

Weekly Digest for UPSC Aspirant

It covers 6 success points

1. Important editorials
2. Issues in news
3. Places in news
4. MCQs and Mains Questions
5. Infographics
6. Mentorship

Sahi Prep Hai **Toh Life Set Hai**

The Sunday Read



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Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP)

The US Navy has publicly declared it conducted “**freedom of navigation operations**” in India’s **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** near Lakshadweep recently, without deliberately seeking India’s prior consent. The exercise was carried out to challenge India's excessive maritime claims.

India has protested this decision, rejecting the U.S.’s claim that its domestic maritime law was in violation of international law, i.e., the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#).

Indian Government Statement

India’s domestic laws hold any country carrying out military maneuvers in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) must provide prior notification. While a country has **full sovereignty over its territorial waters**, which up to **12 nautical miles from the baseline**, it only has **special rights in exploration and use of marine resources in its EEZ**, which stretches up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline.

India replied that other states are not allowed to conduct military exercise and manoeuvres in the EEZ without the consent of coastal states (i.e., India, in this case).

What’s the concern now?

This is not the first time for the US conducting FONOP. The **US — which has not ratified the UNCLOS unlike India, China and many other countries** — does regularly conduct FONOPs in the contentious **South China Sea** to challenge China’s aggressive territorial claims as well as in other areas including the Indian Ocean Region.

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However, the “tone and tenor of the aggressive public declaration” of FONOPs in India’s EEZ, especially when the US is seeking India’s closer cooperation through the Quad and other mechanisms to foster “credible deterrence” against China in the Indo-Pacific, raised the hackles of the Indian security architecture.

The US said, India’s requirement of prior consent is **inconsistent with international laws** and the “**freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs)**”.

What is FONOP?

Freedom of Navigation Operations involves passages conducted by the **US Navy** through waters claimed by coastal nations as their exclusive territory. FONOP is exercised by sailing through *all* areas of the sea permitted under UNCLOS.

- According to the US Department of Defense (DoD), the FON Program has existed for 40 years, and “continuously reaffirmed the United States’ policy of exercising and asserting its navigation and overflight rights and freedoms around the world”.
- These “assertions communicate that the United States does not agree to the excessive maritime claims of other nations, and thus prevents those claims from becoming accepted in international law”.

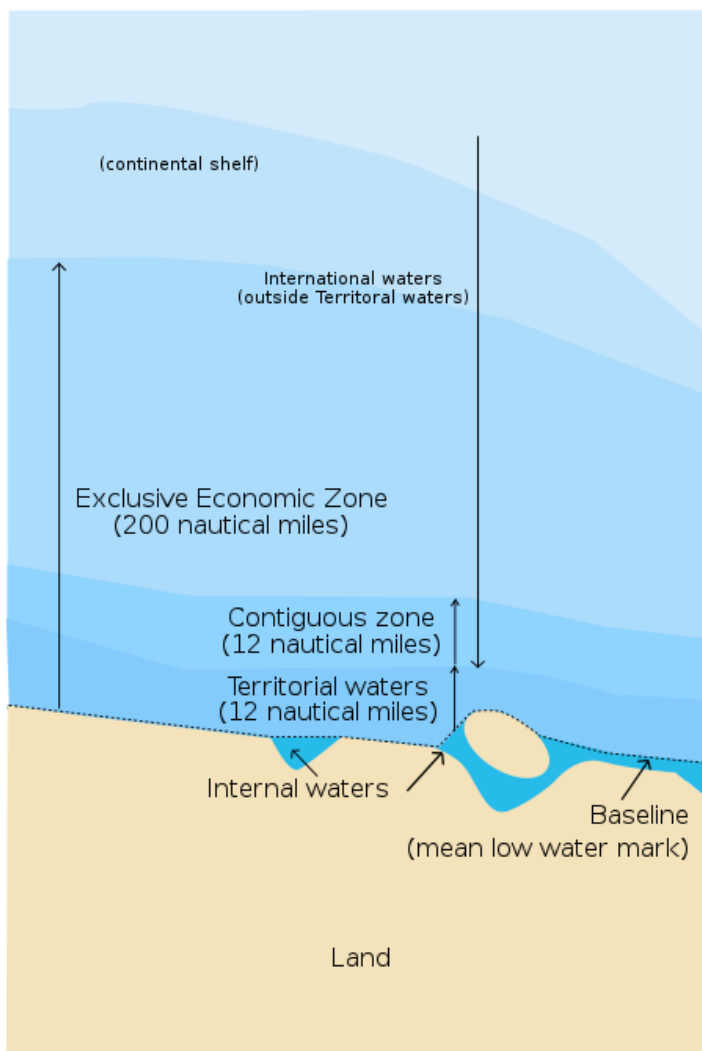
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted and signed in 1982 and entered into force in 1994. The convention frames a comprehensive set of rules governing the oceans and replaces previous U.N. Conventions on the Law of the Sea. The convention is also known as **Law of the Seas**, which defines the rights and responsibilities of nations towards the use of the world’s oceans.

As of 2016, **164 countries** (including **India**), and **European Countries** ratified the Convention. **USA has not ratified** the convention.

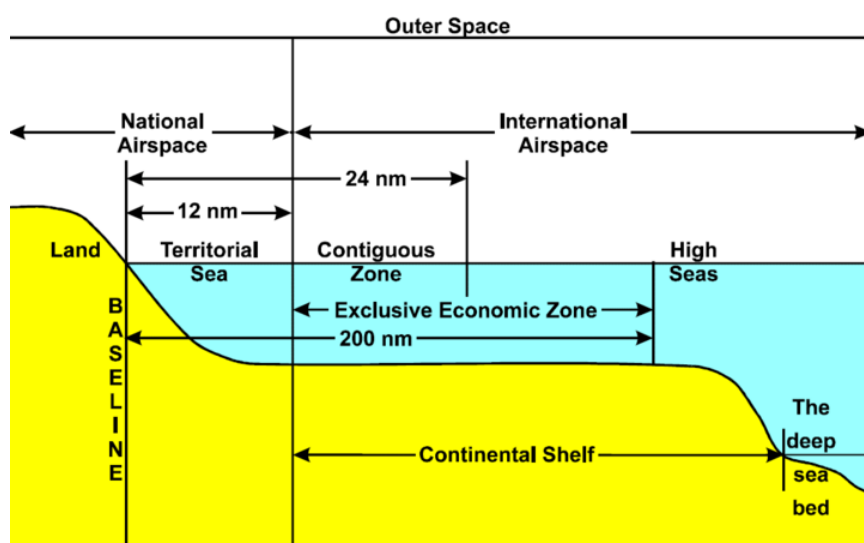
Maritime Zones

UNCLOS divides the marine areas into **five** zones:



- **Internal Waters:**
 - It is waters on the landward side of the **baseline** as mentioned in the image below.
 - A country has **full sovereignty over its internal waters**
 - There is **no right of innocent passage of vessels** or ships through internal waters
- **Territorial waters:**
 - Territorial waters extends **up to 12 nautical miles (nm= distance equal to one minute of latitude)** from its baselines towards seaward
 - Limited innocent passage of vessels
 - coastal states have sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territorial sea including **ocean surface seabed, subsoil, and even airspace.**
- **Contiguous Zone:**
 - It extends seaward up to **24 nm** from its baselines
 - It is an intermediate zone between the **territorial sea** and the **high seas**
 - State has jurisdiction over the **ocean's surface and floor** but **not air and space rights.**
- **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):**
 - The EEZ extends seaward up to **200 nm** from its baselines.

- The coastal state has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living or nonliving, of the seabed and subsoil.
- The coastal state can use these waters, currents and wind for energy generation.
- The coastal state has **no right to prohibit or limit freedom of navigation or overflight**, subject to very limited exceptions.
- **High Seas:**
 - waters beyond the EEZ are referred to as the high seas
 - Beyond national jurisdiction
 - It is called “the common heritage of all mankind”
 - States can conduct activities in these areas as long as they are for peaceful purposes, such as transit, marine science, and undersea exploration.



Other key provisions of UNCLOS

UNCLOS stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces. It provides a **different legal status to different maritime zones**. The convention provides the backbone for offshore governance by coastal states and those navigating the oceans. It not only zones coastal states' offshore areas but also provides specific guidance for states' rights and responsibilities in the five concentric zones.

It also specifies detailed nautical-mile limits for maritime zones and establishes “**rules of the road**” for oceans management and operations at sea. UNCLOS also contains security component, which addresses key tenets of **responding to maritime threats**.

The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation And Conditions Of Service) Ordinance, 2021

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Context:

- Recently the government **abolished appellate authorities under 9 statutes and transferred their functions** (such as adjudication of appeals) to other existing judicial bodies (mainly the High Courts) **by an ordinance**.
- A Bill with similar provisions was introduced in Lok Sabha in February 2021 and is currently pending.

Provisions:

- **Abolition of Appellate tribunals:**
 - The **Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT)** stands dissolved.
 - The Ordinance amends the Cinematograph Act, 1952 by replacing the word “Tribunal” with “High Court”.
 - Other Acts amended by this ordinance (that affects the transfer of the appellate functions to Courts) include:
 - **The Trade Marks Act, 1999, The Copyright Act, 1957, The Patents Act, 1970, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.**
 - **The Customs Act, 1962,**
 - **The Airports Authority of India Act, 1994,**
 - **The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002.**
- **The Finance Act, 2017** empowered the central government to notify rules on:
 - (i) qualifications of members of tribunals,
 - (ii) terms and conditions of their service, and
 - (iii) composition of search-cum-selection committees for 19 tribunals (such as the Customs, Excise, and Service Tax Appellate Tribunals).

The Ordinance amends the 2017 Act to **include provisions related to the composition of search-cum-selection committees and term of office of tribunal members in the Act itself.**

- **Search-cum-selection committees:** The Ordinance specifies that these Committees will consist of:
 - (i) the Chief Justice of India, or a Supreme Court Judge nominated by him, as the Chairperson (with casting vote),
 - (ii) two Secretaries nominated by the central government,
 - (iii) the sitting or outgoing Chairperson, or a retired Supreme Court Judge, or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court, and

(iv) the Secretary of the Ministry under which the Tribunal is constituted (with no voting right).

- **Term of office:** The Ordinance specifies that the term of office for the **Chairperson** of the tribunals will be of **four years** or till the attainment of the age of **seventy years**, whichever is earlier. For **other members** of the tribunals, the term will be of **four years** or till the age of **sixty-seven years**, whichever is earlier.
- Further, the Ordinance **includes the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission** established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 **within the purview of the Finance Act, 2017.**
- It **removes the following bodies from the purview of the Finance Act, 2017:**
 - (i) the Airport Appellate Tribunal established under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994,
 - (ii) the Appellate Board established under the Trade Marks Act, 1999,
 - (iii) the Authority of Advance Ruling established under the Income Tax Act, 1961, and
 - (iv) the Film Certification Appellate Authority established under the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

Detailed Analysis

The Film Certificate Appellate Tribunal - FCAT

- It was a statutory body set up by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in 1983, under Section 5D of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- Its main function was to hear appeals filed under Section 5C of the Cinematograph Act by those aggrieved by the decision of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
- It was headed by a chairperson and had four other members, including a Secretary appointed by the Government of India.
- It was headquartered in New Delhi.

Film Certification process in India:

- All films in India must have a **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** certificate if they are to be released theatrically, telecast on television, or displayed publicly in any way.
- The CBFC consists of a **Chairperson and 23 members**, all **appointed by the Government of India.**
- The CBFC can also deny certification to a film and when a filmmaker or producer has not been satisfied with the CBFC's certification, or with a denial, they can appeal to the FCAT.

Impact:

- Filmmakers will now have to **approach the High Court with appeals every time** CBFC denies or gives an unsatisfactory certificate.
- **Not many film producers will have the means** to approach the courts.

The Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB)

- Pursuant to the Ordinance, the **Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) has been dissolved** that heard **appeals relating to patents, trademarks, copyrights, geographical indications, plant varieties**.
- Thus, the appeals from the decisions of the relevant Registry will now be heard **by the High Court**.
- Appeals from the registry for **industrial designs continue to remain before the relevant High Court**.

Need:

- The IPAB was meant to consist of subject experts and judicial members for the efficient and time-bound resolution of IP matters. However, it **performed poorly due to inadequate funding and inefficiencies in appointments**.

Advantages of the move:

- The main advantage of appeals before the relevant High Court is **improved accessibility for the litigants**.
 - Most of the hearings at the IPAB were held in Chennai or Delhi due to limited funding. Thus, litigants from outside these cities had to bear additional expenses.

Issues:

- **High pendency and delays:** One of the reasons for the establishment of the IPAB were delays due to the **pendency of proceedings before the Courts**. Therefore, shifting jurisdiction from the IPAB to the High Courts may not lead to the more efficient disposal of IP-related suits.
- **Need for Lawyers:** Proceedings before the IPAB were administrative in nature and required only the submission of the relevant form for routine filings. Parties did not require lawyers. Proceedings before the High Courts will **necessitate the appointment of lawyers**.
- **Technical experts:** A domain expert would hasten the adjudication process and add significant value to IP jurisprudence. But this move **removes the involvement of domain experts** altogether.

Conclusion:

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- The IPAB was clearly **in need of urgent reform**. However, **this move is unlikely to resolve the delays** faced by litigants before the IPAB, given the backlog in the High Courts.
- The most significant issues with the IPAB were the **delay in appointments and lack of infrastructure, which could have been addressed** by the government within the existing framework itself which it has not chosen to.

Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021

Context:

- Recently the Parliament passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021.
- The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 that regulates the mining sector in India.

Provisions:

- ❖ Captive Mines:
 - The original Act empowers the central government to reserve any mine (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) to be leased through an auction for a particular end-use (such as an iron ore mine for a steel plant). Such mines are known as captive mines.
 - This Bill provides that no mine will be reserved for particular end-use.
 - It also provides that captive mines (other than atomic minerals) may sell up to 50% of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
- ❖ Auction:
 - The Act allows states to conduct the auction of mineral concessions (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals).
 - Mineral concessions include mining lease and prospecting license-cum-mining lease.
 - The Bill states that If the state government is unable to complete the auction process within a specified period by the Centre, the auctions may be conducted by the central government itself.
- ❖ Transfer of statutory clearance:
 - When mines are leased to new persons through auction, earlier statutory clearances issued to the previous lessee were transferred for a period of 2 years to the new leaseholder within which they had to renew the clearances.
 - This Bill now provides that transferred statutory clearances will be valid throughout the lease period of the new lessee.

- ❖ Mines (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals), whose lease has expired, in certain cases, may be allocated to a government company by the State government for a period up to 10 years or until the selection of a new lessee, whichever is earlier.
- ❖ The Bill provides that the period of mining leases of government companies (other than leases granted through auction) may be extended on payment of additional amounts as prescribed in the Bill.
- ❖ Rights of certain existing concession holders: the right to obtain a prospecting license or a mining lease will lapse on the date of commencement of the 2021 Amendment Act. Such persons will be reimbursed for any expenditure incurred towards reconnaissance or prospecting operations.
- ❖ The original Act provides that a mining lease will lapse if the lessee:
 - (i) is not able to start mining operations within two years of the grant of a lease,
 - (ii) has discontinued mining operations for a period of two years.
 - However, the lease will not lapse at the end of this period if a concession is provided by the state government upon an application by the lessee.
 - This Bill adds that the threshold period for lapse of the lease can be extended by the state government only once and up to one year only.
- ❖ The original Act provided for a non-exclusive reconnaissance permit. This bill removes the non-exclusive provision for this permit.

Need:

- In India mining contributes to only 1.75 percent of the GDP while it has a higher potential to contribute upto 2.5% of the GDP.
- India heavily imports coal despite being the third-largest storehouse of coal in the world. It also has 22,000 million tonnes of iron ore reserve that is enough to last another 100-150 years for itself.
- The bureaucracy wields a lot of power as even a small fault can lead to the closure of a mine. Also, a lot of mining takes place illegally and is a great contributor to corruption.
- This in turn also leaves the environment destroyed without anyone being held accountable, all due to the outdated law.
- Manganese, which is a byproduct of iron ore production, currently cannot be used by captive mines (not useful to them) nor can they be sold. But India imports tonnes of manganese. This issue has been resolved with this bill.
- The new law also provides a license for the use of minerals along with the license for exploration, which gives an additional incentive for exploring more.

- The private mining industry players will also be given incentives out of the National Mineral Exploration Trust (which gets 2 percent of mineral royalties but is largely unused now) fund to explore more minerals in India. This will enhance the production of minerals.

Issues with the Bill:

- States may have objection wherein the Central government is stepping in to auction the mines. This amounts to infringement of states' powers as auction of mines is under the purview of state governments.
- The Central government can also direct how to use the funds in the District Mineral Foundation, which again infringes on rights of the state and also is a top-down approach which may not suit the ground realities.
- The state governments may also object to the fixing of the royalties of the government companies for the extension of their leases as this may lead to lower revenues as compared to a transparent process of auction.
- The environmental concerns regarding mining have no mention at all in the bill.
- There is also a need for an independent regulator that will oversee the process so that there can be reduced conflict between various powers.

Conclusion:

- The new Bill is expected to usher in big reforms in the mining sector - enhancing the production and improving ease of doing business, thereby boosting the economy.
- It also has a huge potential to generate employment especially in rural areas.
- This bill has a huge impact on the upstream related industries like the automobile sector which will also get a boost.
- Also we need to develop the related infrastructure to reap the full benefits of this reform like improving the transport and export infrastructure - railways, shipping, ports etc. This will further generate more economy.
- We also need to focus on value addition to the minerals so that we can reduce our import bills and produce more goods locally.

However due diligence must be followed in granting of permits and leases in order to check the environmental damage to ensure sustainable development

Child Labour and Forced labour in India

Context:

- A recent study, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme and The Coca-Cola Company has raised the issue of ambiguity about definitions of child labour and forced labour-related laws in India, especially for sugarcane producing states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Findings of the study:

- Instances were found where child labour was discounted quoting the incidence of 'children helping parents in the field'.

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- Confusion was apparent about the advance payment to migrant workers, and associated risks of forced or bonded labour.
- Most of the interventions, either by government authorities or by the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of companies, in the sugarcane sector, were focused just on improving farming techniques to ensure an increase in cane productivity.



Child Labour in India

- Definition: India's Census 2001, defines child labour as participation of a child less than 17 years of age in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit.
- As per Census 2011, 10.1 million children (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as 'main worker' or as 'marginal worker'.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh - together constitute nearly 55% of the total population of working children in India.

Laws regulating/prohibiting child labour:

- Article 24 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 in any factory, mine or other hazardous activities like construction work or railways.
- National Policy on Child Labour, formulated in 1987, seeks to adopt a gradual & sequential approach with a focus on rehabilitation of children and adolescents.
- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986:** its amendment in 2016 prohibits employment of children below 14 in all occupations. It prohibits the employment of adolescents (14-18 years) in certain hazardous occupations.
- **The Factories Act of 1948:** The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory. The law also placed rules on who, when and how long can children aged 15–18 years be employed in any factory.
- **The Mines Act of 1952:** It prohibits the employment of children below 18 years of age in a mine.

- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act of 2000:** This law made it a crime, punishable with a prison term, for anyone to procure or employ a child in any hazardous employment or in bondage
- **The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009:** It mandates free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years. This legislation also mandated that 25 per cent of seats in every private school must be allocated for children from disadvantaged groups and physically challenged children.

Limitations in the proper implementation of the above laws:

- **Non-awareness:** Lack of awareness among people about the labour laws in India is a cause for its poor implementation.
- **Poverty:** Many families live below the poverty line and they cannot support their living so they send their children to work.
- **Illiteracy:** illiterates are not aware of the rules and regulations due to a lack of education.
- **Lack of political will:** lack of political will is another obstacle.
- **Lack of efficiency:** the labour laws are not implemented properly due to inefficient administrative machinery.
- **Unemployment:** People are not able to earn due to unemployment and so they send their children to work in order to earn more.
- **Will of parents:** Some parents don't wish to send their children to school rather they send them to fields to work.

Measures needed:

- **Data:** Identifying and generating gender-disaggregated data on child labour and its worst forms in agriculture and its sub-sector.
- **Education:** Sustainable, meaningful and relevant education and vocational skills for children of migrant workers in agriculture in the source as well as destination areas.
- **Regulations:** Minimum wages and decent living and working conditions for legally standardised working hours and ensuring they are gender-equal irrespective of their gender or caste.
- **Supply chain assessments:** Assessment of supply chains from top to bottom to ensure the rights of workers at the foot.
- **Collective rights:** Promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining at the lowest of the tiers.

Bonded Labour:

- The definition as provided in the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976:
 - It is a system of forced (or partly forced) labour in which a debtor enters (or presumed to have entered) into an agreement with the creditor. Owing to this agreement, the following are the end results:
 1. Render services to the creditor (by himself or through a family member) for a specified (or unspecified) period of time with no wages (or nominal wages).
 2. Forfeit the right to move freely.
 3. Forfeit the right to appropriate or sell the product or property at the market value from his (or his family members') labour or service.

Constitutional and legal provisions related to bonded labour:

- Article 21 of the Indian Constitution: provides for the Right to Life.
 - It's a part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and cannot be amended.
 - It secures the right to life and the right to live with human dignity to every person in India.
- Article 23 of the Indian Constitution: provides for the abolition of forced labour.
 - It also covers the practice of Begar and other forms of human trafficking in India.
- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) recognizes the offence of unlawful compulsory labour and imposes a punishment of imprisonment.
- The Minimum Wages Act 1948 sets the minimum wage for certain listed occupations and requires that overtime be paid to whoever is working beyond the 'normal working day.'
- Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976: prescribes imprisonment to whoever compelling a person to render their service under bonded labour and whoever advances the bonded debt.

Factors responsible for the continuance of this system of forced labour:

- The usurious rate of interest is one of the leading factors which contribute to its continuance.
- Faulty system of adjustment of wages with the amount lent, prevalent ignorance, illiteracy, being socially backward, lack of debtor's organisation etc. are other factors contributing to the continuance of bonded labour.

Conclusion:

- The stakeholders benefiting from crops such as sugarcane must take the accountability of ensuring the rights of the most marginalised workers and their children in the supply chain and be extremely diligent of how these complex social and political realities shape issues of child and forced labour to fulfil the needs of global trade and consumer demands.
- The bonded labour and child labour have been continuing despite many Constitutional provisions and various legislations prohibiting them. The real issue lies in the implementation of these laws which needs a strong political and administrative will.

Misuse of Ordinance Making Power

Background

- Recently, the central government Re-promulgated the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020
- This raises questions over the constitutional validity of issuing ordinances and that of repromulgating ordinances, that too without their ratification by Parliament.

About Ordinance making power of executives

- Article 123 and Article 213 empowers the central and state governments to make laws when Parliament or the State Legislature are not in session.
- The Constitution states that the ordinance will lapse at the end of six weeks from the time Parliament or the State Legislature next meets.

- Originally, it was conceived as an emergency provision and was expected to be used rarely.

Misuse of the Ordinance making power

- One, the number of Ordinance issued by the centre has increased from an average of 7.1 per year in the 1950s to 15 in 2020.
- Two, States have also been using the ordinance route to enact laws. For example, in 2020, Kerala issued 81 ordinances, while Karnataka issued 24 and Maharashtra 21.
- Three, further repromulgation of Ordinance by both centre and state is also increasing. For instance, The Indian Medical Council Amendment Ordinance by the centre and Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology by Kerala are two recent examples.
- Concerns associated with the use of ordinances:
- The temptation to use the power vested in the President and the Governors under Articles 123 and 213 of the Constitution is generally a result of one of the following three reasons: reluctance to face the legislature on particular issues, fear of defeat in the Upper House where the government may lack the required numbers, and the need to overcome an impasse in the legislature caused by repeated and wilful disruption by a vociferous section of the Opposition.
- Constitutional experts, the Opposition and the media are against the government issuing ordinances. Generally, their opposition is based on the grounds that an ordinance is an undemocratic route to lawmaking, which is the job of the legislature. Therefore, any executive attempt at lawmaking is bad, they argue.
- Also, more often the power to make ordinances has been abused to subvert the democratic process. A failure of a legislature to confirm an ordinance, therefore, in the court's ruling, is fatal both to the validity of the law, and also, unless public interest otherwise demanded, to the rights and liabilities that may have accrued from such a law.

What is the court's view regarding promulgation and promulgation of the Ordinance?

- In the D.C. Wadhwa case, the court took up the issue of promulgation of 256 ordinances, of which 69 were repromulgated in Bihar between 1967 and 1981.
- The supreme court ruled that repromulgation of ordinances is against Constitutional morality and is an act of Colourable legislation. Because through ordinance making power the Executive encroaches into the law-making function of the Legislature.
- Further, the court said that there was no such practice of repromulgation by the centre.
- Centre too started to follow the lead of Bihar. For example, in 2013 and 2014, the Securities Laws Ordinance promulgated 3 times, Land Acquisition Act twice.
- In 2017, the matter came up again in the Supreme Court. This time, the court gave a strong verdict. It declared that **Re-promulgation of ordinances is a fraud on the Constitution and a subversion of democratic legislative processes.**
- However, the Centre and states are not following this judgement. It is evident in the current case of the Commission for Air Quality Management.

Ordinance making power of the President

- He can only promulgate the ordinance under these circumstances:
 - When both the houses or either of the house is not in session
 - Circumstances occur where the President thinks it necessary to act without waiting for houses to assemble

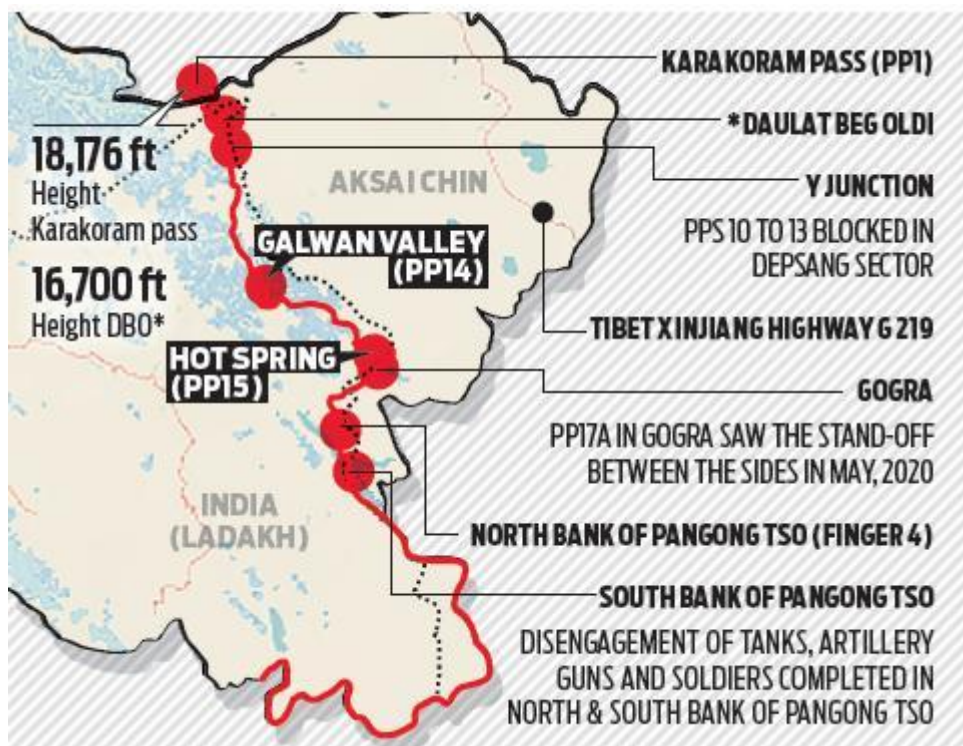
- An ordinance can be retrospective in nature
- An ordinance rolled out when both the houses are in session is void in nature
- The Parliament has to approve the ordinance within six weeks from its reassembly
- Acts, done and completed under the ordinance before it lapses, remains fully active
- Unlike the Indian Constitution, most of the democratic constitution of the world don't give such ordinance making power to their President
- It has no connection with the President's power to proclaim a national emergency
- The power of ordinance making is not to be taken as a substitute for the legislative power. Only under special circumstances, ordinances can be rolled out
- President's power to roll out ordinance is justiciable on the ground of malafide
- The President can also withdraw an ordinance at any time.
- However, his power of ordinance-making is not a discretionary power, and he can promulgate or withdraw an ordinance only on the advice of the council of ministers headed by the prime minister.
- An ordinance like any other legislation, can be retrospective, that is, it may come into force from a back date.
- It may modify or repeal any act of Parliament or another ordinance. It can alter or amend a tax law also.
- However, it cannot be issued to amend the Constitution.

The principle of Separation of Powers and Checks and balances empowers the legislatures and the courts to check the encroachment of the Executive. However, by allowing for repromulgation of ordinances, the Legislature and the court are abdicating their responsibility to the Constitution.

China Not Leaving Hot Springs And Gogra Post

Context

Recently, during the 11th round of discussions between the senior military commanders of India and China to resolve the standoff in eastern Ladakh, China refused to vacate two of the four original friction points.



At two friction points, Patrolling Point 15 (PP15) in Hot Springs, and PP17A near Gogra Post, China still has a platoon-level strength each, along with vehicles.

Other two are the Galwan valley and the Depsang plains.

Patrolling Point 15 and 17A:

- Along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, Indian Army has been given certain locations that its troops have access to patrol the area under its control.
- These points are known as patrolling points, or PPs, and are decided by the China Study Group (CSG).
- CSG was set-up in 1976, when Indira Gandhi was the prime minister, and is the apex decision-making body on China.
- Barring certain areas, like Depsang Plains, these patrolling points are on the LAC, and troops access these points to assert their control over the territory.
- It is an important exercise since the boundary between India and China is not yet officially demarcated.
- LAC is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.
- PP15 and PP17A are two of the 65 patrolling points in Ladakh along the LAC.
- Both these points are in an area where India and China largely agree on the alignment of the LAC.
- PP15 is located in an area known as the Hot Springs, while PP17A is near an area called the Gogra post.

Location of Hot Springs and Gogra Post:

- Hot Springs is just north of the Chang Chenmo river and Gogra Post is east of the point where the river takes a hairpin bend coming southeast from Galwan Valley and turning southwest.
- The area is north of the Karakoram Range of mountains, which lies north of the Pangong Tso lake, and south east of Galwan Valley.

Importance:

- The area lies close to Kongka Pass, one of the main passes, which, according to China marks the boundary between India and China.
- India's claim of the international boundary lies significantly east, as it includes the entire Aksai Chin area as well.
- Hot Springs and Gogra Post are close to the boundary between two of the most historically disturbed provinces (Xinjiang and Tibet) of China.

How significant are they for the military?

- Both PP15 and PP17A are in an area where India and China largely agree on the alignment of the LAC, which comes southeast from Galwan Valley, turns down at Kongka La and moves towards Ann Pass before reaching the north bank of Pangong Tso.
- China has a major post of the People's Liberation Army a few km east of Kongka La, while Indian posts lie southwest of it.
- However, according to the official history of the 1962 war between India and China, the region is not identified as a major "launchpad" from where an offensive can be launched by either side.

Afghanistan After The Removal Of US Troops

Context:

President Joe Biden has announced that the US will withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

More about the news:

- Trump Administration made its troop withdrawal by May 1 conditional — on Taliban taking steps to prevent al-Qaeda or any other group from sheltering in Afghanistan, and agreeing to a dialogue on power sharing with the Afghan government.
- But the Biden plan has no strings attached. There are about 2,500-3,500 US troops in Afghanistan at present, plus a NATO force of under 8,000. A co-ordinated withdrawal is expected to begin soon.
- The impact of this announcement on various actors within Afghanistan and outside is bound to be far-reaching. It can be said with certainty that no country in the region will remain untouched.
- **Background:**

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- It makes sense for America to exit a long and futile war that has cost more than US\$800 billion and the lives of 2,218 US service members.
- The US and NATO combat role in Afghanistan actually ended before Trump took office, with Afghan government forces assuming full security responsibility on 1 January 2015.
- In effect, Trump set out to abandon Afghanistan to terrorists and their sponsors in Pakistan, whose military created the Taliban group, Still harbours its leadership and provides cross-border sanctuaries for its fighters.

Afghanistan: advantage Taliban



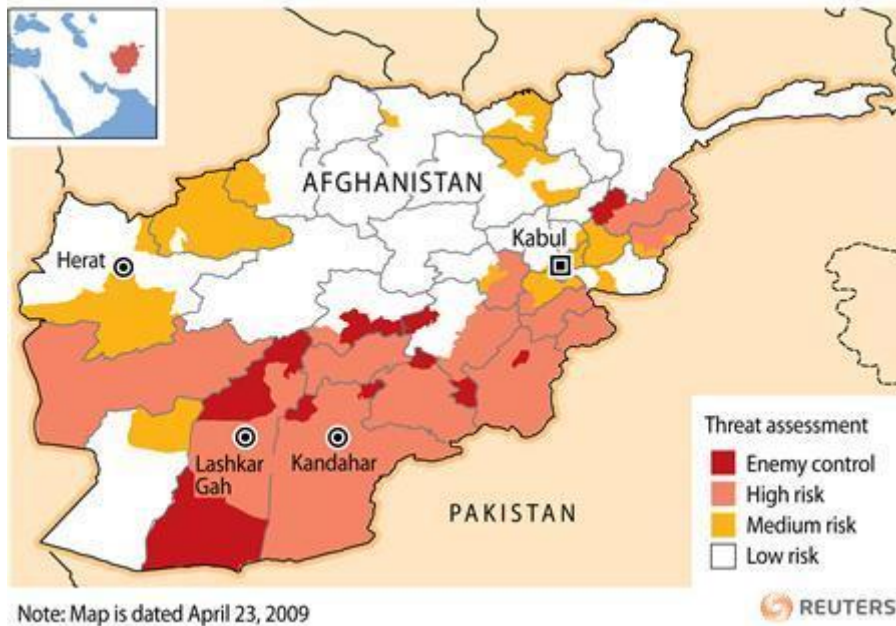
- Biden's announcement has removed all incentives for the Taliban to agree for a dialogue with the Afghan government.
- The proposal by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in March is now almost certainly dead in the water. It included
 - a 90-day ceasefire;
 - talks under the auspices of the UN for a consensus plan for Afghanistan among the US, Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran and India; and
 - a meeting in Turkey between the Taliban and Afghan government towards an "inclusive" interim government, an agreement on the foundational principles of the future political order and for a permanent ceasefire.

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- Turkey has scheduled the talks for April 24, and the Biden Administration has said it remains committed to finding a political solution. But the Taliban are now in a different zone.
- **The Taliban declared in the statement that the “American officials have understood the Afghan situation” but as the withdrawal had been put off “by several months” to September, rather than stick to the Doha Agreement** (signed between the Trump Administration’s special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and the Taliban last March) date of May 1, America had violated the agreement. This had “opened the way” for the Taliban to take “counter-measures”, and the American side “will be held responsible for all future consequences, and not the Islamic Emirate”.



- According to the Long War Journal, of Afghanistan’s 325 districts, the Taliban are in control of 76 or 19%, and government forces 127 or 32%. The remaining are contested. **According to the Council of Foreign Relations, the Taliban are stronger now than at any point since 2001, when US forces invaded Afghanistan.**
- After the full withdrawal of troops, Taliban are likely to see the war, which they believe they have already won, to its completion.
- US Threat Assessment Report, an annual US intelligence briefing, said prospects for a peace deal are dim, the Taliban are confident of victory in the battlefield, and the Afghan government will struggle to hold them at bay.
- There is apprehension that the country is close to losing all the gains of the last 15 years, although there is also a view that the Taliban too have changed over 25 years, and would not want to alienate the international community as they did when they ruled Afghanistan during 1996-01.
- Earlier, Ghani had proposed that if the Taliban were ready to talk, he would give up what remained of his presidential term, and hold a re-election in which the Taliban were free to participate. The Taliban have always rejected elections as un-Islamic, and the government of Afghanistan as a “puppet” of the US. Ghani’s proposal gained no traction.

Pakistan: gains big

- The Taliban are a creation of the Pakistani security establishment. After the US invasion of Afghanistan, they removed themselves to safe havens in Pakistan territory, and the Taliban High Council operated from Quetta in Balochistan.
- For the Pakistani Army, which has always seen Afghanistan in terms of “strategic depth” in its forever hostility with India, a Taliban capture of Afghanistan would finally bring a friendly force in power in Kabul after 20 years.
- India, which has had excellent relations with the Karzai and Ghani governments, would be cut to size.

Cons for Pakistan:

- But a US withdrawal also means Pakistan will need to shoulder the entire burden of the chaos that experts predict. Civil war is not ruled out and with it, the flow of refugees into Pakistan once again, even as the country struggles with refugees from the first Afghan war.
- Plus, the Taliban are not a monolith, and have recently shown streaks of independence from Pakistan. It has to guard against instability in Afghanistan from spilling over the border.

India: time to be wary

- New Delhi, which was hoping to be part of the Blinken initiative, would be nervous about the US withdrawal.
- The Blinken proposal gave India a role, by recognising it as a regional stakeholder, but this proposal seems to have no future.
- The Haqqani group, fostered by the ISI, would have a large role in any Taliban regime. Another concern would be India-focused militants such as Laskhar- e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed, which the Indian security establishment already believes to have relocated in large numbers to Afghanistan.

India outlined four requirements for peace and stability in Afghanistan:

- First, the process had to be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned.
- Second, there must be zero tolerance for terrorism.
- Third, the gains of the last two decades cannot be lost.
 - In particular, India is convinced that the rights of women need to be strongly protected. Further, the rights of the minorities and the vulnerable need to be safeguarded.
 - India has invested heavily in various Infrastructure projects in the region, for example - Zaranj Delaram Highway, Afghan Parliament etc.
- Fourth, the transit rights of Afghanistan should not be used by countries “to extract political price from Afghanistan”.

Russia, China & Iran

- China would have much to lose from instability in Afghanistan as this could have an impact on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

- A Taliban regime in Afghanistan might end up stirring unrest in the Xinjiang Autonomous region, home to the Uighur minority.
- The US exit is for Russia a full circle after its own defeat at the hands of US-backed Mujahideen and exit from Afghanistan three decades ago.
- In recent years, Russia has taken on the role of peacemaker in Afghanistan. But both the Taliban and the Afghan government have been wary of its efforts.
- After a conference in March of Russia, US, China and Pakistan, along with Taliban and Afghan delegates, a joint statement by the four principals said they did not support the establishment of an Islamic Emirate, leaving the Taliban angry.
- Russia's growing links with Pakistan could translate into a post-US role for Moscow in Afghanistan.
- As a country that shares borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan, Iran perceives active security threats from both. A Taliban regime in Kabul would only increase this threat perception.
- Despite the mutual hostility and the theological divide between the two, Iran opened channels to the Taliban a few years ago, and recently, even hosted a Taliban delegation at Tehran.

India's Refugee Policy & Internal Security

Context:

- The Refugee Problem in India is again in the limelight after the February 2021 coup in Myanmar. Numerous people are coming to India from Myanmar to save their lives. However, the Indian government is reluctant to allow this influx considering the challenges posed by refugees.

Recent Refugee Problem

- Myanmar witnessed refugee influx after the coup in the country and subsequent military rule. Some democratic groups started protesting against the coup. It resulted in the military crackdown on the dissenters.
- So, Many people in Myanmar and the security forces who oppose the coup, start fleeing the country and entering India.
- Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to check illegal influx from Myanmar into India.
- It has also called for sealing the border with Myanmar so as to curtail the influx.
- The ministry clarified that state governments have no powers to grant 'refugee' status to any foreigner.

Refugee issue in India: Earlier instances

- India has been generous to refugees and asylum-seekers. The two largest Refugee Influx in India are including some 62,000 Sri Lankans and some 100,000 Tibetans are directly assisted by the Government of India.

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- In late 2011, the Rohingya started to arrive in India's Northeast following stepped-up persecution by the Myanmar armed forces. There are roughly 14,000 Rohingya refugees in India who are registered with the UNHCR and around 40,000 Rohingya living in India illegally.

India's Refugee Policy

- India lacks specific legislation to address the problem of refugees, in spite of their increasing inflow.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946, fails to address the peculiar problems faced by refugees as a class. It also gives unbridled power to the Central government to deport any foreign citizen.
- However, India is a signatory to a number of United Nations and World Conventions on Human Rights. Such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It affirms basic rights for all persons – citizens and non-citizens in the same manner.
- Further, the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA) strikingly excludes Muslims from its purview and seeks to provide citizenship only to Hindu, Christian, Jain, Parsi, Sikh, and Buddhist immigrants persecuted in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- Moreover, India is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the key legal documents pertaining to refugee protection.
- In spite of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, India has had a stellar record on the issue of refugee protection. India has a moral tradition for assimilating foreign people and culture.
- Further, the constitution of India also respects the life, liberty, and dignity of human beings.
- The Supreme Court in the National Human Rights Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh (1996) held that “while all rights are available to citizens, persons including foreign citizens are entitled to the right to equality and the right to life, among others.”

India's Argument for Not Signing the 1951 Refugee Convention

- The definition of refugees in the 1951 convention only pertains to the violation of civil and political rights, but not economic rights, of individuals.
- For instance, a person, under the definition of the convention, could be considered if he/she is deprived of political rights, but not if he/she is deprived of economic rights.
- If the violation of economic rights were to be included in the definition of a refugee, it would clearly pose a major burden on the developed world.
- On the other hand, this argument, if used in the South Asian context, could be a problematic proposition for India too.

Challenges Associated With India's Refugee Policy

- **Refugees or Immigrants:** In the recent past, many people from neighboring countries tend to illegally immigrate to India, not because of state persecution but in search of better economic opportunities in India.
- Much of the debate in the country is about **illegal immigrants, not refugees, the two categories tend to get bunched together**. Due to this, policies and remedies to deal with these issues suffer from a lack of clarity as well as policy utility.
- The main reason why our policies towards illegal immigrants and refugees are confused is that as per Indian law, both categories of people are viewed as one and the same and are covered under the Foreigners Act, 1946.

- **Ad-hocism:** The absence of such a legal framework also leads to policy ambiguity whereby India's refugee policy is guided primarily by ad hocism.
- Ad hoc measures enable the government in office to pick and choose 'what kind' of refugees it wants to admit for whatever political or geopolitical reasons.
- This results in a discriminatory action, which tends to be a violation of human rights.

Arguments in favour of permitting Refugee Influx

- **Humanitarian Rights:** India has an implicit obligation under UDHR to protect the human rights of non-citizens as well.
- **Responsible Regional Power:** The country aspires to be regional and global power that itself calls for adopting an accommodative stance towards refugees.
- **Champion of Democracy:** The world's largest democracy has a responsibility of protecting the rights of people who put their lives in danger for upholding democracy.

Challenges to India's internal security due to refugee influx:

Social consequences:

- Refugees might create an **identity crisis with the indigenous people**. For example, Bangladeshi refugees in Assam and Arunachal threaten to overtake the indigenous population of the region.
- Difficult to identify and deport them back to their country after a few years. For example, the Rohingya refugees entered through the North-East. But later they spread to all other states.

Economic consequence:

- Increased financial responsibility of the state. According to the UNHCR report in 2014, there were more than 200,000 refugees in India. India at present does not have the financial capacity to satisfy all their basic needs.
- Decreases domestic wage level and replaces the native people. Since illegal immigrants and refugees require food and shelter, they also work at very low wages in their settling areas.

Political consequence:

- **Issue of terrorism:** These refugees, since not accepted by governments, are vulnerable to join terror outfits for work and revenue.

Suggestions to solve the Refugee Problem

- There is a need to formulate a comprehensive refugee policy that would provide greater clarity in differentiating between a refugee/illegal migrant.
- Thirdly, the government has to strengthen the Foreigners Act 1946 and also sign bilateral agreements with neighbourhood countries regarding deportation.
- The states must cooperate with the centre on the refugee problem and follow the MHA guidelines of 2018 to identify illegal immigrants. The MHA recommendations include,

Conclusion

In spite of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, India has been one of the largest recipients of refugees in the world. There should be an intake of refugees but not at the cost of the native population. So, It is high time for India to define a clear-cut refugee policy.

IMPLEMENTING GREEN CONTRACTS

Topic: General Studies Paper-2 (Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies)

Context:

- The increasing concerns about climate change highlight the need to achieve sustainable growth goals in India.
- Massive levels of production, consumption and disposal of goods and services have their own set of benefits in a post-industrial society, But they have also slowed down the replenishment cycle of limited resources.
- When benefits of large-scale manufacturing and services are taken by both manufacturers and customers, they must equally share the responsibilities relating to the loss of resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- This article focuses on how Indian corporations can help in sustainable growth by cutting down emissions through the process of green contracting.



What are green contracts?

- 'Green contracts' refer to commercial contracts which mandate that contracting parties cut down greenhouse gas emissions at different stages of delivery of goods/services like designing, manufacturing, transportation, operations and waste disposal.
- The process of implementing a green contract commences at the bidding stage, where various interested companies participate in the tender process.
- The issue of 'green tender' should prescribe necessary 'green qualifications', which shall be considered when awarding the contract to a bidder.
- The green qualifications may be a pre-defined percentage of 'green energy' in service delivery, adequate on-site waste management, reducing carbon emissions by a certain level over a period of time, etc.
- Once a bidder is chosen, the green obligations can be described in detail in the contracting agreement between the parties, thus making the obligations binding and enforceable in the eyes of the law.
- Thus, the obligatory nature of green contracts would help to cut down emissions through contractual clauses which include the use of good quality and energy-efficient infrastructure for the production of goods/services, reducing noise, air and water pollution and ensuring eco-friendly means of transportation like bicycles on site, establishing and maintaining a sustainable waste management system, and so on.

Meeting obligations

- To make sure that the contractual obligations are adhered to, there should be measurement criteria and audit of the performance of the contractor about these obligations, and non-performance of such obligations would result in a ground contractual breach, which would have penalties.
- Also, the green contract should be applicable, to all levels of the supply chain engaged in the delivery of goods and services which would help to reduce emissions further.
- The degree of effectiveness of a green contract will depend on the type of contract and the industry to which it relates.
- In the absence of any mandatory rules, the confidence and consideration of India Inc. towards green contracting shall be used for the attainment of sustainable growth goals.

- The service recipients can also themselves assess their current standing on greenhouse gas emissions, and initiate relevant processes to contribute their share in India's green sustainable future.

Conclusion:

- ✓ The economic cost of executing green contracts may be greater than a normal brown contract, but corporations operating in a changing environment need to understand that greater environmental costs are at stake and enforce green contracts for sustainable India.

Reference:

Implementing green contracts: <https://thg.page.link/2Yobs9V9M6PeBRX8>

THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA CANNOT BE A SUPER GOVERNMENT

Topic: General Studies Paper-2 (Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies)

Context:

- The election commission of India is a constitutional body that directs and controls the conduct of elections and ensures that the elections are held free and fair.



ECI History:

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- Only when T.N. Seshan became the Chief Election Commissioner, he discovered the powers of ECI.
- Until then no one in the country ever knew or felt that the ECI had any powers.
- Seshan discovered the ECE's powers hidden in Article 324 of the Constitution and used them to discipline recalcitrant political parties which had till then believed that it was their birthright to rig elections.
- Due to this, a high level of confidence was created in the minds of Indian citizens about the ECI's role in restoring the purity of the elected legislative bodies in the country.
- The Supreme Court in Mohinder Singh Gill vs Chief Election Commissioner (AIR 1978 SC 851) held that Article 324 contains plenary powers to ensure free and fair elections and these are vested in the ECI which can take all necessary steps to achieve this constitutional object it became further easy for seshan to ensure fair elections.

The model code:

- The model code of conduct is a set of guidelines which political parties, candidates and governments need to adhere to during an election and is issued by ECI.
- The code is based on consensus among political parties.
- Its origin of model code can be traced back to conduct for political parties prepared by the Kerala government in 1960 for the Assembly elections, which was later adopted, refined and enlarged by the ECI and enforced strictly from 1991 onwards.
- For effective regulation of elections, the constitution has empowered ECI to exercise its powers under Article 324.
- Besides the code, ECI also issues directions, instructions and clarifications on a host of issues that arise in the course of an election. The model code is observed by all stakeholders for fear of action by the ECI.
- However, there is confusion about the extent and nature of the powers available to the ECI in enforcing the code and its other decisions in relation to an election.
- The code of conduct is framed based on a consensus among political parties, it doesn't have any legal backing.
- Although a committee of Parliament recommended that the code should be made a part of the Representation of the People Act 1951, it was rejected by ECI because, if the conduct becomes a part of the law, all matters connected with the enforcement of the code will be taken to court, which would delay elections.
- **Unresolved question**
- The position taken by the ECI is practical, but the enforceability of the code is still having no legal backing.
- According to Paragraph 16A of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, ECI may suspend or withdraw recognition of a recognised political party if it refuses to observe the model code of conduct.
- However, it's doubtful if it's legally sustainable because withdrawal of the recognition of a party recognised under these orders affects the functioning of political parties.
- Further, when the code is legally not enforceable, then how can ECI resort to a punitive action such as withdrawal of recognition?
- Thus, there is a need to examine the context of the model code and the exercise of powers by the ECI under Article 324.

Transfer of officials:

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- Observers of the ECI report about the conduct of certain officials of the States where elections are to be held to ECI based on which ECI acts on such reports and orders the transfer on the assumption that the presence of those officials will adversely affect the free and fair election in that State.
- It leads to the Abrupt transfer of senior officials working under State governments by an order of the commission.
- Transfer of an official is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the government, whether the ECI can transfer a State government official in the exercise of the general powers under Article 324 or under the model code is doubtful.
- The code contains only guidelines for the candidates, political parties and the governments it doesn't say what ECI can do if the code is not followed by parties.
- Further, Article 324 does not confer untrammelled powers on the ECI to do anything in connection with the elections.
- If the transfer of officials is a power which can be exercised without the concurrence of the State governments, then the whole State administration could come to a grinding halt, as ECI may transfer even the Chief Secretary or the head of the police force in the State abruptly.
- In Mohinder Singh Gill's case, the Supreme Court had made it clear that the ECI can draw power from Article 324 only when no law exists which governs a particular matter, thus the ECI is bound to act in accordance with the law in force.
- Transfer of officials is governed by rules made under Article 309 of the Constitution which cannot be surpassed by the ECI by the power conferred to it in Article 324.
- Further, the ability of a police officer or a civil servant to swing the election in favour of the ruling party is extremely unrealistic and naive.

Administrative moves:

- ECI has the power to intervene in the administrative decisions of a State government or even the union government.
- According to the model code, Ministers cannot announce any financial grants in any form, make any promise of construction of roads, provision of drinking water facilities, etc or make any ad hoc appointments in the government departments or public undertakings. These are the core guidelines relating to the government.
- However, in reality, no government is allowed by the ECI to take any action, if it believes that such actions or decisions will affect free and fair elections.
- A recent decision of the ECI to stop the Government of Kerala from continuing to supply kits containing rice, pulses, cooking oil, etc is a case in point.
- The State government has been distributing such free kits for nearly a year to meet the situation arising out of the pandemic, and it has helped many households.
- The decision to stop the kit distribution was reported on a complaint from the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly.
- The model code does not provide any clue regarding the decision to stop supply kits and if done on basis of Article 324, the issue boils down to whether the distribution of food items to those in need in a pandemic will affect free and fair elections.
- In S. Subramaniam Balaji vs Govt. of T. Nadu & Ors (2013) Supreme court held that the distribution of colour TVs, computers, cycles, goats, cows, etc, done or promised by the government is in the nature of welfare measures and is in accordance with the directive principles of state policy, and therefore it is permissible even during an election.

- Thus, when colour TVs, computers, etc can be promised or distributed during an election without influencing the choice of the people, how can the distribution of essential food articles which are used to stave off starvation by electoral malpractice.
- Further, According to Section 123 (2)(b) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 declaration of a public policy or the exercise of a legal right is not regarded as interfering with the free exercise of the electoral right.

Insightful words:

- ✓ There is no doubt that the ECI, through the conduct of free and fair elections in an extremely complex country, has restored the purity of the legislative bodies, However, it is not a constitutional body that is vested with unguided and absolute powers.

Conclusion:

- ✓ ECI doesn't have unlimited and arbitrary powers and neither citizens nor ECI should assume that.
- ✓ Justice S.M. Fazalali, in A.C. Jose vs Sivan Pillai (1984) said that if ECI is armed with such unlimited and arbitrary powers and if ever a person manning the commission is wedded to a particular ideology, he could by giving odd directions cause political havoc or bring about a constitutional crisis, disturbing the integrity and independence of the electoral process which is indispensable to the democratic system.
- ✓ Thus, the powers of the ECI should be made more clear and should be used effectively to ensure free and fair elections.

Reference:

The Election Commission of India cannot be a super-government:

<https://thg.page.link/d8Rh95Mq4QRZyV7S9>

A LOW-CARBON FUTURE THROUGH SECTOR-LED CHANGE

Topic: General Studies Paper-3 (Environmental Pollution & Climate Change)

Context:

- The 'Leaders' Climate Summit' has been organised by the United States for April 22-23.
- There are various concerns regarding whether India should announce a 'net-zero' emissions target, and by when.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1.5°C report called for global carbon emissions to reach net-zero by 2050, due to which there is pressure on all countries to announce 2050 as the net-zero target year.
- Global net zero may require some countries to reach net-zero before 2050 so that others get some additional time.
- Huge carbon space has been used up by developed countries already, hence it's their time to act boldly and take climate change steps.
- India must also contribute to limiting global temperature rise, below 1.5°C. but at the same time take care of our own developmental needs.
- Our per-capita carbon emissions are less than half the world average.



What India must do

- India taking only modest steps until richer countries do more is not viable in the context of the climate crisis, Similarly, 2050 net-zero commitment would lead to a much heavier burden of decarbonisation and compromise India's development needs.
- A third path, concentrating on concrete, sectoral transformations by adopting technologies that are within our reach and avoid high carbon lock-ins can be used to achieve climate change target.
- Sectoral low-carbon development pathways along with competitiveness, job-creation, distributional justice and low pollution in key areas where India is changing rapidly can help to achieve net-zero, as our long-term objective. An example of the electricity sector is used to explain how sectoral targets can be both ambitious and in India's interest. A similar approach should be adopted for other sectors.
- **De-carbonise power sector**
- The electricity sector is the single largest source (about 40%) of India's greenhouse gas emissions.
- De-carbonised electricity would not only help India to achieve a net-zero target but also lead to transformational changes in urbanisation and industrial development,
- Example by expanding the use of electricity for transport, and by integrating electric systems into urban planning.
- Till now, we have focused on expanding renewable electricity capacity, with targets starting from 20GW of solar to 175GW of renewable capacity by 2022, and 450GW by 2030.
- However, India needs to go beyond renewables to limit the expansion of coal-based electricity capacity by having a comprehensive re-imagination of electricity and its role in our economy and society.
- Coal provides dispatchable power and accounts for roughly 75% of the electricity today; It supports the economy of key regions; banking and railways.
- To have a decarbonised future these connections needs to be unravelled.

The ceiling for coal power

1. India should not grow its coal-fired power capacity beyond what is already announced, and reach peak coal electricity capacity by 2030, at the same time try to make coal-based generation cleaner and more efficient.

Coal being uneconomic, phasing it out over time will help to reduce air pollution and provide climate mitigation.

It can be done by shifting the focus for the development of renewable energy and its storage.

2. Create a multi-stakeholder Just Transition Commission which includes all levels of government and the affected communities to ensure decent livelihood opportunities beyond coal in India's coal belt.

It is to ensure that transition costs of a brighter low-carbon future don't fall on the head of India's poor.

3. Addressing existing problems of the sector such as the poor finances and management of distribution companies has to be done to achieve a low carbon future.

4. Using technologies for electricity storage, smart grids, and technologies for electrification of other sectors such as transportation.

Public-Private Partnership and production-linked incentives would help India to move towards electricity transition and provide for job creation and global competitiveness in these key areas.

Improve energy services:

- Enhancing the efficiency of electricity use would also help in decarbonising the electricity supply.
- For example, Cooling needs are expected to rise rapidly with increasing incomes and temperatures.
- Air conditioners, fans and refrigerators together consume about 60% of the electricity in households.
- Today, the average fan sold in the market consumes energy more than twice what an efficient fan does, an average refrigerator about 35% more.
- India by setting targets such as 80% of air conditioner sales, and 50% of fan and refrigerator sales by 2030 should be in the most efficient bracket will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and also benefit by lowering consumer electricity bills.
- India can use this transition as an opportunity to become a global leader in the production of clean appliances.
- A similar approach should be developed for other sectors, which would help India to achieve targets of net-zero emissions.
- The developed countries should take immediate steps to complement their net-zero targets, which would allow India to concentrate on its sectoral transition plans as technologies mature and achieve climate change targets periodically as required by the Paris Agreement.

Forming timelines

- ✓ India may provide a timeline to achieving net-zero emissions as part of its future pledges. It will provide India with adequate time to undertake detailed assessments of its development needs and low-carbon opportunities, technological development opportunities.

Conclusion:

- ✓ Thus, India should develop a strategic road map to enhance its technology and manufacturing competence as part of the global clean energy supply chain, which would not only lead to job creation and export revenues but also reduce its over-dependence on certain countries for technologies or materials.
- ✓ An ambitious integrated approach, rooted in our developmental needs will help to achieve a sustainable environment and achieve net-zero emissions.

Reference:

A low-carbon future through sector-led change: <https://thg.page.link/tXXMzow8paqYK9uF8>

STRENGTHENING THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING THE POLICE CHIEF

Topic: General Studies Paper-2 (Governance)

Context:

- The recent removal of Param Bir Singh from the Mumbai Police Commissioner highlights the long-overdue reforms needed in the process of appointing and removing police chiefs.
- State Governments exercise control over the police through their unregulated power to decide who the chief will be.
- There is no independent process to assess the suitability of qualified candidates, and even if such assessment is done it is behind closed doors and is opaque.
- The police chief is answerable to the elected government, Hence, there is a need to attain the right balance between conditioning the government's legitimate role in appointing or removing the police chief at the same time chief's operational autonomy has to be protected.



Have an oversight panel:

- The process of appointment and removal of police chief to be shifted from the government to an independent oversight body of which the government is one part.
- As suggested by National Police Commission (NPC), in 1979, a state-level oversight body should be established with a specified role in the appointment and removal of police chiefs. Supreme Court of India in 2006, Prakash Singh judgment entrusted the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) the role of shortlisting candidates from which the State government is to appoint the police chief.
- However, the Model Police Bill, 2015 envisaged the establishment of a multiparty State Police Board, also known as the State Security Commission (SSCs), consisting of government officials, the Leader of the Opposition as well as independent members from civil society.
- The board shall provide the additional safeguard of civilian oversight over the appointment process.

Gaps in SSCs

- 26 States and the Union Territories have established SSCs, either through new acts, amendments, or through executive orders, but none of them adheres to the balanced composition as suggested by the top court. Some SSCs do not include the Leader of the Opposition, others don't have independent members and also they don't follow the independent selection process of the members.
- In essence, the SSC commissions are dominated by the political executive.
- Further, based on information secured through the Right to Information Act in 2019, only four SSCs have held meetings since 2014.
- Thus, there is an urgent need to restructure and redesign the SSCs so that they can be strengthened to drive meaningful reforms.
- In 23 States, Governments have the sole discretion of appointing the police chief.
- The only states where SSC is given the responsibility of shortlisting candidates are Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, but whether this practice is followed each time needs to be verified.

Need for transparency:

- There is a need for an independent and transparent selection and decision-making process for the appointment and removal of the Police Chief.
- There is a need for standard-setting work as only basic safeguards have been defined in reform measures towards protecting the operational autonomy of the police chief in the Model Police Act.
- For appointments, the Court and the Model Police Act requires the UPSC/SSC to shortlist candidates based on length of service, service record, and range of experience and a performance appraisal of the candidates over the past 10 years.
- However, there is no further explanation specifying their elements to guide the appointments.
- The terms like “good” range of experience, How to measure the integrity of a candidate during appraisals, The process required to be followed by the SSC in reviewing the suitability of candidates, whether interviews should be conducted for selected is not clear.
- Similarly, there is no scrutiny process prescribed to justify removals from tenure posts.

- According to NPC, State governments need to take the approval of the State Security Commission before removing the police chief before the end of term, However, under the Prakash Singh case judgment, this provision was diluted as governments only need to consult the SSC no need to take their approval. The Police Act consists of terms like “on administrative grounds” or “in the public interest” which provides the opportunity to the government to misuse its powers to remove the police chief.
- In 2017, T.P. Senkumar vs. Union of India case, the Supreme Court emphasized that “prima facie satisfaction of the government” alone is not a sufficient ground to justify removal from a tenure post in government, it should be based on compelling reasons and on verifiable material that can be objectively tested.
- There is a need to have clear and specific benchmarks for appointments and removals, to prevent politically motivated adverse actions.
- We can take insights from the United Kingdom, which provides a useful example for transparency. Wherein the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, 2011, introduced public confirmation hearings as an additional layer of check for the appointment of the heads of their police forces known as Chief Constables (outside of London city).

Enabling fairness

- The proposed candidates are required to participate in a hearing organized by the police and crime panel consisting of representatives from local councils and co-opted independent members, where questions center on the candidate’s ability to “recognize and understand the separation of political and operational responsibilities concerning the post.
- Based on this the recommendations are made for the suitability of the candidate.
- These panels also have the power to veto by a two-thirds majority.
- Even during removals, the panels allow the police chief an opportunity to respond to the allegations based on which their removal is being sought as part of the scrutiny process.

Conclusion:

- ✓ Taking insights from the UK Police Force appointment and removal process would help in ensuring fairness in administrative decisions and protect the Police from any Politics.
- ✓ Hence such reform needs to be implemented as soon as possible because any further delay in implementing reforms would continue to demoralize the police and cripple the rule of law.

Reference:

Strengthening the process of choosing the police chief: <https://thg.page.link/FXSUtTvJ7iQCfH647>

A FRESH PUSH FOR GREEN HYDROGEN

Topic: General Studies Paper-3 (Energy)

Context:

- India is planning to launch National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHEM) with that it shall join the group of 15 other members.
- The global target is to produce 1.45 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2023.

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- Currently, India consumes around 5.5 million tonnes of hydrogen, primarily produced from imported fossil fuels.
- According to an analysis by the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), by 2030 green hydrogen demand could be up to 1 million tonnes in India across sectors such as ammonia, steel, methanol, transport, and energy storage.
- However, to have such huge commercial-scale operations, problems persist.



Recommendations:

- Through open access of renewable power to an electrolyzer (which splits water to form H₂ and O₂ using electricity) should be promoted to produce decentralized hydrogen.
- Currently, most renewable energy resources that can produce low-cost electricity are situated far from demand centers and if hydrogen is shipped, it would erode the economics of it.
- Instead, the wheeling of electricity directly from the solar plant can be useful. For Example, wheeling electricity from a solar plant in Kutch to a refinery in Vadodara could lower the transportation cost by 60%, compared to delivering hydrogen using trucks.
- However, the electricity tariffs could double when there is an open-access power supply across State boundaries.
- We need to ensure renewable power access round-the-clock for decentralized hydrogen production.
- To minimize intermittency associated with renewable energy, we need to have a green hydrogen facility that will oversize the electrolyzer, and store hydrogen to ensure continuous hydrogen supply.
- However, such a configuration would also generate excess electricity.
- Therefore, as we prepare ourselves to achieve the target of having 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, aligning hydrogen production needs with broader electricity demand would be essential.
- Steps must be taken to blend green hydrogen in the industrial sector.

- By increasing the supply of green hydrogen along with conventionally produced hydrogen will significantly improve the economics of the fuel and its reliability and we need to learn techniques to handle large-scale hydrogen.
- Investments in R&D and early-stage piloting are needed by the policymakers to advance the technology for use in India.
- The growing interest in hydrogen is triggered by the anticipated steep decline in electrolyzer costs.
- India by using the Public funding method can move ahead, and even the private sector has significant gains to be made by securing its energy future.
- India must focus on domestic manufacturing from the experience of the National Solar Mission.
- The existing performance-linked incentive can help to establish an end-to-end electrolyzer manufacturing facility. However, India needs to secure supplies of raw materials that are needed for manufacturing electrolyzer.
- Institutions like DRDO, BARC, and CSIR laboratories have been developing electrolyzer and fuel-cell technologies that can produce hydrogen.
- We need to have a manufacturing strategy that can leverage the existing strengths and mitigate threats by integrating with the global value chain.

Conclusion:

- ✓ Even before National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHEM) is launched, green hydrogen has been anointed the flag-bearer of India's low-carbon transition.
- ✓ Hydrogen though lighter than air, but would provide heavy lifting to get the ecosystem in place and help India achieve renewable energy targets for a sustainable environment to mitigate climate change.

Reference:

A fresh push for green hydrogen: <https://thg.page.link/AKFbhrXXbeP2SyRK6>

MAKING EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE

Topic: General Studies Paper-2 (Education)

Context:

- Even after one year of the COVID-19 outbreak, access and affordability continue to plague teachers and students even though teachers, administrators, and policymakers are all working, but the results are not encouraging.
- People at both ends of the classroom are trying to show for their efforts, but in reality, how much learning is happening is anyone's guess.



Problems with Online Classes:

- Online Exams have lost their credibility.
- Continuous exposure to screens may affect the Children's health and the dent in financial resources are significant for both teachers and students.
- E-Learning seems to be a case of working mindlessly, rather than working smart.
- Internet penetration in India is less than 50% and it is the major reason for less-than-efficient achievement in the online education sector.
- All teachers and Students even in the metros have experienced poor connectivity and In the rural areas, online access remains an aspiration.
- Children in rural areas who are eager to learn, but don't have access to Internet Connection, or a selfless teacher who is willing to use his/her mobile hotspot, how much can he/she spend?
- The Government needs to find a solution so that e-education is Accessible and affordable to all

Two influential agencies:

- The Government of India owns the Prasar Bharati broadcasting corporation which handles both radio and television in India.
- All India Radio (AIR) has 470 broadcasting centers which cover 92% of the country's geographical area and 99.19% of our population.
- Doordarshan (DD) handles television, online, and mobile broadcasting across the country and the world with 34 satellite channels, 17 well-equipped studios in State capitals, and 49 studio centres in other cities.

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- AIR and DD can be used to broadcast lessons, as education is one of the three functions of the two agencies under the Prasar Bharati Act.
- Educational broadcasts for classes 10, 11, and 12 can be done over AIR and DD in the ratio of 4:1 (four hours of radio and one hour of TV).
- Courses which need demonstration like Science, Maths which needs to be seen or observed can be broadcasted on TV.
- It requires some training and effort, at the same time it would help in educating the children even across rural areas who cannot afford internet connectivity.

Benefits of AIR and DD:

- Both teachers and students will not have to stare at their screens endlessly.
- AIR and DD being free, the heavy drain on financial resources will be drastically reduced it shall be accessible to all and thus provide education to students in rural areas.
- By Providing Training to teachers with the help of experts for a Month, teachers can turn into scriptwriters and programmers.
- Teachers should be trained to create appropriate tools for evaluation over radio and TV.
- The Central and State educational boards can support, monitor, and provide feedback to improve the system.
- Along with regular Radio, we can use digital radio spawning FM stations leased out to private players like NGOs, universities for a fee.
- Free hours of the Internet:
- The government can also ask Internet Service Providers to provide free Internet usage to teachers and students.
- It is not an easy option but Government needs to give it a try to help students and teachers.

Conclusion:

- In the Pandemic, we have realized the importance of online education and making education affordable and accessible for all needs increased Internet penetration and improved internet connectivity. By using AIR and DD we can give a trial, and if it works out well it shall be a win-win situation for teachers, students and the Government.

Reference:

Making education accessible: <https://thg.page.link/UyjMZ8P9EZPhRhCK8>

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Maps and Infographics

PLACE IN NEWS

MAPPING DAILY



CUBA

- RAUL CASTRO CONFIRMED HE WAS HANDING OVER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ALL-POWERFUL CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY TO A YOUNGER GENERATION AT ITS CONGRESS THAT KICKED OFF RECENTLY, ENDING SIX DECADES OF RULE BY HIMSELF AND OLDER BROTHER FIDEL.

- CUBA IS A COUNTRY COMPRISING THE ISLAND OF CUBA, AS WELL AS ISLA DE LA JUVENTUD AND SEVERAL MINOR ARCHIPELAGOS.
- CUBA IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN CARIBBEAN WHERE THE CARIBBEAN SEA, GULF OF MEXICO AND ATLANTIC OCEAN MEET.
- HAVANA IS THE LARGEST CITY AND CAPITAL.



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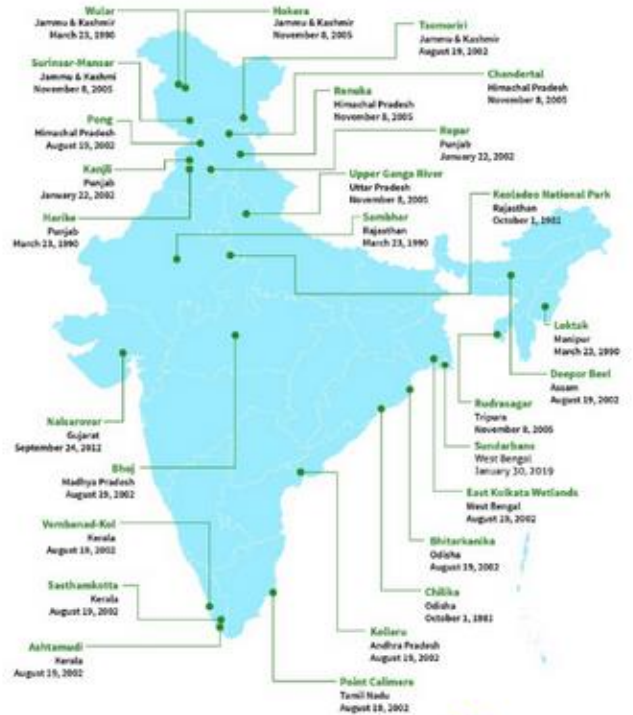
MAPPING DAILY



RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA

- INDIA HAS 42 RAMSAR SITES SPREAD IN 15 STATES.
- LATEST AND THE LARGEST IS THE SUNDARBANS WETLANDS. IT WAS RECOGNISED BY RAMSAR

Ramsar Sites in India



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INGENUITY HELICOPTER

First Powered flight on Mars

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Ingenuity flew to the Red Planet while being attached to the belly of NASA's Perseverance rover, which touched down on Mars on February 18. The American space agency aims to explore the surface of Mars with the help of an Ingenuity helicopter which weighs just 1.8 kgs.



HOWEVER, FLYING A DRONE ON THE SURFACE OF MARS WOULD BE WAY DIFFERENT THAN THAT ON EARTH BECAUSE OF THE DISTINCT ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS OF THE TWO PLANETS. THE GRAVITY ON MARS, NOTABLY, IS ONE-THIRD OF THE BLUE PLANET AND THE ATMOSPHERE IS JUST 1% DENSE IN COMPARISON TO THE EARTH.

Ingenuity helicopter: First powered flight on Mars

It is expected to make its first flight attempt no earlier than April 11

PERSEVERANCE ROVER
2.2 m

MAIN MISSION
First test of a powered flight on another planet

Test flights during a 30-Martian-day* experimental window

Take off, fly, and land with minimal commands from Earth sent in advance

INGENUITY:

- Hitched a ride on rover's belly, which touched down on Feb 18
- Deployed to Martian surface on Apr 3

- FLIGHT ALTITUDE:** up to 5 m
- RANGE:** up to 300 m
- MARS ENVIRONMENT:** Very thin atmosphere, less than 1% the density of Earth's
- HELICOPTER WEIGHT:** 1.8 kg on Earth, 0.68 kg on Mars

ANTENNAS

SOLAR PANEL
Power good for one 90-second flight per day

BLADES
Span: 1.2 m

Avionics and body

Sensors, cameras

Legs

Batteries

*Martian days: 24 h 37 mins
Earth days: 23 h 56 mins

Sources (including helicopter image): NASA/JPL-Caltech

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The Index of Industrial Production (IIP)



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IIP measures variations in the production volume of a basket of industrial goods during a month period.



EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES COMPRISE 40.27 PER CENT OF THE WEIGHT OF ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE (IIP), WHICH IS RELEASED BY THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

- REFINERY PRODUCTS (28.04%)
- ELECTRICITY (19.85%)
- STEEL (17.92%)
- COAL (10.33%)
- CRUDE OIL (8.98%)
- NATURAL GAS (6.88%)
- CEMENT (5.37%)
- FERTILISERS (2.63%)

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PLACE IN NEWS

KENYA SOMALIA DISPUTE

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KENYA HAS DECLINED TO TAKE PART IN PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) OVER ITS MARITIME BORDER DISPUTE WITH NEIGHBOURING SOMALIA.

- **THE DIRECTION OF MARITIME BOUNDARY:** THE MAIN POINT OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO NEIGHBOURS IS THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THEIR MARITIME BOUNDARY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN SHOULD EXTEND.
- **SOMALIA'S STAND:** THE SEA BORDER SHOULD BE AN EXTENSION OF THE SAME DIRECTION IN WHICH THEIR LAND BORDER RUNS AS IT APPROACHES THE INDIAN OCEAN, I.E. TOWARDS THE SOUTHEAST.
- **KENYA'S STAND:** THE MARITIME BORDER SHOULD RUN PARALLEL TO THE EQUATOR.
- **IMPORTANCE OF DISPUTED AREA:** THE TRIANGULAR AREA THUS CREATED BY THE DISPUTE IS AROUND 1.6 LAKH SQ. KM. LARGE, AND BOASTS OF RICH MARINE RESERVES.
- **IT IS ALSO BELIEVED TO HAVE OIL AND GAS DEPOSITS.**

UPSC "SAHI PREP HAI TOH LIFE SET HAI"

Mentorship

Common Questions Asked In UPSC Interview

In this article, we will try to give you a broad idea about the type of questions asked in the personality test of the UPSC civil services exam. These will help you get the idea about the mindset of the UPSC and what you should prepare to score high marks in interview.

Hi Students,

As you know, UPSC is soon going to announce the results of Civil services mains examination 2020 after which the **Personality test or the interview**, in common parlance, will commence.

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You must have heard from your friends, seniors, teachers and parents that the interview is very tough and quite unpredictable. You must have heard about some aspirants scoring really low marks in interview: 110 and some scoring very high marks-206. This huge gap of 96 marks can make or break your dreams of getting into IAS.

In this article we will give you a broad outline of the areas from where questions are being asked in the interview.

Types of Questions:

Profile based questions:

These are the details you provide in your detailed application form. Details like your background, education, job, city, state, interests, hobbies and achievements are asked a lot.

Some Questions like why you chose a particular optional can be asked.

Another Question on your hobby of singing can be asked. The list goes on and on.

Current affairs based questions:

These are usually related to the current affairs of last few months,

An example can be- What are your views on the 3 farm laws passed recently by the Union government.

Another can be about the changing nature of federalism in India due to advent of Covid-19.

These kind of questions require you to read newspapers daily and form your own opinion.

General Questions:

Some common questions are asked to aspirants like

Why do you want to join civil services?- Please prepare your own answer for it.

How is your education relevant to the civil services?

What reforms are required in the civil services to make them more relevant achieve the goals of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat?

Out of the blue questions:

These are strange, eccentric and very hard questions. The candidate is not supposed to know the answer of these questions. Interview board just asks them to see the reaction of an aspirant when he/she is faced with a tricky situation.

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Some examples:

How many stairs di you climb before reaching here?

What are the difference between Indian and Myanmarese constitution?

What is the amount of black money present in the Indian Economy?

As you saw, broadly 4 types of Questions are asked in the interview. Majority of these questions are profile based while others are related to current affairs or very general ones. Aspirants must keep in mind that- not only the content of the answer matters, but the way you present it- the poise, confidence and articulation- also matters a lot. How you conduct yourself in front of the board is more important that the answer you give out.

Being confident, honest, humble and having a smile will help you a lot in tackling the interview ans scoring high marks.

See you another time.

Keep Hustling!!

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Prelims MCQs for Practice

1. Consider the following statements with regards to E-Courts project:

- 1) It is a mission mode project undertaken by the Department of Justice, Government of India.
- 2) The Chairperson of e-committee Supreme court is the Chief Justice of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

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2. 'Sankalp se Siddhi' - Village & Digital Connect Drive is an initiative of:

- A. NITI Ayog
- B. TRIFED
- C. Greenpeace
- D. None of the above

3. Consider the following statements regarding National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021:

- 1) It offers financial support for one-time treatment of up to ₹50 lakh.
- 2) Only two markers are used to define rare diseases - the total number of people with the disease and its prevalence.
- 3) Inherited cancers and autoimmune disorders fall under the category of rare diseases.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2
- B. Only 3
- C. 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

4. Consider the following statements regarding Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP):

- 1) It will house the data entry and management for India's disease surveillance program.
- 2) It will be tracking 25 diseases now as compared to the earlier 18 diseases.
- 3) It is the world's biggest online disease surveillance platform.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 2
- B. 2 and 3
- C. 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

5. Consider the following statements with regards to Stand-up India scheme:

- 1) It provides loans for setting up greenfield enterprises in manufacturing, services or the trading sector and activities allied to agriculture.
- 2) It promotes entrepreneurship amongst women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes category.
- 3) Stand-up India scheme has been extended upto the year 2030.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2
- B. 2 and 3
- C. Only 3

D. 1, 2 and 3

6. Consider the following statements:

- 1) The President of India in consultation with the Prime Minister appoints the Chief Justice of India.
- 2) Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana has been appointed as the 48th Chief Justice of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

7. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G):

- 1) The objective of this scheme is to provide “Housing for All” by the year 2022.
- 2) The houseless beneficiaries are identified using SECC 2011 data.
- 3) 100% target completion has been achieved in the 1st phase of the scheme.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. 1 and 2
- C. 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

8. Consider the following statements regarding National Super Computing Mission (NSM):

- 1) It enhances the research capacities and capabilities in the country by connecting them to form a Supercomputing grid.
- 2) PARAM Shakti is the first supercomputer assembled indigenously and installed in IIT (Kharagpur).
- 3) This mission is being implemented by Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. 1 and 2
- C. 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

9. ‘Wolf-Rayet’ recently seen in in news, refers to:

- A. Endangered Wolf Species
- B. Robotic Helicopter of NASA
- C. Hottest Star
- D. Fighter Jet Plane

10. Consider the following statements regarding Pre-packs under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code:

- 1) A pre-pack is the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through an agreement between secured creditors and investors instead of a public bidding process.
- 2) The use of pre-packs as an insolvency resolution mechanism for MSMEs with defaults up to Rs 50 Lakh only.
- 3) A pre-packaged resolution plan will need to be approved by 66 per cent of financial creditors before it can be placed before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

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

11. Consider the following statements with regards to National Investigating Agency (NIA):

- 1) NIA is functioning as the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency in India.
- 2) It operates under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (India).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

12. Consider the following statements regarding collegium system:

- 1) It is a system under which appointments, elevations and transfer of judges and lawyers to the Supreme Court and the High Courts are decided.
- 2) This forum consists of Chief Justice of India and 5 senior most judges of the Supreme Court.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

13. Consider the following statements regarding Government Securities Acquisition Programme (G-SAP):

- 1) Under this program, the central bank will purchase government securities worth Rs 1 lakh crore in the first quarter of FY22.

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- 2) This programme will help reduce the spread between the repo rate and the 10-year government bond yield.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

14. Consider the following statements regarding 'Lab on Wheels' programme:

- 1) Its objective is to impart education in the fields of Mathematics and Science to persons with disabilities.
- 2) It is an initiative of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

15. Consider the following statements with regards to Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2011:

- 1) In India, the copyright regime is governed by the Copyright Act, 1957 and the Copyright Rules, 2013.
- 2) The requirement of publication in the Official Gazette has been eliminated.
- 3) The time limit for the Central Government to respond to an application made before it for registration as a copyright society has been reduced to one hundred and twenty days.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

16. Consider the following statements regarding Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL):

- 1) It is an invoice discounting platform for MSMEs.
- 2) It has processed close to 10 lakh invoices drawn on over 600 buyers to date since its inception.
- 3) It is a joint venture between the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2
- C. 2 and 3

D. 1, 2 and 3

17. Consider the following statements:

- 1) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has put India's growth projections for 2021-22 at 10.5%.
- 2) Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) GDP growth projection for India stands at 12.5%.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

18. Consider the following statements regarding Election Commission's protocol for transportation of EVMs:

- 1) As per the protocol, the voting machines can be taken in private custody or a private place only under the supervision of armed police.
- 2) After the voting, all EVMs should be under cover of armed police at all times.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

19. Consider the following statements regarding Madhukranti Portal:

- 1) It is an initiative of Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB).
- 2) This portal is being developed for online registration to achieve traceability source of Honey.
- 3) The technical and banking partner for development of this digital platform is State Bank of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only 2
- B. 1 and 2
- C. 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

20. Consider the following statements regarding E9 initiative:

- 1) The initiative aims to accelerate recovery and advance the SDG 4 agenda by driving rapid change in education systems.
- 2) The three main Global Education Meeting priorities for this initiative include - support to teachers; investment in skills; and narrowing of the digital divide.

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- 3) E9 Countries include Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Veitnam, Mexico, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 2 and 3
- B. Only 3
- C. 1 and 2
- D. 1, 2 and 3

21. Which of the following best describes 'INS Sarvekshak', which was in news recently:

- A. Nuclear powered submarine
- B. Hydrographic Survey Ship
- C. Nuclear powered aircraft carrier
- D. Torpedo launch and recovery vessel

22. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) Scheme:

- 1) It aims to provide financial, technical and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.
- 2) It will be implemented over a period of three years from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

23. 'Quasars', recently seen in news is related to:

- A. Bird species
- B. Newly discovered mineral
- C. Space and Galaxies
- D. Super Food

24. Consider the following statements regarding Oxygen enrichment unit:

- 1) It is a device, which concentrates the Oxygen from the air around us by selectively removing nitrogen.
- 2) The device can be used in hospitals only.
- 3) It can be used to treat severe sleep apnea.
- 4) It is developed by CSIR-NIIST (National Institute For Interdisciplinary Science and Technology).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

25. Consider the following statements regarding Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC):

- 1) It is responsible for providing certification only to films which are to be released theatrically.
- 2) The chairperson and members of CBFC are all appointed by the Government of India.
- 3) CBFC cannot deny certification to a film.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3
- B. Only 2
- C. 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

26. Consider the following statements with regards to recent unrest in Northern Ireland:

- 1) Geographically, Northern Ireland is part of United Kingdom.
- 2) The 1998 Good Friday accord resulted in the establishment of a Catholic-Protestant power-sharing government for Northern Ireland.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

27. Consider the following statements:

- 1) Chilika lake is India's largest brackish water lake.
- 2) The endangered Irrawaddy dolphins is found only in Chilika lake.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

28. Consider the following statements with regards to Advanced Antiquities Management System (AAMS):

- 1) The AAMS is a software-driven automated storage used for the storage of various objects.
- 2) The AAMS placed at Goa's Directorate of Archives and Archaeology (DAA) in Panaji.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

29. Consider the following statements regarding 'Tika Utsav':

- 1) It is a celebration of vaccination to fight against corona.
- 2) Holding lockdowns is the one of the main components of achieving success in this drive.

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

30. Consider the following statements with regards to Lilawati Awards 2020:

- 1) It is an initiative of University Grants Commission (UGC).
- 2) The main theme for 2020 awards is 'Health & Hygiene'.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

31. Arrange the following tributaries of River Ganga from east to west direction:

- 1) Ramganga
- 2) Ghaghra
- 3) Kosi
- 4) Gandak
- 5) Gomti

Choose the correct answer from the code given below:

- A. 2-1-3-4-5
- B. 3-4-2-5-1
- C. 3-2-4-1-5
- D. 2-1-3-5-4

32. Which of the given statements is incorrect regarding Public Interest Litigation (PIL)?

- A. The PIL is not defined under any statute or in any act.
- B. Under PIL, the adjudication of individual rights is determined.
- C. The principle of Locus standi has been diluted by the concept of PIL.
- D. It helps in expanding the Fundamental rights of equality, right to life and personal liberty.

33. Which of the following folk theatres with their respective states is/are correctly matched?

Folk Theatres	States
1) Bavai	Gujarat
2) Burkatha	Maharashtra
3) Tamasa	Bengal
4) Baul	Andhra Pradesh

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

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

34. Consider the following statements about Indian toy manufacturing industry:

- 1) Over 60% of toy factory workers are women.
- 2) More than 80% of the domestic demand for toys is met through imports.
- 3) Indian toy retail market valued about 10% of the global market in 2020.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 3 only

D. 1 and 2 only

35. Consider the following statements with reference to the Monsoon in India:

- 1) It blows from the Southwest during the cold season and from the northeast during the warm season of the year.
- 2) The Monsoon winds start moving from Land to sea in winter.

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

36. Consider the following statements about Preamble.

- 1) Preamble establishes that the constitution of India has been created by the people of India with the help of alien rule.
- 2) The Preamble embodies all the ideals and aspirations for which the nation had struggled during the British regime.
- 3) Articles 39(B) and 39(C) explain the socialist goals of the Preamble.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

37. With regard to Badami Paintings, consider the following statements:

- 1) These paintings were patronized by the Chalukyas.
- 2) These paintings are inspired by Vaishnavism and Jainism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2

D. Neither of the two

38. Consider the following statements with regards to participatory notes in the Indian economy:

- 1) It is a derivative instrument issued in foreign jurisdictions.
- 2) This instrument was introduced to curb the menace of black money.
- 3) They are regulated by SEBI.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

39. Consider the following statements:

- 1) The Tropic of Cancer does not pass through Rajasthan.
- 2) Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have an international boundary with Bangladesh.

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

40. Consider the following statements regarding Zero Hour of the Parliament:

- 1) It is mandatory to have a zero hour session every day of the Parliament.
- 2) Zero hours has been in existence since independence.
- 3) Zero hour starts at 12 noon, hence the name 'Zero'.
- 4) Both Zero Hour and Question Hour is mentioned in the Rule of Procedure.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

41. With reference to Urdu language and literature, consider the following statements:

- 1) The first recorded collection of poetry is attributed to Wali Dakhani.
- 2) The first significant work of literary prose is "Sabras" by Wajhi in 1635.
- 3) The first Urdu newspaper Jam-i-Jahan Numa was launched in Kolkata in 1822 by Harihar Dutta.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

42. Which of the following does not attract a Goods and Service Tax?

- 1) Solar Power
- 2) Milk
- 3) Print Media Advertisements
- 4) School Education

Select the correct answer from below:

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

43. Consider the following statements regarding the Brahmaputra River system in India:

- 1) In India Brahmaputra River carries a smaller volume of water and silt as compared to the Tibet.
- 2) River Teesta joins the Brahmaputra River in India.

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

44. Consider the following statements:

- 1) Article 23 of the Indian Constitution is available to both citizens and non-citizens.
- 2) Under Right Against Exploitation, the expression 'traffic in human beings' includes devdasis system.
- 3) Working for less than minimum wage is also included under the term 'forced labour'.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

45. Consider the following statements regarding paintings during the medieval period:

- 1) Tutinama was illustrated during Akbar's reign.
- 2) Shah Jahan patronized portrait paintings.
- 3) Jahangir introduced artificial elements in the paintings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. 2 and 3
- C. 1 and 2
- D. 1 and 3

46. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and market exchange rates are the two most common methods for comparing the GDP of countries. In this context, consider the following statements:

- 1) PPP rates are relatively stable over time while market rates are more volatile.
- 2) India has a greater share in the world economy using PPP rates than market-based rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

47. Consider the following statements about Lightning:

- 1) It is associated with cumulonimbus and stratiform clouds.
- 2) The most of lightning activity on earth is seen on the pacific seashore.
- 3) Lightning is the direct promulgation of global warming, deforestation, rising pollution and aerosol.
- 4) Lightning results in a situation in which the top and lower layer of the cloud gets positively charged and the middle layer is negatively charged.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

48. Consider the following statements:

- 1) The Members of a house move resolutions to draw the attention of the house to matters of general public interest.
- 2) The member who has moved the resolution cannot withdraw the resolution except by leave of the house.
- 3) The statutory resolution which is in pursuance of an Act of the Parliament is always moved by a minister.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

49. Which among the following are correct regarding cultural bodies in India?

- 1) Lalit Kala Akademi provides studios for various forms of visual art such as sculpture, graphics and paintings.

- 2) Sangeet Natak Akademi is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- 3) National School of Drama is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture.
- 4) Sahitya Akademi promotes literature only in languages under the 8th schedule to the Constitution of India.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

50. Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act provides for an escape clause on which of the following grounds?

- 1) National security
- 2) Collapse of agricultural output
- 3) Dispute with trading partners
- 4) National calamity

Select the correct answer from below:

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

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

Mains Answer Writing Practice.

Q1. Assess the impact of global warming on coral life system with examples.

Q2. Do you think Constitution of India does not accept principle of strict separation of powers rather it is based on the principle of 'checks and balance'? Explain.

Q3. What is India's plan to have its own space station and how will it benefit our space programme?

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Q4. Do you think Constitution of India does not accept principle of strict separation of powers rather it is based on the principle of 'checks and balance'? Explain.

Q5. Discuss the causes of depletion of mangroves and explain their importance in maintaining coastal ecology.

Q6. Cross-border movement of insurgents is only one of the several security challenges facing the policing of the border in North-East India. Examine the various challenges currently emanating across the India-Myanmar border. Also discuss the steps to counter the challenges.

Q7. Can the strategy of regional-resource based manufacturing help in promoting employment in India?

Q8. What are the methods used by the farmer's organizations to influence the policy-makers in India and how effective are these methods?

Q9. There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items squeezing their food-budget – Elucidate.

Q10. Individual parliamentarian's role as the national law maker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss.

Answers of Last week's Prelims MCQs

1. Answer: C

Explanation:

- In a major push towards deep technology and driving the country to become a digitally transformed nation, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog today launched AIM-PRIME (Program for Researchers on Innovations, Market-Readiness & Entrepreneurship), an initiative to promote and support science-based deep-tech startups & ventures across India.
- In this regard, AIM has joined hands with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to launch this nationwide program which will be implemented by Venture Center - a non-profit technology business incubator.

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2. Answer: C

Explanation:

- The butterfly species *Nacaduba sinhala ramaswamii* Sadasivan discovered in the Agasthyamalais in the Western Ghats a decade ago has now found a place in the Journal of Threatened Taxa.
- *Nacaduba* is a genus of gossamer-winged butterflies. It contains many of the species commonly called “lineblues”.
- Line Blues are small butterflies belonging to the subfamily Lycaenidae and their distribution ranges from India and Sri Lanka to the whole of southeastern Asia, Australia and Samoa.

3. Answer: D

Explanation:

- Department of Scientific and Industrial Research - Promoting Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs (DSIR-PRISM) scheme. In this scheme, PRISM extends its support to any citizen of the country through direct benefit transfer in the core technology areas such as Affordable Healthcare, Water, Sewage Management, Green Technology, Clean Energy, Industrially Utilizable Smart Materials, Waste to Wealth aligned with our National objectives.

4. Answer: C

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect & Statement 3 is correct - India has fallen 28 places in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, and is now one of the worst performers in South Asia, trailing behind neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar -- it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries.
- Statement 2 is incorrect - it is in the Health and Survival index that India has fared the worst, ranking at 155 — the only country to have fared worse is China. The report points to a skewed sex ratio as a major factor.

5. Answer: B

Explanation:

- The World Development Report has been published annually since 1978 by the World Bank Group, it is an invaluable guide to the economic, social, and environmental state of the world today.

6. Answer: D

Explanation:

- NASA and ISRO are collaborating on developing an SUV-sized satellite called NISAR, which will detect movements of the planet's surface as small as 0.4 inches over areas about half the size of a tennis court. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The name 'NISAR' is short for NASA-ISRO-SAR.
- SAR here refers to the Synthetic Aperture Radar that NASA will use to measure changes in the surface of the Earth.

- It refers to a technique for producing high-resolution images. Because of the precision, the radar can penetrate clouds and darkness, which means that it can collect data day and night in any weather.
- The satellite will be launched in 2022 from the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh) into a near-polar orbit. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

7. Answer: B

Explanation:

- India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, JIMEX (naval), SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force), and Dharma Guardian (Army).
- Both countries also participate in Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise) with the USA (Malabar is not a bilateral exercise).
- Hence, option B is the correct answer.

8. Answer: D

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect - A polling agent is a person appointed as a representative of a political party as a candidate can't be physically present at every polling booth on the day of the elections.
- Statement 2 is incorrect - As per the new rules, a political party can now nominate a polling agent for any booth within the assembly segment he/she is a voter from. Earlier, the polling agent had to be a voter of the booth or an adjoining booth that he/she is working at.
- Note - As per the Election Commission's rules, a polling agent should be familiar with the rules and procedures to conduct elections using EVMs and VVPATs, and with the working of these machines.

9. Answer: B

Explanation:

- The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) was founded on November 2nd, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.
- The Heart of Asia provides a platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region. Hence, B is the correct answer.
- This platform was established to address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners.
- The Heart of Asia comprises 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
- India is part of the process and External Affairs Minister reached Dushanbe on a three-day visit to Tajikistan to attend the 9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process on Afghanistan.

10. Answer: A

Explanation:

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Statement 1 is correct - Miyawaki method involves raising a dense mini-forest on a small parcel of land using only indigenous species.

Statement 2 is correct - The result, according to the method's proponents, is complex ecosystems perfectly suited to local conditions that improve biodiversity, grow quickly and absorb more CO₂.

Statement 3 is incorrect - The method is based on the work of Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki.

11. Explanation:

- Announced in the 2017 Union Budget, electoral bonds are interest-free bearer instruments used to donate money anonymously to political parties. A bearer instrument does not carry any information about the buyer or payee. The holder of the instrument (which is the political party) is presumed to be its owner. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The bonds are sold in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore, and State Bank of India is the only bank authorised to sell them. Donors can buy and subsequently donate bonds to a political party, which can encash the bonds through its verified account within 15 days. There is no limit on the number of bonds an individual or company can purchase. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- If a party hasn't encashed any bonds within 15 days, SBI deposits these into the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

12. Answer: A

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct - According to a recent report of the Global Wind Energy Council, we need to install capacity three times faster over the next decade to achieve the net-zero target by 2050.
- Statement 2 is incorrect - 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 gigawatts (GW) of new capacity installed, which was a 53 per cent year-on-year increase.
- Statement 3 is correct - According to a recent report of the Global Wind Energy Council, we need to be installing at least 180 GW of new capacity every year through 2025 to ensure we remain on the right path to limit global warming well below 2°C.

13. Answer: A

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct - The International Ranger award is given by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).
- Statement 2 is incorrect - Mahender Giri becomes the only ranger from Asia to win the Prestigious International Ranger award in the field of curbing human-wildlife conflict and saving wildlife.

14. Answer: B

Explanation:

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- Statement 1 is correct - A Uniform Civil Code is one that would provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- Statement 2 is incorrect - Article 44 of the Constitution lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.
- Statement 3 is correct - Indian laws do follow a uniform code in most civil matters — Indian Contract Act, Civil Procedure Code, Sale of Goods Act, Transfer of Property Act, Partnership Act, Evidence Act, etc.

15. Answer: D

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect – Under the ULPIN scheme, the Centre plans to issue a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country within a year. It will subsequently integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, as well as Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis, according to a parliamentary standing committee report submitted to the Lok Sabha.
- Statement 2 is incorrect - The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme has been launched in 10 States this year and will be rolled out across the country by March 2022.

16. Answer: B

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect - Climate Data Services Portal of India Meteorological Department (IMD) was inaugurated on World Meteorological Day.
- Statement 2 is correct - It has user-friendly platforms for climate data management and supply to the users. It complements a fully automated climate data management process.

17. Answer: B

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect. – Pakistan has recently successfully test fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile Shaheen 1-A.
- Statement 2 is correct- The test of Shaheen-1A surface to surface ballistic missile, was aimed at re-validating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system including advanced navigation system.

18. Answer: D

Explanation:

- Exercise Desert Flag –VI successfully culminated today with de-induction of the Indian contingent from UAE. Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-lateral large force employment exercise hosted by UAE. The sixth edition of the exercise was conducted from 04 Mar to 27 Mar 21 at Air Force Base Al Dhafra, UAE. Both statements are incorrect.
- IAF participated in the exercise for the first time, fielding Su-30MKI fighter aircraft. Six countries; UAE, USA, France, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain apart from India participated with aerial assets. Jordan, Greece, Qatar, Egypt and South Korea participated as observer forces.

19. Answer: D

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Explanation:

- The World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2021 is being co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line Facilitators/Co-Facilitators.
- The WSIS has proven to be an efficient mechanism for coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices and continues to provide assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private partnerships to advance development goals.

20. Answer: B

Explanation:

- The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021 was passed in Parliament recently to establish the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NBFID) as the principal development financial institution (DFIs) for infrastructure financing.
- Statement 1 is incorrect. NBFID will be set up as a corporate body with authorised share capital of one lakh crore rupees. Shares of NBFID may be held by central government, multilateral institutions, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, insurers, financial institutions, banks, and any other institution prescribed by the central government.
- Statement 2 is correct. NBFID will have both financial as well as developmental objectives.
- Financial objectives will be to directly or indirectly lend, invest, or attract investments for infrastructure projects located entirely or partly in India.
- Developmental objectives include facilitating the development of the market for bonds, loans, and derivatives for infrastructure financing.

21. Answer: B

Explanation:

- The Labour Bureau, an attached office of the M/o Labour & Employment, has been compiling Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers every month on the basis of retail prices collected from 317 markets spread over 88 industrially important centres in the country. The index is compiled for 88 centres and All-India and is released on the last working day of succeeding month. Statement 2 is correct.
- Base year for Index is 2016. Statement 1 is incorrect

22. Answer: B

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is correct - TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has now launched "Sankalp se Siddhi" - Village and Digital Connect Drive. The drive will entail 150 teams visiting ten villages each of which 10 in each region from TRIFED and State Implementation Agencies, visiting ten villages each. The main aim of this drive is to activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in these villages.
- Statement 2 is incorrect – It is a 100 day drive which was started from April 1, 2021.
- Statement 3 is correct - The visiting teams will also identify locations and shortlist potential Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for clustering as TRIFOOD, and Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries- SFURTI units as larger enterprises.

23. Answer: D

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Explanation:

- Statement 1 and 2 are correct - Uranus, the seventh planet from the sun is reflecting X-rays, as per a new study by scientists. This is the first time astronomers have detected X-rays from Uranus, which is also known as the 'sideways planet' because it rotates on its side, unlike any other planet in our solar system.
- Statement 3 is correct - Uranus has the third-largest planetary radius and fourth-largest planetary mass in the Solar System. It has the coldest planetary atmosphere in the Solar System.

24. Answer: B

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect - Baikal-GVD (Gigaton Volume Detector) the Russian biggest underwater neutrino telescope in the waters of Lake Baikal, the world's deepest lake situated in Siberia.
- Statement 2 is correct -The telescope mission to study in detail the elusive fundamental neutrinos particle and to possibly determine their sources.
- Note -The Baikal-GVD is one of the three largest neutrino detectors in the world along with the IceCube at the South Pole and ANTARES in the Mediterranean Sea.

25. Answer: A

Explanation:

- Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) was set up in June 1990 by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India to regulate, monitor and promote adoption of orphaned, abandoned or surrendered children, with the principal mandate of finding loving families for children in need of Care and Protection.

26. Answer: D

Explanation:

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021:

- The Bill amends the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- The Act prescribes the procedure for the adoption of children by prospective adoptive parents from India and abroad.
- On the acceptance of the child by prospective adoptive parents, a specialised adoption agency applies to a civil court to obtain the adoption order.
- The adoption order issued by the court establishes that the child belongs to the adoptive parents.

Changes in the bill

- The Bill provides that instead of the court, the District Magistrate (including Additional District Magistrate) will issue such adoption orders.

Additional functions of the District Magistrate include:

1. supervising the District Child Protection Unit, and
 2. conducting a quarterly review of the functioning of the Child Welfare Committee.
- The Bill specifies certain additional criteria for the appointment of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) members.

It provides that a person will not eligible to be a member of the CWC if he/she

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1. has any record of violation of human rights or child rights
2. has been convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude, and such conviction has not been reversed
3. has been removed or dismissed from service of the central government, or any state government, or an undertaking owned by the government
4. is part of the management of a child care institution in a district.

27. Answer: A

Explanation:

Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)

- The Commission, according to the treaty, shall meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan. The functions of the Commission include:
 - To study and report to the two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers.
 - 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.
- The 115th meeting of the PIC was held in Lahore in August, 2018.
- The 116th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) between India and Pakistan is underway in New Delhi.
- The first day of the Meeting coincided with the National Day of Pakistan (marks Lahore Resolution of 23rd March, 1940).

28. Answer: C

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect. The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG) is a grouping of 10 National Laboratories that was established by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India in December 2020. INSACOG is since then carrying out genomic sequencing and analysis of circulating COVID-19 viruses, and correlating epidemiological trends with genomic variants.
- Statement 2 is correct. A novel variant of the Sars-Cov-2 with double mutation has been detected in India. The variant carries mutations that include those denoted by the letters E484Q and L452R, which have separately been linked to characteristics that make the virus spread more readily and defeat, to some extent, immunity from a vaccine or past infection.

29. Answer: B

Explanation:

- The World Development Report has been published annually since 1978 by the World bank Group, it is an invaluable guide to the economic, social, and environmental state of the world today.

30. Answer: C

Explanation:

- Shigmo is the celebration of a 'rich, golden harvest of paddy' by the tribal communities of Goa.

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- Agricultural communities including the Kunbis, Gawdas and Velips celebrate the festival that also marks the onset of spring.
- Shigmo celebrations last over a fortnight in the months of Phalgun-Chaitra months of the Hindu calendar that correspond with March-April every year.

31. Answer: D

Explanation:

Article 3 authorises parliament to:

- form a new state
- increase the area of any state
- diminish the area of any state
- alter the boundaries and the name of any state

Also, prior recommendation of president is required for introduction of bills related to such changes. But state legislature's views are not binding on the president. **Hence, option D is incorrect.**

32. Answer: B

Explanation:

There are two major island groups in India – one in the Bay of Bengal and the other in the Arabian Sea.

Arabian Islands:

- There are approximately 36 islands of which 11 are inhabited.
- These include Lakshadweep and Minicoy.
- These islands are located at a distance of 280 km-480 km off the Kerala coast.
- The entire island group is built of coral deposits.
- Minicoy is the largest island with an area of 453 sq. km.

33. Answer: C

Explanation:

The term quantitative easing describes an unconventional form of monetary easing used to stimulate an economy. It involves the Central bank to buy financial instruments which in ordinary times are not accepted for OMOs. It is a step that is taken after the interest rate reduction to very low levels and similar downward adjustments of reserve ratio like CRR. Fail to induce any positive change.

34. Answer: C

Explanation:

MODIS is Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectrometer of NASA. VIIRS is Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite. According to Forest Survey of India, MODIS detected 29,547 fires in India. MODIS is

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Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectro-radiometer. The MODIS instrument is placed in two NASA satellites such as Terra and Aqua. The VIIRS is placed on the Suomi NPP satellite. Suomi NPP is Suomi National Polar orbiting Partnership launched by NASA.

35. Answer: A

Explanation:

Paika Akhada is considered as the oldest form of martial art in Odisha. Gatka is the name of Indian martial art associated with the sikhs of Punjab. Gatka features the skilful use of weapons like Kirpan, Stick, Talwar and Kataar.

36. Answer: A

Explanation:

Article 15, 16, 19, 29 and 30 of Indian Constitution are available only to Indian citizens and not foreigners. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of race, religion, caste, sex or place of birth and protection of language, script and culture of minorities are not available to foreigners.

37. Answer: A

Explanation:

Extensive commercial grain cultivation is practised in the interior parts of semi-arid lands of the mid-latitudes. Wheat is the principal crop, though other crops like corn, barley, oats and rye are also grown. The size of the farm is very large, therefore entire operations of cultivation from ploughing to harvesting are mechanised. There is low yield per acre but high yield per person. This type of agriculture is best developed in Eurasian steppes, the Canadian and American Prairies, the Pampas of Argentina, the Velds of South Africa, the Australian Downs and the Canterbury Plains of New Zealand.

38. Answer: A

Explanation:

Derivatives is a financial instrument, which derives its value from an underlying asset – securities, debt, shares etc. The price of the derivatives is directly dependent upon the value of the underlying assets in the present and the future projected trends. Futures are the financial instrument based on physical underlying (Commodities, Equities) .it is an agreement between the two parties to buy/sell an asset at a certain time in the future for a certain price. Futures are different from the forwards as the former are traded on a stock exchange while the latter may be merely a contract between the two parties.

39. Answer: D

Explanation:

The major difference between LTE (Long-Term Evolution) and VoLTE (Voice over Long-Term Evolution) are as follows:

VoLTE allows an operator to offer both voice and data over a 4G LTE network. The big advantage of VoLTE is that call quality is superior to 3G and 2G connections (through which voice is usually routed) as much more data can be transferred via 4G. Hence option D is correct.

40. Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The caves during Mauryan period are illustrated by a **highly polished finish** of the interior walls and decorative gateways, while caves developed after Mauryan period in Western India **were not polished and appears as unfinished**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The Mauryan period saw the emergence of rock-cut cave architectures. During this era, these caves were generally used as viharas, i.e. living quarters, by the Jain and Buddhist monks while Chaityas were used as Prayer halls.
- **Seven sister caves** which consist of **four Barabar caves**, i.e., Karan Chaupar, Lomas Rishi, Sudama and Visvakarma and three Nagarjuni caves i.e Gopika, Vaditi and Vapiya were commissioned by Ashoka and later by his grandson, Dasaratha.
- Pandavleni Caves are a group of **24 caves carved between the 1st century BCE and the 3rd century CE** and is located in Nashik.
- Though **additional sculptures were added up to about the 6th century** which reflects changes in the evolution of Buddhist architecture.
- Main cave is a **Chaitya (prayer hall)** which has a Stupa. These caves were developed by the **Western Kshatrapas, the Satavahanas and the Abhira**.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Ellora Caves are ancient rock-cut architecture set in Aurangabad in the state of Maharashtra. These caves were **built between the 5th and 10th century**.
- They consist of a group of **Buddhist and Brahmanical** caves that were built by the **Rashtrakuta dynasty**. Later editions in the form of Jain group of caves were built by the **Yadava dynasty**.
- There are 34 known caves that have been divided as: 17 caves of Hindu rock-cut temples, 12 caves of Buddhist rock-cut Viharas and 5 caves of Jain rock-cut mathas.

41. Answer: D

Explanation:

High Court can issue writ for the enforcement of fundamental rights and also for other purpose. Under Article 226, remedy is discretionary, therefore a High Court may refuse to exercise its writ jurisdiction.

42. Answer: A

Explanation:

Cotton requires high temperature, light rainfall, two hundred frost-free days and bright sunshine for its growth. It grows best on black and alluvial soils. China, USA, India, Pakistan, Brazil and Egypt are the leading producers of cotton. In India, it is extensively grown in Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan.

43. Answer: A

Explanation:

D-SIB means that the bank is too big to fail. According to the RBI, some banks become systemically important due to their size, cross-jurisdictional activities, complexity and lack of substitute and interconnection. Banks whose assets exceed 2% of GDP are considered part of this group. All the banks under D-SIB are required to maintain higher share of risk-weighted assets as tier-I equity. RBI categorises IDBI Bank as Private Sector Bank; SBI, ICICI and HDFC remain Systemically Important Banks.

44. Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Harappan seals were made up of steatite, copper, bronze, etc. Harappan seals are *square, triangular, rectangular and circular seals* were also used. They were made up of *Steatite which is a soft stone* found in the river beds. Apart from it, agate, chert, copper, gold and ivory seals, faience and terracotta seals have also been found at Harappan sites. IVC seals have inscriptions in a *pictographic script* which was written mostly from right to left, but *bi-directional writing style*, i.e., right to left on one line and left to right on another line has also been found. The common animal motifs found on seals were *unicorn, humped bull, rhinoceros, tiger, elephant, buffalo, bison, goat, markour, ibex, crocodile, etc.*
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Harappan civilization made a large number of bronze statues using "*lost wax technique*" or "*Cire Perdue*" which is still practised in many parts of the country. Different bronze artefacts were discovered after the excavation of different Indus sites. Some examples are: *Bronze dancing girl of Mohenjo-daro*, bronze bull of Kalibangan, etc. The Dancing Girl is the world's oldest bronze sculpture which was found in Mohenjodaro. It is a four-inch figure depicts a naked girl wearing only ornaments such as bangles in the left arm, and amulet & a bracelet on the right arm. She is standing in a 'tribhanga' *dancing posture* with the right hand on her hip.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The plain pottery and painted pottery are the two types of potteries which have been found in IVC sites. The painted pottery is *Red and Black pottery* in which red colour is used to paint the background and glossy black colour was used to draw designs and figures on the red background. Trees, birds, animal figures and geometrical patterns were the themes which were painted on them.

45. Answer: D

Explanation:

Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint regarding the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley. Social security and social Insurance is a subject included in the Concurrent List.

46. Answer: B

Explanation:

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The rivers of Narmada and Tapi are a part of consequent drainage system which means they started flowing according to the general slope of the land once the rift valley formation of Vindhyas and Satpuras was completed

47. Answer: B

Explanation:

The Indian Post Payment Bank (IPPB) is a financial service provider, launched with the mandate of improving financial inclusion through the postal network in the country. The IPPB is a public sector company under the Department of Posts. The Committee stated that Aadhar-based authentication is vital for financial inclusion. Therefore, the Committee was concerned about the potential impact of the Supreme Court judgment on the IPPB (the Court struck down Aadhar linkage where no subsidies or benefits were involved). The Committee observed that discontinuation of Aadhar-based authentication had a negative impact on the vision and business model of IPPB. It recommended that IPPB should take up the matter with UIDAI/RBI for suggesting alternative modes of authentication.

48. Answer: B

Explanation:

The researchers from Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) have designed India's first indigenous microprocessor called 'Shakti'. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

It is aimed at developing industrial-grade microprocessors and other components of the microprocessor ecosystem. It will also help to reduce dependency on imported microchips and risk of cyber-attacks. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

The initial batch of 300 chips named RISECREEK and produced under Project Shakti, have been fabricated free at Intel's facility at Oregon, U.S., to run the Linux operating system. At a frequency of 350 MHz, RISECREEK can meet the demands of defence and strategic equipment such as NAVIC (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite) and Internet of Things (IoT) electronics.

49. Answer: D

Explanation:

Chang'e-5 probe

* It is a Chinese National Space Administration (CNSA) lunar sample return mission. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

* The rocket is comprised of four parts an orbiter, a returner, an ascender and a lander. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

* The objective of the mission is to bring back lunar rocks, the first attempt by any nation to retrieve samples from the moon in four decades.

* Soon, China's Chang'e-5 lunar mission will become the first probe in over four decades to bring back samples of lunar rock from a previously unexplored portion of the Moon.

* If successful, China will be only the third country to have retrieved samples from the moon, following the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.

Answer: A

50.

Explanation:

Temple at Deogarh (in Lalitpur District, Uttar Pradesh), built in the early sixth century CE (late Gupta Period), is in the panchayatana style of architecture where the main shrine is built on a rectangular plinth with four smaller subsidiary shrines at the four corners (making it a total number of five shrines, hence the name, panchayatana). From the architecture and imagery, it is known that the temple was built in early 6th century CE.

- The Lakshmana temple of Khajuraho dedicated to Vishnu, built in 954 CE by the Chandela king, Dhanga.
- There are some Jain temples like a Chausanth Yogini temple at Khajuraho built in the tenth century. Small, square shrines of roughly-hewn granite blocks, each dedicated to esoteric goddesses associated with the rise of Tantric worship after the seventh century.
- Several such temples built between the seventh and tenth centuries were dedicated to the cult of the yoginis across Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu.