  o Section 15 – Schedule 1 lays down rules about the muster rolls — clearly says that the muster roll must be accessible to the workers on demand all day during all working hours. If the muster roll is available only digitally, access will be limited.
• Discourages mates: The app discourages women from being mates which fundamentally undermines the Ministry’s own repeated push towards encouraging women workers as NREGA mates.
• The job of a mate is to see the work of the workers working in his workplace. To make daily attendance of labourers, to see who came and who did not.
• Lack of access to digital devices: Having a smartphone is now mandatory for mates to record attendance on the NMMS. However, many women from poorer households don’t have access to smartphones.
• Language issues: The app has been designed completely in English And there is no technical help provided to redress problems.

National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS)
• The NMMS App permits taking real-time attendance of workers at Mahatma Gandhi NREGS worksites along with geotagged photographs, which will increase citizen oversight of the programme besides potentially enabling processing payments faster.
• Area Officer Monitoring App facilitates them to record their findings online along with time-stamped and go-coordinate tagged photographs for all the schemes of Deptt of Rural Development- Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, PMAYG, PMGSY.
• This would also enable not only better record keeping of inspections by field and supervisory officials but also facilitate analysis of the findings for better programme implementation.

Insta Links
To read about MGNREGS: click here

Practice Questions:
Q. “MGNREGA created rural infrastructure and assets, along with increasing rural demand and employment”. How far has the scheme been successful in its objective? Critically analyze.

Q. With reference to MGNREGS, consider the following statements:
1. The application must be made with the local Gram Panchayat only.
2. Within 30 days of submitting the application or from the day work is demanded, wage employment will be provided to the applicant.
Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (b)

JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT AMENDMENT MAY BACKFIRE

Context:
• Child rights panels of three states (Bengal, Rajasthan and Punjab) joined the Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), appealing to the Union government to roll back an amendment in the Juvenile Justice Act that makes certain offences against children non-cognisable.
• In 2021, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act-2015 as amended through Presidential assent.
• Previously, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) audit of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in 2020, had highlighted glaring issues with the running of childcare institutions.
As per the amendments:

1. **Supervision by District Magistrate**: DMs and ADMs will monitor the functioning of various agencies under the JJ Act in every district— including the Child Welfare Committees, the Juvenile Justice Boards, and the District Child Protection Units and the Special Juvenile Protection Units.
   - The DM will also carry out **background checks of CWC members**, who are usually social welfare activists, including educational qualifications, as there is no such provision currently.
   - The DMs are also to check possible **criminal backgrounds** to ensure that no cases of child abuse or child sexual abuse are found against any member before they are appointed.
   - The CWCs are also to report regularly to the DMs on their activities in the districts.
   - Instead of the court, the District Magistrate (including Additional District Magistrate) will now issue adoption orders.

2. **Serious offences** will also include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is less than seven years.

3. **Non-Cognisable offence**: According to the amendment, the crimes under the special law, with punishment between **three and seven years**, have been reclassified as non-cognisable.

**Pan India Problems with the law:**

- **Discourages reporting**: With this amendment, if anyone goes to the police station to register a complaint, the police will refer them to a magistrate for permission.

- **Need of Complainant**: In some cases, NGOs or child rights activists decide to report such instances directly to the police given that they are a cognisable offence (until the amended JJ Act is notified). But the police will look for someone to be made a complainant even when they can verify the complaint and register an FIR if it is a cognisable offence.

- **Directions of Magistrate**: According to the Code Of Criminal Procedure, once the crimes are rendered non-cognisable, the police will be able to register an FIR only on the directions of a magistrate and a complainant will first have to approach the magistrate concerned to start the process.

- **Loss of wages**: Most children at CCIs whose parents are daily wage labourers do not want to engage with the legal process because that would force them to take time off from work, resulting in loss of wages.

- **Reporting instances of abuse and cruelty by staffers or persons in charge at child care institutions (CCI)** is not easy.

- The victims themselves are unable to directly report, most such crimes are reported to the police by either parents or child rights bodies and **child welfare committees (CWC)**.

**Juvenile Justice Act 2015**

**What is the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015?**

The Act was introduced and passed in Parliament in 2015 to replace the Juvenile Delinquency Law and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) 2000.

- It allowed the trial of juveniles in conflict with law in the age group of 16-18 years as adults, in cases where the crimes were to be determined.

- The nature of the crime, and whether the juvenile should be tried as a minor or a child, was to be determined by a Juvenile Justice Board.

- It received impetus after the 2012 Delhi gangrape in which one of the accused was just short of 18 years, and was therefore tried as a juvenile.

- The Act streamlined adoption procedures for orphans, abandoned and surrendered children and the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has been given the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively.

**INSTA LINKS:**

To read about Juvenile Justice Act: click here

**Practice Questions:**

Q. Critically analyze the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Act 2021. (10M)

Q. With reference to Juvenile Justice Amendment Act 2021, consider the following statements:

1. DMs and ADMs will monitor the functioning of various agencies under the JJ Act in every district.
2. Instead of the court, the District Magistrate will now issue adoption orders.

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

Ans: (c)
Justification:
• The District Magistrates have been further empowered under the Act to ensure its smooth implementation, as well as garner synergized efforts in favour of children in distress conditions.
• It means that DMs and ADMs will monitor the functioning of various agencies under the JJ Act in every district—including the Child Welfare Committees, the Juvenile Justice Boards, the District Child Protection Units and the Special Juvenile Protection Units.
• Instead of the court, the District Magistrate (including Additional District Magistrate) will now issue adoption orders.

IRAN-U.S. NUCLEAR TALKS TO RESUME SOON SAYS EU

Context:
Iran’s indirect talks with the U.S. on reviving the 2015 nuclear pact or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) will resume soon, the Iranian Foreign Minister. The pact appeared close to being revived in March When the EU, which is coordinating negotiations, invited Foreign Ministers representing the accord’s parties to Vienna to finalize an agreement after indirect talks between Iran and the US President’s administration.

Changes agreed under Iran deal to limit nuclear programme

Significance of JCPOA for India:

Removing sanctions may revive India’s interest in the Chabahar port
India’s interest in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), which runs through Iran, may also get a boost.

Boost to Regional Connectivity

Significance Of JCPOA for India

Energy Security

Restoration of ties between the US and Iran will help India to procure cheap Iranian oil and aid in energy security.

INSTA LINKS:
To read about JCPOA: click here

Q. With reference to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), consider the following statements:
Under the deal, Iran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy water, all key components for nuclear weapons.
The JCPOA was the result of prolonged negotiations between Iran and the P5 countries.
Q. Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (b)

Justification:
• The JCPOA was the result of prolonged negotiations between 2013 and 2015 between Iran and P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States + Germany).
• Under the deal, Iran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy water, all key components for nuclear weapons.
• Iran also agreed to implement a protocol that would allow inspectors from the International Atomic En-
energy Agency (IAEA) to access its nuclear sites to ensure Iran would not be able to develop nuclear weapons in secret.

**NITI AYOG REPORT ON INDIA’S GIG WORKFORCE**

**Context:**
NITI Aayog has recommended steps to provide social security for the country’s gig workforce, which is expected to grow to **2.35 crore by 2029-30.**

**Current Number:**
According to a study released by NITI Aayog, the number of gig workers is estimated to be **77 lakh in 2020-21.**

**Key findings of the report:**
- **Platformization of work:** It has given rise to a new classification of labour—**platform labour,** falling outside of the purview of the traditional dichotomy of formal and informal labour.
- The report broadly classified gig workers into:
  1. **Platform workers:** are those whose work is based on online software applications or digital platforms,
  2. **Non-platform gig workers:** are generally casual wage workers and own-account workers in the conventional sectors, working part-time or full-time.
- **More medium-skilled jobs:** At present, about **47% of gig work** is in **medium**-skilled jobs, about **22%** in **high**-skilled, and about **31%** in **low**-skilled jobs, the trend shows the concentration of workers in medium-skilled jobs is declining and that of the low skilled and high skilled is increasing.
- **Increase in the non-agricultural workforce:** By 2029-30, gig workers are expected to form **7%** of the **non-agricultural workforce** or **4.1%** of the total livelihood workforce in India.

**Recommendations:**
- **Separate enumeration exercise:** It recommended undertaking a separate enumeration exercise to estimate the size of the gig and platform workforce and collecting information during official enumerations (Periodic Labour Force Survey) to identify gig workers.
- **Wider scope:** Apart from impetus through digitalisation, operating outside the traditional “employer-employee” relationship enables platforms to scale within and across geographies as well as sectors.
- **Positive implication of paid leaves:** The report said that giving paid sick leave, health access and insurance to all workers will have positive implications.
- **Reclassification:** Citing international regulations for gig and platform workers, it said in the UK, a Supreme Court ruling in February 2021 led to the reclassification of Uber’s driver-partners in the country as “workers”.
- **Compensation:** It suggested gig firms adopt policies that offer old age or retirement plans and benefits and other insurance covers for contingencies such as injury arising from work that may lead to loss of employment and income.
- **Introduction of Platform India initiative:** NITI Ayog recommended introducing a ‘Platform India initiative’ on the lines of the ‘Startup India Initiative’.

**INSTA LINKS:**
To read about NITI Ayog: [click here](#)
To read about Startup India Initiative: [click here](#)

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS:**
Q. India requires a framework that balances the flexibility offered by platforms while also ensuring the social security of workers. Discuss. (15M)

Q. With reference to NITI Ayog, consider the following statements:
1. The Governing Council of NITI Ayog comprises the Chief Ministers of all States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
2. The team India Wing comprises representatives from every State and Ministry and serves as a permanent platform for national collaboration.
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
Ans: (c)

**Justification:**
**Composition:**
- **Governing Council:** Comprising the Chief Ministers of all States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- **Team India Wing:** comprising representatives from every State and Ministry, will serve as a permanent platform for national collaboration.
NATO TO RAISE ITS RESPONSE FORCE FROM 40,000 TO 3 LAKH TROOPS

Context:
- NATO will increase the strength of its rapid reaction force (RRF) nearly eightfold to 3,00,000 troops as part of its response to an “era of strategic competition”.
- The NATO reaction force currently numbers around 40,000.
- In NATO’s new strategic concept, the alliance is also expected to address for the first time the security challenges posed by China.

Key new objectives:
- Deliver further military support to Ukraine. When they convene in Spain, with NATO members set to adopt a “strengthened comprehensive assistance package,” including deliveries of secure communication and anti-drone systems.
- Help Ukraine transition from Soviet-era armaments to modern NATO equipment.
- Address for the first time the security challenges posed by China.
- Methods to respond to the growing influence of Russia and China in their southern neighbour.
- Another central theme at the NATO summit will be the possibility for Finland and Sweden to join the alliance.

Alliances of NATO:
- Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)
- Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)
- Mediterranean Dialogue

Objectives of NATO:
- It promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defense and security-related issues to solve problems.
- Political objectives
- Military Objectives

INSTA LINKS:
NATO

Practice Questions:
Q. Which of the following is/are alliances of NATO?
1. Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
2. Euro-Atlantic Partnership Dialogue
3. Mediterranean Dialogue
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3
Ans: (d)
MANY IN ANDHRA GET SMS ON VACCINATION WITHOUT TAKING A JAB

Context:
• Several senior citizens and adult citizens in Andhra Pradesh who have not visited any vaccine centre after the second dose were taken aback on receipt of messages that they had ‘received’ the dose as per CoWIN.
• People received SMSs on their phone numbers used for the earlier doses that have been successfully administered with the third dose and certificates were also generated.

Vaccination process:

Co-WIN:
• CoWIN app is an extension of the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) that provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country
• It is a cloud-based IT platform and it handles minute details for India’s Covid-19 immunization programme
• It includes:
  » registering beneficiaries, allocating vaccination centres
  » sending text messages with the name of their vaccinator to beneficiaries and live monitoring of vials in cold storage.
• The Co-WIN platform is owned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and was earlier the platform used for conducting Pulse Polio and other crucial immunization programmes across the country.
• The Ministry of Electronics and IT along with the National Informatics Centre are handling the back-end and the tech infrastructure for it.
• Monitoring and tracking: This app enables monitoring the inoculation drive and tracking the listed beneficiaries for vaccination on a real-time basis.
• Thus, it also helps to counter proxy vaccinations.
• Aadhaar enabled: This app would enable beneficiaries to be identified efficiently through the use of the Aadhaar platform.

Challenges:

Booster Dose:
• A booster is a means of strengthening one’s immune system against a particular pathogen.
• It may be exactly the same original vaccine, in which case its goal is to increase the magnitude of protection by producing more antibodies.
• The aim is to protect people from a new variant, a version of the virus that’s mutated significantly from the original version people were vaccinated against.
• These shots are only for the fully vaccinated.

INSTA LINKS:
COVID-19

Practice Questions:
Q. With reference to CoWIN, consider the following statements:
1. The app enables beneficiaries to be identified efficiently through the use of the Aadhaar platform.
2. The Co-WIN platform is owned by The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
Which of the statements given above is/are not correct:
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (b)
‘PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC’ INITIATIVE TO COUNTER CHINA

Context:
The US and its allies — Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom — have launched a new initiative called ‘Partners in the Blue Pacific’ for “effective and efficient cooperation” with the region’s small island nations.

Why this new initiative?
To counter China: The geostrategic competition in the pacific region intensified after China confirmed a common cooperation agreement with 10 Pacific nations.

What are the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) initiative?
The PBP is a five-nation “informal mechanism” to support Pacific islands and boost diplomatic, and economic ties in the region.
- Aim: To enhance “prosperity, resilience, and security” in the Pacific through closer cooperation. Through the PBP, these counties will direct more resources here to counter China’s aggressive outreach.
  » “Elevate Pacific regionalism”, and forge stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum.
- Areas of cooperation: climate crisis, connectivity and transportation, maritime security and protection, health, prosperity, and education”.

How is China trying to transform its ties in the Pacific?
- China signed a security pact with the Solomon Islands: It raised serious concerns about the Chinese military getting a base in the southern Pacific, close to the US island territory of Guam, and right next to Australia and New Zealand.
- Common Development Vision: It is an agreement between 10 Pacific nations, which will help China to work with “traditional and non-traditional security,” and expand law enforcement cooperation with these countries.
  » It made a warning that the Pacific states becoming part of “Beijing’s orbit”.

What is being done by the US and its allies to counter China?
Apart from PBP, the US and its allies launched
- Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF): It is a US-led initiative that aims to strengthen economic partnership among participating countries to enhance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. India is part of it along with 13 other countries.
- Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) — It is a plan to mobilise $600bn in funding for the developing world in a move seen as a counter to China’s Belt and Road plan.
- Global gateway by EU— to narrow the global investment gap worldwide
- Asia-Africa Growth Corridor: India-Japan collaboration for development, connectivity and cooperation between Asia and Africa.

Why is the Pacific region strategically important?
- US Department of Defence Report (2019): It called the Indo-Pacific the “single most consequential region for America’s future”.
- Huge geography: Spanning a vast stretch of the globe from the west coast of the United States to the western shores of India
- Huge population: the region is home to the world’s most populous state (China), most populous democracy (India), and largest Muslim-majority state (Indonesia), and includes over half of the earth’s population.
- Military importance: Among the 10 largest standing armies in the world, 7 reside in the Indo-Pacific; and 6 countries in the region possess nuclear weapons.
- Trading power: Nine of the world’s 10 busiest sea ports are in the region, and 60 per cent of global maritime trade transits through Asia, with roughly one-third of global shipping passing through the South China Sea alone.
  The US has long maintained a balance of power in the region with its hub-and-spoke system where America is the hub and its allies are spokes whose security is guaranteed by the US military power. China is trying to make its own version of the same system.

INSTA LINKS
INDIA’S INDO-PACIFIC VISION

Practice Question:
Q. India's carefully calibrated policy towards Indo-pacific is centred on two pillars of strengthening engagement and stronger partnerships with like-minded countries. Elaborate. (15M)
PM GATI SHAKTI SCHEME IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Context:
- Union Education Secretary addressed an online workshop on “Leveraging Satellite communication, Geo-informatics, and Geospatial technology for urban planning and to promote multimodal logistics” organized by NITIE Mumbai in association with the Ministry of Education and Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N).
- He emphasized on leveraging the capabilities of the Gati Shakti platform by all the state governments to scale up their efficiency and economy.

Some of the action points that emerged at the workshop:
- Educational Institutions need to contribute to the training of students and industry professionals.
- The institutions should be encouraged to use the platform developed by BISAG-N and carry out research work, projects, internships etc.
- To strengthen the platform for applications including infrastructure development.
- To encourage research in Logistics and Supply chain networks.
- Workable and pragmatic coordination and integration to synchronize NEP 2020 and PM Gati Shakti mission
- The institutes emphasized the introduction of syllabus through Interdisciplinary courses in Logistics and Supply Chain and integration of emerging technologies to remove silos among the different departments.

PM Gati Shakti Mission
- Integrated planning: It will ensure integrated planning and implementation of infrastructure projects in the next four years, with a focus on expediting works on the ground, saving costs and creating jobs.
- Subsuming NIP: The Gati Shakti scheme will subsume the Rs 110 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) that was launched in 2019.
- Creation of Corridors: It also aims to have 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors – one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh.
- Connectivity: Extending 4G connectivity to all villages is another aim. Adding 17,000 km to the gas pipeline network is being planned.

INSTA LINKS:
NEP 2020

Practice Questions:
Q. Critically analyze the provisions of New Educational Policy (NEP) 2020.

Q. With reference to PM Gati Shakti’s mission, consider the following statements:
- It aims to have 11 industrial corridors and five new defence corridors.
- It will subsume the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?
a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2
Ans: (a)

Justification:
The Gati Shakti scheme
- It will subsume the Rs 110 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline that was launched in 2019.
- It also aims to have 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors – one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh.
- Extending 4G connectivity to all villages is another aim. Adding 17,000 km to the gas pipeline network is being planned.
G7 TO CAP RUSSIA’S INCOME FROM OIL SALES

Context:
• Leaders of the world’s wealthiest democracies struck a united stance to support Ukraine for “as long as it takes” as Russia’s invasion grinds on.
• G7 countries decided to explore far-reaching steps to cap Kremlin income from oil sales that are financing the war.

Key Highlights:
• The G7 summit in Germany underlined their intent to impose “severe and immediate economic costs” on Russia.
• G7 agreed on a ban on imports of Russian gold and to step up aid to countries hit with food shortages by the blockade on Ukraine grain shipments through the Black Sea.

Implications of the ban on Russian oil:

INSTA LINKS:

Practice Questions:
Q. G7 countries underlined their intent to impose “severe and immediate economic costs” on Russia. Critically analyze.

Q. Which of the following is/are part of the G7 grouping?
a. India  
b. Germany  
c. France  
d. Japan  
e. China  
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
 a. 1, 2 and 3 only  
b. 2, 3 and 4 only  
c. 1, 3, 4 and 5 only  
d. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5  
Ans: (b)

Justification:
CHINA’S INTERVENTIONS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Context:
• China has been investing across the African continent throughout the last decade.
• The emphasis has been on investments and raw materials, but it took a new turn, with the first “China Horn of Africa Peace, Governance and Development Conference”.
• This is the first time China aims “to play a role in the area of security”.
• The conference held in Ethiopia witnessed the participation of foreign Ministries from the following countries of the Horn: Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Recent projects between China and the Horn of Africa:

INSTA LINKS:
The geopolitical significance of Horn of Africa for India

Practice Questions:
Q. China is paving huge investments into the Horn of Africa. Discuss its implications for India. (10M)

Q. Which of the following countries is/are part of the Horn of Africa?
a. Eritrea  
b. Sudan  
c. Kenya  
d. Djibouti
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
 a. 1, 2 and 4 only  
b. 1 and 4 only  
c. 2, 3 and 4 only  
d. 1, 2, 3 and 4
Ans: (b)

UN REPORT ON INTERNET SHUTDOWN

Context:
Recently released United Nations-backed report (by OHCHR) has highlighted that shutting down the internet affects people’s safety & well-being, hampers information flow and harms the economy

What is an Internet shutdown?
Internet shutdowns are measures taken by a government or on behalf of a government, to intentionally disrupt access to and the use of information and communications systems online.

Status:
• As per #KeepItOn coalition (which monitors internet shutdown episodes across the world), documented 931 shutdowns in 74 countries from 2016-2021
• India’s record: India blocked or disrupted internet connections 106 times and at least 85 of India’s internet shutdown episodes were in Jammu & Kashmir

Reasons behind it:
• To subvert protests and political crisis: Almost half of all shutdowns recorded by civil society groups from 2016-2021 were carried out in the context of protests and political crises related to social, political or economic grievances.

Impact of Internet shutdown (as per the report):
• Economic cost: It disrupts financial transactions, entrepreneurship, commerce and industry
The World Bank recently calculated that Internet shutdowns in Myanmar alone had cost nearly $2.8 billion from February-December 2021, reversing economic progress made over the previous decade.

- **Disrupts political transparency**: Such disruptions undermine or eliminate access to digital tools that are critical for campaigning, promoting public discussion, conducting voting and overseeing the electoral processes
  
  - E.g. Shutdowns following protests during electoral periods in Belarus and Niger

- **Disrupts civic life**: e.g. societal debates, works of NGO, SHG.

- **Interferes with health and education**: E.g. for digital education and tele-medicines

- **Endangers vulnerable sections**: esp. women and girls who are in need of support and protection

- **Loss of creativity**: People are not able to utilize their online creativity and long-term disruption may also affect their mental health

**Recommendations**

- **Stop imposing Internet shutdowns**: It may be the last recourse but should be used rarely for legitimate reasons

- **Legitimate shutdown**: Need to control the spread of hate speech, disinformation or other forms of content deemed illegal or harmful

- **Clear policies**: There should be an unambiguous, publicly available and legitimate policy for any shutdown

- **Internet companies should engage and collaborate** with stakeholders including government and civil society to prevent such disruption

**Provisions related to shutdown in India:**
Temporary suspension of Telecom Services (public emergency and public safety) Rules 2017 under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885: It governs suspension, shutdown or any disruption in telcom services on the ground of Public emergency but only upto 15 days at once

**Supreme court observations:**

- Right to internet is a fundamental right (subject to reasonable restrictions) included in the freedom of expression under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

- Restrictions on fundamental rights could not be in exercise of arbitrary powers. These freedoms could only be restricted as a last resort if “relevant factors” have been considered and no other options are there.

- Any order passed to restrict or suspend judicial scrutiny will be subject to judicial scrutiny.

- Suspension of internet services indefinitely is also a violation of telecom rules.

**SC Guidelines**
The court recognised that the 2017 Rules are the only procedure to be followed to suspend Internet services in the occurrence of a “public emergency” or for it to be “in the interest of public safety”.

1. The verdict reiterated that the competent authority to issue an order under the Suspension Rules, in ordinary circumstances, would be the Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

2. The Rules also say that in case the confirmation does not come from a competent authority, the orders shall cease to exist within a period of 24 hours.

3. Clear reasons for such orders need to be given in writing, and need to be forwarded to a Review Committee by the next working day.

4. The confirmation must not be a mere formality, but must indicate independent application of mind by the competent authority to the order passed by the authorised officer, who must also take into account changed circumstances if any, etc.

**INSTA LINKS**

**REGULATING THE BAN**

**Practice Questions**

Q. Are Internet shutdowns healthy for India? Critically analyse and also comment on the recent trends associated and the laws governing it. (250 words)

**COOKING WITH ‘DIRTY’ FUELS AFFECTS WOMEN’S MENTAL HEALTH**

**Context:**

- The study revealed that women cooking primarily with charcoal and wood had approximately 50% higher odds of likely depression than those cooking with gas.

- About 2.6 billion people — nearly half of the global population, most of them in Africa, Asia, and central and south America — rely on biomass fuels, like wood and charcoal, or kerosene to cook meals, heat, and light their homes.
In high-income countries, the inability to afford clean household energy has worsened people’s mental health. A recent study in the United Kingdom found that individuals who couldn’t afford to heat their homes had poorer mental health than those who could. This manifested in lower levels of life satisfaction.

Women whose homes did not have electricity for lighting also had 40% higher odds of being depressed than those with electric lighting.

Reasons:
- These include a loss of productivity, fewer job opportunities, and less food security than those with access to clean energy.
- Time is also lost because women often have to travel long distances to gather firewood.
- Cooking with biomass fuels takes much longer than it would with clean energy sources.

Solution:
- Providing clean and affordable cooking fuels.
- Create awareness regarding the harmful effects of biomass burning, so that people will move on to alternate clean fuels.
- This has led to reduced their stress levels, improved their diets, and provided them with more time to take on new employment.
India will release cheetahs from South Africa and Namibia into the wild at Kuno Palpur in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh, possibly by the end of this year.

- To begin with, there will be 12 cheetahs from South Africa and eight from Namibia. More would follow in subsequent years.

**Cheetah reintroduction project:**
The project to translocate cheetahs from Africa to India is being implemented by the environment ministry with the help of the Wildlife Institute of India.

- The Supreme Court had appointed an expert panel, which approved Kuno Palpur as the possible location for cheetah relocation.

**What is reintroduction and why reintroduce Cheetah now?**

- ‘Reintroduction’ of a species means releasing it in an area where it is capable of surviving.
- Reintroductions of large carnivores have increasingly been recognised as a strategy to conserve threatened species and restore ecosystem functions.
- The cheetah is the only large carnivore that has been extirpated, mainly by over-hunting in India in historical times.
- India now has the economic ability to consider restoring its lost natural heritage for ethical as well as ecological reasons.

**Facts:**

- The cheetah, Acinonyx jubatus, is one of the oldest of the big cat species, with ancestors that can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era.
- The cheetah is also the world’s fastest land mammal.
- African Cheetah is listed as vulnerable in IUCN red listed species.
- The country’s last spotted feline died in Chhattisgarh in 1947. Later, the cheetah — which is the fastest land animal — was declared extinct in India in 1952.
- The Asiatic cheetah is classified as a “critically endangered” species by the IUCN Red List, and is believed to survive only in Iran.

**Reasons for extinction:**

- The reasons for extinction can all be traced to man’s interference. Problems like human-wildlife conflict, loss of habitat and loss of prey, and illegal trafficking, have decimated their numbers.
- The advent of climate change and growing human populations have only made these problems worse.
- With less available land for wildlife, species that require vast home range like the cheetah are placed in competition with other animals and humans, all fighting over less space.

Q.19) Which of the following place has been identified for the Cheetah reintroduction project in India?

A. Kuno, Madhya Pradesh.
B. Bandipur, Karnataka.
C. Orang, Assam.
D. None of the above.
**PM-KISAN SCHEME**

**Context:**
11th installment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, worth over Rs. 20,000 crores, was recently transferred to more than 10 crore farmers.

**About PM-Kisan scheme:**
- It is a central sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the Government of India. The scheme was launched in December 2018.
- Under the scheme, income support of ₹6,000 per year is provided to small and marginal farmers.
- The state governments and Union Territory administration identify the farmers who are eligible for the scheme and share the list with the Centre.

**Ambit:**
The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers’ families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

**Exceptions:**
Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants etc and pensioners pensioners drawing at least Rs.10,000/- per month (excluding MTS/Class IV/Group D employees).

**Similar programmes by states:**
1. Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana- MP.
2. The Rythu Bandhu scheme- Telangana.

**WHAT IS LIQUID NANO UREA?**

**Context:**
Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the country’s first liquid nano urea plant at Kalol, Gujarat.
- It will be produced by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Limited.

**What is liquid nano urea?**
Urea is a chemical nitrogen fertilizer, white in colour, which artificially provides nitrogen, a major nutrient required by plants.
- Liquid nano urea is essentially urea in the form of a nanoparticle.

**Liquid nano urea vs imported/urea - Which is better?**
- Cost: liquid nano urea is cheaper (Rs 240 for half litre without subsidy; International market price of a bag of urea is between Rs 3,500 and Rs 4,000. A bottle of the nano urea can effectively replace at least one bag of urea.
- Benefits for the government: Reduces fertilizer subsidy bill of the government. India is dependent on imports of the widely used fertilizer.
- The efficiency of liquid nano urea can be as high as 85-90 per cent (Conventional urea has an efficiency of about 25 per cent).
- Liquid nano urea has a shelf life of a year, and farmers need not be worried about “caking” when it comes in contact with moisture.

Q. 20) Which of the following are correctly matched?
2. The Rythu Bandhu scheme- Telangana.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. 1 and 3 only.
D. All of the above.

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. PM KISAN- eligibility.
2. About Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana.
3. About Rythu Bandhu scheme.
4. About KALIA scheme.

**MAINS LINK:**
Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) was a tectonic shift in the nature of government support to farmers in India. Evaluate its performance.
Other benefits of liquid nano urea:

- Fertilizers in nano form provide a targeted supply of nutrients to crops, as they are absorbed by the stomata, pores found on the epidermis of leaves.
- Reduces the unbalanced and indiscriminate use of conventional urea.
- Increases crop productivity.
- Reduces soil, water, and air pollution.

INSTA CURIOUS

Do you know about neem coated urea? What are its benefits?

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:

1. Nano liquid urea.
2. Urea.
3. NPK fertilizers.
4. Urea subsidy.

MAINS LINK:

Discuss the Fertilizer woes in Indian agriculture. Do you think Indian farmers can reduce urea use by half by 2024?
Q.21) Consider the following statements:

1. Urea is a chemical nitrogen fertilizer.
2. It artificially provides nitrogen, a major nutrient required by plants.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

GOVERNMENT-E-MARKETPLACE (GEM):

Context:
The Union Cabinet has cleared a proposal allowing cooperatives to sell products on the Government-e-Marketplace (GeM) platform.

Significance:
The move will benefit 27 crore people associated with 8.5 lakh cooperatives.
- The micro and medium small industries will get buyers and it will boost the prospects of “Vocal for local” and Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

What is GeM?
- Started in 2017.
- It is a one stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods and Services.
- The portal is open for all government buyers— Central and State Ministries, departments, public sector enterprises etc.
- Private buyers cannot buy on the platform but private people can sell products to government bodies through the portal.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Significance of GeM:
- Transparent and Cost-effective Procurement.
- Promotion of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Entry of Small Local Sellers.

Q.22) Consider the following statements:

1. GeM portal is open for all government buyers.
2. Private buyers cannot sell on the platform but private people can buy products to government bodies through the portal.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 Only.
B. 2 Only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Ans: A

INDIA’S FIRST LIQUID-MIRROR TELESCOPE:

Context:
India’s first liquid-mirror telescope- International Liquid Mirror Telescope (ILMT) has now entered the commissioning phase and will start scientific observations some time in October this year.
About the International Liquid Mirror Telescope (ILMT):
It is located at an altitude of 2,450 metres on the Devasthal Observatory campus of the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) in Nainital district, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

- It is the only liquid-mirror telescope operational anywhere in the world.
- It will also hold the unique tag of being the maiden liquid-telescope globally to be designed exclusively for astronomical purposes.
- This international telescope facility is the result of collaborative work between astronomers from Canada, Belgium and India.

Features of the Telescope:
- Unlike the conventional telescopes that can be steered to track specific stellar source objects, the ILMT will be stationary.
- It will basically carry out observations and imaging at the zenith, that is, of the overhead sky.
- This is a survey telescope having high potential for discovering newer objects.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the International Liquid Mirror Telescope (ILMT):
1. It is located in Nainital.
2. It is the only liquid-mirror telescope operational anywhere in the world.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C

NTPC’S BIODIVERSITY POLICY
Context:
Recently, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC Ltd) issued a renewed Biodiversity Policy 2022.
- It is an integral part of NTPC’s Environmental Policy and its objectives are aligned with environmental and sustainability policies.

Objectives of the Policy:
1. To support all the professionals of the NTPC Group to help them contribute toward the achievement of the targets set in this field.
2. To achieve a ‘no net loss’ of biodiversity at all of its currently operating sites and ensure there is a net positive balance wherever applicable.
3. To mainstream the concept of biodiversity across NTPC’s value chain and adopt a precautionary approach for sustainable management of biodiversity in all the decision-making processes.

Expected outcomes of the policy:
- Overall conservation will increase with participation from business/firm’s side.
- Better practices of conservation will be known and will yield better results.
- Grass root participation will make people feel more connected to the cause.

About NTPC:
- NTPC Ltd. is a central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Power.
- It is India’s largest energy conglomerate with roots planted way back in 1975 to accelerate power development in India.
- It became a Maharatna company in 2010.

Q. Biodiversity forms the basis for human existence in the following ways (2011):
1. Soil formation
2. Prevention of soil erosion
3. Recycling of waste
4. Pollination of crops
Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1, 2 and 3 only
B. 2, 3 and 4 only
C. 1 and 4 only
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4
Ans: D
WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Context:
31st May is observed as ‘World No Tobacco Day’ every year to spread awareness around the deadly effects of tobacco consumption.
- The Member States of the World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes.
- In 1988, Resolution WHA 42.19 was passed, calling for the celebration of World No Tobacco Day, every year on 31 May.
- Theme for 2022: “Tobacco: Threat to our environment.” This drive aims to create awareness among the public on the detrimental impact of tobacco cultivation, production, distribution, and waste on the environment, besides human health.
- The WHO has selected Jharkhand for the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2022.

Impact of tobacco on environment:
- About 3.5 million hectares of land are cleared for growing tobacco each year.
- It causes deforestation mainly in the developing nations.
- Tobacco cultivation results in soil degradation, making it infertile to support the growth of other crops or vegetation.
- Tobacco contributes 84 megatons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide to the atmosphere every year.
- Around twenty-two billion litres of water is consumed in the production of cigarettes every year.
- Tobacco is a very nutrient-hungry crop, and it depletes soil nutrients more rapidly.

Tobacco cultivation in India:
- It is one of the important cash crops.
- Today, India is the second-largest crop producer in the world after China.
- Around 760 million kg of Tobacco is grown in India on about 40 lakh hectares of land.
- The sector provides jobs to millions of people and contributes as much as Rs.22,737 crore as excise duty and Rs.5,969 crore in foreign exchange to the national treasury.

Impact on health:
- It is estimated that about 29% of the adult Indian population consumes Tobacco. Most commonly, it is consumed as Smokeless Tobacco Products like khaini, gutkha, and zarda.
- The smokeless forms pose high risks of oral and oesophageal cancer.
- Their consumption by pregnant women can also lead to stillbirth and low birth weight in infants.
- People addicted to smoking are at very high risk of uterine cervix, and bone marrow cancers.
- Tobacco kills more people than tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and malaria combined worldwide.
- Tobacco farmers are prone to suffer from a work-related ailment known as “Green Tobacco Sickness” (GTS), which is caused mainly by nicotine absorption via the skin.

Efforts by Government in this regard:
- The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act 2003 (COTPA 2003): This Act includes the prohibition of smoking in public places, advertisement of cigarettes and other tobacco products, sale of cigarettes or other tobacco products to anyone below the age of 18 years, and prohibition of selling areas like schools, colleges, etc.
- To make India addiction-free, the Government has launched programmes like National Tobacco Control Programme and Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan.
- Crop diversification programme: Farmers are encouraged to replace tobacco crops with less water-consuming alternatives to conserve water and soil.

Q. Consider the following statements:
2. India is the second-largest crop producer in the world after China.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: C
50 YEARS SINCE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE:

Context:
The 50th anniversary of the Stockholm conference is being observed.

About the Stockholm conference:
- The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm between June 5 to June 16, 1972.
- It was the first such worldwide convergence on planetary environment, with the theme ‘Only One Earth’.
- It resulted in the Stockholm Declaration which contained principles and an Action Plan containing recommendations for environmental policy.

The three dimensions of this conference were:
1. Countries agreeing not to “harm each other’s environment or the areas beyond national jurisdiction”.
2. An action plan to study the threat to Earth’s environment.
3. Establishment of an international body called the UN Environment programme (UNEP) to bring in cooperation among countries.

Significance and outcomes of the Stockholm Conference:
- Until 1972, no country had an environment ministry.
- Norwegian delegates returned from the conference to set up a ministry for the environment.
- India set up its ministry of environment and forest in 1985.

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that Stockholm Conference is also known as the Swedish Initiative?
- It is because in 1968 Sweden first proposed the idea of the Stockholm conference.

Q.26) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty drawn at:

D. UN Climate Change Conference, Copenhagen, 2009.

TACKLING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE:

Context:
Health ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) highly industrialised countries recently recognised antimicrobial resistance was a bigger threat to low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) even though fighting it was a shared responsibility.

Concerns associated:
- Nearly 700,000 people die of AMR every year.
- The toll can rise to as many as 10 million by 2050 and eat up 3.8 per cent of annual global gross domestic product (GDP).

Proposed plan by G7:
1. To establish new international integrated surveillance systems.
2. Improve existing systems to monitor AMR and antibiotics use among humans, animals and plants and the effect on the environment.
3. Enhance the scientific basis to inform risk assessments and identify opportunities for mitigation.
4. To promote prudent and appropriate use of antimicrobials through 2023 by defining national measurable targets on AMR in line with domestic authorities, including antibiotic usage in human health.
5. To prepare the upcoming report on infection prevention and control and present it at the World Health Summit in Berlin in October.
What is Antibiotic resistance?
It is the ability of a microorganism (like bacteria, viruses, and some parasites) to stop an antimicrobial (such as antibiotics, antivirals, and antimalarials) from working against it. As a result, standard treatments become ineffective, infections persist, and may spread to others.

Why is Antimicrobial resistance a silent threat of the future?
- Antibiotics have saved millions of lives till date. Unfortunately, they are now becoming ineffective as many infectious diseases have ceased to respond to antibiotics.
- Even though antimicrobial resistance is a natural process, the misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process.
- A large number of infections such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, and gonorrhea are becoming very difficult to treat since the antibiotics used for their treatment are becoming less effective.
- Globally, use of antibiotics in animals is expected to increase by 67% by 2030 from 2010 levels. The resistance to antibiotics in germs is a man-made disaster.

Measures Taken to Address AMR (India):
- National Programme on AMR containment: Launched in 2012.
- National Action Plan on AMR was launched in April 2017.
- AMR Surveillance and Research Network (AMRSN) was launched in 2013.

Q. Antibiotic resistance can be caused by?
1. Bacteria.
2. Viruses.
3. Algae.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Ans: A
PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT

Context:
The Enforcement Directorate has arrested Delhi Health Minister and senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Satyendar Jain under the criminal provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with his alleged involvement in a ‘hawala transactions’ case.

About the Prevention of Money Laundering Act:
It was enacted as a response to India’s global commitment (including the Vienna Convention) to curb the menace of money laundering. 

Objectives of the Act: PMLA was enacted in 2002 and it came into force in 2005, to curb money laundering (process of converting black money into white) and to provide for seizure of property derived from money-laundering.

There are mainly 3 objectives of PMLA:
1. To prevent and control money laundering.
2. To confiscate and seize the property obtained from the laundered money.
3. To deal with any other issue connected with money laundering in India.

Dispute redressal:
- The Adjudicating Authority is appointed by the central government. It decides whether the property attached or seized is involved in money laundering.
- The Adjudicating Authority shall not be bound by the procedure laid down by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by the principles of natural justice and subject to the other provisions of PMLA.

Appellate Tribunal: An Appellate Tribunal appointed by the Government is given the power to hear appeals against the orders of the Adjudicating Authority. Orders of the tribunal can be appealed in the appropriate High Court.

Special Court: Provision for establishing special court by the Union government under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2012:
- Adds the concept of ‘reporting entity’ which would include a banking company, financial institution, intermediary etc.
- PMLA, 2002 levied a fine up to Rs 5 lakh, but the amendment act has removed this upper limit.
- It has provided for provisional attachment and confiscation of property of any person involved in such activities.

INSTA CURIOUS

Do you know about FIU-IND?
Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance is an independent body reporting directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister.
- FIU-IND is the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analysing, and disseminating the information relating to suspect financial transactions.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About PMLA.
2. Dispute redressal mechanism under the act.
3. Appellate tribunal under the act.

MAINS LINK:
What is Money Laundering? How does Money Laundering work? Discuss various steps taken by government of India to prevent money laundering.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) works under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. PMLA (Amendment) Act, 2012 added the concept of ‘reporting entity’.
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: B
NAGA PEACE PROCESS

Context:
Naga rebel group National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) or NSCN(IM) has stuck to its demands for a separate flag and a constitution in an indication that the deadlock in the peace talks with the central government, aimed at bringing an end to India’s oldest insurgency, is likely to continue.

Background:
The process has been ongoing since mid-1997 when the NSCN (I-M) declared a ceasefire with the armed forces. Other groups began opting for talks in 2001. However, it has been put in a cold storage since the Framework Agreement was signed on August 3, 2015.

How old is the Naga political issue?
1. Pre-independence:
   - The British annexed Assam in 1826, and in 1881, the Naga Hills too became part of British India. The first sign of Naga resistance was seen in the formation of the Naga Club in 1918, which told the Simon Commission in 1929 “to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times”.
   - In 1946 came the Naga National Council (NNC), which declared Nagaland an independent state on August 14, 1947.
   - The NNC resolved to establish a “sovereign Naga state” and conducted a “referendum” in 1951, in which “99 per cent” supported an “independent” Nagaland.

2. Post-independence:
   - On March 22, 1952, the Naga Federal Government (NFG) and the Naga Federal Army (NFA) were formed. The Government of India sent in the Army to crush the insurgency and, in 1958, enacted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

Agreement in this regard:
- The NSCN (IM) entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Centre in 1997 and the two have been holding talks since then, while a conglomerate of seven different Naga national political groups (NNPGs) also got into separate talks with the Centre since 2017.
- The Centre signed a “framework agreement” with NSCN (IM) in 2015, and an “agreed position” with the NNPGs in 2017. However, the NSCN (IM)’s demand for a separate Naga flag and constitution has been a delaying factor in signing a final deal on the protracted Naga political issue.

The 2015 ‘agreement’:
After years of negotiations with successive governments, the NSCN(IM) had on August 3, 2015 signed a framework agreement with the BJP-led Centre. The “agreement” was based on the idea of “shared sovereignty” for the Nagas, a community comprising more than 60 tribes (the exact number is unclear) spread across the Northeast and parts of neighbouring Myanmar.
- Shared sovereignty denotes sharing of administrative and legislative power between India and ‘Nagalim’.

Under this arrangement, the Naga Hoho, the apex body of all Naga tribes, would look after the welfare of all Naga-inhabited areas, irrespective of their integration with the proposed ‘Nagalim’.

INSTA CURIOUS
The key demand of Naga groups has been Greater Nagalim. What parts of the state are covered in it? Reference: read this.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. Parts of States included Greater Nagalim.
2. About Naga Club and NNC.
3. When was the Naga Referendum held?

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the issues and challenges associated with the Naga Peace Accord.
BARCODES VS RADIO-FREQUENCY

Context:
Baggage tags equipped with radio-frequency identification (RFID) will soon be available at Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport, marking a first of its kind for the country.

What is RFID?
Radio Frequency Identification is a wireless tracking system that consists of tags and readers.
- Radio waves are used to communicate information/identity of objects or people.
- The tags can carry encrypted information, serial numbers and short descriptions.

Types - passive and active RFID tags:
1. Active RFIDs use their own power source, mostly batteries.
2. Passive RFIDs are activated through the reader using the electromagnetic energy it transmits.

How do they work?
RFID tags use an integrated circuit and an antenna to communicate with a reader using radio waves at several different frequencies – low frequency (LF), high frequency (HF), and ultra-high frequency (UHF).
- The message sent back by the tag in form or radio waves is translated into data and analysed by the host computer system.
- Unlike Barcodes, RFIDs do not require direct line of sight to identify objects.

Differences between RFID and Barcode:
1. RFID uses radio waves to communicate that do not require line of sight in order to obtain the data; barcodes use light to read the black-and-white pattern printed on the sticky tag.
2. An RFID tag can communicate with a powered reader even when the tag is not powered.
3. When printed on paper or sticky labels, barcodes are more susceptible to wear and breakage, which can affect their readability. RFID tags are more durable than barcodes.
4. In contrast to barcode scanners, RFID scanners can process dozens of tags in a single second.
5. Barcodes are simple and easy to copy or counterfeit, whereas RFID is more complicated and difficult to replicate or counterfeit.
6. RFID tags are expensive compared to barcodes.

What is a barcode?
- A barcode is a printed series of parallel bars or lines of varying width used for entering data into a computer system.
- The bars are black on a white background and vary in width and quantity depending on the application.
- The bars represent the binary digits zero and one, which represent the digits zero to nine processed by a digital computer.
- These barcodes are scanned using special optical scanners known as barcode readers.
- The majority of these codes use only two different widths of bars, however some use four.
- One of the most well-known examples of a barcode is the QR code.
WHAT ARE THE ECO-SENSITIVE ZONES (ESZS)?

Context:
The Supreme Court has directed that every protected forest, national park and wildlife sanctuary across the country should have a mandatory eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) of a minimum one km starting from their demarcated boundaries.

What’s the issue?
- The judgment came on a petition instituted for the protection of forest lands in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.
- Subsequently, the scope of that writ petition was enlarged by the court so as to protect such natural resources throughout the country.

Directions by the Court:
1. In case any national park or protected forest already has a buffer zone extending beyond one km, that would prevail.
2. In case the question of the extent of buffer zone was pending a statutory decision, then the court’s direction to maintain the one-km safety zone would be applicable until a final decision is arrived at under the law.
3. Mining within the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries shall not be permitted.
4. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Home Secretaries of States responsible for the compliance of the judgment.

About ESZs:
1. Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) or Ecologically Fragile Areas (EFAs) are areas notified by the MoEFCC around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
2. The purpose of declaring ESZs is to create some kind of “shock absorbers” to the protected areas by regulating and managing the activities around such areas.
3. They also act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.
4. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 does not mention the word “Eco-Sensitive Zones”.
5. An ESZ could go up to 10 kilometres around a protected area as provided in the Wildlife Conservation Strategy, 2002.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. RFID uses radio waves to communicate.
2. RFID does not require line of sight in order to obtain the data.
3. Barcodes use light to read the black-and-white pattern printed on the sticky tag.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only.
B. 2 and 3 only.
C. All of the above.
D. None of the above.

Ans: C

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INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About RFID.
2. Radio frequency.
3. Optical communications systems.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of NASA’s LCRD.
Significance of ESZ:
The purpose of declaring ESZs around national parks, forests and sanctuaries is to create some kind of a “shock absorber” for the protected areas.
- These zones would act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to those involving lesser protection.

Need of the hour:
The nation’s natural resources have been for years ravaged by mining and other activities.
- Hence, the government should not confine its role to that of a “facilitator” of economic activities for the “immediate upliftment of the fortunes of the State”.
- It has to act as a trustee for the benefit of the general public in relation to the natural resources so that sustainable development could be achieved in the long term.

Q. Consider the following statements:
1. Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) are notified by respective State governments only.
2. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 does not mention the word “Eco-Sensitive Zones”.
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Ans: B
GREEN BONDS

Context:
India is likely to face an uphill battle if it goes ahead with its first sovereign green bond sale as it aims to issue the securities in rupees, putting off most overseas investors.

What’s the issue?
The timing might not be ideal for India though, especially for a rupee issuance.
- The currency has slumped more than 4% this year amid concern the Reserve Bank of India is behind the curve in tackling inflation, with elevated crude oil prices adding to pressures on the net importer.

What Is a Green Bond?
A green bond is a type of fixed-income instrument that is specifically earmarked to raise money for climate and environmental projects. These bonds are typically asset-linked and backed by the issuing entity’s balance sheet, so they usually carry the same credit rating as their issuers’ other debt obligations.
- Green bonds may come with tax incentives to enhance their attractiveness to investors.
- The World Bank is a major issuer of green bonds.

How Does a Green Bond Work?
Green bonds work just like any other corporate or government bond.
- Borrowers issue these securities in order to secure financing for projects that will have a positive environmental impact, such as ecosystem restoration or reducing pollution.
- Investors who purchase these bonds can expect to make as the bond matures.
- In addition, there are often tax benefits for investing in green bonds.

Green Bonds Vs Blue Bonds:
Blue bonds are sustainability bonds to finance projects that protect the ocean and related ecosystems.
- This can include projects to support sustainable fisheries, protection of coral reefs and other fragile ecosystems, or reducing pollution and acidification.
- All blue bonds are green bonds, but not all green bonds are blue bonds.

Green Bonds Vs Climate Bonds:
“Green bonds” and “climate bonds” are sometimes used interchangeably, but some authorities use the latter term specifically for projects focusing on reducing carbon emissions or alleviating the effects of climate change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Green Bond Principles</th>
<th>Climate Bond Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>By certified approver based on taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Principles of green bond</td>
<td>CBI produces (a) a standard for GB certification, (b) a green taxonomy, and (c) a GB list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representativeness</td>
<td>Nearly 250 members and observers and consensus</td>
<td>A buy-side view as reflected by the composition of its Climate Bond Standard Board (CBSSB)</td>
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<td>Defining Green</td>
<td>High-level guidance on green through its Eligible Project Categories</td>
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<td>Market Guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Cover for GBP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICMA, 2018[3]

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About Green Bonds.
2. How do they operate?
3. Features.
4. How are they different from Blue Bonds?

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of Green Bonds.
WHAT ARE ‘GREEN JOBS’?

Context:
During his speech on the occasion of World Environment Day, PM Modi highlighted India’s efforts to create ‘green jobs’.

What are ‘green jobs’?
• They are a class of jobs that directly have a positive impact on the planet, and contribute to the overall environmental welfare.
• They’re aimed at reducing the negative environmental impact of economic sectors and furthering the process of creating a low-carbon economy.

Jobs involving renewable energy, conservation of resources, ensuring energy efficient means are categorised under the same.

Significance:
For India ‘green jobs’ can prove immensely useful to the country with sectors like renewable energy, waste management, green transport and urban farming all having great potential to employ a trained workforce.

Efforts by India in this regard:
Skill Council for Green Jobs:
• Launched on October 1, 2015.
• It was set up to be a not-for-profit, independent, industry-led initiative.
• It was aligned to the National Skill Development Missions.
• Promoted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
• Aim: To help manufacturers and other service providers in India’s ‘green business’ sector.

Green Jobs Initiative:
• It is aimed at bettering placements, training and creating opportunities for individuals to work in ‘green jobs’.

WHAT ARE ‘CARBON BOMBS’?

Context:
The usage of the term ‘carbon bombs’ picked up after an investigative project of The Guardian this year.
• The project reported the plans of countries and private companies all over the world to engage in 195 ‘carbon bomb’ projects.

What are carbon bombs?
Definition by the Guardian: It is “an oil or gas project that will result in at least a billion tonnes of CO2 emissions over its lifetime.”
• In total, around 195 such projects have been identified world over, including in the US, Russia, West Asia, Australia and India.
• According to the report, they will collectively overshoot the limit of emissions that had been agreed to in the Paris Agreement of 2015.
WHAT IS THE RBI’S MPC?

Context:
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its bimonthly policy review meeting increased the key repo rate by 50 basis points, but made no changes in the cash reserve ratio.

Withdrawal Of Accommodative Policy:
- The MPC also decided to remain focused on withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation remains within target, going forward, while supporting growth.
- This clearly indicates that the RBI is in no mood to continue with an accommodative stance, and it is most likely to increase the rate in its next policy meeting in August 2022.

What is an accommodative policy stance?
- An accommodative stance means the central bank is prepared to expand the money supply to boost economic growth. The central bank, during an accommodative policy period, is willing to cut the interest rates.

What is the plan for ‘defusing’ carbon bombs?
The network working towards this goal is called Leave It In the Ground Initiative (LINGO).
- Its mission is to “leave fossil fuels in the ground and learn to live without them.”
- It believes the root of climate change is the burning of fossil fuels, and the 100% use of renewable energy sources is the solution.
- LINGO aims to organise ground support for protesting such projects, challenge them through litigation, and conduct analysis and studies for the same.

Q.16) Consider the following statements regarding the Leave It In the Ground Initiative (LINGO):

1. Its mission is to leave fossil fuels in the ground and learn to live without them.
2. It was launched by UNEP in 2022.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

What is Repo Rate?
Repo stands for ‘Repurchasing Option’. It refers to the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the RBI in case of shortage of funds.
- It is one of the main tools of RBI to keep inflation under control.

About MPC:
The RBI has a government-constituted Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) which is tasked with framing monetary policy using tools like the repo rate, reverse repo rate, bank rate, cash reserve ratio (CRR).
- It has been instituted by the Central Government of India under Section 45ZB of the RBI Act that was amended in 1934.

Functions:
The MPC is entrusted with the responsibility of deciding the different policy rates including MSF, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, and Liquidity Adjustment Facility.

Composition of MPC:
- The committee will have six members. Of the six members, the government will nominate three. No government official will be nominated to the MPC.
- The other three members would be from the RBI with the governor being the ex-officio chairperson. Deputy governor of RBI in charge of the monetary policy will be a member, as also an executive director of the central bank.

Selection and term of members:
Selection: The government nominees to the MPC will be selected by a Search-cum-Selection Committee under Cabinet Secretary with RBI Governor and Economic
Affairs Secretary and three experts in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy as its members.

**Term:** Members of the MPC will be appointed for a period of four years and shall not be eligible for reappointment.

**How decisions are made?**
Decisions will be taken by majority vote with each member having a vote.

RBI governor’s role: The RBI Governor will chair the committee. The governor, however, will not enjoy a veto power to overrule the other panel members, but will have a casting vote in case of a tie.

**What is RBI Monetary Policy?**
The term ‘Monetary Policy’ is the Reserve Bank of India’s policy pertaining to the deployment of monetary resources under its control for the purpose of achieving GDP growth and lowering the inflation rate.

The Reserve Bank of India Act 1934 empowers the RBI to make monetary policy.

**What the Monetary Policy intends to achieve?**
As per the suggestions made by Chakravarty Committee, aspects such as price stability, economic growth, equity, social justice, and encouraging the growth of new financial enterprises are some crucial roles connected to the monetary policy of India.

• While the Government of India tries to accelerate the GDP growth rate of India, the RBI keeps trying to bring down the rate of inflation within a sustainable limit.

• In order to achieve its main objectives, the Monetary Policy Committee determines the ideal policy interest rate that will help achieve the inflation target in front of the country.

**Monetary Policy Instruments and how they are managed?**
Monetary policy instruments are of two types namely qualitative instruments and quantitative instruments. The list of quantitative instruments include Open Market Operations, Bank Rate, Repo Rate, Reverse Repo Rate, Cash Reserve Ratio, Statutory Liquidity Ratio, Marginal standing facility and Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF).

Qualitative Instruments refer to direct action, change in the margin money and moral suasion.

Q.17) Consider the following statements:
1. Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was constituted by the RBI on the recommendation of Supreme Court of India.
2. The RBI Governor will chair the committee.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

**WHY BOND YIELDS ARE RISING?**

**Context:**
The Reserve Bank of India has hiked rates to rein in inflation, which is expected to remain above 7% until at least September.

• However, with this, the bond yields have also risen to their highest levels in three years.

**What does it mean?**
1. The rise in yields means markets have already factored in the worst of the rate movements.
2. The rise indicates that the cost of funds in the financial system is rising and so are interest rates.
3. The rise means the government will have to pay more as yield (or return to the investors), leading to a rise in cost of borrowings.
4. This will put upward pressure on general interest rates in the banking system.

**Impact on Investors:**
The rise in yields means investors expect higher interest rates and are selling their bonds, because higher rates would result in a decline in the bond price of existing bonds (and thereby capital loss on sale before maturity).

• Debt investors are set to get impacted. When yields rise and bond prices fall, net asset values of debt funds, which hold a sizeable chunk of government securities in their portfolios, will also decline.

• It will also impact corporate bonds, which are priced higher than government bonds.

• Rising bond yields are generally not good news for equity investors as they raise the cost of funds for companies and start hurting their earnings.

**Bond Yields vs Equity:**
Bond yields have an inverse relationship with equities as a rise in bond yields means that the risk premium on equities will have to go up.
Relationship between Bond Price and Yield:
A bond’s price moves inversely with its yield or interest rate; the higher the price of a bond, the lower the yield.
- The reason for the inverse relationship between price and yield is due, in part, to bonds being fixed-rate investments.
- Investors might sell their bonds if it’s expected that interest rates will rise in the coming months and opt for the higher-rate bonds later on.
- Conversely, bond investors might buy bonds, driving the prices higher, if they believe interest rates will fall in the future because existing fixed-rate bonds will have a higher rate or yield.

MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICES (MSP) FOR THE KHARI SEASON 2022-23:

Context:
The Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for the Khari season 2022-23 were recently approved by the cabinet. The rates for 14 Kharif crops have been increased, the hikes ranging from 4% to 8%.

What is MSP?
MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers. Currently, it fixes MSPs for 23 crops grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons (Including FRP for sugarcane).
- The mandated crops include 14 crops of the kharif season, 6 rabi crops and 2 other commercial crops.

How is it calculated?
The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
- The Union Budget for 2018-19 had announced that MSP would be kept at levels of 1.5 the cost of production.
- The MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which is a statutory body and submits separate reports recommending prices for kharif and rabi seasons.

Which production costs are taken in fixing the MSPs?
The CACP considers both ‘A2+FL’ and ‘C2’ costs while recommending MSP.
1. A2 costs cover all paid-out expenses, both in cash and kind, incurred by farmers on seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, hired labour, fuel and irrigation, among others.
2. A2+FL covers actual paid-out costs plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour.
3. The C2 costs account for the rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets respectively, on top of A2+FL.

Q.18) Consider the following statements:

1. A bond’s price moves inversely with its yield or interest rate.
2. The higher the price of a bond, the lower the yield.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
Please note:
CACP reckons only A2+FL cost for return. However, C2 costs are used by CACP primarily as benchmark reference costs (opportunity costs) to see if the MSPs recommended by them at least cover these costs in some of the major producing States.

The limitations of MSP:
The major problem with the MSP is lack of government machinery for procurement for all crops except wheat and rice, which the Food Corporation of India actively procures under the PDS.

As state governments procure the last mile grain, the farmers of states where the grain is procured completely by the government benefit more while those in states that procure less are often affected.

The MSP-based procurement system is also dependent on middlemen, commission agents and APMC officials, which smaller farmers find difficult to get access to.

Q.19) Consider the following statements: (2020):
1. In the case of all cereals, pulses and oil-seeds, the procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP) is unlimited in any State/UT of India.
2. In the case of cereals and pulses, the MSP is fixed in any State/UT at a level to which the market price will never rise.

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.

STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX

Context:
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)’s 4th State Food Safety Index (SFSI) was released on the occasion of World Food Safety Day (June 7).

• It seeks to measure the performance of States across five parameters of food safety.

What is the State Food Safety Index (SFSI)?
• The index was developed by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) in 2018-19 to measure the performance of states on five significant parameters of Food Safety.
• The parameters include Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.
• The index will help in providing safe and nutritious food to our citizens.
Q.20) Consider the following statements:

1. State Food Safety Index (SFSI) was developed by FSSAI.
2. World food safety day was first celebrated in 2019.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

Performance of various states:
- Tamil Nadu topped the State Food Safety Index followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Among Smaller States, Goa stood first, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- Among UTs, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Chandigarh secured first, second and third ranks.

What is World food safety day?
- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly facilitate the observance of World Food Safety Day, in collaboration with Member States and other relevant organizations.
- It was first celebrated in 2019.
- Objective: To strengthen the commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva Forum in 2019 under the umbrella of “The Future of Food Safety”.
- The theme for 2022 was Safer Food, Better Health.

PAR TAPI NARMADA PROJECT

Context:
PM Modi is all set to inaugurate the Astol project that will provide tap water to 4.50 lakh people living in 174 tribal villages and 1,028 hamlets on the hills of Valsad district in Gujarat.
This is significant as the tribes in the area have been protesting against the central government’s Par-Tapi-Narmada river link project.

Background:
Par-Tapi-Narmada river link project in south Gujarat was scrapped after strong protests by tribal communities of the three districts in the region.

About the Project:
Envisioned under the 1980 National Perspective Plan. The project proposes to transfer river water from the surplus regions of the Western Ghats to the deficit regions of Saurashtra and Kutch.

It proposes to link three rivers:
1. Par, originating from Nashik in Maharashtra and flowing through Valsad.
2. Tapi from Saputara that flows through Maharashtra and Surat in Gujarat.
3. Narmada originating in Madhya Pradesh and flowing through Maharashtra and Bharuch and Narmada districts in Gujarat.

Benefits:
The surplus water proposed to be diverted through the estimated Rs 10,211 crore Par-Tapi-Narmada link project is expected to irrigate an area of 2,32,175 hectares, of which 61,190 ha is en route to the link canal.

Why is this project being opposed?
According to a report by the NWDA, about 6065 ha of land area will be submerged due to the proposed reservoirs.
- A total of 61 villages will be affected, of which one will be fully submerged and the remaining 60 partly.
- The total number of affected families would be 2,509 of which 98 families would be affected due to the creation of the Jheri reservoir, the only one in Maharashtra, spread over six villages.
- In Gujarat, around 2000 families will be affected by the project. The districts where the project will be implemented are largely dominated, by tribals who fear displacement.
Benefits of interlinking:
1. Enhances water and food security.
2. Proper utilisation of water.
3. Boost to agriculture.
4. Disaster mitigation.
5. Boost to transportation.

INSTA CURIOUS
Do you know about the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers? Reference: read this.

INSTALINKS
PRELIMS LINK:
1. About the Project.
2. About Par River.
3. Tapi and Narmada - tributaries and basin states.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of the project.

Q.21) The Narmada river flows to the west, while most other large peninsular rivers flow to the east. Why? (2013).

1. It occupies a linear rift valley.
2. It flows between the Vindhyas and the Satpuras.
3. The land slopes to the west from Central India.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
(a) 1 only.
(b) 2 and 3.
(c) 1 and 3.
(d) None.

FAST RADIO BURST

Context:
Astronomers have reported a fast radio burst (FRB) whose characteristics are different from almost all other FRBs previously detected, except one.

- The latest FRB (Named FRB 20190520B), unlike many other FRBs, emits frequent, repeating bursts of radio waves. Only one FRB has been previously observed to behave this way.

What are FRBs?
FRBs are bright flashes of light that appear for a few milliseconds and then vanish.
- The first FRB was discovered in 2007. Since then 140 more were discovered until June 2021.

How are they produced?
The astronomers have suggested that the candidates for the sources of FRBs are the superdense neutron stars left over after a supernova, or magnetars (neutron stars with ultra-strong magnetic fields).

What are Magnetars?
A magnetar is a type of neutron star.
- They are the most powerful magnets in the cosmos.
- Their magnetic fields are 5,000 trillion times more powerful than that of the Earth.

Q.22) Consider the following statements:
1. A magnetar is a type of neutron star.
2. Magnetic fields of Magnetars are 5,000 trillion times more powerful than that of the Earth.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
TIANGONG SPACE STATION

Context:
Three Chinese astronauts docked at the country’s space station on Sunday.

About China’s Space Station:
- The new multi-module Tiangong station is set to be operational for at least 10 years.
- The space station will operate in low-Earth orbit at an altitude of 340-450 km above Earth’s surface.

Significance of the space station:
1. The low orbit space station would be the country’s eye from the sky, providing round the clock bird’s-eye view for its astronauts on the rest of the world.
2. It shall aid China’s aim to become a major space power by 2030.

Concerns:
China’s space station will be equipped with a robotic-arm over which the US has raised concerns for its possible military applications.
- The Concern is that this technology “could be used in a future system for grappling other satellites”.

Other space stations:
- The only space station currently in orbit is the International Space Station (ISS). The ISS is backed by the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada.
- So far, China has sent two previous space stations into orbit- the Tiangong-1 and Tiangong-2 were trial stations.
- India is planning to launch its own space station by 2030.

Comparing with the International Space Station:
- The ISS programme is a joint project between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).
- ISS is now the largest human-made body in low Earth orbit. The Chinese station will be smaller and similar in design, meaning it will have limited capacity for astronauts (three versus six on ISS).

Others planned space stations:
Lunar Gateway: involving four of the ISS partner agencies: NASA, European Space Agency (ESA), Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and Canadian Space Agency (CSA). It is planned to be both the first space station beyond low Earth orbit and the first space station to orbit the Moon.
The Russian Orbital Service Station is scheduled to begin construction in 2025.
Starlab is the name given to the planned LEO space station designed by Nanoracks for commercial space activities uses.
Indian Human Spaceflight Programme: India plans to deploy a 20-tonne space station as a follow-up programme of the Gaganyaan mission, it will be deployed in 5–7 years after the completion of the Gaganyaan project.

INSTA CURIOUS

What is Molniya orbit? Read Here (Briefly)

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About ISS.
2. Countries involved.
3. Objectives.
4. Previous space stations.

MAINS LINK:
Write a note on the International Space Station.
Q.23) Consider the following statements:

1. International space station is a joint project between five space agencies, with India as a technical partner.
2. China’s Tiangong Space Station will replace ISS in the lower earth orbit.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

1. 1 only.
2. 2 only.
3. Both.
4. None.

LITHIUM

Context:
With the EV industry growing rapidly, the demand for lithium, an essential resource for EV battery makers, has surged along.

Significance:
It is estimated that if the entirety of ore from the African mines are extracted, it will be sufficient to meet the demand for at least 27.78 million vehicles with 60 kWh batteries.

About Lithium:
It is a soft, silvery-white metal. Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.

It is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in mineral oil. It is an alkali metal and a rare metal.

Key Characteristics and Properties:
- It has the highest specific heat capacity of any solid element.
- Lithium’s single balance electron allows it to be a good conductor of electricity.
- It is flammable and can even explode when exposed to air and water.

Uses:
1. Lithium is a key element for new technologies and finds its use in ceramics, glass, telecommunication and aerospace industries.
2. The well-known uses of Lithium are in Lithium ion batteries, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators for mobile phones and as convertor to tritium used as a raw material for thermonuclear reactions i.e. fusion.

Prescribed substance:
The thermonuclear application makes Lithium as “Prescribed substance” under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 which permits AMD for exploration of Lithium in various geological domains of the country.

- Under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, “Prescribed Substance” means any substance including any mineral which the Central Government may, by notification, prescribe, being a substance which in its opinion is or may be used for the production or use of atomic energy or research into matters connected therewith and includes uranium, plutonium, thorium, beryllium, deuterium or any of their respective derivatives or compounds or any other materials containing any of the aforesaid substances.

Q.24) Consider the following statements:

1. Lithium is a hard, silvery-white metal.
2. Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

eVTOL

Context:
The Union Civil Aviation Minister, recently said that the Government of India is exploring the possibility of inviting manufacturers of Electric Vertical Take off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft to set up base in India.
What is eVTOL?

- As the acronym suggests, an electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft is one that uses electric power to hover, take off, and land vertically.
- Most eVTOLs also use what is called as distributed electric propulsion technology which means integrating a complex propulsion system with the airframe.
- This is a technology that has grown on account of successes in electric propulsion based on progress in motor, battery, fuel cell, and electronic controller technologies and also fuelled by the need for new vehicle technology that ensures urban air mobility (UAM).

Challenges associated:

- As the technology so far is a mix of unpiloted and piloted aircraft, the areas in focus include “crash prevention systems”.
- There are also issues such as ensuring safety in case of powerplant or rotor failure.
- Aircraft protection from cyberattacks is another area of focus.

More on eVTOL:

- The global market for eVTOLs was put at $8.5 million in 2021 and is to grow to $30.8 million by 2030.
- The demand will be on account of green energy and noise-free aircraft, cargo carrying concepts, and the need for new modes of transport.
- Also, the Government of India is exploring the possibility of inviting manufacturers of Electric Vertical Take-off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft to set up base in India.

INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:

1. What is eVTOL?
2. Developments that are enabling eVTOL.

MAINS LINK:

The challenges associated with eVTOL, need to be addressed before they become new vehicles of Urban Air Mobility. Comment.

Q.25) Which of the statements regarding eVTOL are correct?

1. eVTOL needs a runway to perform its operations.
2. They possess the potential to reduce emissions, in Urban Mobility.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both 1 and 2.
D. None of the Above.

NEVER AGAIN WILL THERE BE A COAL SHORTAGE

Context:
The Union Coal Minister said that there was a shortage of coal due to an extraordinary situation.

- The demand for power went up due to improved economic activity, but at the same time power plants operating on imported gas and coal stopped producing power because of high gas and coal prices.
- Coal prices increased from $40 a tonne to $210 a tonne. Also, power plants operating with blended coal (partly imported) stopped importing and began demanding domestic coal.
Coal:
It originates from organic matter wood, when large tracts of forests are buried under sediments, wood is burnt and decomposed due to heat from below and pressure from above. This phenomenon makes coal but takes centuries to complete.

Classification of Coal (on the basis of carbon content and time period):

**Anthracite:**
- It is the best quality of coal with the highest calorific value and carries 80 to 95% carbon content.
- It ignites slowly with a blue flame and is found in small quantities in Jammu and Kashmir.

**Bituminous:**
- It has a low level of moisture content with 60 to 80% of carbon content and has a high calorific value.
- Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh have deposits of Bituminous.

**Lignite:**
It carries 40 to 55% carbon content and is often brown in colour with high moisture content thus, gives smoke when burnt. Rajasthan, Lakhimpur (Assam), and Tamil Nadu have deposits of Lignite.

**Peat:**
It is the first stage of transformation from wood to coal with low calorific value and less than 40% carbon content.
- The top 5 States in terms of total coal reserves in India are: Jharkhand > Odisha > Chhattisgarh > West Bengal > Madhya Pradesh.
- The leading coal producers of the world include China, US, Australia, Indonesia, India.

Coal Blending:
- Coal blending is a practice that has been undertaken by many power stations to provide a consistent feedstock of fuel for power generation or to meet different requirements such as solving transportation problems, fuel cost, reducing slagging, and SOx emission.
- Low-grade (high ash) coal can be mixed with higher-grade (imported) coal without deterioration in thermal performance of the boiler, thus reducing the cost of generation.

India’s Dependence on coal:
- The installed capacity for coal-based power generation across the country was 2.04 lakh megawatt (MW). This accounts for about 5% of power from all sources.
- Coal-based power stations are retired periodically which happens all the time. But is not fast enough nor are new additions being halted.
- Coal is still most inexpensive compared with other present sources of energy.

### WHERE POWER COMES FROM (IN₹. TRILLION UNITS OF ELECTRICITY)

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**Installed generation capacity (megawatts)**

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<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Per capita consumption in 2020-21 (in KWh)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewables</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coal consumption in 2020-21 (million tones/year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewables</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>2,530</td>
<td>2,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coal controllers’ organisation**

**INSTALINKS**

**PRELIMS LINK:**
1. Coal, types of coal.
2. Content of different varieties of coal.
3. Geographic locations of coal-producing states in India and the world.
4. Coal blending.
5. Coal gasification.

**MAINS LINK:**

The demand for coal energy is going to increase over the next decade. Critically analyze its impact on energy and the environment.
Q.26) Consider the following statements:

1. Syngas contains carbon monoxide but negligible amounts of carbon dioxide.
2. In Coal Gasification coal is reduced to produce coal gas and fertilizers.

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.

About Yamuna River:

- The river Yamuna is a major tributary of river Ganges.
- Originates from the Yamunotri glacier near Bandarpooch peaks in the Mussoorie range of the lower Himalayas in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.
- It meets the Ganges at the Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh after flowing through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi.
- Tributaries: Chambal, Sindh, Betwa and Ken.

YAMUNA RIVER POLLUTION

Context:
River activists have demanded prompt measures to save the Yamuna river.

Demands by activists:
1. Construct the Rubber check dam downstream of the Taj Mahal.
2. Revisit the 1994 Yamuna water distribution agreement to ensure a larger share of Yamuna water for Agra and Mathura.
3. Frame a comprehensive national rivers policy.
4. Constitute a central rivers authority for management of all big rivers in the country.

Why is Yamuna so polluted?

1. The sewage treatment plants of Delhi are major contributors of the Pollutants being discharged in the river.
2. Pollutants discharge from different types of industry is also a major issue.
3. Agriculture activities along the banks of the river in Delhi contributes to river pollution.
4. Agricultural waste and pesticide discharge from the Haryana field also contributes to the pollution.
5. The low volume of water flow in the river causes the pollutants to accumulate and raise the pollution level.

Q.27) Consider the following statements:

1. River Yamuna originates near Bandarpooch peaks.
2. It meets the Ganges at the Sangam in Prayagraj.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
COMMON SURVEY TO COUNT ELEPHANTS AND BIG CATS

Context:
The government of India, for the first time this year, will present a unified count of the tiger, leopard and elephant populations of the country.

Benefits of the new method:
Given that 90% of the area occupied by elephants and tigers is common, and once estimation methods are standardised, having a common survey can significantly save costs.

- Also, the ‘head count’ method, or one currently deployed to count elephants was “obsolete” and frequently led to animals being double counted.

How are they counted currently?
Currently, the tiger survey is usually held once in four years and elephants are counted once in five years.

1. Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, which is affiliated to the Environment Ministry, has a standardised protocol in place that States then use to estimate tiger numbers. Based on sightings in camera traps and indirect estimation methods, tiger numbers are computed.

2. Elephant numbers largely rely on States directly counting the number of elephants. In recent years, techniques such as analysing dung samples have also been deployed to estimate birth rates and population trends in elephants.

Numbers:
- According to the most recent 2018-19 survey, there were 2,967 tigers in India.
- According to the last count in 2017, there were 29,964 elephants in India.

Efforts aimed at conservation of Elephants and their corridors at all-India level:
- ‘Gaj Yatra’, a nationwide campaign to protect elephants, was launched on the occasion of World Elephant Day in 2017. The campaign is planned to cover 12 elephant range states.
- The campaign aims to create awareness about elephant corridors to encourage free movement in their habitat.

Forest Ministry guide to managing human-elephant conflict (Best Practices):
1. Retaining elephants in their natural habitats by creating water sources and management of forest fires.
2. Elephant Proof trenches in Tamil Nadu.
3. Hanging fences and rubble walls in Karnataka.
4. Use of chili smoke in north Bengal and playing the sound of bees or carnivores in Assam.
5. Use of technology: Individual identification, monitoring of elephants in south Bengal and sending SMS alerts to warn of elephant presence.

Efforts by Private Organizations in this regard:
- Asian Elephant Alliance, an umbrella initiative by five NGOs, had, last year, come together to secure 96 out of the 101 existing corridors used by elephants across 12 States in India.
- NGOs Elephant Family, International Fund for Animal Welfare, IUCN Netherlands and World Land Trust have teamed up with Wildlife Trust of India’s (WTI) in the alliance.

About Asian Elephants:
1. Asian elephants are listed as “endangered” on the IUCN Red List of threatened species.
2. More than 60% of the world’s elephant population is in India.
3. Elephant is the Natural Heritage Animal of India.

INSTA CURIOUS
Did you know that Project Elephant was launched in 1992 by the Government of India Ministry of Environment and Forests to provide financial and technical support of wildlife management efforts by states for their free ranging populations of wild Asian Elephants?


INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. IUCN conservation status of Asian Elephant.
2. Elephant corridors in India.
3. Calving period of elephants.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the measures suggested by the Environment Ministry to manage man-elephant conflicts.
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX

Context:
The latest edition (2022) of the Environmental Performance Index was recently released. The report is prepared by the researchers of:
1. Yale Centre for Environmental Law & Policy.
2. Centre for International Earth Science Information Network Earth Institute, Columbia University.

About the Environmental Performance Index:
• The EPI provides a data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world.
• It ranks 180 countries on 40 performance indicators including climate change, environmental public health, biodiversity etc.
• It offers a scorecard that highlights leaders and laggards in environmental performance.
• It also provides practical guidance for countries that aspire to move toward a sustainable future.

Performance of India and other countries:
• The report ranked India at the bottom in a list of 180 countries.
• The lowest scores go to India (18.9), Myanmar (19.4), Vietnam (20.1), Bangladesh (23.1) and Pakistan (24.6).
• The US has been ranked at 43rd and the biggest current emitter China has been ranked at 160th position.
• Top 5 countries: Denmark, UK, Finland, Malta and Sweden have been ranked at the top five positions due to their better performance.

Why India is placed at the bottom?
• The report claimed that India prioritised economic growth over environment.
• It has markedly poor air quality and quickly rising greenhouse gas emissions.

Why India rejected the report?
• As per Indian govt, the report used many indicators based on unfounded assumptions.
• The methodology does not consider per capita emissions and different socio-economic conditions across countries.
• The weight of indicators in which India was performing well has been reduced.
• The principle of equity is given very low weightage in the form of the indicators like GHG emission per capita and GHG emission intensity trend.

• The common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) principle is also barely reflected in the composition of the index.
• Forests and wetlands, which act as crucial carbon sinks, have not been factored in while computing the projected GHG emissions trajectory up to 2050 by EPI 2022.

COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (CAQM)

Context:
The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has issued directions to ban the use of coal in industrial, domestic and other miscellaneous applications in the entire Delhi-NCR region from 1st January 2023.

Need for:
• This step is taken to bring down greenhouse gas emissions in Delhi NCR. Delhi is among the world’s most polluted capital cities.
• It will help save 1.7 million tonnes of coal annually.
• It will also help reduce pollutants including particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxide (NOx), CO2 and CO.

About the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM):
The Commission was first formed by an ordinance in October 2020. The erstwhile Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, or EPCA had been dissolved to make way for the Commission.
• The Commission will be a statutory authority.
• The Commission will supersede bodies such as the central and state pollution control boards of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan.
In 2021, the Parliament approved the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill.
Composition:
Chairperson: To be chaired by a government official of the rank of Secretary or Chief Secretary.
- The chairperson will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
- It will have members from several Ministries as well as representatives from the stakeholder States.
- It will have experts from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Civil Society.

Powers and functions:
1. It will have the powers to issue directions to these state governments on issues pertaining to air pollution.
2. It will entertain complaints as it deems necessary for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the air in the NCR and adjoining areas.
3. It will also lay down parameters for control of air pollution.
4. It will also be in charge of identifying violators, monitoring factories and industries and any other polluting unit in the region, and will have the powers to shut down such units.
5. It will also have the powers to overrule directives issued by the state governments in the region, that may be in violation of pollution norms.

INSTALLINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. About EPCA.
2. About NGT.
3. About CPCB.

MAINS LINK:
Why was EPCA dissolved? What has replaced EPCA? Discuss.

Q. 28) Consider the following: (2019)
1. Carbon monoxide
2. Methane
3. Ozone
4. Sulphur dioxide
Which of the above are released into atmosphere due to the burning of crop/biomass residue?
A. 1 and 2 only.
B. 2, 3 and 4 only.
C. 1 and 4 only.
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

AUSTRALIA – INDIA WATER SECURITY INITIATIVE (AIWASI)

Context:
The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the Government of Australia have signed an MoU for Technical Cooperation in urban water management.

Significance:
- The MoU will enable both India and Australia to learn about technological advancements gained by two nations in key areas of urban water security.
- It will promote exchange of learning, best practices and capacity building of institutions.
- It will also help promote cooperation between the two countries under Australia-India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI).

What is the Australia-India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI)?
AIWASI is a project Under South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI) of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia.

- It aims to work towards the Water Sensitive City vision which is based on holistic management of the integrated water cycle.
- It will undertake investments that provide urban water services support to disadvantaged communities to access reliable, safe water and sanitation services.

AIWASI project is also a ‘living laboratory’ with multiple educational, social and environmental benefits like water literacy of students and the community, creation of green spaces etc.
INSTALINKS

PRELIMS LINK:
1. Australia–India water Security initiative (AIWASI).
3. The Water Sensitive City vision.

MAINS LINK:
Discuss the significance of the Australia–India water Security initiative (AIWASI).

Q.29) Consider the following statements:
1. Australia-India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI) is a project Under South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI).
2. It aims to work towards the Water Sensitive City vision.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

WHAT IS WEB 5.0?

Context:
Former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey recently announced his vision for a new decentralized web platform that is being called Web 5.0.
The aim is to return “ownership of data and identity to individuals”.

What do the terms Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 mean?
Web 1.0 is the “read-only Web,” Web 2.0 is the “participative social Web,” and Web 3.0 is the “read, write, execute Web.”
Web 1.0. Web 1.0 was all about reading, and getting information.
Web 2.0 was all about reading, writing, and creating. So, users joined social platforms, and these platforms got big because of this created content.
Web 3.0 is all about reading, writing and owning. So, builders and creators can now own a piece of their own community, through NFTs, tokens etc.

WEB 1.0 VS WEB 2.0 VS WEB 3.0

WEB 1.0 KEY FEATURES:
- Static page - same content for all users
- Content owned by the creator of a website
- Websites were created only to display information

WEB 2.0 KEY FEATURES:
- Dynamic page - content customised as per user’s need
- Interactivity - helped people connect with each other
- Also included video streaming features

WEB 3.0 KEY FEATURES:
- No ownership of content; anyone can contribute
- Utilises machine learning & artificial intelligence
- Content can be accessed by multiple applications

Web 5.0?
Being developed by Dorsey’s Bitcoin business unit, The Block Head (TBH).
Simply put, Web 5.0 is Web 2.0 plus Web 3.0 that will allow users to ‘own their identity’ on the Internet and ‘control their data’.
Both Web 3.0 and Web 5.0 envision an Internet without threat of censorship – from governments or big tech, and without fear of significant outages.
**What is TDS?**

**Context:**

The government has clarified that the TDS on virtual digital assets continues to be 1%.

The clarification from the Income Tax comes after some media reports mentioned that the TDS rate for virtual digital assets has been dropped to 0.1% from 1% as announced earlier in the budget.

**What is 1% TDS on crypto trade?**

Following the 30% taxation on the gains arising from the cryptocurrency assets, the Centre will implement the 1% TDS on the transfer or consideration of every trade from 1 July, 2022.

While the industry players see this move as one of the most controversial provisions over the cryptocurrency taxations, the Centre believes that the new TDS mechanism is used to trace transactions and prevent tax evasion.

**What is TDS?**

TDS is a liability enforced against the exchanges that deposit tax on behalf of sellers on the platform. It will be calculated at 1% of the transaction value.

---

**WHAT ARE VIRTUAL DIGITAL ASSETS?**

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**What is TDS?**

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**MAINS LINK:**

Discuss the significance of blockchain technology.

**Q. 14) Virtual digital assets include:**

1. DeFi (decentralised finance).
2. Non-fungible tokens (NFTs).
3. digital gold.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.
ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE:

Context:
Congress MP Rahul Gandhi recently appeared before the Enforcement Directorate for the second day for questioning in a money-laundering case related to the National Herald newspaper.

About Enforcement Directorate:
The origin of this Directorate goes back to 1st May, 1956, when an ‘Enforcement Unit’ was formed, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA ‘47).

In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as ‘Enforcement Directorate’.

Presently, it is part of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. The Organization is mandated with the task of enforcing the provisions of two special fiscal laws – Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

Composition:
Besides directly recruiting personnel, the Directorate also draws officers from different Investigating Agencies, viz., Customs & Central Excise, Income Tax, Police, etc. on deputation.

Other functions:
Processing cases of fugitive/s from India under Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

Sponsor cases of preventive detention under Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974(COFEPOSA) in regard to contraventions of FEMA.

Special courts:
For the trial of an offence punishable under section 4 of PMLA, the Central Government (in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court), designates one or more Sessions Court as Special Court(s). The court is also called “PMLA Court”.

Any appeal against any order passed by PMLA court can directly be filed in the High Court for that jurisdiction.

INSTALINKS:
Prelims Link:
What is FEMA?
What is PMLA?
What is COFEPOSA?

MAINS LINK:
How has ED become the weapon of choice today? Discuss.

Q. 15) Consider the following statements:
1. Enforcement Directorate is part of is part of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
2. Any appeal against any order passed by PMLA court can directly be filed in the High Court for that jurisdiction.
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:
A. 1 only.
B. 2 only.
C. Both.
D. None.

WHAT IS THE AGNIPATH SCHEME?

Context:
The government unveiled its new Agnipath scheme for recruiting soldiers across the three services.

What is the Agnipath scheme?
Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers (will be called ‘Agniveers’) will be recruited annually (for a short period, and most will leave the service in just four years. Of the total annual recruits, only 25 per cent will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission.

Format of the scheme:
Eligibility: Aspirants between the ages of 17.5 years and 21 years will be eligible to apply. The scheme is only applicable to personnel below officer ranks.
Recruitment:
Twice a year through rallies.
The recruitment will be done on “all India, all class” recruitment to the services (from any caste, region, class or religious background). Currently, recruitment is based on ‘regiment system’ based on region and caste bases.
Training period: 6 months + deployment for three and a half years.

Salary and Benefits:
Recruits will get starting salary of Rs 30,000, along with additional benefits which will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the four-year service.
During this period, 30 per cent of their salary will be set aside under a Seva Nidhi programme, and the government will contribute an equal amount every month, and it will also accrue interest. At the end of the four-year period, each soldier will get Rs 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount, which will be tax-free.
For 25% of soldiers, who are re-selected, the initial four-year period will not be considered for retirement benefits.

Benefits
Make the armed forces much leaner and younger: For India’s over 13-lakh strong armed forces, the current average age profile is 32 years. It is envisaged it will come down by about 4-5 years by implementation of this scheme
Reduce the defence pension bill: The government has either allocated or paid more than Rs. 3.3 lakh crore in defence pension since 2020. As per Army calculations, the savings for the government in this ‘Tour of Duty model’ of recruitment from just one sepoy would be around 11.5 cr (the army initially proposed a 3-year service model).
Create “future-ready” soldiers: A youthful armed forces will allow them to be easily trained for new technologies.
Increased employment opportunities and higher skilled workforce: Apart from job opportunities in the army, recruits because of the skills and experience acquired during the four-year service such soldiers will get employment in various fields.
The central government will likely give preference to Agniveers in regular employment after their four years stint.

Concerns regarding the scheme:
Present benefits and security of jobs will be lost: Recruits will not get permanent jobs or promised pension and health benefits even after retirement.
Doubt about training: 6 months of short training may not be enough to trust them with the same kind of tasks that current troops can be trusted with.
Erosion of loyalty: “All India, all class” recruitment to the services may lead to the erosion of the loyalty that a soldier has for his regiment.

Similar schemes in other countries:
Voluntary tour of duty: In the USA tours are 6-9 or even 12 months’ deployment depending upon the needs of the military and branch of service.
Mandatory tour of duty (called conscription): Countries that follow the practice of conscription include Israel, Norway, North Korea, and Sweden.

Q16. Consider the following statement regarding Agnipath Scheme:
1. It is a short-service scheme for the Indian Army to recruit young soldiers.
2. One of the primary motives behind the scheme
is to cut down the burden of pension bills for defence personnel.

Which one of the following is correct?
A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: (b) As Agnipath scheme is meant for all three branches of the armed forces

UNEMPLOYMENT HAS DECREASED, SAYS LABOUR SURVEY

Context:
As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2020-21 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the unemployment rate saw a decrease of 0.6% and fell to 4.2% in 2020-21, compared with 4.8% in 2019-20

What does the survey say:
Unemployment rate: Data show the rate of joblessness fell to 4.2% in 2020-21, compared with 4.8% earlier
Rural areas recorded an unemployment rate of 3% and urban areas recorded an unemployment rate of 6.7%.
The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) e., the percentage of persons in the labour force (that is, working or seeking work or available for work) in the population was 41.6% during 2020-21 (higher than 40.1% in 2019-20).
All-India female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in usual status has increased from 2.3% in 2021 to 25.1% as compared to 22.8% a year ago
Worker Population Ratio (the number of employed people per thousand people) was 39.8% (an increase from 38.2% of the previous year)
Migration rate: The migration rate, according to the survey, is 28.9%. The migration rate among women was 48% and 47.8% in rural and urban areas, respectively. Migrants are defined as a household members whose last usual place of residence, at any time in the past, was different from the present place of enumeration.
Employment-related migration: 4.4% of migration happened due to employment, which is a drastic reduction from the 10% in 2011
Reverse migration: During the pandemic, reverse migration led to a higher rate of unemployment agglomeration in rural areas, which caused rural distress. However, the annual report on the unemployment rate shows a contradiction.

How does NSO collect sample?
The National Statistical Office (NSO) uses “rotational panel sampling design” in urban areas to assess the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and the unemployment rate, and visits selected households in urban areas four times. There was, however, no revisit for the rural samples.

What does report indicate?
Overall, the report suggests shifting the government’s policy directions as it has become more rural-centric. Creation of rural jobs other than in the agricultural sector and MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) could be priorities for the government at the Union and State levels.

Issues with the survey: Experts point out that a second visit to the households in rural areas could have provided a bigger and larger picture of unemployment, which did not happen in the survey.

Measuring unemployment
Usual Status Approach: It records only those persons as being unemployed who had no gainful work for a major time during the 365 days preceding the date of the survey and are actively seeking work.
Weekly Status Approach: A person is considered to be employed if he or she pursues any one or more of the gainful activities for at least one hour on any day of the reference week.
The individual who may be employed on a usual status approach may however become intermittently unemployed during some seasons or parts of the year. Therefore, unlike the usual status approach, the weekly status approach can measure not only open chronic unemployment but also seasonal unemployment.
Current Daily Status Approach: Accordingly, a person having no gainful work even for 1 hour a day is described as unemployed for a full day. It is beneficial in sectors like farming and non-farming households where employment often fluctuates over a small period within a week.

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS): PLFS was launched by National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2017 and is India’s first computer-based survey. It was constituted based on the recommendation of the Amitabh Kundu committee.

INSTA LINK:
PRELIMS LINK:
- What is NSO
• How often government conducts Labour survey?
• What are different measures of calculating unemployment in India?

**MAINS LINK:**
Despite a decrease in the unemployment rate, the government has been found lacking in providing gainful employment in India. Discuss the reasons behind it and suggest suitable remedies. (15M)

Q17) “A category of unemployment arising from the mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the skills of the available workers in the market.” Which type of unemployment is being discussed here? (UPSC CSE 2021)

A. Cyclical Unemployment
B. Frictional Unemployment
C. Structural Unemployment
D. Disguised Unemployment

Ans: c
Structural Unemployment is a category of unemployment arising from the mismatch between the jobs available in the market and the skills of the available workers in the market.

**What is unemployment trap? (UPSC CSE 2021 Prelims)**

A. A situation when unemployment benefits discourage the unemployed to go to work.
B. A situation where people working informally, without proper job contracts and thus sans any legal protection.
C. It refers to the time lag between the jobs when an individual is searching for a new job or is switching between the jobs.
D. It is loss of jobs due to changes in technology.

Ans: A
Unemployment trap is a situation when unemployment benefits discourage the unemployed to go to work. People find the opportunity cost of going to work too high when one can simply enjoy the benefits by doing nothing.

**PROPOSED REFORMS TO WTO WILL HURT DEVELOPING NATIONS: INDIA**

**Context:**
India has expressed concern that some suggestions on reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO) could eventually damage the developing nations more.

**What are the concerns raised by India at WTO:**

- **On issues of Fisheries and E-commerce:** Revmoval of subsidies will hurt fishermen. So, India demanded to make extensive exceptions on a 20-year negotiation to cur harmful government fishery subsidies.
  India is seeking broad exemptions for its fishing industry, including a 25-year phase-in period and a 200-nautical-mile exclusion for its artisanal anglers.

- **On E-commerce:** India fears that new rules could provide the pretext for unfair mandatory market access to foreign companies. This will hurt the rapidly growing domestic e-commerce sector, which is still developing in India.

- **On Food:** WTO should renegotiate subsidy rules for government-backed food purchasing programs aimed at feeding poor citizens in developing and poor countries.
  India wants assurances that its public stock-holding program, which buys exclusively from the nation’s farmers and has exported in the past, cannot be challenged at the WTO as illegal.

- **On vaccines:** India wants to waive IP rights for vaccines and extend the WTO ban on digital duties
  Special and differential treatment (S&D) must continue, as such treatment has been a treaty-embedded and non-negotiable right for all developing members
  **Principles are sacrosanct:** Ensure that multilateral rule-making processes are neither bypassed nor dilut-ed. The principles of non-discrimination, predictability, transparency and most importantly, the tradition of decision-making by consensus need to remain sacrosanct.

**PRELIMS LINK**
*To know more about WTO: Click here*

**MAINS LINK**
*Issues faced by WTO and suggested reforms: Click here*
The World Trade Organization has today become a victim of its own success. Critically discuss. (15M)

Q18. Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2017)

1. India has ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of WTO.
2. TFA is a part of WTO’s Bali Ministerial Package of 2013.
3. TFA came into force in January 2016.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3
Q5. In the context of which of the following do you sometimes find the terms ‘amber box, blue box and green box’ in the news? (UPSC CSE 2016)

A. WTO affairs  
B. SAARC affairs  
C. UNFCCC affairs  
D. India-EU negotiations on FTA

**5G WILL DRIVE ‘SIGNIFICANT’ ADVANCEMENTS**

**Context:**
Cabinet has cleared the way for the auction of the 5G spectrum

**Benefits from the auction:**

**Newer avenues:** The auction and steps outlined for bidding would open up newer avenues for deeper penetration, access and rich user experience.

**Option of surrender:** Operators would have the flexibility to surrender the spectrum after 10 years without any liabilities.

**Wider choices:** Wide availability of spectrum across all bands will help potential bidders to opt for spectrum bands and quantum as per their strategy.

**Benefits from captive 5G networks:** Captive networks would drive digital transformation, augment industry efficiencies and lead to greater economic benefits.

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**What are spectrum auctions?**
A spectrum auction is a process whereby a government uses an auction system to sell the rights to transmit signals over specific bands of the electromagnetic spectrum and to assign scarce spectrum resources.

**Spectrum auctions in India**
Devices such as cellphones and wireline telephones require signals to connect from one end to another. These signals are carried on airwaves, which must be sent at designated frequencies to avoid any kind of interference.

The Union government owns all the publicly available assets within the geographical boundaries of the country, which also include airwaves.

With the expansion in the number of cellphones, wireline telephones and internet users, the need to provide more space for the signals arises from time to time.

**To sell these assets to companies** willing to set up the required infrastructure to transport these waves from one end to another, the central government through the DoT auctions these airwaves from time to time. These airwaves are called a spectrum, which is subdivided into bands which have varying frequencies.

All these airwaves are sold for a certain period of time, after which their validity lapses, which is generally set at 20 years.

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**PRELIMS LINK**
To know more about 5G Technology. Click here

**MAINS LINK**
Where does the 5G rollout stand? Click here

Discuss the advantages that 5G technology holds as compared to previous mobile technology. (10M)

**U.S. FED RAISES RATE BY 75 BPS TO TAME INFLATION**

**Context:**
The US Federal Reserve announced the most aggressive interest rate increase in almost 30 years, raising the benchmark borrowing rate by 0.75 percentage points.

**Basics:**
Increasing interest rate will make US bonds more attractive and investors/citizens will invest in them rather than spend. Also, borrowings will become costly, this will rein in inflation. Also, FII from emerging markets may take out their money and invest in US bonds. This will strengthen the US currency against others.
Impact on India: It could have a three-pronged impact on India. When the Fed raises its policy rates, the difference between the interest rates of the two countries narrows, thus, making countries such as India less attractive for the currency carry trade. Higher returns in the US debt markets may also lead to the flight of foreign investors from India. It could weaken the Indian currency vis a vis US Dollars.

Q19. WITH REFERENCE TO THE INDIAN ECONOMY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (UPSC CSE 2022)

1. If the inflation is too high, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to buy government securities.
2. If the rupee is rapidly depreciating, RBI is likely to sell dollars in the market.
3. If interest rates in the USA or European Union were to fall, that is likely to induce RBI to buy dollars.

Which of the statements given below is/are correct?
A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Justification:
Statement 1 is incorrect: To control inflation, the RBI sells the securities in the money market which sucks out excess liquidity from the market. As the amount of liquid cash decreases, demand goes down. This part of monetary policy is called the open market operation.

Statement 2 is correct: If the rupee is depreciating, RBI pumps the dollar into the market, this results in an increase in foreign currency supply and a decrease in Rupee supply, thus appreciating its value.

Statement 3 is correct: If interest rates in US and EU fall, investors would like to park more money in emerging market such as India for better returns, thus Indian market would be flooded with foreign currency. To stabilize it, RBI would likely buy excess dollars.

Q20. WHICH AMONG THE FOLLOWING STEPS IS MOST LIKELY TO BE TAKEN AT THE TIME OF AN ECONOMIC RECESSION? (UPSC CSE 2021)
A. Cut in tax rates accompanied by increase in interest rate.
B. Increase in expenditure on public projects.
C. Increase in tax rates accompanied by reduction of interest rate.
D. Reduction of expenditure on public projects.

Answer: b

Q21. IF THE INTEREST RATE IS DECREASED IN AN ECONOMY, IT WILL (UPSC CSE 2014)
A. Decrease the consumption expenditure in the economy
B. Increase the tax collection of the Government
C. Increase the investment expenditure in the economy
D. Increase the total savings in the economy

Answer: C

IN INDIA RANKS THIRD IN RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATIONS IN 2021

Context:
India ranked third in renewable energy installations in 2021, after China and Russia, according to a Renewable 2022 Global status report published by REN21 (Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century).

What does the report say:
On India:
India installed 15.4 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy projects in 2021. India ranked fourth in total solar installations (60.4 GW) for the year – overtaking Germany (59.2 GW) for the first time.

What is REN21?
REN21 is the only global renewable energy community of actors from science, government, NGOs and industry that keep track of global development in renewable sector.

Goal: enable decision-makers to make the shift to renewable energy happen – now.

Created: It was created in 2004 as an outcome of the Bonn2004 International Conference on Renewable Energy.

On world: Overall countries added around 3,146 GW of total installed renewable power capacity in 2021 – a rise of 11% from the previous year.

On Target of renewables: Despite the rise in installed capacity, the share of renewables in global energy use
stagnated in 2021. The renewable energy capacities achieved so far come nowhere close to the targets required to keep the world on track to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

**On impact of pandemic**: Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, renewables saw a year of record growth in both investment and installation.

**On impact of Ukrain crisis**: The invasion of Ukraine added to the energy crisis. Governments, however, responded by increasing fossil fuel production and subsidies. This has caused a record surge in carbon dioxide emissions (up by 6%, adding more than two billion tonnes).

**India’s Efforts**:
India has announced a target of **500 GW of renewable energy by 2030** through sources such as solar photovoltaic (PV) energy, wind and hydropower. Currently, projects worth almost $197 billion are underway in India.

India extended its **national solar production programme**, which provides incentives to domestic and international companies for setting up battery manufacturing plants.

In 2021, after India increased its cap on solar PV installations under its net metering scheme, the country’s rooftop PV market hit a record high.

**Other Government Programmes**: Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, Green Open Access Rules (which facilitates the generation, purchase and consumption of green energy including that produced by waste-to-energy plants), Green Term Ahead and Day-Ahead Market etc.

**Prelims and Mains Links**:
- Basics of climate change: Click here
- India’s Renewable energy plan: Click here
- India’s solar capacity: Milestones and challenges
- India’s Stand at COP-26: Click here

**Practice Questions**:

Q. “Momentum for Change: Climate Neutral Now” is an initiative launched by (UPSC 2018)
- A. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- B. The UNEP Secretariat
- C. The UNFCCC Secretariat
- D. The World Meteorological Organisation

Answer: C

Q. With reference to ‘Global Climate Change Alliance’, which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC CSE 2017)
- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Q22. With reference to the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC CSE 2015)
1. It is a Public Limited Government Company.
2. It is a Non-Banking Financial Company.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.
- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Q. “Despite increase in renewable energy capacity, India still heavily depends on fossil fuels for its energy security”. What measures need to be taken to increase the pace of renewable adoption in India? Discuss. (15M)

HARYANA GRANTS NOC TO MAHYCO FOR FIELD TRIALS OF BT COTTON VARIETY

**Context**:
Haryana government has issued a no-objection certificate (NOC) to seed major Mahyco to conduct field trials on **BG-2 RRF**, a herbicide-tolerant and insect-resistant variety of **BT cotton**. BG-2 RRF can provide protection against devastating pest attacks such as American Bollworm.

**Other steps**:
India has allowed commercial use of BG-1 and BG-2 GM cotton in the country while the approval for the BG-2 RRF has been pending at various stages. Central government had for the **first time exempted certain types of genome-edited crops** from the stringent regulations applicable on genetically modified or
GM crops, paving the way for further R&D on them.

**Other countries:** Many have either developed or approved for commercial cultivation of vegetables, fruits, oilseeds and cereals developed through genome editing such as Gamma-aminobutyric acid or GABA tomato, high oleic canola and soybean, non-browning mushroom etc.

**China** too approved guidelines for genome editing that will spur research into crops that have high yields and are resistant to pests and climate change.

**Prelims and Mains link:**

To know more about BT Cotton: Click here

**Practice Questions:**

Q 23. What are the reasons for the people’s resistance to the introduction of Bt brinjal in India?

1. Bt brinjal has been created by inserting a gene from a soil fungus into its genome.
2. The seeds of Bt brinjal are terminator seeds and therefore, the farmers have to buy the seeds before every season from the seed companies.
3. There is an apprehension that the consumption of Bt-brinjal may have adverse impact on health.
4. There is some concern that the introduction of Bt-brinjal may have adverse effect on the biodiversity.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

A. 1, 2 and 3 only  
B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 3 and 4 only  
D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: C

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**THE REASONS BEHIND THE CRASHING CRYPTO MARKET**

**Context:**

Bitcoin and many other cryptocurrencies have been crashing since they hit an all-time high late last year

**Why are cryptocurrencies crashing?**

**Tight monetary policy by governments across the world:** As central banks withdraw liquidity from the market, there’s less money chasing assets, which in turn causes the prices of assets to drop. **Bubble:** Crash could also mark the popping of the bubble that has driven the prices of cryptocurrencies to very high levels.

**How do governments view cryptocurrencies?**

Many countries have taken several steps to discourage the widespread use of cryptocurrencies. While countries such as China and Russia have opted to impose outright bans on cryptocurrencies, others such as India have tried to tax and regulate them heavily. In India, while the government has not imposed an outright ban on cryptocurrencies, the Reserve Bank of India has been quite vocal about the need to ban them completely.

**Do these virtual currencies have intrinsic value?**

Similar to Fiat currency, Bitcoin (or most of the cryptocurrencies) is also not backed by any gold or silver hence does not have any intrinsic value. The value of any currency comes from the backing of the state and the trust that people have over the government.

**Prelims and Mains Link**

**Basics of Cryptocurrency**

**Cryptocurrency and related Issues**

**Practice Questions:**

Q 24. Consider the following pairs: (UPSC CSE 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms sometimes seen in news</th>
<th>Context/Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle II experiment</td>
<td>Artificial Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockchain technology</td>
<td>Digital/Cryptocurrency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRISPR – Cas9</td>
<td>Particle Physics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Q 25. With reference to “Blockchain Technology”, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2020)

1. It is a public ledger that everyone can inspect, but that no single user controls.
2. The structure and design of the blockchain are such that all the data in it are about cryptocurrency only.
3. Applications that depend on the basic features of blockchain can be developed without anybody’s permission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only  
(b) 1 and 2 only  
(c) 2 only  
(d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: d

Q. What is a cryptocurrency? Discuss the need for the formulation of a clear, constructive, and adaptive regulatory environment for cryptocurrencies in India.
WHAT VPN SERVER CLOSURES IN INDIA MEAN FOR USERS

Context:
The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team’s (CERT-In’s) directive to virtual private network (VPN) providers to store user data on Indian servers has prompted many of them to shut their local servers.

What do CERT-In directives say:
VPN providers have specifically been directed to store validated customer names, their physical addresses, email IDs, phone numbers, and the reason a customer is using the VPN.
They also have to log the user’s “ownership pattern” and the dates when they use the VPN, along with a record of the time-stamp for when a user registered, and every IP address that the VPN assigns to the user.

Why are VPN companies leaving India?
VPN providers who provide “no-logging” services cannot do so if they comply with such rules, which is why they’re withdrawing servers to leave the Indian government’s jurisdiction. E.g. NordVPN, Surfshark and ExpressVPN

Impact of the move:
VPN providers install their servers in a country to achieve two purposes—to be close to their users and to increase the number of locations they can provide. Removing servers from India, in theory, affects the overall speed that a VPN can provide, though this will hardly make a difference for those using VPNs simply to browse the web by spoofing their location.

Government Intention:
The government wants to access VPN data for domestic regions as well as may ask companies to comply even if they have no physical presence in India, as their “computer systems” are operating within Indian cyberspace.

But they add that the Information Technology Act of 2000 is meant to regulate Indian cyberspace and should not have extra-territorial reach.

Practice Questions

Q 26 What is “Virtual Private Network”? (UPSC CSE 2011)
A. It is a private computer network of an organization where the remote users can transmit encrypted information through the server of the organization
B. It is a computer network across a public internet that provides users access to their organization’s network while maintaining the security of the information transmitted
C. It is a computer network in which users can access a shared pool of computing resources through a service provider
D. None of the statements (a), (b) and (c) given above is a correct description of Virtual Private Network

Answer: C

Q. What is a virtual private network (VPN)? Discuss its applications and security issues associated with it. (10M)

RBI TO REGULATE BIGTECH AND FINTECH

Context:
RBI governor has asked for regulation of Bigtech and Fintech companies. For this, With an aim to provide secure and affordable e-payments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come up with a document ‘Payments Vision 2025’

Document ‘Payments Vision 2025’
As part of its Vision 2025, the RBI will attempt regulation of big tech and fintech in the payments space explore guidelines on payments that involve BNPL (buy now pay later) services work towards the introduction of CBDC (central bank digital currency) seek inclusion of rupee in continuous linked settlement (CLS) (CLS provides protection for cross-currency settlement in 18 currencies)

Why the need for such regulation?
• To avoid systemic concerns: Big Tech’s play in lending activities using customer data and sophisticated algorithms can lead to “systemic concerns” like over-leverage and inadequate quality assessment
of borrowers.

- **Other Concerns:** The entry of firms like Google, Amazon, and Meta, which are referred to as Big Tech, also poses concerns related to **competition, data sharing, data protection and operational resilience** of critical services in situations where banks and NBFCs utilise their services.
- Also, risks relating to cybersecurity, software development limitations in transaction capacity, the privacy of customer data and data security.
- **Last year’s Financial Stability Report,** had raised some broad concerns, including about such companies’ products **accepting deposits for some regulated financial sector entities.**
- **Sensitive user data:** Big-tech and fintech companies offer sophisticated services which use sensitive data from various sources to issue loans to users, including those not having collateral or credit history.
- **Issues of lending through digital channels, including mobile apps:** Issues related to unfair practices, data privacy, documentation, transparency, and breach of licensing conditions.
- **Multiple regulators:** The fintechs’ require multiple regulators to work together because a single technology like blockchain or de-centralised finance (DeFi) can have multiple uses coming under different watchdogs’ ambit.
- **Anonymity:** DeFi poses unique challenges to regulators as it is anonymous. The lack of a centralised governance body and legal uncertainties can make the traditional approach to regulation somewhat ineffective.

**What needs to be done?**

Authorities and regulators have to **strike a fine balance** between enabling innovation and preventing systemic risks.

**Guidelines:** RBI will soon be issuing guidelines to make digital lending ecosystems “safe and sound while enhancing customer protection and encouraging innovation”.

Need for **entity-based and outcome-based regulation.**

- **Globally coordinated regulatory approach and inter-regulatory coordination:** This will enable comprehensive assessment of such activities, activities and mitigation of risks.
- **Use of technology:** Use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to determine the creditworthiness of a borrower.
- **Transparency:** The methodology of algorithms underpinning digital financial services has to be “clear, transparent, explainable and free from exclusionary biases”.

In the age of technological changes, banks should not just work like banking service firms but like technology companies.

**Practice Questions:**

Q27. With reference to digital payments, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2018)

1. BHIM app allows the user to transfer money to anyone with a UPI-enabled bank account.
2. While a chip-pin debit card has four factors of authentication, the BHIM app has only two factors of authentication.

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

Q.28 Which of the following is a most likely consequence of implementing the Unified Payments Interface (UPI)? (UPSC CSE 2017)

(a) Mobile wallets will not be necessary for online payments.  
(b) Digital currency will totally replace the physical currency in about two decades.  
(c) FDI inflows will drastically increase.  
(d) Direct transfer of subsidies to poor people will become very effective.

Answer: A

Q. There is a growing support for either regulating big tech companies such as Facebook and Google. Discuss the reasons. Should they be broken up? Comment. (15M)

Q. Explain the dominance of global technological giants and in what way it is a cause of concern for Indian tech companies and start-ups? Also suggest ways forward to address the situation. (15M)

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**WTO STRIKES GLOBAL TRADE DEALS**

**Context:**

The World Trade Organization’s 164 members (12th Ministerial Conference) in a historic step approved a series of trade agreements including commitments on fish, a partial waiver of intellectual property (IP) rights for COVID-19 vaccines, and pledges on health and food security.

**Important Deals struck:**

**On Fisheries:** prohibited certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing,
and eliminates subsidies that contribute to IUU-fishing recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing country Members and least developed countries.
The accord to curb fishing subsidies is only the second multilateral agreement setting new global trading rules struck in the WTO’s 27-year history and is far more ambitious than the first, which was designed to cut red tape.
The fishing subsidies deal has the potential to reverse collapsing fish stocks
On partial IP waiver: Allowed the developing countries to produce and export Covid vaccines
Maintaining a moratorium on e-commerce tariffs: It is considered vital to allow the free flow of data worldwide.

India’s Leadership:
India has been able to secure a favourable outcome at the WTO after many years, despite a strong global campaign against Indian farmers and fishermen.

What were the concerns raised by India at WTO:
On issues of Fisheries and E-commerce: Removal of subsidies will hurt fishermen. So, India demanded to make extensive exceptions on a 20-year negotiation to curb harmful government fishery subsidies.
India is seeking broad exemptions for its fishing industry, including a 25-year phase-in period and a 200-nautical-mile exclusion for its artisanal anglers.
On E-commerce: India fears that new rules could provide the pretext for unfair mandatory market access to foreign companies. This will hurt the rapidly growing domestic e-commerce sector, which is still developing in India.
On Food: WTO should renegotiate subsidy rules for government-backed food purchasing programs aimed at feeding poor citizens in developing and poor countries.
India wants assurances that its public stock-holding program, which buys exclusively from the nation’s farmers and has exported in the past, cannot be challenged at the WTO as illegal.
On vaccines: India wants to waive IP rights for vaccines and extend the WTO ban on digital duties
Special and differential treatment (S&D) must continue, as such treatment has been a treaty-embedded and non-negotiable right for all developing members
Principles are sacrosanct: Ensure that multilateral rule-making processes are neither bypassed nor diluted. The principles of non-discrimination, predictability, transparency and most importantly, the tradition of decision-making by consensus need to remain sacrosanct.

Prelims Link
To know more about WTO: Click here
Mains link
Issues faced by WTO and suggested reforms: Click here

Practice Question:
Q. For India, though the multilateral trading system embodied by the WTO provides security and predictability, India has had a chequered relationship with the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Examine. Also, Suggest reforms that needs to be undertaken in the WTO. (250 words)
MAJOR OUTCOMES ACHIEVED AT WTO

Context:
This is in continuation of the article published in Current Affairs on 18th June 2022

Important Deals struck:
- **Fisheries**: Countries agreed to check on illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and overfishing; no subsidies for fishing in areas outside of RFMOs (regional fisheries management organizations) and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and strict control on overfished areas.
  - India’s demand for curb on non-specific fuel subsidies for fisheries was not accepted.
  - The pact says that members will need to come out with comprehensive disciplines within the next four years, or see the current agreement terminated.
- **Food security**: Member countries would not impose export prohibitions or restrictions on foodstuffs purchased for humanitarian purposes of the WFP. (except for ensuring domestic food security)

What is overfishing?
Overfishing refers to exploiting fishes at a pace faster than they could replenish themselves — currently standing at 34% as per the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- However, negotiators could not reach agreements on issues such as permissible public stockholding threshold for domestic food security, domestic support to agriculture, cotton, and market access.
- **E-commerce moratorium**: WTO extended moratorium (moratorium means a temporary prohibition) on imposing customs duties on electronic transmission.
  - This moratorium has been in place since 1998 and developing countries have been losing revenue because of it. India had opposed any further extension.
- **WTO reforms**: Dispute settlement Body (DSB) will be revived. Also, focus area for WTO will be -Gender, Enviroment and MSME

What is WTO’s ministerial conference?
- The MC is at the very top decision making body of WTO.
- It meets once every two years and can take decisions on all matters under any multilateral trade agreement.
- Unlike other organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund or World Bank, WTO does not delegate power to a board of directors or an organisational chief. All decisions at the WTO are made collectively and through consensus among member countries at varied councils and committees.
- This year’s conference (13th MC) took place in Geneva, Switzerland.

A MAJOR REVAMP FOR BANK BOARD BUREAU

Context:
The finance ministry is working to expand and relaunch the Banks Board Bureau (BBB) by bringing in more representatives from the insurance sector.

Revamp plan:
- **Add new member**
- **Empower**: Finance ministry wants to legally empower the body to recommend candidates for public sector insurers and accelerate top-level hiring at all state-run financial institutions.
- **Restructure**: BBB’s name and mandate will be changed. The proposed entity will recommend candidates for appointments to senior management-level posts in state-run banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions.

Why the need for revamping:-
- **Delhi HC order**: Delhi high court last year ob-
served that the bureau was not a competent body to recommend appointments at PSU general insurers, and held that circulars enabling BBB to select general managers and directors of PSU insurers were not legally valid.

- **Slow recruitment process:** Despite the BBB’s good work, recruitment to a higher level has been slow. Also, BBB’s extended two-year term ended, and new recruitments can restart only when a new body is in place.

### About BBB:

It was **set up in February 2016** as an autonomous body—based on the recommendations of the RBI-appointed Nayak Committee.

- It was part of the **Indradhanush Plan**.
- It will make recommendations for the appointment of whole-time directors as well as non-executive chairpersons of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and state-owned financial institutions.
- **The Ministry of Finance takes the final decision on the appointments** in consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office.

### Composition:

Banks Board Bureau comprises the Chairman, three ex-officio members i.e Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Secretary of the Department of Financial Services and Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, and five expert members, two of which are from the private sector.

### Practice Questions:

**Q. With reference of the ‘Banks Board Bureau (BBB), which of the following statements are correct? (UPSC 2022)**

1. The Governor of RBI is the Chairman of BBB.
2. BBB recommends for the selection of heads for Public Sector Banks.
3. BBB helps the Public Sector Banks in developing strategies and capital raising plans.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 and 3 only
C. 1 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 2

**Answer:** b

BBB is a self-governing autonomous and advisory body of the Central Government to improve the management of public sector banks. **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Chairman is selected by the central government and the RBI governor does not head it.

**Statements 2 and 3 are correct:** Banks Board Bureau recommends the selection of heads for Public Sector Banks. It also develops strategies for raising capital and improving the performance of PSBs.

### FIVE STATES NEED TO TAKE STEPS TO STABILISE DEBT LEVELS: RBI

**Context:**

As per the **Recent RBI study**, five states -Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal are highly stressed states.

**Status of states Debt:**

- **Punjab:** its debt-GSDP ratio is projected to exceed 45 per cent in 2026-27
- **Rajasthan, Kerala and West Bengal:** projected to exceed the debt-GSDP ratio of 35 per cent by 2026-27. These states will need to undertake significant corrective steps to stabilise their debt levels.
- **Ten states accounting for half of the total expenditure in India are** Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala, West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- **Debt/GSDP ratio definition:** It is a metric that shows what a state owes with what it produces. It indicates that particular state’s ability to pay back its debts.
Reasons for fiscal deterioration in states:

- **Not adhering to targets set by the 15th FC:** Among the ten states, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Punjab exceeded both debt and fiscal deficit targets for 2020-21 set by the 15th Finance Commission.

- **Fall in own tax revenue:** It said the own tax revenue of some of these 10 states, viz., Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Kerala, has been declining over time, making them fiscally more vulnerable.

- **Volatile non-tax revenue:** For most of these states, non-tax revenue has remained volatile, dropping significantly in recent years.
  - The decline in non-tax revenue is under general services, interest receipts and economic services.

- **High revenue expenditure:** The share of revenue expenditure in total expenditure of these states varies in the range of 80-90 per cent.
  - Some states like Rajasthan, West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala spend around 90 per cent on revenue accounts. This results in poor expenditure quality, as reflected in their high revenue spending to capital outlay ratios.
  - **Definition of Revenue expenditures:** These include the expenses required to meet the ongoing operational costs of running the government, and thus are essentially the same as operating expenses e.g., rent, employee salary etc.

- **High committed expenditure:** These include interest payments, pensions and administrative expenses, account for a significant portion (over 35 per cent) of the total revenue expenditure in states like Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala and Punjab, leaving limited fiscal space for undertaking developmental expenditure.
  - Consequently, the share of developmental expenditure in these states is considerably lower than in the other states.
  - Although welfare-enhancing, the impact of revenue spending on economic activity lasts for just about a year. In contrast, the impact of capital outlay is stronger and lasts longer, with the peak effect materialising after two-three years.

- **High losses of DISCOMs:** After the UDAY scheme, the losses of DISCOMs were made part of state government liability. This further worsened the situation.

Immediate impact:

- **Impact of COVID19:** It led to high expenditure and low revenue, thus misbalancing state finance

- **Impact of the Russia-Ukraine war:** The high oil prices have led the states to cut duty on Petroleum, thus further impacting their revenue.

What happens if the debt-to-GDP ratio widens?

- Each year’s borrowing (or deficit) adds to the total debt. Paying back this debt depends on a state’s ability to raise revenues.

- If a state, or all the states in aggregate, finds it difficult to raise revenues, a rising mountain of debt — captured in the debt-to-GDP ratio — could start a vicious cycle.

- Then, states end up paying more and more towards interest payments instead of spending their revenues on creating new assets that provide better education, health and welfare for their residents.

Steps taken:

- **Central government directives:** The Centre has urged chief secretaries of all states to keep a check on the increasing debt burden and fiscal deficit as their performance will have a huge bearing on the country’s economy.

Other long-term measures suggested by the central government:

- **Need to adopt the best practices of other states for crop diversification:** discourage more paddy and wheat cultivation, and focus on pulses and oilseeds.

- **Focus on slums redevelopment and cluster development**

- **Advance urban planning for Tier II and Tier III cities**

- **Urban development along the transit corridor**

- **Focus on the quality of their teachers:** The states have been asked to fill vacancies of teachers, train them and equip them with the latest technologies.

**FRBM Act**

**FRBM Act (2003)**

- **Aim:** To make the Central government responsible for ensuring inter-generational equity in fiscal management and long-term macro-economic stability.
• **Fiscal Limits**: The Act envisages the setting of limits on the Central and state government’s debt and deficits.

• The States have since enacted their own respective Financial Responsibility Legislation, which sets the same 3% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) cap on their annual budget deficits.

• **The NK Singh committee** (set up in 2016) recommendation: The debt to GDP ratio should be 7% for the central government, 20% for the state governments together by the FY 2022 – 23. Fiscal deficit: By FY 2022 – 23, the fiscal deficit should be 2.5% of GDP.

Insta Links:
To know more about the fiscal deterioration of states: [Click here](https://www.insightsonindia.com/posts/fiscal-deterioration-of-states)

Practice Questions

Q. Which of the following is/are included in the capital budget of the Government of India? (UPSC 2016)

1. Expenditure on acquisition of assets like roads, buildings, machinery, etc,
2. Loans received from foreign governments
3. Loans and advances granted to the States and Union Territories

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

1 only
2 and 3 only
1 and 3 only
1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Q. With reference to the Fourteenth Finance Commission, which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC CSE 2015)

1. It has increased the share of States in the central divisible pool from 32 percent to 42 percent.
2. It has made recommendations concerning sector-specific grants.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

A. 1 only
B. 2 only
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Q. Increasing fiscal deficit of states is a cause of worry and there is a considerable need to focus on state government finances. Analyse. (15M)

**BANNING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC**

**Context:**
The Centre has banned the use of ‘single-use-plastic’ from July 1 and now defined a list of single-use plastic items that will be banned from this date.

**What does the Notification say?**
As per MoEFCC: The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of following single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1st July, 2022.

**Single Use Plastic (SUP)**
SUP refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded.
Steps to avoid Plastic Future:
- Harmonize global production Standards
- Extended Producer’s Responsibility
- Limit Virgin Plastic Production
- Invest in circular recycling and waste management
- Stop fossil fuel subsidies
- Formalize plastic pollution clean-up

**What is single-use plastic?**
As the name suggests, it refers to plastic items that are used once and discarded. E.g., plastics used in packaging of items, bottles (shampoo, detergents, cosmetics), polythene bags, face masks, coffee cups, cling film, trash bags, food packaging etc.

**Status:**
As per the Minderoo Foundation report (2021): single-use plastics account for a third of all plastic produced globally, with 98% manufactured from fossil fuels.

- India features in the top 100 countries of single-use plastic waste generation – at rank 94 (the top three being Singapore, Australia and Oman).
- India’s domestic production of SUP is 8 million metric tonnes annually, and its import of 2.9 MMT.
- India’s per capita generation is 4 kg.
- The largest share of single-use plastic is that of packaging – with as much as 95% of single-use belonging to this category – from toothpaste to shaving cream to frozen foods.
Why SUP is a cause of concern?
- **Harm environment**: Single-use plastic also accounts for the majority of plastic discarded – 130 million metric tonnes globally in 2019 — all of which are burned, buried in landfills or discarded directly into the environment.
- **GHG emission**: On the current trajectory of production, it has been projected that single-use plastic could account for 5-10% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

What are the items being banned?
- **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have announced a ban on** – earbuds; balloon sticks; candy and ice-cream sticks; cutlery items including plates, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, trays; sweet boxes; invitation cards; cigarette packs; PVC banners measuring under 100 microns; and polystyrene for decoration.
- **Polythene bag**: The Ministry had already banned polythene bags **under 75 microns** in September 2021, expanding the limit from the earlier 50 microns. From December 2022, the ban will be extended to polythene bags **under 120 micron**
- **Sachets**: According to the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, there is also a complete ban on sachets using plastic material for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala.

Why these items?
As per the ministry: The choice for the first set of single-use plastic items for the ban was based on “difficulty of collection, and therefore recycling”.

How will the ban be enforced?
- **Monitoring by CPCB**: The ban will be monitored by the CPCB from the Centre and by the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) that will report to the Centre regularly.
- **Stop raw materials supply**: Directions have been issued at national, state and local levels — for example, to all petrochemical industries — to not supply raw materials to industries engaged in the banned items.
- **Directions to industries**: SPCBs and Pollution Control Committees will modify or revoke consent to operate issued under the Air/Water Act to industries engaged in single-use plastic items.
- **Fresh licensing required**: Local authorities have been directed to issue fresh commercial licenses with the condition that SUP items will not be sold on their premises, and existing commercial licences will be cancelled if they are found to be selling these items.
- **Encouraging compostable plastics**: CPCB has issued one-time certificates to 200 manufacturers of compostable plastic and the BIS passed standards for biodegradable plastic.
- **Penalty**: Those found violating the ban can be penalised under the Environment Protection Act 1986 – which allows for imprisonment up to 5 years, or a penalty up to Rs 1 lakh, or both.
  - Violators can also be asked to pay Environmental Damage Compensation by the SPCB.

How are other countries dealing with single-use plastic?
- **Consensus on SUP in UN**: This year, 124 countries, parties to the United Nations Environment Assembly, including India, signed a resolution to draw up an agreement which will in the future make it legally binding for the signatories to address the full life of plastics from production to disposal, to end plastic pollution.
  - 68 countries have plastic bag bans with varying degrees of enforcement
- **Bangladesh**: Bangladesh became the first country to **ban thin plastic bags** in 2002.
- **China**: China issued a ban on plastic bags in 2020 with a phased implementation.
- **EU**: EU bans certain single-use plastics for which alternatives are available.

Insta Links:
- Substitute for single-use plastics
- NATURE AND YOU- SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Practice Questions:
Q. What is single-use plastic and what are the concerns associated with it? How can it be successfully phased out in the country? (15M)
**Context:**
At the virtual meeting of MEF, Union Minister calls upon the members of MEF to launch a global movement on LIFE i.e., Lifestyle for Environment

**Aim of the meeting:**
The MEF meeting was aimed at galvanising actions (both developed and developing countries) that are to strengthen energy security and tackle the climate crisis thereby building momentum for COP27.

**Background:**
MEF was launched in 2009 by US President Barack Obama.

**India at MEF 2022**
- India has already installed 159 GW of non-fossil fuel-based electricity generation capacity.
- During the last 7.5 years, India’s installed solar energy capacity has increased over 18 times.
- India’s annual per capita emissions are only a third of the global average and its cumulative GHG emissions are less than 4 percent.
- India’s Panchamrit goals are being fructified through one of the largest clean energy development plans in the world.
- India is on track to meet its commitments, through the adoption of low carbon policies across key sectors of our economy ranging from the green hydrogen mission to e-mobility.

*Source: PIB*

**INDIA’S EMERGING TWIN DEFICIT PROBLEM**

**Context:**
RBI in its ‘Monthly Economic Review’ report highlighted two key areas of concern for the Indian economy: the fiscal deficit and the current account deficit (or CAD).

**What does the report say?**
- **On Fiscal deficit:** Fiscal deficit may be high due to cuts in excise duties on diesel and petrol.
- **On Current account deficit**
  - **Higher import bills may increase CAD:** Costlier imports such as crude oil and other commodities will not only widen the CAD but also depreciate the rupee.
    - A weaker rupee will, in turn, make future imports costlier.
  - **Pulling out of funds from emerging markets:** Rupee can also weaken if, in response to higher interest rates in the western economies especially the US, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) continue to pull out money from the Indian markets, which too will hurt the rupee and further increase CAD.

**Impact of twin deficit:**
Although no cause of worry in the short term, the twin deficit may in the long-term reduce the savings, depreciate the rupee and imbalance the financial investments of the government for social purposes.

**What needs to be done:**
- Trim revenue expenditure (or the money government spends just to meet its daily needs)
- Rationalizing non-Capex (capital) expenditure to avoid fiscal slippages
- Use tight monetary policy to achieve fiscal consolidation
- Import cut of non-essential goods and make exports of Indian goods competitive
- Reforming the Indian market to make it attractive for FDI and FII.

**Important Terms**
- **Definition of Fiscal deficit:** The fiscal deficit is essentially the amount of money that the government has to borrow in any year to fill the gap between its expenditures and revenues.
  - Higher levels of fiscal deficit typically imply the government takes money from the market, thus leaving less money for private sector for its own investment needs (also called crowding out effect)
- **CAD** It has two parts:
  - **Trade account (Import and Export of goods):** If a country imports more goods than it exports, it is said to have a trade account deficit.
  - **Invisible account (Import and export of services)**
    - If the net effect of a trade account and the invisibles account is a deficit, then it is called a current account deficit or CAD. A widening CAD tends to weaken the domestic currency because a CAD implies more dollars (or foreign currencies) are being demanded than rupees.
A **deficit** implies that more money is going out of the country than coming in via the trade of physical goods. Similarly, the same country could be earning a surplus on the invisibles account — that is, it could be exporting more services than importing.

**Definition of Capex:** Capex or capital expenditure essentially refers to money spent towards creating productive assets such as roads, buildings, ports etc. Capex has a much bigger multiplier effect on the overall GDP growth than revenue expenditure.

**Definition of Stagflation:** Stagflation is defined as an economy that is suffering both an increase in inflation and low growth. Stagflation was initially identified in the 1970s, when an oil shock caused fast inflation and significant unemployment in many industrialized economies. The latest RBI report also point out that “even as the world was looking at a distinct possibility of widespread stagflation, India was at low risk due to its stabilisation policies.”

**Insta Links**
- Basics: Types of Deficits
- India’s fiscal deficit

**Practice Questions:**

**Q. Which one of the following is likely to be the most inflationary in its effects? (UPSC CSE 2021)**

A. Repayment of Public debt.
B. Borrowing from the public to finance a budget deficit.
C. Borrowing from the banks to finance a budget deficit.
D. Creation of new money to finance a budget deficit.

*Answer: d*

**Q. What is twin deficit? Examine as to how India can avoid the twin deficit problem amidst rising commodity prices and subsidy burden.**

**Q. What is Fiscal Deficit? What are the impacts of Fiscal Deficit on the economy? What are the ways to finance the fiscal deficit? Suggest steps for fiscal consolidation in the light of the Union Budget proposals (15M)**

**WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN RISING FOOD PRICES AND CENTRAL BANKS RAISING INTEREST RATES?**

**Context:**
Last week the US central bank (Fed) announced that it will raise interest rates by 75 basis points (or 0.75 percentage points) to bring down inflation to its target rate of 2% from 9%. However, there is a fear that such a move may lead to the US going into recession and thus impacting India and the world.

This article is also in continuation to the article on 16th June 2022.

**What is inflation?**
Inflation is the rate at which prices rise. A 2% inflation implies the general price level in April this year was 2% more than what it was in April last year. **Inflation rate** in India has steadily gone up from close to 4% in September last year to almost 8% in April this year.

**Why is inflation bad?**
It makes commodities costly. It essentially erodes the basis on which one makes economic decisions— meaning it reduces the value of money.
**What is a recession?**
A recession is said to occur if an economy **contract for two consecutive quarters** (a quarter is a period of three months).

**On a side note:** US president Ronald Reagan (who succeeded Jimmy Carter as the US President in 1981) remarked about the Recession: “Recession is when your neighbour loses his job. Depression is when you lose yours. And recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his.”

**Why is a recession bad?**
Recession essentially **leads to a low growth rate** thereby starting a **vicious circle** wherein the country experiences low production and high unemployment.

Fed and RBI increasing interest rates may cut inflation to some extent but may not help in reducing food and fuel price-led inflation, but **raising interest rates may bring about a recession.** Then why are all these central banks still trying to do this? The answer lies in something called “inflation expectations”.

**What are inflation expectations?**
- **Inflation expectations** refer to people’s (or households’ expectation of what the inflation rate will be in the future). And they matter because this expectation is what determines people’s economic behaviour.
- If people expect higher inflation in the future, they may start purchasing things in present times to be used in future.
- The net effect of these individual decisions to advance or postpone purchases or ask for higher wages etc. determine the course of a country’s economy.
- For example, if people expect higher inflation and advance their purchases, all of a sudden there will be a spike in demand, far in excess of the supply, thus causing higher inflation.
- As such, policymakers try to gauge what is happening to inflation expectations.

**Impact of Inflation expectation:**
- Reduced investment: Businesses will hold back fresh investment as costs (such as wages) go up. This, in turn, hurts the country’s competitiveness.
- Increase in Gold Demand: People pull out money from their savings and put it into non-productive assets such as gold. In India’s case, since **98% of all gold demand is met from imports**, this essentially implies capital going to other countries.
- How raising the interest rate will bring down inflation expectations?

Inflation expectations tend to be “backwards-looking”: (Households) tend to look at a recent food and fuel prices which are salient items in the average consumption basket and they form their opinion about what inflation would be in the future, say three months or a year from now. If RBI/Fed starts taking preventive measures then households will have confidence that inflation will be controlled in future and thus stabilize ‘inflation expectations’.

Dampen demand-side inflation: While high-interest rates may not affect the supply-side inflation, it does dampen the demand for other goods and services (by disincentivizing borrowing (because it is now costlier)) It **reduces inflation** by bringing down demand. It gives time for the supply to catch up with the demand.

**Core argument:**
Ensuring inflation expectations stay “anchored” is the essential goal for monetary policy. Reducing inflation is a way to achieve that goal and raising interest rates is a way to achieve lower inflation.

India’s RBI is also trying to achieve the same goal: keeping inflation expectations anchored. (Target rate is 4-6% in the case of India). But as central banks try to achieve this goal, more interest rate hikes in the coming months are expected, which, in turn, will dampen economic activity all around.
Practical Questions:

Q. In India, which one of the following is responsible for maintaining price stability by controlling inflation? (UPSC CSE 2022)
A. Department of Consumer Affairs
B. Expenditure Management Commission
C. Financial Stability and Development Council
D. Reserve Bank of India

Answer: D

Q. Which among the following steps is most likely to be taken at the time of an economic recession? (UPSC CSE 2021)
A. Cut in tax rates accompanied by increase in interest rate.
B. Increase in expenditure on public projects.
C. Increase in tax rates accompanied by reduction of interest rate.
D. Reduction of expenditure on public projects.

Answer: b

Q. With reference to Indian economy, demand pull-inflation can be caused/increased by which of the following?
1. Expansionary policies
2. Fiscal stimulus
3. Inflation-indexing wages
4. Higher – purchasing power
5. Rising interest rates

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.
A. 1, 2 and 4 Only
B. 3, 4 and 5 Only
C. 1, 2, 3 and 5 Only
D. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: A

Q. If the interest rate is decreased in an economy, it will (UPSC CSE 2014)
(a) decrease the consumption expenditure in the economy
(b) increase the tax collection of the Government
(c) increase the investment expenditure in the economy
(d) increase the total savings in the economy

Answer: C

In the interest rate is decreased, it becomes easier to borrow money at a low-interest rate and therefore individuals/companies will increase their investment expenditure.

Q. Inflation further exacerbates inequalities and affects the poor the most. Discuss the policy measures that are needed to ensure that inequalities do not deepen amidst rising inflation. (10M)

Q. Distinguish between demand-pull and cost-push inflation. Examine the factors that are causing inflation in India. What measures are needed to keep inflation under check? (10M)

A SIX-FOLD RISE IN HEART ATTACKS

Context:
India’s financial capital Mumbai witnessed a six-fold rise in deaths related to heart attacks in the first six months of 2021 when the city was under the grip of the second wave of Covid-19.

What are the factors behind the spike in cases?
- Post-Covid development of thrombosis: SARS-Cov-2 damages the heart and blood vessels in infected patients which leads to the development of clots, heart inflammation, arrhythmias, and heart failure
- Thrombosis occurs when blood clots block veins or arteries
- Covid-19 can also cause microvascular damages, which may have also contributed to heart ailments
- Additional distress was noticed during the pandemic: Anxiety and stress levels further added to the heart ailments.
- Delay in diagnosis of heart-related ailments amid the second wave: During the second wave, many patients avoided hospitals due to fear of contracting Covid-19, which further delayed life-saving treatment.
- Reperfusion therapies like Thrombolytic therapy (that dissolves clots) and timely interventions like angioplasty (the procedure used to widen blocked or narrowed coronary arteries) were delayed
- Better recording of heart-attack cases: Since the start of the pandemic, medical practitioners are more conscious of segregation and bifurcation of types of deaths as well as maintaining better data related to heart attacks.
- Major lifestyle changes: Life has become more sedentary with fewer options for socialisation and physical activities
• Doctors have witnessed an increase in the prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, smoking, alcohol use and an unhealthy lifestyle in the last two years.
• Indians have a genetic predisposition, smaller coronary arteries, a diet pattern with excessive consumption of trans fats and a sedentary lifestyle that puts them in a high-risk category for heart attacks.

What does resolution 1267 say?
• Resolution 1267 provides for sanctions against individuals and entities that support or finance the acts or activities of ISIL, Al-Qaida, associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.
• LeT, JuD, Hafiz Saeed, Jaish-e-Mohammed and it’s head Masood Azhar are listed under 1267.

Why the efforts to designate Makki under UN sanction?
The US Treasury Department describes Makki as having “occupied various leadership roles within Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), and played role in terror funding for LeT operations. He has given several speeches threatening India with the terror attack.

Role of FATF
• Pressure on Pakistan: Under the pressure of FATF, Pakistan began a crackdown against the LeT/JuD in 2017:
  • Hafiz Saeed was placed under house arrest, and Pakistan proscribed JuD under its own 1997 Anti-Terror Act.
  • However, FATF grey-listed Pakistan as its efforts was not satisfactory. It was also at risk of being black-listed
• FATF is now considering removing Pakistan from the grey list: Pakistan’s continued political commitment to combating both terrorist financing and money laundering has led to significant progress.
• In this context, the proposal to designate Makki helps Delhi remind the world that Pakistan may get off FATF, but its concerns about terrorism emanating from Pakistan remain.

SANCTIONS UNDER THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1267

Context:
India and US proposal to designate Abdul Rehman Makki (brother-in-law of Hafiz Saeed, founder of Lashkar-e-Toiba) under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 were put on ‘technical hold’ by China.

What does ‘technical hold’ mean?
• Beijing’s “technical hold”, which means the proposal cannot come up for another six months.
• China’s double standards: Its technical hold shows China is having “double standards” on terrorism and related activities.

Insta Links
Lifestyle disease biggest health risk for Indians

Practice Questions:
Q. Critically comment on the extent, scope and implications of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in India. (10M)
Q. Diseases of affluence are overtaking poverty disease in India reflecting the growing middle class. Elucidate (15M)

FATF
• The Financial Action Task Force, is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering. In 2001, its mandate was expanded to include terrorism financing.
• Headquarters: It operates from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris.
• Member Countries: It has 39 members (including India) including two regional organisations – the EU and GCC (Gulf cooperation council)
• Sessions: Its plenary (decision-making body) meets three times per year.

Lists under FATF:
• Grey List: It serves as warning for the countries con-
sidered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering.

- **Black List**: High risk countries and Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put in the black-list. E.g., Iran and Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

**Insta Links**

**FATF**

The FATF and Pakistan’s Position

**Practice Questions**

**Q. Discuss the role of Financial Action Task Force in combating money laundering and terror financing.** (15M)

**BIODIVERSITY LOSS TO RAISE INDIA’S BANKRUPTCY RISK BY 29%**

**Context:**

As per a study by British Economist, loss of biodiversity will downgrade the credit ratings of several countries, including India, increasing their bankruptcy risk.

**Status:**

- **Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 (2020)** warned that none of the 20 targets of Aichi (2010 to 2020) under the Convention of Biological Diversity, have been met by the global community.
- **India amended its National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)** to cover all 20 Aichi targets into 12 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs). As per India’s 6th National Report, India is on track to achieve 9 out of its 12 NBTs.

**What does the study say:**

- **Economic loss out of ignoring biodiversity**: The team claimed that investors and corporations ignoring biodiversity loss from calculations could lead to market stability being undermined. They found that at least 58 per cent of the 26 countries would face a detrimental impact.
- **Sovereign credit ratings** are an independent assessment that determines the creditworthiness of a country.
- **Sectors most affected**: “partial ecosystem collapse” of sectors such as fisheries, tropical timber production and wild pollination. (based on World Bank Prediction)
- **Worst affected**: China and Malaysia would be the worst affected with downgrades of more than six notches.
- **On India**: The downgrades to four notches for India and other countries means that they will be burdened with billions of dollars in interest. Twelve of the 26 countries analysed will be at the risk of bankruptcy.

**How does biodiversity impacts economics?**

- As nature loss reduces economic performance, it will become harder for countries to service their debt, straining government budgets and forcing them to raise taxes, cut spending, or increase inflation.
- **Developing countries** are already saddled with crippling debt burdens driven by COVID-19 and soaring prices, and the loss of nature will push these countries closer to the edge.
- India’s debt burden is expected to increase to 8 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of March 2022

**Insta Links**

**Basics of Biodiversity**

**Practice Question:**

**Q. With reference to an initiative called “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)” which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC CSE 2016)**

1. It is an initiative hosted by UNEP, IMF and World Economic Forum.
2. It is a global initiative that focuses on drawing attention to the economic benefits of biodiversity.
3. It presents an approach that can help decision-makers recognize, demonstrate and capture the value of ecosystems and biodiversity.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below.**

A. 1 and 2 only
B. 3 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: C**

TEEB study was launched by Germany and the EU and...
not UNEP+IMF+WEF. The other two options are correct. For more information: TEEB

Q. With reference to an organization known as 'BirdLife International', which of the following statements is/are correct?
It is a Global Partnership of Conservation Organizations. The concept of ‘biodiversity hotspots’ originated from this organization. It identifies the sites known/ referred to as ‘Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas’.
Select the correct answer using the code given below.
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: C

BirdLife International (BLI) is an NGO and Global partnership of conservation org. that strives to conserve birds, their habitats, and global biodiversity. ‘Biodiversity hotspot’ concept was developed by Norman Mayers and not by BLI.

Q. “Biodiversity-related risks are a material risk to economic activity and public finances. Protecting the natural habitat is not just important for nature’s sake but also crucial for safeguarding macroeconomic stability.”

Steps to be taken by India to ensure green growth and preserving biodiversity:

- **Innovation in markets**: E.g. Green Bond, Social stock exchange etc.
- **Forest and Land transition**: employing landscape-level spatial planning to avoid, reduce and mitigate land-use change, reversing land degradation
  - g. India joined the Bonn Challenge in 2015 with a pledge to restore 26 mha of degraded land.
- **Sustainable freshwater transition**: guaranteeing the water flows, improving water quality, protecting critical habitats, controlling invasive species, and safeguarding connectivity to allow the recovery of freshwater systems from mountains to coasts.
  - g. India’s minimum environment flow requirement, Namami Gange project for river rejuvenation
- **Sustainable fisheries and oceans transition**: Protecting and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems, rebuilding fisheries, and managing aquaculture and other uses of the oceans to ensure sustainability, and to enhance food security and livelihoods.
  - g. PM Matsya Sampada Yojana, National Fisheries policy 2020
- **Sustainable agriculture transition**: Redesigning agricultural systems through agroecological and other innovative approaches to enhance productivity while minimizing negative impacts on biodiversity.
  - g. India ranks 1st in number of organic farmers, with Sikkim 1st state to be 100% organic
- **Sustainable food systems transition**: diversity of foods, and more moderate consumption of meat and fish, as well as dramatic cuts in the waste involved in food supply and consumption
  - g. Lab-made meat, use of seaweeds to produce edible protein, etc.
- **Cities and infrastructure transition**: Deploying ‘green infrastructure’ and making space for nature within built landscapes to improve the health and quality of life for citizens and to reduce the environmental footprint of cities and infrastructure.
  - g. National Building Code, the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), rating programs, such as LEED-India
- **Sustainable climate action transition**: Employing nature-based solutions, alongside a rapid phase-out of fossil fuel use, to reduce the scale and impacts of climate change.
  - g. India’s is set to over-achieve its INDC target of 2030 by a wide margin (as per climate action tracker)
- **Biodiversity-inclusive One Health transition**: Managing ecosystems, including agricultural and urban ecosystems, as well as the use of wildlife, through an integrated approach, to promote healthy ecosystems and healthy people.
  - g. The number of Protected Areas under the Wildlife Protection Act in the country has increased from a total of 771 in 2018 to 870 in 2021
- A united response will make it possible to achieve the 30×30 target to protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean and 30 percent of land areas and inland waters by 2030 through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative, and well-connected systems of protected areas.
WHAT FPIS’ MARKET EXIT MEANS

Context:
Foreign portfolio investors have pulled out Rs 42,000 crore this month amid rising inflation and monetary policy tightening in the US.

What are Foreign portfolio investors (FPI)?
FPI involves an investor buying foreign financial assets such as fixed deposits, stocks, and mutual funds. All the investments are passively held by the investors.

Why is capital flowing out?
Playing safe: Investors see relatively high valuations in India, rising bond yields in the US, an appreciating dollar and concerns regarding the possibility of a recession in the US triggered by a rate hike in the US as the possible reasons for their pullout.

In India, inflation surged to an eight-year high of 7.79% in April, prompting the RBI to hike the repo rate by 90 basis points to 4.90%.

How does it impact the markets and the rupee?
India’s foreign exchange reserves have fallen $46 billion in the last nine months to $596.45 billion as of June 2022, mainly due to the dollar appreciation and FPI withdrawals.

Rupee depreciation may lead to higher import bills: A strong dollar (and weaker rupee) is good for export-oriented companies but bad for import-oriented industries such as oil, gas and chemicals.

With the dip in the rupee, oil imports and other imported components will get costlier, which will further lead to higher inflation.

How do FPIs operate?
In times of global uncertainty, FII moves money from risky assets such as equities and add more bonds and gold. When interest rates rise in the US and other advanced economies, they withdraw money from emerging markets such as India and invest in the bonds in their domestic markets. The 10-year US bond has shot up from a low of 0.54% in July 2020 to over 3.30% now.

How big are FII in India?
FPIs are the largest non-promoter shareholders in the Indian market and their investment decisions have a huge bearing on the stock prices and overall direction of the market.

Will the rupee fall further?
The rupee has continued to depreciate despite the RBI selling dollars from its forex reserve to stabilise the currency. The rise in US inflation, rate hike worries and the stock market fall may drive further weakening of the rupee in India.

Insta Links:
Also read a related article on central bank raising interest rates and its impact: 22nd June CA

Practice Questions:
Q. Examine the role played by Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Institutional Investors in the economy of the developing countries. (150 words, 10 marks)

Q. With reference to Foreign Direct Investment in India, which one of the following is considered its major characteristic? (UPSC CSE 2020)
A. It is the investment through capital instruments essentially in a listed company.
B. It is a largely non-debt creating capital flow.
C. It is the investment which involves debt-servicing.
D. It is the investment made by foreign institutional investors in Government securities.

Answer: B

Q. With reference to the Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), which of the following statements is/are correct? (UPSC CSE 2020)
1. Quantitative restrictions on imports by foreign investors are prohibited.
2. They apply to investment measures related to trade in both goods and services.
3. They are not concerned with the regulation of foreign investments.
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3 only
Answer: C

Q. Both Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Institutional Investor (FII) are related to investment in a country. Which one of the following statements best represents an important difference between the two? (UPSC CSE 2011)
(a) FII helps bring better management skills and technology, while FDI only brings in capital
(b) FII helps in increasing capital availability in general, while FDI only targets specific sectors
(c) FDI flows only into the secondary market, while FII targets the primary market.
(d) FII is considered to be more stable than FDI
Answer: B

COVID VACCINES PREVENTED 42 LAKH DEATHS IN INDIA IN THE FIRST YEAR

Context:
A study by Lancet Infectious Disease has estimated that Covid-19 vaccines prevented nearly 1.98 crore deaths worldwide — out of a potential 3.14 crore deaths — in the first year of the vaccine programme. These include 42.10 lakh deaths prevented in India.

What does the study say:
• Majority of Indians are fully vaccinated: India began vaccination in January 2021. According to the Health Ministry, to date, the cumulative vaccination coverage exceeds 196.62 crores. More than 65% of the population are fully vaccinated, according to Our World in Data.
• Global inequalities: The study found high and upper-middle-income countries accounted for the greatest number of prevented deaths (1.22 crore/1.98 crore), highlighting inequalities around the world.

Significance of the study:
Huge impact: The data shows the remarkable impact that vaccination has had, especially in India, which was the first country to experience the impact of the Delta variant.

Q. “The COVID-19 vaccination drive demonstrates that India has become Atmanirbhar in vaccination against infectious diseases”, Elucidate. (10M)

Insta Links
Issues of Vaccination During COVID Responding to adversity with achievement

Practice Questions
Q. What is the importance of using \ Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccines in India? (UPSC CSE 2020)
1. These vaccines are effective against pneumonia as well as meningitis and sepsis.
2. Dependence on antibiotics that are not effective against drug-resistant bacteria can be reduced.
3. These vaccines have no side effects and cause no allergic reactions.
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: b
Context:
- Cooperation Minister has highlighted that cooperative banks will not be given a “second-grade” treatment but they should adopt modern and transparent banking methods to stay in the competition.
- Status: As per RBI, as of March 2019, there were 1,544 urban co-operative banks, and 96,248 rural co-operative banks in the country.

Need for modernization:
- Negligible participation: There were more than 195 cooperative banks that were more than 100 years old. Despite this, the role of urban cooperative banks is negligible in the total banking sector in terms of deposit and advance payment.
- UCBs account for only 3.25 per cent of the total bank deposits and 2.69 per cent of the total advances in the country.
- Symmetric development of Urban cooperative: There are 1,534 urban cooperative banks, and 54 scheduled urban cooperative banks but the development is uneven. The symmetric development of cooperative banks will help sustain competition in future.
- Need to look after small and marginal sections: Urban State Cooperative Banks need to be strengthened for the upliftment of that section, and to make them participants in the process of development and a stakeholder in the country’s economy.

What should be done:
- Adopt modern and transparent banking methods to stay in competition e.g. computerization of accounting process
- Engage younger people in management roles
- Engage professionals to run day-to-day affairs
- Treating UCB equally in government policies in respect of taxation, BR Act [The Banking Regulation Act, 1949] or the Reserve Bank’s norms.
- Responsibility lies with the cooperative sector: It is the cooperatives’ responsibility to establish trustworthiness and earn people’s faith as well as win the confidence of the RBI and the government.
- Undertake institutional reforms like transparency in recruitment and implementation of a robust accounting system, which is necessary for their growth.

Cooperative Bank
- A Co-operative bank is a financial entity which belongs to its members, who are at the same time the owners and the customers of their bank.
- Governance: They are registered under the Cooperative Societies Act of the State concerned or the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and governed under the Banking Regulations Act, 1949 and Banking Laws (Cooperative Societies) Act, 1955.

Features of Cooperative Banks:
- They are Customer Owned: Co-operative bank members are both customer and owner of the bank.
- Democratic in nature: Co-operative members also own it and they democratically elect a board of directors. Members usually have equal voting rights, (as per the principle of “one person, one vote”)
- Profit distribution: Part of the profit, benefits or surplus is usually allocated to constitute reserves and a part of this profit can also be distributed to the co-operative members.
- They play important role in Financial Inclusion of unbanked rural masses.
- RBI appointed committee categorised UCB into four tiers for regulatory purposes:
  - Tier 1 (having deposits up to Rs 100 crore)
  - Tier 2 (deposits between Rs 100 crore and Rs 1,000 crore)
  - Tier 3 (deposits between Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 10,000 crore)
  - Tier 4 (deposits more than Rs 10,000 crore)
- For UCBs the minimum Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) for them could vary from 9% to 15% and Tier-4 UCBs has to follow the Basel III prescribed norms.

Insta Links
Cooperative banks under RBI
WHAT DOES OUR CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT SHOW?

Context:
CAD in India decreased to 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) from 2.6% of GDP in Q3 FY 2021-22.

What is CAD?
The current account deficit is a measurement of a country’s trade where the value of the goods and services it imports exceeds the value of the products it exports. The current account represents a country’s foreign transactions and, like the capital account, is a component of a country’s balance of payments (BOP).

What does CAD include?
CAD includes a nation’s net trade-in products and services, its net earnings on cross-border investments including interest and dividends, and its net transfer payments such as remittances and foreign aid. A current account deficit (CAD) means the value of goods and services imported exceeds the value of exports.

Reasons for lowering India’s CAD?
• Robust performance by computer and business services, net service receipts rose.
• Remittances by Indians abroad also rose.
• Moderation of India’s trade deficit in the quarter mentioned.
• Merchandise export overcame higher import bills: Geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions led to crude oil and commodity prices soaring. A rise in prices of coal, natural gas, fertilizers, and edible oils has added to the pressure on the trade deficit.
• However, with global demand picking up, merchandise exports have also been rising.

Practice Questions:
Q. Co-operative banks in India form the backbone for the delivery of credit to rural areas. However, for co-operative banks to be regulated and supervised better, RBI needs to ramp up its supervisory capacity. Elucidate. (15M)

Q. With reference to ‘Urban Cooperative Banks’ in India, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2021)
1. They are supervised and regulated by local boards set up by the State Governments.
2. They can issue equity shares and preference shares.
3. They were brought under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 through an Amendment in 1966.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: b

Q. Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2020)
1. In terms of short-term credit delivery to the agriculture sector, District Central Cooperative Banks (DC-CBs) deliver more credit in comparison to Scheduled Commercial Banks are Regional Rural Banks
2. One of the most important functions of DCCBs is to provide funds to the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

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: b
How will a large CAD affect the economy?

- Rising CAD: A large CAD will result in demand for foreign currency rising, thus leading to depreciation of the home currency. Nations balance CAD by attracting capital inflows and running a surplus in capital accounts through increased foreign direct investments.
  - A weaker Indian currency will drive inflation up, which is already a grave concern due to high commodity prices.
- Rising CAD is not always bad: If an increase in the import bill is because of imports for technological upgradation it would help in long-term development.
  - If increasing imports is accompanied by an expansion in industrial production, it is a sign of economic development.

Future predictions:
This decrease in CAD is temporary: India’s current account deficit is likely to widen to around 3-3.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022-23, due to FED interest rates hike and outflow of FII and FDI from the Indian market.

Q. Consider the following actions that the Government can take: (UPSC CSE 2011)
1. Devaluing the domestic currency.
2. Reduction in the export subsidy.
3. Adopting suitable policies which attract greater FDI and more funds from FIIIs.
Which, of the above action/actions can help in reducing the current account deficit?
(a) 1 and 2  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) 3 only  
(d) 1 and 3  
Answer: D  
Devaluing the currency will help increase India’s export competitiveness. A reduction in export subsidy will further decrease exports and increase CAD. Attracting FII and FDI will increase and improve CAD.

OCEANS GREAT DYING 2.0

Context:
Scientists from Stanford University, warn of imminent mass annihilation of marine species similar to the Permian extinction (250 million years ago) that wiped out most lives in oceans.

Practice Questions
Q. What do you understand Current Account Deficit? Do you think a rising CAD is inherently bad and must be checked by the country’s central bank? Discuss (10M)

Q. With reference to Balance of Payments, which of the following constitutes/constitute the Current Account? (UPSC CSE 2014)
1. Balance of trade
2. Foreign assets
3. Balance of invisibles
4. Special Drawing Rights
Select the correct answer using the code given below.
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) 1 and 3  
(d) 1, 2 and 4  
Answer: C  
The current account includes trade in goods and services (Invisibles) and transfer payments etc. The capital account includes Foreign Direct Investment, Foreign Portfolio Investment, External Commercial Borrowings, and SDR.
What is Permian extinction?
- Permian extinction (or the “Great Dying”) was caused by global warming that left ocean animals unable to breathe. Roughly 96 per cent of marine species and 70 per cent of land species went extinct.
- Permian Era: During this period, land masses collided to form the supercontinent Pangaea. The supercontinent was arid; only a few parts received rainfall round the year.
  » However, the large Panthalassic Ocean, which covered much of Earth, was home to many marine species.

What led to extinction?
- Volcanic eruption: Towards the end of the era, a series of volcanic eruptions occurred in central Siberia, injecting massive amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere. Then, as of now, the uncontrolled GHG emissions triggered climatic changes.

Why the studies are important now?
- Earth is undergoing a similar phase of warming: The studies predict a 2-10 degree C warming lead to many species getting extinct while other species may migrate from the tropics into polar waters.
- Ocean importance: Oceans are the planet’s largest ecosystem accounting for 95 per cent of all spaces available for life and hosting 90 per cent of the planet’s total species.
- Ocean accommodating more heat: Deep oceans are warming up. Ocean heat content is the energy accumulated by the ocean. The atmosphere has a low heat capacity compared to the ocean water, which can accommodate 1000 times more heat. So, most of the heat from GHG is moving into the ocean.
  » Ocean heat content reached a record high in 2021.

INSTA LINKS
Sixth mass extinction

Practice Question
Q. According to recent research, a sixth mass extinction in Earth’s history is underway and is more severe than previously feared. Discuss the magnitude, causes and remedial measures needed to halt the extinction. (15M)

Q. The term “sixth mass extinction/sixth extinction” is often mentioned in the news in the context of the discussion of (UPSC CSE 2018)

a. Widespread monoculture Practices agriculture and large-scale commercial farming with indiscriminate use of chemicals in many parts of the world that may result in the loss of good native ecosystems.
b. Fears of a possible collision of a meteorite with the Earth in the near future in the manner it happened 65million years ago that caused the mass extinction of many species including those of dinosaurs.
c. Large scale cultivation of genetically modified crops in many parts of the world and promoting their cultivation in other Parts of the world which may cause the disappearance of good native crop plants and the loss of food biodiversity.
d. Mankind’s over-exploitation/misuse of natural resources, fragmentation/loss, natural habitats, destruction of ecosystems, pollution and global climate change.
Answer: D

Anthropocene Extinction is an ongoing extinction event of species during the present era (known as the Holocene Epoch) due to human activity.

Q. In the context of mitigating the impending global warming due to anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide, which of the following can be the potential sites for carbon sequestration?
1. Abandoned and uneconomic coal seams
2. Depleted oil and gas reservoirs
3. Subterranean deep saline formations
Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: D

All of the site can be used for carbon sequestration

WHETHER RESOURCES CAN BE EFFICIENTLY ORGANISED IN A CENTRALLY PLANNED ECONOMY

Context:
- Basic economy concept for Mains and economy/Sociology optional
- Socialist calculation debate: Whether centrally planned economies can allocate scarce resources efficiently?
- The debate was between the Austrian school econ-
omists Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek on the one side and socialist economists Oscar Lange and Abba Lerner on the other in the first half of the twentieth century.

No, the centrally planned economies cannot allocate resources efficiently?

- Absence of private property: In the case of a centrally planned economy, there would be no market for resources and hence no rational resource allocation.
- People, in general, would have very little incentive to work hard when rewards are skewed.
- Lack of information: Group of central planners managing the economy would not have sufficient information to allocate the scarce resources under their control efficiently. Since, resources are owned by the government, knowing the true price for resources becomes difficult.
- Market economy by default ensures resources to the most needy: When resource owners sell their resources to whoever is ready to pay the highest price, they thus ensure that the resource is allocated to those who need it the most.

Socialist argument: Markets were not essential for the rational allocation of resources:
- Cater to the genuine need of the society: Central planning board can allocate resources according to a plan that takes into account the genuine needs of society.

In conclusion, the middle ground would be moving towards a mixed economy, where prices are determined by the private sector but essential services are in the hands of the government to enable resource allocation to the poor.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.
(a) 1, 2 and 5 only
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only
(c) 2 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
Ans: D

For the Central Planning process, Parliament is associated through the MPLADS while NDC is part of the process. The planning commission collaborates indirectly with the Finance Commission but is not directly associated with the planning process. Previously (in 2014) the Union Ministries given were not part of the planning commission.

However, in the present framework of Niti Ayog, CMs of state and union misters are part of Ex-Officio members (Maximum of four from the Union council of ministers to be nominated by the Prime minister).

RUSSIA GOLD IMPORT BAN

Context:
G7 have decided to ban Russian gold imports in order to punish it for the invasion of Ukraine.

How a G-7 Russian gold ban would work:
- Will put economic pressure: Already Russia has defaulted on its foreign debt for the first time since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and Gold is Russia’s second-largest export industry after energy.
- A ban on imports of Russian gold will target its ability to interact with the global financial system.

Why ban Gold?
- Gold used to support currency: The US says Russia has used gold to support its currency as a way to circumvent the impact of sanctions.
- One way to do that is by swapping gold for a more liquid foreign exchange that is not subject to current sanctions.

Will the ban work?
- No, it may not work: Some experts say since only a few countries are implementing the gold ban, the move is largely symbolic.
- Yes, it may:
  » Restrict export revenue: While Russia will still able to sell gold to other countries outside the Group of Seven jurisdictions, it will “impact the ability of Russia to earn export revenue”
Create threat of secondary sanctions: Countries outside G7, who trade with Russia may face a ban.

How much gold does Russia have?
- Russia began increasing its gold purchases in 2014 after the US issued sanctions on Russia for invasion of Crimea. Now the country holds $100 billion to $140 billion in gold reserves.
- Gold gives $19bn in revenue every year: Gold is Russia’s second most lucrative export after energy and nearly 90% of the revenue comes from G-7

Impact on India:
- Since India is not part of the G7, the move will not directly impact it. However, India may face problems in issuing payments for gold purchases.
- May increase the price of Gold: India is the largest importer and consumer of Gold and limited supply may increase its price.

INSTA LINKS
Lessons from Russia to India

Practice Questions
Q. The fallout from the Ukraine crisis will, directly and indirectly, impact the Indian economy. Analyze. What steps are needed to protect the Indian economic interests? (15M)

CARBON NEUTRAL EFFORTS BY AGRI-FOOD COMPANIES

Context:
A recent report by FAO and EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), highlights the need for decarbonizing agrifood systems.

Status:
Global agrifood system:
- Account for 21-37% of total anthropogenic GHG emissions
- Are affected by warming through changing rainfall patterns and supply chain disruptions.

Carbon neutrality may help but still is an imperfect tool to transform food systems because:
- Roadblock 1: Governance of standards and processes: e.g. A common terminology surrounding carbon neutrality is still lacking.
- Roadblock 2: Knowledge, data and tools gaps at several levels
- Roadblock 3: Costs: The costs of becoming carbon neutral can be relatively high for smaller farmers and companies
- Roadblock 4: Engaging smaller players: While some companies are engaging SMEs and smallholder farmers in carbon neutrality efforts, these cases are singular and so far, wide-scale engagement has been minimal.

Action Area for greener agrifood system:
- Strategically target carbon neutrality (through decarbonization policies and Nationally Determined Contributions)
- Improve and standardize tools: e.g. simplify and harmonise database and standards for carbon accounting
- Directly support companies and farmers to decarbonize
- Awareness and education on carbon neutrality
- Promote sound governance mechanisms to guide low-carbon investment and private sector compliance

What are Net-zero emissions?
Net zero-emission (or carbon neutrality) means removing an equal amount of CO2 from the atmosphere as we release it, thus reducing the Earth’s net climate balance.

What is meant by the CO₂ budget?
A CO₂ budget determines how much CO₂ a country or person is allowed to emit in order to achieve the global climate protection goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C.

INSTA LINKS
India will achieve net-zero emissions by 2070
Practice Questions

Q. Discuss the concept of Carbon Neutrality? Explain its significance. Also, evaluate the feasibility of such a principle for a developing country like India. (10M)

Q. Discuss the ways in which India can achieve its ambitious targets of net zero emissions by 2070. (10M)

Q. “Momentum for Change: Climate Neutral Now” is an initiative launched by
(a) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
(b) The UNEP Secretariat
(c) The UNFCCC Secretariat
(d) The World Meteorological Organisation

Answer: C

Launched in 2015 by UNFCCC, it urges individuals, companies, and governments to measure their climate footprint, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

Q. What is blue carbon? (UPSC CSE 2021)
(a) Carbon captured by oceans and coastal ecosystems.
(b) Carbon sequestered in forest biomass and agricultural soils.
(c) Carbon contained in petroleum and natural gas.
(d) Carbon present in atmosphere

Answer: A

PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL CREDIT SOCIETIES (PACS)

Context:
Cabinet approves digitisation of 63,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

PACS:
It is a village-level institution that works directly with rural residents. It encourages agriculturists to save, accepts deposits from them, makes loans to deserving borrowers, and collects repayments.

PACS are the lowest unit in a three-tier structure:
The other two tiers — State Cooperative Banks (StCB) and District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCB) — have already been automated by the NABARD and brought on the Common Banking Software (CBS).

Benefits:
- Each PACS will get around ₹4 lakh to upgrade its capacity and even old accounting records will be digitised and linked to cloud-based software.
- Service delivery: Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS), Crop Insurance Scheme (PMFBY), and inputs like fertilizers and seeds.
- A government statement said that PACS account for 41% (3.01 crore farmers) of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans given by all entities in the country.

In the pipeline:
- Amendments to the model bylaws that would govern the PACS will be placed in the public domain soon (‘Cooperative is a state subject’)
- Amendments to the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Amendment Act, 2002 will also be effected soon
- Plans to set up a National Cooperative University
- Pan India legislation to govern the credit societies.

Structure of Rural Co-operative credit societies

INSTA LINKS

Practice Questions

Q. Analyse the role of Cooperative societies as an economic driver toward national development. (10M)

Q. With reference to ‘Urban Cooperative Banks’ in India, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2021)
1. They are supervised and regulated by local boards set up by the State Governments.
2. They can issue equity shares and preference shares.
3. They were brought under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 through an Amendment in 1966.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: B
Q. Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2020)

1. In terms of short-term credit delivery to the agriculture sector, District Central Cooperative Banks (DC-CBs) deliver more credit in comparison of Scheduled Commercial Banks are Regional Rural Banks
2. One of the most important functions of DCCBs is to provide funds to the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

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

Ans: B

Q. In India, which of the following have the highest share in the disbursement of credit to agriculture and allied activities? (UPSC CSE 2011)
(a) Commercial Banks
(b) Cooperative Banks
(c) Regional Rural Banks
(d) Microfinance Institutions

Ans: A

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Public Administration Test Series & Mentorship Program for Mains 2022

Manjunath Sir
(Faculty for Polity & Governance, Public Administration, InsightsAS)

Starts from 4th July 2022

Features of the program:
1) 3 months test series
2) Total 10 tests
   a) 8 short tests for 125 marks (all questions mandatory)
   b) 2 Full length simulation tests
   c) 250 marks, based on UPSC pattern
3) Evaluation by Public Administration faculty
4) one to one interaction and feedback
5) Questions will be framed based on the pattern of previous UPSC questions
6) Focus on Public Administration specific language and keywords
7) Learn the skill to tackle abstract questions
8) Number of admissions is restricted to 50 (preferably those writing 2022 mains)

Note:
1) Synopsis will not be provided
2) Test 9 and 10 discussion will be conducted by the faculty.
   (Not for Other tests)

Fee:
4,999/-
(Excluding GST)

Early Bird Offer:
10%
(all 27th June 2022)

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Intensive Bridge Course for GS 2 Mains

Shashank Sir
Faculty for International Relations, InsightsIAS

Marjunath Sir
Faculty for Polity & Governance, Public Administration, InsightsIAS

Ananya Raajshree
Rank 68, CSE 2021
GS 2 score 121
GS2 Bridge course 2021 student

Course Features:
1) Cover entire GS 2 in 60 hours
2) Target: 120+
3) All 19 sub topics will be covered
4) Three staged approach:
   a) Conceptual clarity on 19 subtopics
   b) PTQ discussions
   c) Probable Questions for 2022 Mains on recent issues
5) Enrich your answers with appropriate Keywords and Vocabulary for GS2
6) Identity, Ramenber & Reproduce important & Relevant Articles, Judgements, Reports etc
7) Learn skills to tackle abstract questions
8) Smart usage of the content according to the demand of the question

Materials provided:
1. Handouts on substantiation which includes:
   a) Examples & Case studies of Committee recommendations
   b) GS 2 specific keywords and terminologies
   c) Definitions and flowcharts which can be used effectively in the exam
   d) Model answers for probable questions based on important recent issues (current affairs of 1.5 years)

Fee:
7,750/-
Including GST

Early Bird Offer:
10% OFF
(till 27th June 2022)

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OGP - Offline & Online Guidance Program (GS+CSAT+Eassy)

We have bagged spectacular results with 80+ ranks in UPSC CSE 2021

OGP Excellence

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- Integrated coverage of Prelims & Mains syllabus
- Emphasis on Mains Answer Writing with Daily Class tests
- Weekly, fortnightly and full-length Prelims and Mains tests
- Personalized One-to-One Mentorship
- Complete Coverage of syllabus
- ETHICS, ESSAY & CSAT classes are also provided
- Free access to All India Prelims Test Series
- Ignite session & Lecture Series

Fee Structure:
Offline Classes: 1,25,000/-
Online Classes: 1,10,000/-

Early Bird Offer:
10% Discount
(15th July)
5% Discount
(20th July)

SOCIOLGY
OPTIONAL CLASSES

Ms. Pooja Prasanna
INSIGHTS SOCIOLGY FACULTY

Features:
- Syllabus will be covered in 4 months
- Systematic and Comprehensive coverage of syllabus
- Complete syllabus material will be provided - both paper 1 & 2
- Online / offline
- Special attention on presentation of content
- Focus on Current affairs and its analysis with theories
- Class room tests with feedback

Fee: 32,500/- inclusive of Tax

Early bird discount: 10% (till 5th July 2022)

Advantages of Choosing Sociology:
- Overlap of Sociology syllabus with GS Syllabus like Social Issues, Social Justice, Polity, Modern History, Economics and Ethics
- Sociology helps students with respect to essay writing
- Sociology success ratio has increased in the recent times with successively securing ranks within top 25
- Very interesting subject to read and it’s easy to relate to current affairs hence enables candidates to write innovative answers

Mode: Online & Offline
(Offline in Bangalore)
PSIR Test Series & Mentorship Program 2022

By Nikhil K Gowda
Insightias PSIR Optional Faculty

Test Series
- Limited to only 20 students
- Total 8 tests - 250 marks each
- One to one guidance from Nikhil K Gowda
- No Synopsis will be provided.
- Test starts from 25th of June
- Test available - online / offline

Fees - 8000/- + GST

Anthropology Test Series & Mentorship Program 2022

By Dr Arjun Boppanna
Insightias Anthropology Faculty

Test Series
- 12 tests (Full length)
- 5 sectional + 3 Revision + 4 Comprehensive papers
- Value addition materials + answer structuring + case study etc
- Discussion by Dr Arjun Boppanna, Insightias Anthropology Faculty
- Test available - online / offline
- 1st Test - 24th of June

Fees: 14,000/- + taxes

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(Available in Online & Offline mode in Bangalore, Delhi, Lucknow, Hyderabad & Srinagar Centres)

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Intensive Test-Based Initiative of Insight IAS

Starts from: 28th July 2022

Scholarship cum Entrance Test

Round 1:
- 17th July 2022
  - Online: 2 pm - 3 pm
  - Offline: 2 pm - 4 pm

Round 2:
- 19th July 2022
  - Online: 2 pm - 3 pm
  - Offline: 2 pm - 5 pm

Scholarship for top 100
- Top 10 ranks: 100% Scholarship
- Ranks 11-50: 50% discount
- Ranks 51-100: 30% discount

Test will be available Online & Offline mode in Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad & Lucknow Centres.

Results: 30th July 2022
Admissions for Selected 100 candidates from every branch

Total tests: 86
Main: (55 Sectional + 11 Full length +20 Essays)
Prelims: 42

CORE BATCH HALL OF FAME:

Register Here
(Should be registered before 14th July 2022)

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