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GS 1 History Culture Social issues and Geography

Channakeshava temple- Hoysala architecture

The historic Chennakeshava temple in Belur – a masterpiece of Hoysala architecture – has turned 900 this year.

Mains : GS 1 Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

About Chennakeshava temple

- The temple was constructed by Vishnuvardhana of Hoysala dynasty and is a monument recognised by the ASI.
- It is considered to be the first temple of Hoysala style,
- It was built between 1106 and 1117.
- The temple is regarded a marvel of architecture in the typical Hoysala style.
- Belur, along with Halebid, is proposed as a UNESCO heritage site.

Hoysala Empire : The Hoysala empire was a prominent Southern Indian Kannadiga empire that ruled most of the modern-day state of Karnataka between the 10th and the 14th centuries. The capital of the Hoysalas was initially located at Belur but was later moved to Halebid.

Temples constructed by Hoysalas

The three main temples constructed by Hoysalas are at Belur, Halebid and Somnathpuram.

Features

- These temples grow extremely complex with so many projecting angles emerging from the previously straightforward square temple, that the plan of these temples starts looking like a star, and is thus known as a stellate plan.
- Since they are made out of soapstone which is a relatively soft stone, the artists were able to carve their sculptures intricately.

- The Hoysaleswara temple (Lord of the Hoysalas) at Halebid in Karnataka was built in dark schist stone by the Hoysala king in 1150.
- Hoysala temples are sometimes called hybrid or vesara as their unique style seems neither completely dravida nor nagara, but somewhere in between.
- They are easily distinguishable from other medieval temples by their highly original star-like ground-plans and a profusion of decorative carvings. Dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja, the Halebid temple is a double building with a large hall for the mandapa to facilitate music and dance. A Nandi pavilion precedes each building.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

With regard to hoysala architecture which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. The plan of these temples looks like a circle.
2. They were built in Dravida style
3. Temples at Halebid and Belur are examples of Hoysala architecture.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 2 and 3 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 3 only
- d. None of the above

Sources: [The Hindu](#) NCERT - An Introduction to Indian Art

Common duct policy

The Centre is likely to come out with a new policy under which a common duct will be laid across a city and service providers such as telcos and digital TV players can lease these ducts to pass their fibre through it to offer services to consumers.

Mains : GS 1 urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Highlights

- It will reduce operational costs and frequent digging of roads.
- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is carrying out pilots in Deoghar in Jharkhand.
- It will also result in additional revenue for the municipalities and remove issues related to right of way.
- A common duct will be created for about 20 years. Once the duct is made, no service provider will be allowed to dig the road.
- The concept of common shared infrastructure had dispelled the myth that each service provider must individually own the entire backbone.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Discuss the various economic and infrastructural problems which originated out of the speedy process of urbanization in India.

Sources: The Hindu

Kohinoor diamond

The Supreme Court refused to further dwell on a petition seeking a judicial declaration to bring the Kohinoor diamond back from the United Kingdom, leaving the task to the efforts of the government. The court said it has no jurisdiction over such matters.

Mains : GS 1 Indian culture covers the salient features of Literature, Art Forms, and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

History of Kohinoor diamond

- The Koh-i-Noor (Persian for Mountain of Light) is a large, colourless diamond that was found near Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, India, possibly in the 13th century.
- It weighed 793 carats (158.6 g) uncut and was first owned by the Kakatiya dynasty.
- In the early 14th Century, Alauddin Khilji of Delhi Sultanate, while looting the kingdoms of Southern India, raided Warangal and acquired the diamond.
- After the disintegration of Delhi Sultanate, it came into the hands of Babur.
- Some sources state that it was presented to Shah Jahan by Mir Jumla, who had the stone placed into his ornate Peacock Throne.
- Following the 1739 invasion of Delhi by Nader Shah, the Shah of Persia, the treasury of the Mughal Empire was looted by his army and took away most of the wealth including the Koh-i-Noor.
- After the assassination of Nader Shah in 1747 and the collapse of his empire, the stone came into the hands of one of his generals, Ahmad Shah Durrani, who later became the Emir of Afghanistan.
- Later, his descendants who ran away to Sikh empire gave the diamond as a sign of hospitality to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- On 29 March 1849, following the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Sikh War, the Kingdom of Punjab was formally annexed to British India, and the Last Treaty of Lahore was signed, officially ceding the Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria and the Maharaja's other assets to the company.
- Maharaja Duleep Singh, the youngest son of Ranjit Singh was made to officially surrender the same.

Efforts to bring back the diamond

The Government of India, believing the gem was rightfully theirs, first demanded the return of the Koh-i-Noor as soon as independence was granted in 1947.

A second request followed in 1953, the year of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Each time, the British government rejected the claims, saying that ownership was non-negotiable.

In April 2016, the Indian Culture Ministry stated it would make “all possible efforts” to arrange the return of the Koh-i-Noor to India.

Prelims Perspective

Which of the following statements regarding Kohinoor diamond is/are correct?

1. Kohinoor diamond was manufactured in 19th century
2. The British took it from Maharaja Duleep Singh

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Sources : [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#), [Wikipedia](#)

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GS 2 Indian Polity

Electronic Visa - New visa regime

India's new liberalised visa structure has come to force.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Highlights

- These include liberalisation of the e-visa scheme, tourist, business, medical and employment visas.
- New categories of visas such as intern visa and film visa have been introduced

Electronic Visa

How e-Tourist Visa Work

- The e-Tourist Visa enables the prospective visitor to apply for an Indian Visa from his/her home country online without visiting the Indian Mission and also pay the visa fee online.
- Once approved, the applicant receives an email authorizing him/her to travel to India and he/she can travel with a print out of this authorisation.
- On arrival, the visitor has to present the authorisation to the immigration authorities who would then stamp the entry into the country.

Eligibility

- This facility is available to Foreigners whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sight-seeing, short duration medical treatment, casual business visit, etc. and not valid for any other purpose/activities.
- This will allow entry into India within 30 days from the date of approval of e-Tourist Visa and will be valid for 30 days stay in India from the date of arrival in India. It can be availed only once in a calendar year.
- Not available to Diplomatic/Official Passport Holders.
- Not available to individuals endorsed on Parent's/Spouse's Passport i.e. each individual should have a separate passport.
- Not available to International Travel Document Holders.

Benefits : The facility will encourage people to travel with short-term planning, take via routes while travelling to other countries and bring family members while on business visits

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Consider the following statements

1. Application for E-Visa is submitted at designated airports
2. E-Visa is not available for diplomatic passport holders

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

Mains Perspective

Essay

- Tourism : Can this be the next big thing for India [UPSC Mains 2014]

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu pib](#) [e-touristvisa](#)

New scheme for power looms - PowerTex India

A three-year Comprehensive Scheme for Powerloom Sector Development was launched by the government, to boost common infrastructure and modernisation of the powerloom sector.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

PowerTex India - Highlights

Objective : The aim of the scheme is to boost common infrastructure and modernise the sector

- The scheme has nine major components, including two new ones. The two new schemes are: Pradhan Mantri Credit Scheme for powerloom weavers and solar energy scheme for powerlooms.
- Existing powerloom units, new ones, and group enterprises in weaving will now get 20 % of project cost with a ceiling of ₹1 lakh as margin money subsidy and 6% interest subvention, both for working capital and term loan up to ₹10 lakh for a maximum period of five years.
- Powerloom units with maximum eight looms each will be eligible for 50 % subsidy for going in for solar energy for captive use, be it on grid or off grid system.

Components comprehensive scheme for powerloom sector development

1. In-situ Upgradation of Plain Powerlooms
2. Group Workshed Scheme (GWS)
3. Yarn Bank Scheme
4. Common Facility Centre (CFC)
5. Pradhan Mantri Credit Scheme for Powerloom Weavers
6. Solar Energy Scheme for Powerlooms

7. Facilitation, IT, Awareness, Market Development and Publicity for Powerloom Schemes
8. Tex Venture Capital Fund
9. Grant-in-Aid and Modernisation & Upgradation of Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs)

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements about PowerTex India

1. The scheme aims to boost common infrastructure of power loom sector.
2. Under the scheme powerloom will get subsidy for adopting solar power.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Sources: [The Hindu](#) pib

National Institutional Ranking Framework

The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, has been rated as the top higher educational institution of India across disciplines.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Highlights

- The rankings were the first-ever **overall** ranking of institutions. First NIRF ranking had ranked institutions in separate lists.
- The Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru ranked first in the list followed by IIT-Madras.
- There are separate lists within disciplines for engineering, management and pharmacy, and for universities and colleges.
- IIT Chennai, IIM Ahmedabad, Jamia Hamdard New Delhi, IISc Bengaluru, Miranda house Delhi were respectively the toppers in engineering, management, pharmacy, universities and colleges categories.

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

- The NIRF is a comprehensive ranking system for universities developed by the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry.
- The ranking is done by an independent and autonomous body and the exercise will be an annual affair. Accordingly, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) has undertaken the task of doing the ranking exercise.

Parameters used to rank universities

1. Teaching learning and resources;

2. research, consulting and collaborative performance;
3. graduation outcomes;
4. outreach and inclusivity
5. peer group perception

Each of these has been further subdivided into nearly 20 sub criteria to comprehensively assess an institution.

Why NIRF?

- These rankings would also help in reaching benchmark of international excellence.
- The rankings will also help students make informed choices about the institutions they want to join.
- It will bring in much needed transparency in higher education sector
- It would empower citizens as it would endow them with the power as to how they observe the institutions to be.

Prelims Perspective

Model question

Which of the following parameters are used to rank universities in National institutional Ranking framework?

1. Teaching learning and resources
2. Research, consulting and collaborative performance
3. Peer group perception

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Mains Perspective

Model questions

- One of the biggest challenges in the higher education sector have been that citizens who engage with these institutions feel that there is no level playing field in terms of transparency and the data that they need from these institutions with regard to the choices they, specially the students, need to make. National institutional Ranking framework can do a long way in ensuring bringing in the much needed transparency in higher education sector. Explain

Sources: [The Hindu pib NIRF](#)

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) - Steps to prevent

fireworks accidents

The Centre government has tightened the norms on explosives and issued directives for safe public display of fireworks.

Mains :GS 2 Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Directives

- Only authorised fireworks approved by the Chief Controller of Explosives shall be used for public display.
- For authorisation of traditional fireworks manufacturers shall apply to the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)
- The District Magistrate shall instruct festival organisers to conduct risk assessment
- A disaster management plan shall be prepared by the district administration before the fireworks display.

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)

- The PESO is entrusted with the administration of the Explosives Act of 1884 and the Petroleum Act of 1934, with regard to handling of Explosives, Petroleum products and Compressed gases
- Providing operational and technical Advice and Assistance to various stakeholders regarding handling of explosives and petroleum products.
- Ensure public safety in the areas of manufacture, transport, storage, handling, etc. of Explosives
- Advisory role in matters coming within the purview of Explosives Act 1884 and Petroleum Act 1934 and the rules.
- It reports to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) is under the administrative control of which ministry?

- a) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- b) Ministry of Power
- c) Ministry of Commerce
- d) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers

Mains Perspective

How important are vulnerability and risk assessment for pre-disaster management? As an administrator, what are key areas that you would focus on in a Disaster Management System? **[UPSC Mains 2013]**

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [PESO](#)

Goods and service Tax network - audit of GST data

The question of how and where GST data can be accessed by the auditors remains unresolved.

Mains : GS 2 Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

The issue

- To decide the compensation for States and to determine their revenue share, auditors of the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) will require access to datasets.
- The GSTN has refused to give access to data to CAG officials saying that the tax data belongs to respective state and Central governments.
- The question of how and where GST data can be accessed by the auditors remains unresolved.
- Accessing the data at various points — point of manufacture, point of sale etc. — would make the GST audit a complicated and almost impossible task. Auditors should be able to get all data from a centralised location.
- The auditors would be using data available from individual States to assess their share of taxes earned from alcohol and petrochemicals, which would be kept out of GST. (It is required to calculate compensation that needs to be paid to the states)

Goods and service Tax network

- GSTN (Goods and Services Tax Network) is a private limited company set up in 2013 for providing IT infrastructure to all stakeholders for the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax
- The Government of India, state governments, UT's, together hold 49% of equity in GSTN. Balance 51% equity is with non-Government financial institutions.
- The Company has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)

- The Constitution of India (Article 148) provides for an independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).
- He is the guardian of the public purse and controls the entire financial system of the country at both the levels—the Centre and the state.

Powers and duties of CAG

The Constitution (Article 149) authorises the Parliament to prescribe the duties and powers of the CAG. Accordingly, the Parliament enacted the CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) act. 1971.

The duties and functions of the CAG among other things laid down by the Parliament and the Constitution are:

- Auditing the accounts related to all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India and that of the states
- Auditing the receipts and expenditure of
 1. All bodies and authorities substantially financed from the Central or state revenues;
 2. Government companies
 3. Other corporations and bodies, when so required by related laws.

Prelims perspective

A question from the following areas can be expected

- Functions and power of CAG which forms the static part of polity
- Related to GSTN, GST
- Taxation powers of Central and State governments

Mains Perspective

Model questions [*UPSC Mains 2016*]

Exercise of CAG's powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the states is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether audit of the Government's policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own jurisdiction

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [GSTN](#)

National Commission for Backward Classes

The Lok Sabha passed a constitutional amendment which introduces a National Commission for socially and Educationally Backward Classes in the Constitution. The constitutional amendment will still need to be passed by the Rajya Sabha with two-thirds majority and receive ratifications from more than 50% state governments.

Mains : GS 2 Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Highlights of the bill.

- It will establish National Commission for Backward Classes as a constitutional body.
- It will give powers to Parliament to designate castes as OBCs.
- The proposed commission will have a chairperson, vice-chairperson and three other members
- It will hear the grievances of socially and educationally backward classes (Presently a Scheduled Castes commission discharges this function)
- It empowers the President to specify communities which would fall under backward class for states and union territories, in consultation with the concerned governor.

Present status of the commission: At present, the functions of the commission are limited to examining the requests for inclusion of any class of citizens as a backward class and hear complaints of over-inclusion or under-inclusion of any backward class in

the existing quota and advise the Central government.

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements about the proposed National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes

1. The commission will have six members
2. The commission will have the power to designate castes as backward classes.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

The proposed National Commission for Backward Classes can be another milestone in protecting the rights of socially and economically backward communities in India.

Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [Livemint](#)

PMAY-G – From Houses to Homes

The Prime Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) on November 2016.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Features of the scheme

- It allows for construction using local materials and local house designs.
- Homes will have cooking area, toilet, LPG connection, electricity connection and water supply through convergence.
- Beneficiaries can plan their homes as per their need.
- Training programme for Rural Masons has been launched to meet a critical skill requirement for quality construction.
- Selection of beneficiaries :Done through a rigorous process using Socio Economic Census (SECC) Data for those who are homeless or in 0, 1, 2 kutcha rooms with kutcha roof.
- A completion period of 6 to 12 months is being followed in PMAY-G.
- The beneficiaries under PMAY Gramin have been selected up to 2022 based on the prioritisation and in a transparent manner.

Prelims Perspective

Consider the following statements about PMAY-G.

1. The beneficiaries are selected from Socio Economic Census (SECC) Data

2. All houses under the scheme has a standard design developed by IIT Madras.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer A

Mains Perspective

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana seeks to utilise resources efficiently and through convergence paves the way for improved outcomes of government schemes. Evaluate

Sources: pib

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016

The Lok Sabha passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016. The Bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to address issues such as third party insurance, regulation of taxi aggregators, and road safety.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

What is the Bill all about?

The provisions of the Bill talk about improved citizen centric services, reducing the number of accidents and several steps proposed to reduce the footfalls to regional transport offices (RTO).

The bill proposes hefty penalties for various traffic offences, jail term for parents of minors caught driving, a ten-fold increase in compensation for the families of accident victims.

Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill caps the maximum liability for third party insurance in case of a motor accident at Rs 10 lakh in case of death and at five lakh rupees in case of grievous injury. In cases where courts award compensation higher than the maximum liability amount, it is unclear who will pay the remaining amount.
- It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.
- The Bill defines taxi aggregators, guidelines for which will be determined by the central government.
- It provides for: (i) amending the existing categories of driver licensing, (ii) recall of vehicles in case of defects, (iii) protection of good Samaritans from any civil or criminal action, and (iv) increase of penalties for several offences under the 1988 Act.

- Improving delivery of services to the stakeholders using e-Governance such as enabling online learning licenses, increasing validity period for driving licenses etc
- The Bill caps the maximum liability for third party insurance, but does not cap the compensation amount that courts can award. In cases where courts award compensation higher than the maximum liability amount, it is unclear who will pay the remaining amount.
- State governments will issue licenses to taxi aggregators as per central government guidelines. Currently, state governments determine guidelines for plying of taxis.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Consider the following statements about Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016

1. The bill caps the maximum liability of third party insurances.
2. The bill aims to use e-Governance for improved service delivery.
3. State government will get the power to regulate taxi aggregators.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

Mains Perspective

Model questions

While the motor vehicles Act seeks to improve service delivery and reduce accident the implementation challenges remain. Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Business Standard](#)

Nakshe web portal

The Survey of India, - official maker of maps in India, has set up a web portal called Nakshe that allows 3,000 of its 7,000 maps to be downloaded for free.

Mains : GS 2 Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Highlights

- The Survey of India maps —prepared for defence and civilian purposes — are considered a standard reference for the shape, extent and geographic features of the country.

- Topographic maps or Open Series Maps (OSM) containing natural and man-made geographical features including terrain or topography are prepared by the SoI.
- These OSM maps have been made available for free download from “**nakshe**” web portal through Aadhaar enabled user authentication process.
- The Aadhaar is to ensure that only Indians are able to access this portal.
- The maps to be made available through the portal <http://soinakshe.uk.gov.in/> will make it easier for residents of villagers and panchayats to readily access information

Survey of India

- The Survey of India, the principal mapping agency of the country.
- Origin of the Survey of India is traced back to Year 1767.
- It is the oldest scientific department in India.
- SoI has surveyed and mapped each and every part of the country which has been of immense use in the development of the country

Prelims Perspective

“Nakshe”, sometimes seen in the news, is related to

- a. App developed by ISRO
- b. Geotagging of government assets
- c. Accessing maps of India
- d. Tax evasion

Sources: [The Hindu](#) pib

National Mission for Manuscripts (NAMAMI) - BORI digitising rare manuscripts

Manuscripts in Sanskrit and its related languages, Pali and the Prakrits, are soon to be preserved with the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) launching an e-library and commencing a major digitisation process of its treasure trove in Indology.

Mains : GS 2 Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Highlights

- The move to digitise rare books began in last year.
- The Institute has formed a three-member committee to examine its repository of 1.35 lakh books and 28,000 manuscripts
- The digitisation process is laborious and may take upto five years for completion.
- The move to build a digital collection has been mired in financial stress, and the digitisation process gained momentum only recently after the Centre approved of a revised budget outlay for the same.
- In 2003, the National Mission for Manuscripts (NAMAMI) selected BORI as one of the 32 manuscripts resource and conservation centres across the country.

The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute : The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, was founded on July 6, 1917 in the honor of the work of Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarakar, the foremost pioneer of scientific Orientology in India. The Institute is a public organization registered under Act XXI 1860 (a Public Trust). It is partially supported by annual earmarked grants from the Maharashtra Government.

National Mission for Manuscripts (NAMAMI)

- The National Mission for Manuscripts (NAMAMI) is an autonomous organisation under Ministry of Culture, Government of India, established to survey, locate and conserve Indian manuscripts.
- Its objective is to create national resource base for manuscripts, for enhancing their access, awareness and use for educational purposes.
- The Mission was initiated in February 2003, by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) is the nodal agency for the execution of this project.
- It creates bibliographic databases of Indian manuscripts and is involved in the conservation and preservation of the manuscripts.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Which one of the following is the purpose of National Mission for Manuscripts (NAMAMI) by government of India?

- a. Create a national resource base for manuscripts
- b. encourage the creation of new manuscript magazines
- c. Make students aware about the importance of manuscripts
- d. None of the above.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Traditional Knowledge has not been given the importance it deserves. What might be the possible reasons behind this? What are the challenges faced in making traditional knowledge available to the citizens ?

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) machines

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) requested the Union Law Ministry for release of funds, given the to facilitate procurement of VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) machines for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Government has given permission to election commission to procure VVPAT machines.

Mains : GS 2 Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability,

The issue

- Opposition parties have questioned the credibility of Electronic voting machines

without paper trails.

- Over 16 lakh VVPATs would be required, at an estimated cost of ₹3,174 crore, to cover all polling stations in the next Lok Sabha polls.

Verifying the vote

The Election Commission feels that with most opposition parties having declared their lack of faith in electronic voting machines, VVPAT machines are the need of the hour



All for audit: Election officials checking VVPAT machines. ■ A. MURALITHARAN

- The voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) is a method that provides feedback to voters

- It is an independent verification printer machine and is attached to electronic voting machines

- It allows voters to verify if their vote has gone to the intended candidate

- When a voter presses a

EVM button, a paper slip is printed through VVPAT

- The slip contains the poll symbol and name of the candidate. It allows the voter to verify his choice

- After the voter views the slip, it drops inside a sealed box linked to the EVM seven seconds later. It can only be accessed by authorised persons

Image : The Hindu

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Consider the following statements about voter-verified paper audit trail(VVPAT).

1. The voter will get a slip which contains the details of the vote.
2. It will help in improving transparency of voting process.

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Recently several political parties have raised concerns about EVMs without voter-verified paper audit trail(VVPAT).What is VVPAT? How does it work? Give your suggestions.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Rs. 2,000-cr. push for women engineers

The Department of Science and Technology will be leading a Rs. 2,000-crore initiatives to encourage more girls and women to take up careers in the domain of science and technology.

Mains : GS 2 Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Highlights

- A pilot programme covering 100,000 girls and women, from school-going children to those interested in research, will be launched initially.
- The programme aims to raise the percentage of women working in premium educational institutions.
- The proportion of women in the science and engineering workforce is abysmal at 12%.
- The current initiative, 'Vigyan Jyoti', envisages 500 contractual faculty positions for five years in universities and research organisations, and special scholarships for school girls. Alongside mentoring, there would be a concerted effort to expose them to more areas of science and engineering,
- The proposal is a key part of a report, Vigyan 2030: Science and Technology as the Pivot for Jobs, Opportunities and National Transformation, submitted by the secretaries of all Central science departments.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Modi shows red light to beacons of VIP privilege

Prime Minister decided to shake up India's privileged VIP culture, most notably symbolised by flashing red beacon lights on top of vehicles, by scrapping a rule that allowed the Central and State governments to nominate dignitaries who could use such lights.

Mains : GS 2 Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

Rationale behind the new amendments

The government has decided to do away with beacons of all kinds atop all categories of vehicles in the country as it is of the considered opinion that beacons on vehicles are perceived symbols of VIP culture, and have no place in a democratic country.

What are the changes to be adopted from May 1?

1. The rule under Central Motor Vehicles Rules of 1989 that allowed the Central and State governments to nominate dignitaries who could use such lights will be scrapped.
2. States are also being stripped of their power to specify persons whose vehicles can use blue flashing lights.

3. Only emergency services vehicles such as ambulances, fire engine trucks, and police vehicles will be allowed to use blue lights.
4. Red lights will not be permitted on any vehicle.
5. Private vehicles will not be allowed to use either red or blue lights.

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements:

1. Red lights will not be permitted in any vehicle other than fire engines.
2. The Central and State governments cannot nominate dignitaries who could use red beacons.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 or 2

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Legal Aid and Empowerment initiatives - 'Pro bono legal services', 'Tele law service' and 'Nyaya Mitra scheme' launched

Three key legal aid and empowerment initiatives of the Department of Justice –'Pro bono legal services', 'Tele law service' and 'Nyaya Mitra scheme' was launched.

Mains : GS 2 e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;

Objective of the initiatives

- The initiatives are aimed at enhancing '*access to justice*' for the poor and vulnerable communities, including making accessible quality and effective legal aid for them.
- The initiatives launched by the department here are to supplement the efforts of NALSA(National Legal Services Authority) and not to overlap the activities undertaken by the legal services authorities.

Pro bono legal Services

- The '**Pro bono legal services**' initiative is a web based platform, through which interested lawyers can register themselves to volunteer pro bono (denoting work undertaken without charge, especially legal work for a client on low income) services for the underprivileged litigants, who are unable to afford it.
- The Department of Justice has launched the online portal through which litigants from marginalised communities can also apply for legal aid and advice from the pro bono lawyers.

Tele Law: Mainstreaming Legal Aid through Common Service Centre

- The Department of Justice and NALSA are partnering with CSC- E- Governance Service Limited for mainstreaming legal aid to the marginalized communities through the Common Service Centers (CSCs).
- The initiative, called '**Tele Law**', is aimed at facilitating delivery of legal advice through an expert panel of lawyers – stationed at the State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA).
- The project would connect lawyers with clients through video conferencing facilities at CSCs, operated by para legal volunteers.

District Facilitation Centre to reduce pendency: Engagement of Nyaya Mitra

- The **Nyaya Mitra** scheme, is aimed at reducing pendency of cases across selected districts, with special focus on those pending for more than 10 years.
- Functionalized through a retired judicial or executive officer (with legal experience) designated as the 'Nyaya Mitra', the project would be operated out of District Facilitation Centres, housed in CSCs.
- Nyaya Mitra's responsibilities would include among others assistance to litigants who are suffering due to delay in investigations or trial, by actively identifying such cases through the National Judicial Data Grid, providing legal advice and connecting litigants to DLSA, CSC Tele Law, other government agencies and civil society organisations.

Prelims Perspective

"**Nyaya Mitra**", sometimes seen in the news, is related to

- a. Lok Adalats
- b. Providing free legal services to the poor and vulnerable
- c. Appointing advocates for free to the needy
- d. Reducing pendency of cases across selected districts,

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Legal services still remain out of reach for many Indian citizens despite having several mechanisms constituted for the purpose. Comment

Sources: [pib](#)

Niti Aayog meet: States to get greater say in new national planning regime

Prime Minister and state chief ministers considered a new approach in policy planning that aims to give states a greater say in determining national priorities

Mains : GS 3 Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Highlights of NITI Aayog meeting

- The vision document projects the economy to grow more than three-fold to Rs 469 lakh crore by 2031-32, from Rs 137 lakh crore in 2015-16, assuming an 8%

annual growth.

- Vision document and action plan rests upon the spirit of cooperative federalism.
- The long-term national development agenda up to 2031-32 extend the traditional plan mandate to include internal security and defence.
- NITI Aayog has set out a 15-year vision and a draft three-year short-term action plan ending 2019-20.
- The action plan assesses the revenue available to the union and state governments over the next three years to suggest enhanced spending on priority areas. The plan will be finalised after feedback from the states
- The meeting also reviewed Niti Aayog's move to encourage states to excel in various governance parameters by comparing performance.

Sources: [Livemint](#)

Reorient social sector subsidies: NITI Aayog

India's social sector subsidies should be reoriented so that beneficiaries don't become dependent on them, the NITI Aayog said.

Mains : GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

NITI Aayog on Social sector subsidies

- It mooted a reduction in food subsidies through better targeting and rationalisation measures.
- Subsidies have tended to crowd out the socially more productive expenditures such as those on education and health.
- The social subsidies should be reoriented so that beneficiaries become economically independent instead of remaining perpetually dependent on them.
- The efficiency of social expenditure must be improved to deliver better outcomes.
- Open ended schemes that can absorb rising expenditures and lack clearly identified beneficiaries must be avoided.

NITI Aayog member's opinion on Loan Waiver

- NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand has said that omnibus farm loan waivers, or excessive support to farmers, can cripple them in the long run, as they disincentive individuals from becoming self-reliant.
- Instead of waivers alone, it is important to provide overall relief to the most-affected farmers in distress in a targeted manner.
- Past farm loan waivers made no difference on the growth of debt or the agrarian stress,"
- When public money is given for debt relief other public investment projects suffer and it act as an incentive for farmers to not pay for their debt.

Sources: The Hindu [The Hindu](#) [NITI Aayog](#)

Judicial performance index mooted

The NITI Aayog has proposed the introduction of a judicial performance index and the outsourcing of non-core functions of the police to reform justice system.

Mains : GS 2 Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries

NITI Aayog's proposals

Judicial Performance Index

- It proposed introduction of a judicial performance index to reduce delays.
- It mooted changes in criminal justice and procedural laws, a repeal of all irrelevant legislation by March 2019 and reforms in land ownership laws – which account for 67% of litigants in civil suits.
- Creation of a judicial performance index will help High Courts to keep track of the performance and processes at district courts and subordinate levels.
- The performance index for courts will entail fixing of 'non-mandatory time frames for different types of cases to benchmark when a case has been delayed.'
- It called for streamlining judicial appointments on the basis of online real-time statistics on the workload of pending cases.

On police reforms

- The outsourcing of non-core functions of the police to private agencies or other government departments should be done.
- Functions such as serving court summons and antecedents and address verification for passport applications or job verifications can be outsourced as per NITI Aayog
- India's police to population ratio should reach the United Nations norms of 222 per lakh population, over the next seven years, from the current level of 137.
- NITI Aayog has asked the Home Ministry to push for greater hiring of women in the police force, with a target of 30% of all new recruits.

NITI Aayog

- The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet in 2015.
- NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs.
- While designing strategic and long term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.
- The Government of India, constituted the NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission instituted in 1950.

- NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform of the Government of India to bring States to act together in national interest, and thereby fosters Cooperative Federalism.
- At the core of NITI Aayog's creation are two hubs – Team India Hub and the Knowledge and Innovation Hub. The Team India Hub leads the engagement of states with the Central government, while the Knowledge and Innovation Hub builds NITI's think-tank capabilities. These hubs reflect the two key tasks of the Aayog.

Prelims Perspective

Which of the following statements about NITI Aayog is/are correct?

1. NITI Aayog is constitutional body.
2. Team India hub leads to engagement of states
3. It provides advice to state governments.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Mains Perspective

- The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasised in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings. *[UPSC Mains 2015]*
- What are the reform measures that should be adopted by the government to address inefficiencies in the Judicial system? What are the constraints in doing so and how can it be addressed?
- What are the measures adopted by the government to make subsidies more efficient. In your opinion what more needs to be done?

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

IDEAS - Innovations for Development of Efficient and Affordable Systems

The Centre is set to launch a scheme for students which offer rewards to students for finding innovative solutions to problems facing the country.

Mains : GS 3 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Highlights of the scheme -IDEAS, or Innovations for Development of Efficient and Affordable Systems.

- Centre's IDEAS scheme invites students to find solutions to various problems
- The scheme will invite students to find solutions to problems in the fields

identified by the Human resource ministry and offer a prize of ₹1 crore to the best solution in each field

- The IDEAS is an initiative to challenge young minds with problems of society in general, to come up with innovative, original, practical and economical solutions
- Under different areas or themes, 10 problem statements will be prepared and widely publicised.
- All higher educational institutions will be eligible and encouraged to participate, but participation of IITs, NITs and CFTIs will be mandatory.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

'IDEAS', an initiative of the Government of India, aims at

- (a) promoting innovation in agriculture
- (b) providing assistance to young start-up entrepreneurs
- (c) promoting technical education
- (d) inviting students to find solutions to various problems faced by the nation

Mains Perspective

Questions related to education had figured in the general essay paper as well as in GS 2 paper. You can take a look at our [IAS preparation page](#) to know more.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Reinstate ousted Kerala DGP: SC - Fixed tenure for bureaucrats

The Supreme Court for the first time ordered the reinstatement of ousted Kerala DGP sending out a clear message that police officers cannot be made "scapegoats" by politicians in power.

Mains : GS 3 Role of civil services in a democracy.

Highlights

- The court held that the DGP has been unfairly treated by the newly formed government
- Supreme court in an earlier case held that the DGP should have a fixed tenure of two years.
- The decision by Supreme court is likely to have repercussions in States where police chiefs were removed by the political dispensation.

The Case

- The LDF government had removed DGP Senkumar contending that his handling two major cases in the state were "totally unsatisfactory."
- Mr. Senkumar, who was removed as State Police chief, by the LDF government immediately on assuming office, had approached the Supreme Court after failing in his bid to get a favourable order from the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).

Mains Perspective

Model questions

1. Has the Cadre based Civil Services Organization been the cause of slow in India? Critically examine. **[UPSC Mains 2014]**
2. “Traditional bureaucratic structure and culture have hampered the process of socio-economic development in India.” Comment. **[UPSC Mains 2015]**

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016

The Labour Ministry has proposed draft rules to fix the working conditions for child artistes and for employing children in family enterprises.

Mains : GS 2 Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Proposed Draft rules

- 20% of child's income should to be kept in fixed deposit. The money would be credited to the child after she turns 18.
- While a child artiste will not be allowed to work for more than five hours a day, a child “assisting” in a family business can only work for three hours a day.
- No child (artist) shall be allowed to work for more than five hours in a day, and for not more than three hours without res
- Children will be allowed to assist their family in running family enterprises without affecting their school education.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016

Objective

- The Act amended the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, which prohibits the engagement of children in certain types of occupations and regulates the condition of work of children in other occupations.

Highlights

- The Act prohibits employment of children below 14 years in certain occupations such as automobile workshops, bidi-making, carpet weaving, handloom and power loom industry, mines and domestic work.
- It made two exceptions in favour of child labour: children could work as child artistes (in the entertainment sector), and could “help” in their family enterprises.
- The Bill seeks to prohibit employment of children below 14 years in all occupations except where the child helps his family after school hours.
- The Bill adds a new category of persons called “adolescent”. An adolescent

means a person between 14 and 18 years of age. The Bill prohibits employment of adolescents in hazardous occupations as specified (mines, inflammable substance and hazardous processes).

- The central government may add or omit any hazardous occupation from the list included in the Bill.
- The Bill enhances the punishment for employing any child in an occupation and employing an adolescent in a hazardous occupation.
- The Bill empowers the government to make periodic inspection of places at which employment of children and adolescents are prohibited.

Also read : [A law that allows child labour](#)

Prelims Perspective

Model question

Which of the following statements regarding Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016 is/are correct?

1. It allows children to help in family enterprises
2. The act prohibits employment of children below 18 years from all occupations.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 2016 has some important provisions outlined for prevention of child labour, yet there are some lacunae which if left unaddressed will defeat the entire purpose of the Act. Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#) , [PRS](#)

SC seeks law to regulate NGO funds

The Supreme Court suggested that the government should frame a statutory law to regulate the flow of public money to the NGOs even as Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) recommended the registration of 159 FIRs against various NGOs for swindling government funds.

Mains : GS 2 Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders

Details

- The Centre has submitted new guidelines for accreditation of nearly 30 lakh NGOs and voluntary organisation in the country.

- A Bench suggested introducing a law after perusing guidelines handed over by the government to the court, appointing NITI Aayog as the nodal agency for NGO registration.
- The Court observed that the guidelines may not be sufficient for systematising the entire process of accreditation, fund utilisation and audit of NGOs.
- The court, gave the government the liberty to start civil and criminal proceedings against 703 NGOs, which according to CAPART, have defaulted.
- The agency, which works under the Rural Development Ministry, said 718 NGOs had been initially blacklisted, but 15 had responded satisfactorily to notices issued on them.
- CBI records filed in 2016 in the Supreme Court had shown show that only 2,90,787 NGOs file annual financial statements of a total of 29,99,623 registered ones under the Societies

Mains Perspective

Model questions - *[UPSC Mains 2015]*

1. Examine critically the recent changes in the rule governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976.
2. How can be the role of NGOs be strengthened in India for development works relating to protection of the Environment? Discuss throwing light on the major constraints.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

PRAGATI - Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation

The Prime Minister, chaired his eighteenth interaction through PRAGATI - the ICT-based, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.

Mains : **GS 2** e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential;

Details

The Prime Minister reviewed the progress towards handling and resolution of grievances related to Railways, progress of vital infrastructure projects, Mission Indradhanush for universal immunization of children, implementation of Swachhta Action Plans and other programmes.

PRAGATI: a multi-purpose, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation

- PRAGATI is a unique integrating and interactive platform.
- The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies:

1. Digital data management,
2. video-conferencing
3. Geo-spatial technology

Key features of the PRAGATI application are as follows:

- It is a three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States);
- Prime Minister will hold a monthly programme where he will interact with the Government of India Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries through Video-conferencing enabled by data and geo-informatics visuals;
- Issues to be flagged before the PM are picked up from the available database regarding Public Grievances, on-going Programmes and pending Projects;
- The system will ride on, strengthen and re-engineer the data bases of the CPGRAMS for grievances, Project Monitoring Group (PMG) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. PRAGATI provides an interface and platform for all these three aspects.
- It will also take into consideration various correspondences to PM's office by the common people or from high dignitaries of States and/or developers of public projects;
- It is also a robust system for bringing e-transparency and e-accountability with real-time presence and exchange among the key stakeholders.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

PRAGATI sometimes seen in a new is related to

- a. monitoring projects of the Government of India and State Governments.
- b. providing healthcare to all citizens free of cost
- c. providing financial and technical assistance to young start-up entrepreneurs
- d. promoting education of women

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Questions related to e-governance were asked in the previous year examinations. You can visit our [IAS preparation page](#) to see the questions

Sources: pib [pib](#)

BBIN - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal motor vehicle agreement

Bhutan government has announced that it is not going ahead with the proposed sub-regional motor vehicle agreement BBIN.

Mains : GS 2 Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

What Bhutan government has said?

- Bhutan asked the other members of the 'BBIN' grouping — India, Bangladesh and Nepal — to continue to operationalise it without Bhutan.
- The agreement will enter into force for Bhutan after its ratification process is completed.
- The government remains fully committed to the BBIN process, including the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement,
- The decision by Bhutan comes on the back of severe domestic opposition to the motor vehicles agreement, primarily on fears of vehicular pollution and environmental degradation if trucks from neighbouring countries are given access to Bhutan.

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal motor vehicle agreement

- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) signed an agreement on June, 2015 to facilitate cross border movement of both passenger and cargo vehicles in the sub-region. Protocols to implement the Agreement are being negotiated by the four countries for passenger and cargo vehicles separately.
- The MVA allows cargo vehicles registered in any one of the BBIN countries to cross borders and enter any of the other BBIN countries, along agreed routes.
- The MVA also covers movement of passenger vehicles and will help deepen people-to-people contact and boost tourism.
- India, Bangladesh and Nepal have already ratified the agreement

Prelims Perspective

Sample questions

Consider the following statements

1. The BBIN motor vehicles agreement covers passenger vehicles only
 2. The agreement will help in increasing seamless cargo movement between the BBIN countries
- a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer B

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Infrastructure bottleneck can not affect international as well as domestic trade. Explain the steps taken by India to improve its connectivity with its neighbourhood and its benefits.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) PIB

Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) initiative

The Centre has decided to bring 10 iconic places in India under phase-II of the Swachh

Iconic Places (SIP) initiative, to ensure better cleanliness and improved amenities for visitors.

Mains : GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Details

The 10 places chosen under the Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) initiative are Gangotri, Yamunotri, Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, Char Minar in Hyderabad, Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi in Goa, Adi Shankaracharya's abode Kaladi in Ernakulam, Gomateshwar in Shravanabelagola, Baijnath Dham in Devghar, Gaya Tirth in Bihar and the Somnath temple in Gujarat.

Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) initiative

- It is an initiative under Swachh Bharat mission to 100 iconic heritage, spiritual and cultural places in the country.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation will be the coordinating Ministry for this initiative
- The aim of this initiative is to make these 100 places model 'Swachh Tourist Destinations', that will enhance the experience for visitors from India and abroad. Under Phase 1 of this initiative, 10 iconic places were selected earlier.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

The Swachh Iconic initiative is being coordinated by which of the following ministries?

- a. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- b. Ministry of Urban Development
- c. Ministry of Culture
- d. Ministry of Tourism

Sources: The Hindu pib

UNICEF seeks help from Islamic bodies to achieve vaccination goal - Measles, Rubella

Mains : GS 2 Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

The Issue

- Though India runs of the largest immunisation programmes in the world only 65% of children in India received all vaccines during the first year of their life.
- Rubella vaccine has been introduced in India's childhood immunisation programme for the first time and misinformation and myths surrounding immunisation programme are keeping people away from immunisation programme.
- UNICEF has engaged with Urdu media Islamic civil society organisations, religious leaders and academia to create trust and address myths around

immunisation.

Measles

- Measles is a deadly disease and one of the important causes of death in children.
- It is highly contagious and spreads through coughing and sneezing of an infected person. Measles can make a child vulnerable to life threatening complications such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and brain infection.
- Globally, in 2015, measles killed an estimated 1, 34,200 children—mostly under-5 years. In India, it killed an estimated 49,200 children.

Rubella

- Rubella is generally a mild infection, but has serious consequences if infection occurs in pregnant women, causing congenital rubella syndrome (CRS),
- CRS is characterized by congenital anomalies in the foetus and newborns affecting the eyes (glaucoma, cataract), ears (hearing loss), brain (microcephaly, mental retardation) and heart defects, causing a huge socio-economic burden on the families in particular and society in general.
- In 2010, an estimated 1,03,000 children were born with CRS (congenital rubella syndrome) globally, of which around 47,000 children, i.e. 46% were in South-East Asia Region.

UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund is a United Nations (UN) programme headquartered in New York City that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War

Prelims perspective

Similar question [*UPSC Prelims 2016*]

Consider the following diseases

1. Diphtheria
2. Chickenpox
3. Smallpox

Which of the above diseases has/have been eradicated in India?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3
- d) None

Answer. B

Mains Perspective

Similar questions [*UPSC Mains 2015*]

Public health system has limitation in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that private sector can help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives do you suggest.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [pib](#) [Wikipedia](#)

GS 2 International Relations

G 20 - India to support resistance to protectionism at G20 meet

India part of G20 Finance ministers meet supported resistance against all form of protectionism.

Mains : GS 2 Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

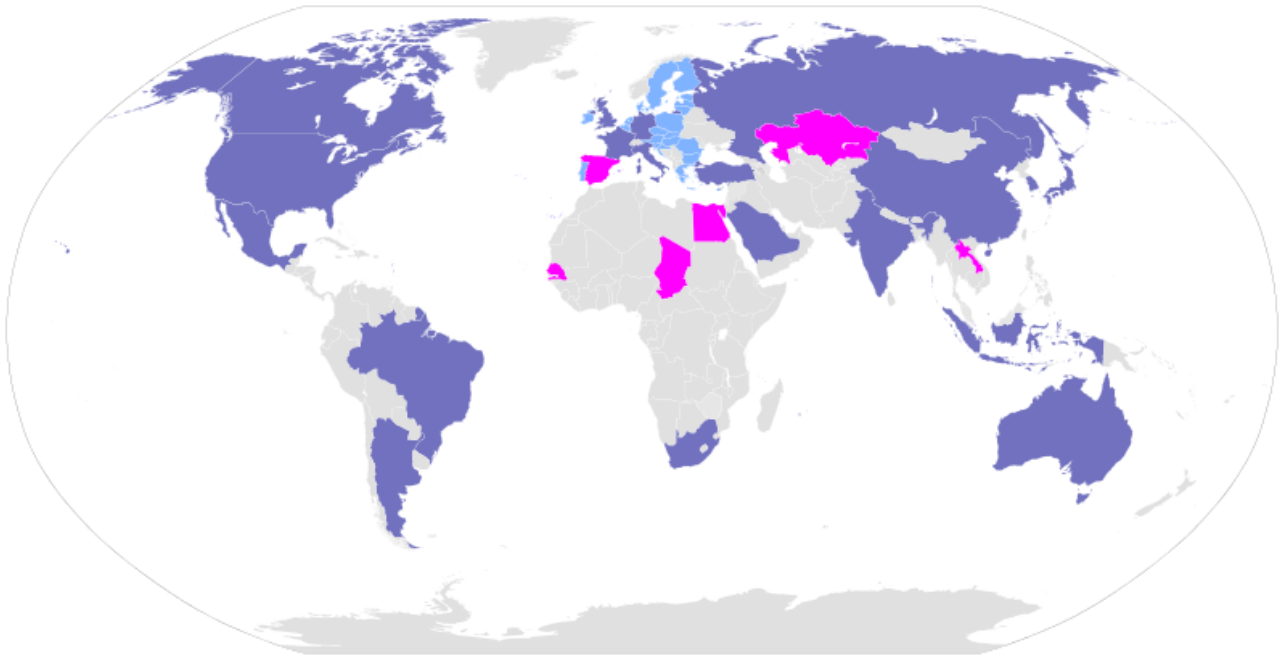
The News

- In the recent meeting of G20 nation's Finance ministers no statement opposing protectionism was put forward
- U.S had opposed inclusion of statement against protectionism.
- This was considered as a major setback for India and Germany

G20

- The G20 (or G-20 or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies.
- It was founded in 1999 with the aim of studying, reviewing, and promoting high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.
- Purpose : Bring together systemically important industrialized and developing economies to discuss key issues in the global economy.
- Collectively, the G20 economies account for around 85% of the gross world product (GWP), 80% of world trade (or, if excluding EU intra-trade, 75%), and two-thirds of the world population.

Members



Member countries in the G-20

Members of the European Union not individually represented

2016 guests

The members include 19 individual countries and along with the European Union (EU).

Meetings

The heads of the G20 nations met semi-annually at G20 summits between 2009 and 2010. Since the November 2011 Cannes summit, all G20 summits have been held annually.

Organisation

- The G20 operates without a permanent secretariat or staff.
- The group's chair rotates annually among the members and is selected from a different regional grouping of countries.
- **Troika:** The chair is part of a revolving three-member management group of past, present and future chairs, referred to as the "Troika". The incumbent chair establishes a temporary secretariat for the duration of its term, which coordinates the group's work and organizes its meetings.

Prelims Perspective

Consider the following statements

1. The Headquarters of G20 is located at Germany
2. All ASEAN members are members of G20 group

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

- Cooperation, Conflict and competition coexist between G20 nations. Explain the futility of having an organisation with such members.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

Trade Barriers identified by US in India

Barriers identified by United States Trade Representative for investors in e-commerce, banking, insurance in India

Mains : GS 2 International relations.

Trade Barriers identified by USTR

- Foreign ownership norms in e-commerce, banks, insurance and other online-related services

India allows for 100% foreign direct investment in business-to-business (B2B) electronic commerce, but largely prohibits foreign investment in business-to-consumer (B2C) electronic commerce transactions

- **Equalisation levy :** India's tax (6% equalisation levy) on foreign online advertising platforms was not par with the international norms

Equalisation levy is an additional 6% withholding tax on foreign online advertising platforms, with the ostensible goal of "equalising the playing field" between resident service providers and non-resident service providers.

- **Data storage :** The Indian requirement that data should be stored within India. *The 2012 National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy, requires that all data collected using public funds – including weather data – be stored within the borders of India. Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) guidelines requires cloud computing service providers to store data within India to qualify for bidding for government procurements.*

- Regulatory requirements in insurance sector regarding appointment of directors, operations..
- Regulatory requirement for foreign banks.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

US identifies trade barriers faced by it in India while conveniently forgetting about its own protectionist policies. Discuss and given your suggestions

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC)

The Union Minister of Finance Shri Arun Jaitley chaired the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Finance Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi.

Mains : GS 2 Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC)

- The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Program brings together **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka** in a project-based partnership that aims to promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and build a better quality of life for the people of the subregion.
- SASEC countries share a common vision of boosting intraregional trade and cooperation in South Asia, while also developing connectivity and trade with Southeast Asia through Myanmar, to the People's Republic of China, and the global market.
- The Manila, Philippines-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) serves as the Secretariat for the SASEC member countries.

The meeting

- The meeting was attended by the seven Finance Ministers from SASEC member countries.
- Myanmar has joined the SASEC programme as its seventh member and has been officially welcomed during the event.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Consider the following statements

1. South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation is an initiative under SAARC
2. China is a member of SASEC
3. Recently Myanmar joined SASEC

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 1 and 3 only

Mains Perspective

Model Questions

How far global platforms had helped in improving the economic ties between member nations? Do you think all the member nations will benefit equally from improved ties?

Explain

Sources: [The Hindu](#) pib [Wikipedia SASEC](#)

H-1B visa programme

The Trump administration has decided to enforce the laws related to H-1B visa programme to crack down on companies that might be misusing the programme.

Mains : GS 2 Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Highlights

- The H-1B visa programme should help U.S. companies recruit highly-skilled foreign nationals when there is a shortage of qualified workers in the country.
- The U.S administration is probing on the misuse of H-1B visa usage.
- The move by US is to ensure that companies are only bringing in people who are highly talented and skilled.

H1-B and L-1 visas

- These are temporary work visas that allow employers in U. S. A to temporarily employ workers in specialized occupations.
- India is the largest user of temporary work visas provided by the U. S government.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Australia visa - The 457 visa

The Centre said it was studying the implications of the Australian government's decision to scrap a visa programme that benefited Indians, and warned that the move could have an impact on negotiations on the free trade agreement — Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements (CECA) — between both countries.

Mains : GS 2 Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Highlights

- Australian Prime Minister announced that he was scrapping the Australian “457” visa programme that allowed Australian companies to hire Indians in a number of skilled jobs.
- The system will be replaced with a more stringent system, making it difficult to hire non-Australian citizens.

The 457 visa

- The 457 visa is the most commonly used program for Australian or overseas employers to sponsor skilled overseas workers to work in Australia temporarily.

Prelims Perspective

The 457 visa sometimes seen in news is in the context of relations between India and

- a. USA
- b. UK
- c. European Union

d. Australia

Mains Perspective

All over the world visa norms are becoming stricter. U.S.A, U.K are all moving towards tougher immigration laws. This comes at a time when India is pushing for easing the cross border movement of human resources. In this context the interests of developed countries differ from India. The topic assumes significance as this has been recurring for some time in the news though in the context of different countries. Thus it will be good if an aspirant could obtain a holistic and balanced view of the problem in the backdrop of India's relationship with developed countries.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#)

Rohingya crisis

India urged Myanmar to contain violence against Rohingya Muslims in the western part of the country bordering Bangladesh.

Mains : GS 2 India and its neighborhood- relations.

The issue

Who are Rohingya people?

The Rohingya people are a Muslim minority group residing in the Rakhine state, formerly known as Arakan in Myanmar.

What is Rohingya crisis?

- The 2015 Rohingya refugee crisis refers to the mass migration of thousands of Rohingya people from Myanmar (also known as Burma) and Bangladesh in 2015, collectively dubbed 'boat people' by international media.
- Nearly all that fled traveled to Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand undertook dangerous journeys

Why do they migrate?

- The Rohingya people are considered “stateless entities”, as the Myanmar government has been refusing to recognise them as one of the ethnic groups of the country.
- For this reason, the Rohingya people lack legal protection from the Government of Myanmar, are regarded as mere refugees from Bangladesh, and face strong hostility in the country—often described as one of the most persecuted people on earth. To escape the dire situation in Myanmar, the Rohingya try to illegally enter Southeast Asian states, begging for humanitarian support from potential host countries.

The issue

- India urged Myanmar to contain violence against Rohingya Muslims.
- India's comment followed Amnesty International's cautioning New Delhi against forcibly relocation Rohingyas to Myanmar where the community faces discrimination.

Prelims Perspective

Consider the following pairs [*UPSC Prelims 2016*]

Community sometimes In the affairs of mentioned in the news

1. Kurd : Bangladesh
2. Madhesi : Nepal
3. Rohingya : Myanmar

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 3 only

Solution: C

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)

A Defence Ministry delegation is in the U.S. to discuss the entire range of cooperation under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI).

Mains : GS 2 International relations.

India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)

What is DTTI?

- DTTI is a mechanism for defence cooperation between India and USA.
- It aims to promote co-development and co-production of military technologies for use by both countries.
- The whole idea of the DTTI is to cut through the government bureaucracies on the two sides

When was it launched?

The DTTI mechanism was launched in 2012. It was a brainchild of then US deputy secretary of defense, Ash Carter.

DTTI history

- In July 2012, Carter began consultations with senior Indian officials on taking Indo-U.S. defense ties to the next level from a purely buyer-seller relationship.
- The U.S. side referred to the new initiative as the Defense Trade Initiative to highlight attempts to increase bilateral trade; Indian officials called it the Defence Technology Initiative to emphasize technology transfer and the goal of indigenization.
- The different names showed differences in emphasis until Carter incorporated both and started calling it DTTI.
- The careful terminology was a way for an established power to adjust to the desires of a rising power in the interest of a long-term relationship.
- With DTTI, the United States effectively agreed to treat India as an alliance

partner on crucial technology issues without requiring New Delhi to sign a formal treaty.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

The term 'Defence Technology and Trade Initiative' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- a. India Japan
- b. India Israel
- c. India U.S.A relations
- d. India Russia relations

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Discuss the advantages of having improved ties with U.S in defence sector. also explain how it will benefit India's make in India initiative. Give your suggestions

Sources: The Hindu [The Indian Express](#) [The Diplomat](#)

Delhi, Dhaka exchange 22 deals - India Bangladesh

India and Bangladesh exchanged 22 agreements as a part of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India.

Mains : GS 2 India and its neighborhood- relations.

Highlights / Agreements signed

- Both countries agreed to work together on ways to advance issues like trade, connectivity, and regional cooperation.
- **Defence Cooperation :** A major aspect of the visit has been the defence component which includes an MoU on defence framework, and a \$500 million Line of Credit for defence procurement for the Bangladesh military forces.
- MoUs were signed between defence training institutes of India and Bangladesh.
- Both sides also sealed a MoU coastal route and protocol route.
- Commitment to support civil nuclear research between two sides.
- Leaders of both nations spoke of increasing security cooperation between two sides.
- India and Bangladesh supported international campaign against terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations General Assembly. Both nations called on the international community for the early finalization and adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism by the UNGA.
- **River Water sharing :** The two sides were unable to make any progress on the contentious Teesta water sharing agreement.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

India and its neighborhood- relations is a topic which is of great importance in Mains

examination. Several questions were asked based on this topic. Visit our IAS preparation page to know more

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

BIMSTEC - BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal of the Ministry of Power for Signing of "Memorandum of Understanding for Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection". It will be signed among member states of BIMSTEC at the upcoming 3rd BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Meeting to be held in Nepal shortly.

Mains : GS 2 India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Impact

This MoU will provide a broad framework for the Parties to cooperate towards the implementation of grid interconnections for the trade in electricity with a view to promoting rational and optimal power transmission in the BIMSTEC region. This MoU will facilitate:

1. The optimization of using the energy resources in the region for mutual benefits
2. The promotion of efficient, economic, and secure operation of power system needed through the development of regional electricity networks;
3. The necessity of optimization of capital investment for generation capacity addition across the region.
4. power exchange through cross border interconnections.

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

Overview

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- It was established in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.

Objective of the group

The objective of building such an alliance was to harness shared and accelerated growth through mutual cooperation in different areas of common interests

Sectoral cooperation

Unlike many other regional groupings, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization. Starting with six sectors—including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries—for sectoral cooperation in the late 1997, it expanded to embrace nine more sectors—including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-

terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change—in 2008.

Members

It constitutes seven Member States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

Why BIMSTEC is important to India?

- The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of the global population with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 2.7 trillion economy.
- In the last five years, BIMSTEC Member States have been able to sustain an average 6.5% economic growth trajectory despite global financial meltdown.

Prelims Perspective

Similar question from *[UPSC preliminary examination 2015]*

India is a member of which among the following?

1. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations
3. East Asia Summit

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) India is a member of none of them

Answer B

Mains perspective

How far do you think regional cooperation platforms has been effective achieving its stated objectives?

Sources: pib [The Hindu](#) [BIMSTEC](#) [Wikipedia](#)

India Iran relations

While balancing ties with India and Pakistan, Tehran is unhappy over Delhi's growing ties with GCC

Mains : GS 2 International relations.

Background

- The lack of investigative support from Iran on the Kulbushan Jadhav case has raised questions about India - Iran security cooperation, say experts.
- India has maintained that Kulbushan Jadhav had been engaged in “legitimate business” in the Iranian port of Chabahar and was kidnapped by Pakistani agents. However, this part of the Indian narrative can be corroborated only if Iran comes forward with an investigation.

Highlights

- Iran is a strategic partner in India's outreach to Afghanistan and Central Asia
- Iran has not responded to India's request for investigation in the case.
- While India tries to maintain its balanced relationship between the Arab Gulf countries and Iran, Iran also balances its ties with Pakistan with its India connections.
- Iran might be uncomfortable with India's growing proximity to Saudi Arabia and the UAE and its non-cooperation on the case of Mr. Jadhav is indicative of a larger bilateral problem.
- India's growing ties with GCC states are naturally viewed by Iran with some concern.
- Bilateral energy ties between the two nations were not in the best shape because of Iran-India disagreement over a gas field which Iran had promised to India.
- Following pricing issues over the gas field, India has begun to cut gas imports from Iran.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Examine the importance of India Iran relations in the backdrop of changing economic, strategic, and political relations.

Sources: The Hindu

China renames six areas in Arunachal

China has renamed six districts along a disputed Himalayan border region with India, in a move seen as "retaliation" for a visit by the Dalai Lama.

Mains : GS 2 India and its neighborhood- relations.

The renaming of places in Arunachal : Reason and Consequences

- Retaliation to the visit of Dalai Lama in Arunachal.
- China had said the visit had a "negative impact" on bilateral relations and warned India against "undermining" Beijing's interests.
- China has standardised the names of six places in South Tibet, a region that is part of China's territory but in which some areas are currently controlled by India.
- This marks the first time China has officially named regions in the disputed territory.
- The six names on the list are: Wo'gyainling, Mila Ri, Qoidengarbo Ri, Mainquka, Bumo La and Namkapub Ri.
- The first name mentioned in the report — Wo'gyainling — probably refers to the Urgyenling monastery, near Tawang town. It is obviously a reassertion of China's claim over the Kameng division in western Arunachal.
- The latitude and longitude listed with the names show these places as Tawang, Kra Daadi, West Siang, Siang (where Mechuka or Menchuka is an emerging

tourist destination), Anjaw and Subansiri respectively.

- These names reflect and indicate from one aspect, that China's proposal on the sovereignty claim of South Tibet region has a prominent historical, cultural, administrative and jurisdictional basis.
- While experts said the move was meant to underscore its territorial sovereignty to India, the Chinese government said it was a legitimate process as part of a census exercise, and indicated that more could follow.

Indo-China territorial dispute

- The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC).
- While China claims Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, India asserts that the dispute covers Aksai Chin area which was occupied by China during the 1962 war.
- The two sides have so far held 19 rounds of Special Representatives talks to resolve the boundary dispute.

Mains Perspective

Discuss the Indo-China territorial disputes in the light of the renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh ?

Sources: The Hindu [BBC](#) [The Indian Express](#)

BCIM corridor

After a gap of over two years, the meeting of Joint Study Group (JSG) of academics and officials of the four countries on April 25-26 is expected to finalise the road map for the BCIM economic corridor.

Mains : India and its neighbourhood- relations.

What is BCIM corridor?

- The BCIM economic corridor hopes to connect Kolkata with Kunming, capital of the Yunnan province. It envisages formation of a thriving economic belt, focusing on cross-border transport, energy and telecommunication networks.
- Starting from Kunming, the route passes through nodal points, such as Mandalay and Lashio in Myanmar. It heads towards Kolkata after passing through Manipur and Silchar, before crossing Bangladesh via Sylhet and Dhaka, with branches extending to the ports of Cox Bazar and Chittagong.
- The multi-modal corridor will be the first expressway between India and China and will pass through Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- The advantages that are envisaged to accrue from greater market access for goods, services and energy, elimination of non-tariff barriers, better trade facilitation, investment in infrastructure development, joint exploration and development of mineral, water, and other natural resources, development of value and supply chains based on comparative advantages, by translating

comparative advantages into competitive advantages, and through closer people to people contact.

- This interconnectedness would facilitate the cross-border flow of people and goods, minimize overland trade obstacles, ensure greater market access and increase multilateral trade.

Prelims perspective

BCIM Corridor was in news recently. Which of the following statements are correct with reference to BCIM Corridor?

1. BCIM Economic Corridor will be the first expressway between India and China passing through Myanmar and Bangladesh.
2. Chinese government made BCIM a part of One belt one road initiative of China.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 or 2

Mains Perspective

Model questions

BCIM-EC is a cooperation platform for economic development and prosperity of the region. How far linking BCIM with One Belt One road initiative affect Indian Interests?

Sources: The Hindu

Logistics exchange and memorandum of agreement

India is expected to notify the operationalising of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the U.S. India and the U.S. concluded the logistics agreement, the first of the three foundational agreements between the two nations, last August.

Mains : GS 2 Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

- LEMOA or Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement is another name for Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), an agreement the US has with many of its allies.
- LEMOA allows each military to avail logistics support facilities — fuel, spare parts, mechanics, etc. — of the other while on joint training, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), and port calls.
- The agreement lays out the procedure for billing for these facilities as part of a larger accounting transactions.
- Under LEMOA, while Indian logistics support will be available to the US military, Indian armed forces will benefit from access to a large number of US military

bases globally, particularly while undertaking HADR missions in a diaspora crisis.

- It will allow India to respond promptly to emerging situations or humanitarian crises, and will expand Indian military's operational environment globally.

A shot in the arm

Signed on August 29, 2016, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum Of Agreement is seen as an enabling agreement for India-U.S. defence cooperation



- LEMOA is a facilitating agreement that establishes basic terms, conditions, and procedures for reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies, and services between Indian armed forces and the U.S.

What it seeks

- Reciprocal logistic support to be used during port visits, joint exercises, training, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- Provision of logistic support would be in return for either cash payment or reciprocity

What it does not entail

- Obligations on either party to carry out any joint activity
- It does not provide for the establishment of any bases or basing arrangements

Image : *The Hindu*

Foundational agreements of U.S.A

There are two other logistics and information sharing agreements, the Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), which, together with LSA form the three foundational agreements that define American defence ties with partner countries. These other two agreements are yet to be signed.

Prelims Perspective

A question can be expected from any of the following areas

- A one sentence description of LEMOA.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

- What is Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)? Discuss the prospects of signing the agreement.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [The Indian Express](#)

India Cyprus relations

President of the Republic of Cyprus, will ask Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi if there is any way he can help in his country's efforts to reunify the northern and southern parts of Cyprus.

Mains : GS 2 International relations

Highlights

- Cyprus President thinks India can help in unification efforts as India is close to Turkey
- The Indian government supports Cyprus on the basis of the U.N. resolution.

Background : *In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus, overran parts of it and has since stationed troops in the north. There is a ceasefire line that cuts across Cyprus, monitored by U.N. troops.*

India Cyprus relations

- Cyprus is looking for India's help in developing a technology park along the lines of Silicon Valley.
- Cyprus is pitching itself as both an investment destination and as a bridge to both Europe and the Gulf region, given both its location as well as its relations with the countries in the region.
- India used Cyprus's help to help evacuate its citizens from Lebanon in 2006.
- Cyprus supports India in its bid to enter the UN Security Council as a permanent member. It supports India's efforts on the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- Cyprus has consistently spoken in favour of India in various international fora on Kashmir. An upcoming visit of by the President of Cyprus is likely to see further steps being taken to deepen the bilateral engagement.

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

India, Sri Lanka Highlights of Sri Lankan Prime Minister's visit

Mains : GS 2 India and its neighborhood- relations.

Highlights of Sri Lankan Prime Minister's visit

- The meeting between officials is expected to finalise an MoU on developing energy and infrastructure projects in Trincomalee, as well as fast-tracking negotiations for the upgraded Free Trade Agreement —the ETCA (Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement)

Both projects face opposition in Sri Lanka

- Talks on the ETCA, is progressing, to iron out differences on the upgraded Free Trade Agreement of 2000 to include services, investment and technological trade. It faces opposition from Professionals as well as businessman.
- Sri Lankans are protesting against the FTA in operation for the past 17 years as it made difficult for the Sri Lankans to import licenses, placed restrictions on ports, times of the year they are allowed to use the ports, certification and quarantine times

Mains Perspective

Similar questions

In respect of India-Sri Lanka relations, discuss how domestic factors influence foreign policy [UPSC Mains 2013]

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

India - Eurasian Economic Union FTA

India is set to formalise a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union.

Mains : GS 2 Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Details

- The FTA is expected to open up a huge market with a trade potential of \$37 to 62 billion.
- The Eurasian market could open up new export opportunities for Kerala in medical tourism, IT and IT-enabled services, besides traditional sectors like spices, marine products, coir and rubber.

Why FTA with Eurasian Economic Union?

- The FTA with the Eurasian countries was dictated by India's need to diversify into new markets.

Eurasian Economic Union

- Trade between India and the five Eurasian countries stands at about \$11 billion.
- The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is an economic union of states located primarily in northern Eurasia.
- It was established in 2015.
- The Eurasian Economic Union comprises Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Prelims perspective

Similar questions [*UPSC Prelims 2016*]

Which of the following is **not** a member of 'Gulf Cooperation Council'?

- (a) Iran
- (b) Saudi Arabia
- (c) Oman
- (d) Kuwait

Answer A

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Several free trade agreements has been in the news recently. What do you mean by a free trade agreement? Explain the pros and cons of signing various free trade agreements.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

GS 3 Indian Economy

PM launches low-cost regional flights - UDAN – Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik

Prime Minister inaugurated the first UDAN flight on the Shimla-Delhi route and simultaneously flagged off flights on the Kadapa-Hyderabad and Nanded-Hyderabad sectors through a video conference from Shimla.

Mains : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

GS 2 Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

- Five airlines – SpiceJet, Alliance Air, TruJet, Air Deccan and Air Odisha Aviation – recently won bids to fly 128 routes connecting 70 airports under the regional connectivity scheme.
- The Prime Minister said 30 new airports will start commercial operations in Tier II and Tier III city routes within a year.

Also Read : [Regional Connectivity Scheme](#)

Sources: [The Hindu pib](#)

GAAR - General Anti-Avoidance Rules

Industry is concerned about the greater subjective authority being given to the tax department following government implementing provisions of GAAR.

Mains : GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment. Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

What is GAAR/General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR)?

- The General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) are designed to prevent the avoidance of tax by taking advantage of international tax laws.
- Government can invoke GAAR provisions If the major outcome of a transaction is a tax benefit and there is no sound business basis for the transaction.

Issues with GAAR

- A common criticism of GAAR is that it provides discretion and authority to the tax administration which can be misused.
- The tax authorities under GAAR can reclassify a transaction or the profits arising from it and make them taxable

Safeguards

- Government has included several safeguards against bullying by tax authorities, such as several layers of permissions required before GAAR is invoked.
- The Department clarified that GAAR will not be invoked in cases where investments are routed through tax treaties that have a sufficient limitation of benefit (LOB). Such LOB clauses usually require the investor to meet certain

investment and employment requirements so that only resident companies benefit from the deal.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

The term 'General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR)' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of

- a. mining operation by multinational companies in resource-rich but backward areas
- b. curbing tax evasion
- c. exploitation of genetic resources of a country by multinational companies
- d. lack of consideration of environmental costs in the planning and implementation of developmental projects

Mains Perspective

Model questions

What do you mean by General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR)? Does the rule give too much power to tax administrators? Evaluate the pros and cons of the rule and give your suggestions

Sources: [The Hindu PRS Blog](#)

Rail Development Authority (RDA)

The Central government has decided to set up an independent rail regulator.

Mains : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Mandate of the rail regulator - Rail Development Authority (RDA)

- Recommend passenger fares commensurate with costs.

It will only make recommendations to the Ministry which will take a final call on passenger and freight fares.

- Setting performance standards for rail operations
- Create level playing policy for private sector participation.
- Frame principles for social service obligation
- Fix efficiency standards and resolve disputes related to future concession agreements
- Collect, analyse and disseminate information and statistics concerning the rail sector.

The regulator will become functional through an executive order. The authority will be strengthened later through legislative route.

Significance

It will improve the services offered to passengers, provide comfort to investors in the rail sector and will enhance transparency and accountability.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Which of the following is/are the function of the proposed Rail Development Authority?

1. Fixing passenger fares
2. Suggest policies for improving private sector participation

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Answer C

Mains Perspective

Model questions

The establishment of Rail development authority can pave the way for professional management of Railways .Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Standing deposit facility (SDF)

Following demonetisation deposits in the banking system increased. RBI may take measures to drain surplus liquidity.

Mains : GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Highlights

- The surplus liquidity in the system is estimated to be about ₹4 lakh crore.
- The surplus liquidity in the system is likely to rise further when the government starts spending in the new fiscal year

Standing deposit facility (SDF)

- SDF is a proposed as a tool to tackle liquidity.
- SDF is a mechanism to drain surplus cash at a rate lower than the repo rate without the need for any collateral.
- The implementation of SDF requires an amendment to the RBI Act.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Consider the following statements about proposed Standing deposit facility (SDF)?

1. SDF is is used to inject money into banking system
2. SDF does not require any collateral
3. The implementation of SDF will require an amendment to the RBI Act.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only

- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 2 only

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

India, Russia seal deal on Kudankulam Unit 1

India has taken over full operational control of Unit 1 of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP). India signed a joint statement with Russia on the final takeover of the unit, formally marking the full transition.

Mains : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Highlights

- The agreement was signed between representatives of Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. and the ASE Group of Companies, a subsidiary of ROSATOM State Atomic Energy Corporation of Russia.
- The commercial operation and the warranty period of Unit 1 started in December 2014. The warranty is typically for one year, which ended in December 2015.
- However, the final takeover agreement was delayed to ensure the reliability of the plant and equipment as this is the first of a series of six reactors.
- In March 2017, the joint protocol on provisional acceptance of Unit 2 of the plant was signed, which marked the start of its commercial operation.

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (or Koodankulam NPP or KKNPP) is a nuclear power station in Koodankulam in the Tirunelveli district of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Construction on the plant began on 31 March 2002 but faced several delays due to the fishermen's objection.

History

An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) on the project was signed on 20 November 1988 by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and then Soviet head of state Mikhail Gorbachev, for the construction of two reactors. The project remained in limbo for a decade due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Across the world nuclear power plants has faced issues related to safety and cost overruns. Along with this the fall in prices of renewable energy should be seen as an opportunity to have a serious rethink on the proposed nuclear power plants. Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

N.K. Singh panel report

The Centre can take a pause on the fiscal consolidation front over the next three years by maintaining a fiscal deficit to GDP ratio of 3% till 2019-20 as per the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Review Committee.

Mains : GS 3 Government Budgeting.

Recommendations made by N.K Singh Panel

- The panel advocated reaching a fiscal deficit to GDP ratio of 2.8% in 2020-21, 2.6% the subsequent year and 2.5% in 2022-23.
- **Escape clause** : It allows the government to skip the fiscal deficit target for a particular year, in situations that include national security concerns, acts of war, national calamities, a collapse of the agriculture sector and far-reaching structural reforms with unanticipated fiscal implications.
- It recommended that deviations from the stipulated fiscal targets should not be more than 0.5%. The escape clause can also be triggered if the economy's real output growth slips by three percentage points from the average of the previous four quarters.
- **Buoyancy clause** : Fiscal deficit must fall at least 0.5% below the target if real output grows 3% faster than that average.
- The panel recommended scrapping of existing FRBM Act and adoption of a new Debt and Fiscal Responsibility Act.
- It proposed the creation of a Fiscal Council that the government must consult before invoking escape clauses.

FRBM Act

- The FRBM law enacted in 2003 had originally envisaged attaining a fiscal deficit of 3% of GDP by 2008-09, but amendments over the years had revised the year for achieving the same target to 2017-18.
- The N .K Singh led committee was set up to comprehensively review and give recommendations on the FRBM roadmap for future.

Prelims Perspective

Budget related questions were asked in the preliminary examination several times. To see how questions can come from this portion visit our [IAS preparation page](#).

Mains Perspective

Model questions

What were the reasons for the introduction of Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003? Discuss critically its salient features and their effectiveness. 200 words. **[UPSC Mains 2013]**

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Business Reform Action Plan 2017

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with the World Bank Group, released the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) 2017 for implementation by States/UTs

Mains : **GS 3** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

What is Business Reform Action Plan?

- The BRAP includes 405 recommendations for reforms on regulatory processes, policies, practices and procedures spread across 12 reform areas to be implemented by the states and UTs
- **Reform areas** : labour regulation enablers; contract enforcement; registering property; inspection reform enablers; single window system; land availability and allotment; construction permit enablers; environmental registration enablers; obtaining utility permits; paying taxes; access to information and transparency enablers and sector specific reforms spanning the lifecycle of a typical business.
- The last date to implement the reform is 31.10.2017.
- DIPP will collect feedback from businesses on the quality of implementation of the reforms claimed by the States and UTs.
- Feedback scores will be used to generate a ranking of States/UTs in terms of reform implementation.
- An online portal will be enabled to allow States/UTs to upload the reforms implemented along with the evidence.

Prelims Perspective

A question can be expected from any of the following areas

Consider the following statements about Business Reform Action Plan(BRAP) unveiled by the central government.

1. The plan will be implemented by central government for facilitating ease of doing business
2. The plan was released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under Ministry of Finance

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

What are the major impediments faced by companies while doing business in India?

How these are addressed through government's business reform action plan?

Sources: pib

BHIM-Aadhaar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched BHIM Aadhaar platform for merchants, Cash back and Referral bonus schemes for BHIM and declared about 75 townships going less-cash.

Mains : **GS 3** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of

resources, growth, development and employment. Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life .

BHIM-Aadhaar

- BHIM-Aadhaar is the merchant interface of the BHIM App,
- Any Indian citizen can pay digitally using their biometric data like their thumb imprint on a merchant's' biometric enabled device which could be smart phone having a biometric reader.
- Citizens without access to smart phones, internet, debit or credit cards will be able to transact digitally through the BHIM Aadhaar platform.

Cash back and Referral bonus.

- Under the Referral bonus scheme both the existing user who refers BHIM and the new user who adopts BHIM would get a cash bonus credited directly to their account.
- Under the Cashback scheme the merchants will get a cash back on every transaction using BHIM. Both schemes are to be administered by MEITY and implemented by NPCI.a

What is BHIM app?

- BHIM is a biometric payment system app using Aadhaar platform, and is based on Unified Payment Interface (UPI) to facilitate e-payments directly through bank.
- The Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is a simplified payment platform designed to make Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and USSD payment modes simpler and usable across feature phones and smartphones.

Advantages

- It can be used on all mobile devices, be it a smartphone or a feature phone with or without internet connection
- The new app is expected to minimise the role of plastic cards and point of sale machines.
- The app will eliminate fee payments for service providers like MasterCard and Visa, which has been a stumbling block in people switching to digital payments.
- The app can be used to send and receive money through smartphones.
- Money can also be sent to non UPI supported banks.
- Bank balance can also be checked through the app.

Features

- The app will facilitate retail banking operations such as transfer of money, checking balance, etc through UPI, which was developed by the National Payments Corporation of India of India.
- BHIM will let you send and receive money to other UPI accounts or addresses. You can also send money via IFSC (Indian Financial System Code) and MMID

(Mobile Money Identifier) Code to users who don't have a UPI-based bank account.

- Up to Rs 10,000 can be sent per transaction, and up to Rs 20,000 in any 24 hours.

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements about BHIM payment system

1. The payment system can be used only in smartphones
2. Money can be sent to non UPI supported banks through this system
3. It is developed by National Payment corporation of India

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

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Digital economy : A leveller or source of economic inequality *[UPSC 2016 mains essay question]*

Sources: [The Hindu](#) pib [The Indian Express](#)

Computer Emergency Response Team for the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin)

The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), has discussed the setting up of a Computer Emergency Response Team for the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin).

Mains : **GS 3** basics of cyber security.

Highlights

- Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) considered issues such as setting up of Computer Emergency Response Team for the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin), roadmap for National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE) and macro-prudential framework in India
- The move to set up an emergency response team comes in the backdrop of growing cyberattacks in the financial system.
- RBI had already created a specialised cell- Cybersecurity and Information Technology Examination (C-SITE)- within its supervision department to conduct detailed IT examination of banks' cybersecurity preparedness, to identify the gaps and to monitor the progress of remedial measures.
- More than 30 major banks were to be covered by the detailed IT examination in 2016-17 and all banks are to be covered by 2017-18.

Mains Perspective

Cyber security related questions asked in the previous year examinations.

- Cyber warfare is considered by some defence analysts to be a larger threat than

even Al Qaeda or terrorism. What do you understand by Cyber warfare? Outline the cyber threats which India is vulnerable to and bring out the state of the country's preparedness to deal with the same. **[UPSC Mains 2013]**

- Discuss the advantage and security implications of cloud hosting of servers vis-a-vis in-house machine-based hosting for government businesses. Considering the threats cyberspace poses for the country, India needs a "Digital Armed Force" to prevent crimes. **[UPSC Mains 2015]**
- Critically evaluate the National Cyber Security Policy, 2013 outlining the challenges perceived in its effective implementation. **[UPSC Mains 2015]**

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Sovereign Gold Bonds 2017-18 – Series I

Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds 2017-18 – Series I. The bond will be issued by Reserve Bank India on behalf of the Government of India

Mains : GS 3 Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Sovereign gold bond scheme

Sovereign gold bond scheme is designed to reduce the import the physical gold and thereby to reduce the India's current account deficit. Under the scheme citizens can hold paper gold.

How gold bonds works?

Similar to bank deposits instead of cash gold is held by people under this scheme. When gold bond is brought one pays an amount equivalent to prevailing market prices of gold. He/ she earns interest on the the same amount at a rate of 2.75% for 8 years.(Tenure of gold bond). Finally on redemption one gets the prevailing market price on redeeming time plus interest earned.

Features

- Tenure : 8 years with exit option from 5th year onwards
- Interest rate 2.75%
- The Bonds will be sold through banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices and recognised stock exchanges viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange.
- The Bonds will be restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.
- The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram. Minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold.
- The maximum amount subscribed by an entity will not be more than 500 grams per person per fiscal year (April-March)

Advantages and attractions of the scheme

- Can be used as collateral for loans.
- Capital gains tax exemption on redemption.
- Zero risk of theft/ impurities associated with handling of physical gold.
- Tradability through stock exchanges.
- Availability in DEMAT and paper form.

Prelims Perspective

UPSC prelims 2016

What is/are the purpose/purposes of Government's 'Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme' and 'Gold Monetization Scheme'?

1. To bring the idle gold lying with Indian households into the economy
2. To promote FDI in the gold and jewellery sector
3. To reduce India's dependence on gold imports

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution: C

Mains Perspective

Model Questions

- Craze for gold in Indians has led to a surge in import of gold in recent years and put pressure on balance of payments and external value of rupee. In view of this, examine the merits of the Gold Monetization Scheme [*UPSC Mains 2015*]

Sources: [PIB](#) [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [Economic Times](#)

National Waterway-1 Jal Marg Vikas

The World Bank has approved a \$375 million loan for capacity augmentation of National Waterway-1(River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP).

Mains : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Jal Marg Vikas

- The 'Jal Marg Vikas' (National Waterway-1) project envisages to develop a fairway with 3 meters depth between Allahabad to Haldia covering a distance of 1620 kms
- The project is estimated to be completed in six years.
- This would enable commercial navigation of at least 1500 ton vessels.
- For implementation of the Jal Marg Vikas Project, technical assistance and investment support is being provided by the World Bank.
- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) through selected Consultancy firms

will conduct various studies, EIA and SIA The actual developmental works and the interventions required in the project would be decided based on the outcome of the above studies.

Funding : The estimated cost of the project was Rs. 4200 crore in 2013 which now went up to 5369 Crores.

Prelims Perspective

Identify the correct statements regarding 'Jal Marg Vikas' project:

1. It is a fully Government funded project
2. It aims to develop all the Inland Waterways of India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer: D

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Discuss the major impediments in developing waterways across India. Give your suggestions.

Sources: [pib](#) [The Hindu](#) [pib](#)

'Logistics and Integrated Transport Board

The Centre has begun discussions to set up a national level nodal body for all transport-related matters across modes including aviation, railways, surface transport and waterways.

Mains : GS 3 Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Highlights

- It will initially work on improving inter-ministerial co-ordination to facilitate an efficient multi-modal transport system in India
- The Board will include top officials from other ministries, Industry representatives, legal experts.
- **Objective :** Gradually set up a single unified transport ministry by merging the ministries of Aviation, Railways, Surface Transport and Shipping to ensure greater ease of doing business and boost India's internal and external trade
- Nearly 100 countries across the world have a Ministry of Transport or similar integrated equivalent rather than the collection of mode-specific ministries found in India.
- An earlier report by National Transport Development Policy Committee, suggested the need to have a single unified ministry to deliver multi modal transport system.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

The proposed 'Logistics and Integrated Transport Board' aims to

- a. improve facilities at ports
- b. facilitate an efficient multi-modal transport system in India
- c. improve cargo handling at ports and airports
- d. make movement of cargos on roads easier

Mains Perspective

Model questions

An effective multi modal logistics and transport sector will make Indian economy more competitive. Discuss

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

Doctors wary as Centre pushes for generic drugs

Following the Centre's advisory to physicians to prescribe drugs with generic names, doctors across the country are worried that any change in drug — especially for patients with chronic illnesses and critical care — may risk patients not getting the full benefit of a particular drug.

Mains : GS 2 Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why doctors are opposing generic drugs?

- Several practitioners say medicines made without strict quality checks could affect patients.
- A section of doctors argue that there is no concrete evidence to show that generic drugs are equal to branded drugs.
- Prescribing generic drugs can sometimes lead to complication and can lead to diseases going out of control.
- Some branded drugs are available at a lower cost than generic drugs as the price have been capped under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).
- Doctors opine that one should not compromise on quality of drugs, particularly in critical care sector, including cardiac emergencies.
- Stringent quality checks of generic drugs are missing in India.
- The Indian Medical Association (IMA), while welcoming the push for generic drugs, insists that it is "discretionary and non-mandatory".

Drug quality checking in India

- The number of drug inspectors for the entire country is grossly insufficient.
- The government itself admits that less than 0.01% of the drugs produced in the country are tested for quality.

The way forward

- The IMA is for promotion of drugs in the NLEM so that all drugs are price capped

and cheaper.

- While writing the generic name of the drug, mentioning the name of the company of whose generic the patient is going to buy will be a good practice.

Mains Perspective

Model questions

While the promotion of generic drugs will go a long way in ensuring that healthcare becomes affordable to all more needs to be done to ensure quality of generics in India.

Comment

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

National Standards Conclave

Department of Commerce, Government of India in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) and other knowledge partners is organizing the 4th National Standards Conclave.

Mains : Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

National Standards Conclave

Objective

To bring awareness and prepare Industries, Central Government Ministries, State Governments, regulatory/standards setting and conformity assessment bodies on the growing importance of “Standards” in the changing scenario of global trade.

Why standards conclave?

The Standards Conclave is being held in the backdrop of diminishing importance of tariffs and rising influence of standards and regulation both in goods and services trade.

The importance of standards in industry

- Adoption of global standards are necessary if the Indian industry has to survive to the changing global scenario.
- Adoption of global standards will help in preventing flooding of domestic market with unsafe/substandard imports at the expense of our domestic industry as well as consumers.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

National Standards Conclave sometimes seen in news is related to

- a. consumer grievances
- b. project of CSIR to ensure standard weights and measures are used across India.
- c. to raise awareness about increasing importance of standards in global trade
- d. to set benchmark for various products manufactures in India

Sources: [pib](#)

GS 3 Environment and Ecology

Ken-Betwa project

The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), the apex environment ministry authority that clears requests for diverting forest land for projects, has imposed tough conditions on the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project.

Mains: GS 3 Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Ken Betwa river linking project

- The Ken-Betwa link project envisages diversion of surplus waters of Ken basin to water deficit Betwa basin.
- The Rs. 10,000-crore Ken-Betwa project will irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region
- Both rivers are tributaries of Yamuna and flows through Madhya pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

Features of the project

- The project consists of 230-km long canal and a series of barrages and dams connecting the Ken and Betwa rivers
- It will irrigate 3.5 lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh and 14,000 hectares of Uttar Pradesh, in Bundelkhand.
- The key projects are the Makodia and Dhaudhan dams.

The present Issue

- The project will requires large amount of land in the heart of Panna Tiger reserve.
- As compensation for the land affected by the project the Water Ministry had agreed to acquire about 8,000 hectares of forest land from the Madhya Pradesh government and revive them as forest.
- The FAC said this land was not good enough as it was fragmented to revive a forest that is part of tiger habitat it needs to be contiguous.
- The FAC has also asked for the project's main canal to be re-aligned.

Prelims perspective:

Which among the following tiger reserve is affected by the Ken-Betwa Project?

- a) Jim Corbett
- b) Panna Tiger Reserve
- c) Manas Tiger Reserve
- d) Melghat Tiger Reserve

Mains Perspective

What are the socio economic and political factors that cause hindrance in the progress of inter linking of rivers in India?

Source: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#)

Project Elephant - All-India Synchronised Asian Elephant Population Estimation

The All-India Synchronised Asian Elephant Population Estimation, will be carried out simultaneously in the southern States from May 16 to 19, and earlier in eastern States, after a five-year gap.

Mains: GS 3 Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Highlights

- All India counting exercise in May will assess the health of the iconic species
- Volunteers and wildlife activists will carry out census across forests and other habitats to count the actual number of wild elephants in the country.
- Various methods - direct sample block counts and indirect or line transect dung counts - are employed to estimate the number of elephants.
- The protocols have been designed and approved by the Project Elephant Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.
- The census is expected to show the impact of growing conflicts with humans.

Project Elephant

Project Elephant was launched by government of India in 1992

It is a flagship conservation project that aims to conserve the elephant and its habitats across 10 major landscapes.

The major objectives are

- Protection of elephants, their natural habitats and elephant corridors
- Address issues of man- animal conflict
- Ensure welfare of captive Elephants

Prelims perspective:

Which of the following is/are NOT the components of Project Elephant?

- a. Protection of elephants, their natural habitats and elephant corridors
- b. Addressing man- animal conflict
- c. Welfare of domesticated Elephants
- d. **None of the above**

Source: [The Hindu](#) Environmental Studies From Crisis to Cure by R Rajagopalan

‘Indian wolf’ in Sunderbans

A picture of an Indian wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) taken by an individual from Sunderbans sparked speculation of wolf's presence in mangrove forests. This was the first record of an Indian wolf from a "mangrove terrain".

Mains : GS 3 Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Indian Wolf

- The Indian wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*) is a subspecies of grey wolf that ranges from Israel to the Indian Subcontinent.
- The Indian wolf is a Schedule I animal in the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 of India.
- Indian wolf prefers to live in scrublands, grasslands and semi-arid pastoral, agricultural landscape,

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Several questions related to flora and fauna of India were asked in the previous year. Visit our [IAS preparation page](#) to see the previous year questions.

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions in Geneva

An inter-ministerial Indian delegation headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Ajay Narayan Jha, will participate in the 2017 Conference of Parties (COPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm (BRS) Conventions.

Mains : GS 3 Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Highlights

- The three COPs to BRS Conventions will be held jointly in Geneva, Switzerland.
- This year the meetings will also feature a high-level segment to be attended by Ministers of the Parties.
- The theme of the meetings and the high-level segment will be - "***A future detoxified: sound management of chemicals and waste***".
- While the Basel Convention will discuss the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal, the Rotterdam Convention will deliberate on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade" and the Stockholm Convention is on persistent organic pollutants (POPs)".

BRS Conventions – Brief Background

The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions are multilateral environmental agreements, which share the common objective of protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes.

Basel Convention : The Convention aims towards **restricting transboundary movements of hazardous wastes** and its disposal with environmentally sound management (ESM).

Rotterdam Convention : The Rotterdam Convention is a multilateral environmental agreement which prescribes obligations on the importers and exporters of certain hazardous chemicals. **The Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure** is the mechanism for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing Parties, as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of those chemicals listed in Annex III of the Convention and for ensuring compliance with these decisions by exporting Parties.

Stockholm Convention : The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from a class of chemicals known as **Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**. Under the Convention, the chemicals can be listed for complete elimination from production, use, export and import (Annex-A), Restriction in use and production for specific purpose only (Annex-B) or Unintentional production (Annex-C).

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Which of the following international agreement deals with the transboundary movement of hazardous waste?

- a. Rotterdam convention
- b. Stockholm convention
- c. Basel convention
- d. Montreal Protocol

Sources: Read more on all the three conventions mentioned above - [pib](#)

Heat wave

Over four thousand people died in India due to severe heat wave over the last four years, of which only Andhra Pradesh and Telangana accounted for about 92 per cent.

Mains : GS 3 Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Highlights

- A total of 4,246 people died in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana alone during last four years.
- The figures, however, were larger across the country as causes other than the direct reasons like heat stroke and dehydration are seldom accounted for
- Since last year IMD has started issuing heat wave alerts.
- With global temperatures on the rise, the instances of heat wave are increasing.

What is Heat Wave?

- A heat wave is a prolonged period of excessively hot weather, which may be accompanied by high humidity, especially in oceanic climate countries. While definitions vary, a heat wave is measured relative to the usual weather in the area

and relative to normal temperatures for the season.

- The IMD broadly defines a heat wave as when a place's temperature is 5-6°C above normal.

Criteria for Heat Wave

The following is the criteria for determining heat wave.

Heat wave need not be considered till maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40° C for Plains and at least 30° C for Hilly regions.

1. When normal maximum temperature of a station is less than or equal to 40° C

Heat Wave: Departure from normal is 5° C to 6° C

Severe Heat Wave : Departure from normal is 7° C or more

2. When normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40° C

Heat Wave : Departure from normal is 4° C to 5° C

Severe Heat Wave : Departure from normal is 6° C or more

3. When actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more irrespective of normal maximum temperature, heat wave should be declared.

Prelims Perspective

A question about heat wave, criteria for determining heat wave can figure in the examination

Mains Perspective

Similar Questions

- How important are vulnerability and risk assessment for pre-disaster management? As an administrator, what are key areas that you would focus on in a Disaster Management System? *[UPSC Mains 2013]*
- Drought has been recognized as a disaster in view of its spatial expanse, temporal duration, slow onset and lasting effects on vulnerable sections. With a focus on the September 2010 guidelines from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), discuss the mechanisms for preparedness to deal with likely El Nino and La Nina fallouts in India. *[UPSC Mains 2014]*

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#) [IMD](#)

GS 3 Science and Technology

Chenani-Nashri tunnel

The Prime Minister Inaugurated India's longest highways tunnel - the Chenani- Nashri tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir. The 9 km long, twin-tube, all-weather tunnel between Udhampur and Ramban in Jammu & Kashmir is not only India's longest highways tunnel but also Asia's longest bi-directional highways tunnel.

Mains : GS 3 Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

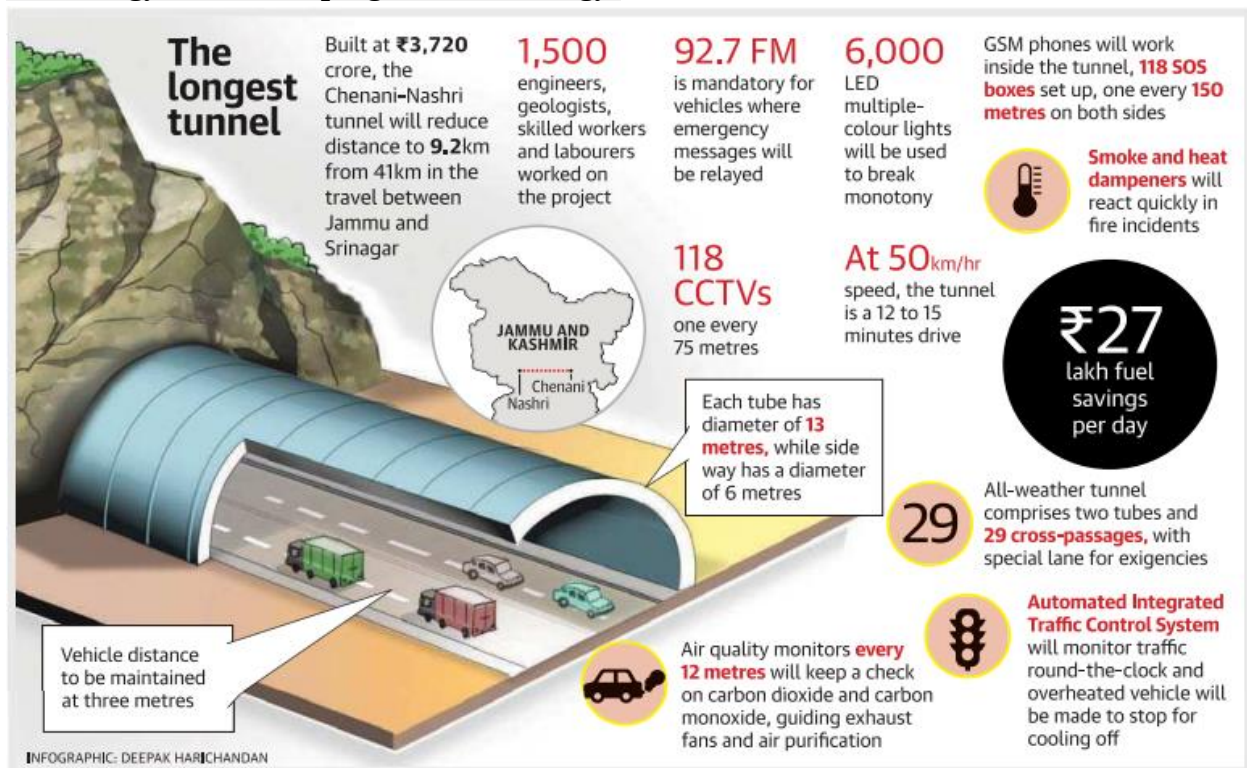


Image : The Hindu

INSIDE INDIA'S LONGEST ROAD TUNNEL

TUNNEL WILL

CUT Jammu-Srinagar distance by 30 km; travel time by 2 hours

SAVE fuel worth Rs 27 lakh per day between Chenani and Nashri

PROVIDE better road connectivity to Doda, Baderwah, Kishtwar

PRESERVE forests in the ecologically sensitive Patnitop area

TUNNEL STATS

COST Rs 3,720 CRORE

CONSTRUCTION TIME 5.5 years

BUILDER Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) Ltd

CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM), also known as Sequential Excavation Method (SEM), the technique used in most famous new tunnels

LENGTH 9.2 km

DIAMETER OF MAIN TUBE 13 m

DIAMETER OF ESCAPE TUBE 6 m

TOTAL TUBE LENGTH 19 km (including 9 km of each of the 2 tubes and 1 km of connecting tubes between them)

FRESH AIR INLETS Every 8 metres in main tube

EXHAUSTS Every 100 m, opening into escape tube

TRAVEL COST

Rs 55

Cars (Rs 85 return, Rs 1,870 monthly return)

Rs 90

Minibuses (Rs 135 return)

Rs 190

Buses, trucks (Rs 285 return)

PROHIBITED: VEHICLES TALLER THAN 5 M

Image : The Indian Express

Prelims perspective

Model questions

India's longest highways tunnel was recently inaugurated in which of the following states.

- Jammu and Kashmir
- Goa
- Himanchal Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh

Mains Perspective

Model questions

Science and Technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the Nation. [UPSC Mains 2013]

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Indian Express](#)

BARAK Missile System

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) of the Defence Ministry on Monday approved the purchase of Barak surface-to-air missiles (SAM) for the Navy

Mains : GS 3 Security challenges and their management in border areas.

BARAK Missile System

- Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) and Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MR-SAM) are jointly developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), India and M/s Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI), Israel and as per literature available in Internet, M/s IAI, Israel refers this missile as Barak-8 missile system (upgraded version of BARAK Missile System).
- LR-SAM is the Ship Launch Version and Project MR-SAM is the Land Launch Version of Barak-08 Missile system.
- MR-SAM detects incoming enemy aircraft while they are well over 100 km away and destroys them at range upto 70 km.
- LR-SAM has got long range engagement capability to penetrate in deep water/land to intercept all types of aerial targets (like Subsonic & Supersonic Missiles, Fighter Aircraft, Maritime Patrolling Aircraft (MPA), Helicopter and Sea Skimming Missiles).
- Israeli-built Barak short-range SAMs are installed on most of the front-line warships, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements

1. The Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MR-SAM) is jointly developed by India and Israel
2. MR-SAM is the Ship Launch Version of Barak-08 Missile system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer A

Sources: [The Hindu](#) pib

Geotagging of assets created under RKVY

Inventory of assets created by RKVY will be geotagged for better monitoring and management of assets. National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), wing of Indian Space Research Organisation is providing technical support to RKVY division and has come up with a detailed procedure for the same.

Mains : GS 3 Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life .

What is geo tagging?

- It is the process of adding geographical identification like latitude and longitude to various media such as a photo or video.
- It provides users the location of the content of a given picture.

- Geomapping-a visual representation of the geographical location of geotagged assets layered on top of map or satellite imagery

Why is Geotagging important?

- Several assets are created in the states under various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture. Under RKVY also, states have been utilising substantial amount of funds for creation of infrastructure/assets in agriculture and allied sectors
- Monitoring of such wide spread activities is of paramount importance.

Who does it?

- National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) , ISRO at Hyderabad : This centre of ISRO has a software platform, Bhuvan that allows users to explore a 2D/3D representation of the surface of the Earth.
- The assets created under RKVY could be monitored by Geotagging them using BHUVAN, a geoplatform of National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of ISRO, Hyderabad.

Prelims perspective

Consider the following statements about geo tagging

1. It provides users the location of the content of a given picture
2. Recently government has proposed to geotag assets created under RKVY

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer B

Mains perspective

Model questions

What do you mean by geo- tagging? Explain how it will help in better management and utilisation of government assets.

Sources: pib

Programme on cyber physical systems

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has initiated a Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) programme.

Mains : GS 3 Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life .

Highlights

- CPS is an interdisciplinary field that deals with the deployment of computer-based systems that do things in the physical world, such as, for instance, the self-driven cars produced by Google and Tesla.
- It deals with self-driven cars, autonomous unmanned vehicles and aircraft

navigation systems

- An initial budget of ₹100 crore has been earmarked for the project in the current financial year.
- The thrust of the initiative would be to encourage greater synergy between the university scientists and industry.
- Centres of excellence would be developed at the IITs and universities and there would be dedicated courses [on the subject].
- It has been conceived as a ₹3,000-crore exercise that would, at first, take root in some of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

All about bitcoins

All you want to know about bitcoins

Mains : GS 3 Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life .

What is a bitcoin?

It is an electronic or digital currency that works on a peer-to-peer basis. . A bitcoin is not printed currency but is a non-repudiable record of every transaction that it has been through. All this is part of a huge ledger called the blockchain.

- It is decentralised and has no central authority controlling it.
- It can be sent from one person to another
- Online payments can be sent without either side knowing the identity of the other.

How is a new bitcoin generated?

- A bitcoin is generated when an entity, i.e. a person or a business, uses software power to solve a mathematical puzzle that makes the blockchain more secure.
- The system depends on cryptography to control the creation of the currency
- The blockchain system is designed such that at its maximum only 21 million bitcoins can be produced and in circulation. Presently about 15.2 million bitcoins have been mined (or produced).

Where do you get bitcoins?

- Bitcoins are available in bitcoin exchanges. You could also purchase bitcoins from other users.

Unocoin is a Bengaluru-based company that allows users to buy, sell, store or use bitcoins.

How does the payment system work?

When you send a bitcoin to a receiver, the transaction is included in the blockchain and broadcast to the network. The blockchain ensures that the same bitcoin is not spent twice by the same user. A computer network validates the transaction using algorithms so that the transaction becomes unalterable. Once validated, the transaction is added to

others to create a block of data for the ledger.

Prelims Perspective

With reference to 'Bitcoins', sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct? **[UPSC 2016]**

1. Bitcoins are tracked by the Central Banks of the countries
2. Anyone with a Bitcoin address can send and receive Bitcoins from anyone else with a Bitcoin address.
3. Online payments can be sent without either side knowing the identity of the other.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution: B

Mains Perspective

What are bitcoins? Explain the working of bitcoins. Will the emergence of cryptocurrencies pave the way for new methods of financing subversive activities?

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

H1N1

The number of swine flu deaths has reached an alarming high in Maharashtra while several people are admitted in hospitals.

Mains : GS 2 Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Highlights

- There is a fourfold increase in H1N1 deaths as compared to the same period [January-April] last year.
- The extreme and continuing variance in temperatures creates a favourable environment for the swine flu virus to thrive.

H1N1/Swine flu

- It is a human respiratory infection caused by an influenza strain that started in pigs.
- Swine flu was first recognised in the 1919 pandemic and still circulates as a seasonal flu virus.
- Swine flu is caused by the H1N1 virus strain, which started in pigs.
- Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, chills, weakness and body aches.
- Children, pregnant women and the elderly are at risk from severe infection.
- Typical treatment includes rest, pain relievers and fluids. In some cases antiviral medication and IV fluids may be required.

- It spreads through airborne respiratory droplets, skin-to-skin contact, saliva, touching a contaminated surface

Prelims Perspective

Similar Question [UPSC Prelims 2015]

H1N1 virus is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to which one of the following diseases?

- a) AIDS
- b) Bird Flu
- c) Dengue
- d) Swine Flu

Mains Perspective

Examine the reasons behind occasional outbreaks of contagious diseases in various part of the country? What measures should be taken to prevent such outbreaks in future?

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [Google Health Card](#)

Cassini spacecraft

Findings from the data collected by NASA's Cassini spacecraft suggest the possibility that icy moons like Saturn's Enceladus in the outer solar system may host microbes of other forms of alien life.

Mains : GS 3 Awareness in the fields of IT, Space

The discovery

- Plumes of gas erupting out of Enceladus — a small moon with an ocean of liquid water beneath its icy crust — contain hydrogen.
- Scientists infer that there are hydrothermal chemical reactions similar to those that occur at hot fissures at the ocean bottoms on the earth.

On the earth at least, hydrothermal vents thrive with microbial life, offering up the potential that icy moons far away from Earth could be habitable.

- This is the latest discovery by Cassini
- Several observations from different experiments points to the fact that icy moons of outer planets may contain life.

The Cassini mission

- The Cassini mission to Saturn is an interplanetary space exploration done to explore Saturn.
- Cassini is a sophisticated robotic spacecraft orbiting the ringed planet and studying the Saturnian system in detail.
- It is joint endeavor of NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Italian space agency, Agenzia Spaziale Italiana (ASI),

Huygens

Cassini also carried a probe called Huygens, which parachuted to the surface of Saturn's largest moon, Titan, in January 2005 and returned spectacular results.

Prelims Perspective

What is 'Greased Lightning-10 (GL-10)', recently in the news? [UPSC Prelims 2016]

- (a) Electric plane tested by NASA
- (b) Solar-powered two-seater aircraft designed by Japan
- (c) Space observatory launched by China
- (d) Reusable rocket designed by ISRO

Solution: A

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Indian Express](#) [The Hindu](#) [NASA](#)

Belle-II experiment

The High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation (KEK) in Japan is getting ready to launch the Belle-II experiment, a massive collaboration of 700 scientists from across the globe.

Mains : GS 3 Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

Belle 2

- This experiment is designed to study violations of the Standard Model of particle physics. At Belle-II, highly intense electron-positron beams will be made to collide and a huge number of B-mesons (a boson containing the B, or beauty, quark) produced.
- A grand collaboration of 700 scientists from 23 countries, Belle-II has a significant Indian participation both on experimental and theoretical sides.
- The fourth layer of the six-layer, highly sensitive particle detector, has been built by Indian scientists.
- This experiment has the same aim as the LHCb experiment at CERN — to study the decay of the short-lived B-mesons, and unearth clues to “new physics”.

Prelims perspective

Model questions

Belle 2 experiment sometimes seen in news is related to

- a. NASA's space mission
- b. Indigenously manufactured UAV by DRDO
- c. Japanese particle physics project
- d. Neutrino project by India

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#)

BrahMos missile

The Indian Navy successfully carried out the maiden test-firing of the land attack variant of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a stealth frigate in the Bay of Bengal.

Mains :GS 3 Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

Highlights

- So far, the Navy has inducted only the anti-ship variant of Brahmos in many of the frontline vessels.
- The test-firing is seen as a major capability addition as it enables vessels to neutralise selected targets deep inland
- The missile was fired from Indian Naval Ship Teg, a guided missile frigate, on a target on land.

Brahmos Missile

- The BrahMos is a short-range supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or land.
- BrahMos, derived from Russian P-800 Oniks or Yakhont missile, is a joint product of India and Russia.
- The name BrahMos is derived from the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.
- While it was a joint development, most of the critical systems on board the missile, including the seeker, come from Russia.
- It is the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation.
- The missile travels at speeds of Mach 2.8 to 3.0.
- The missile is capable of carrying a warhead of 300 kg.

The present range of the BrahMos is 290 km, which is now in the process of being extended up to 450 km following India's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime last year.

Prelims Perspective

A question can be expected from any of the following areas

Consider the following statements

1. BrahMos missile is jointly developed by India and Israel.
2. It is the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

Sources: [The Hindu](#) [The Hindu](#) [Wikipedia](#)

GS 3 Security Issues

Joint doctrine Indian armed forces

The 'joint doctrine Indian armed forces' prepared by the Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff was released. The first joint military doctrine was released in 2006.

Mains : GS 3 Security challenges and their management in border areas. Linkages of organized crime with terrorism

Key points of the 'joint doctrine Indian armed forces

- It added surgical strikes including across the border, among India's possible responses to terrorist attacks.
- The reclassification of surgical strikes shows that they are not a one-off event any more but part of several options that would be considered.

In the last two years, the Army had carried out surgical strikes across the border with Myanmar and Line of Control (LoC) Pakistan, targeting terrorist camps.

- The doctrine will serve as a cornerstone document for application of military power in a synergised manner leading to enhanced efficiency, optimum utilisation of resources and financial savings.
- A lot of integration has taken place in the Indian armed forces which is highlighted in this doctrine
- It speaks of the threat posed by radicalisation of youth and also lays emphasis on a proactive philosophy of the Indian armed forces

Seeking synergy

A look at what the joint doctrine proposes

- Will facilitate the establishment of a broad framework for joint planning and conduct of operations
- Proposes joint training, unified command & control
- Lists the security threats India faces, including transnational threats, "proxy war" in J&K, and left-wing extremism



- Stresses that "surgical strikes" could be a key feature in counter-terror operations from now on

Image : The Hindu

Mains Perspective

Model questions

The term 'Hot Pursuit' and 'Surgical Strikes' are often used in connection with armed action against terrorist attacks. Discuss the strategic impact of such actions [UPSC

Mains 2016]

Sources: [The Hindu](#)

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Quick Facts

India's direct tax base to rise over the next three years

The NITI Aayog expects India's direct tax base to rise significantly over the next three years, due to demonetisation and steps taken to curb black money by the government. The cumulative result of these measures taken by the government would be increased tax compliance and an expansion in the tax base.

Global initiative launched to fight fake news - The News Integrity Initiative

A global alliance of tech industry and academic organisations unveiled plans to work together to combat the spread of "fake news" and improve public understanding of journalism. The News Integrity Initiative will launch with \$14 million from Facebook, the Ford Foundation, Mozilla and others, based at the City University of New York's journalism school, which will coordinate research, projects and events.

Travel and Tourism Competitive Index of World Economic Forum

India has moved 12 places up in this ranking from 52nd to 40th position in Travel and Tourism Competitive Index of World Economic Forum. In all, in last three years India has cumulatively improved its ranking by 25 places which is a significant achievement.

China-Nepal exercises

The China-Nepal exercise, "Sagarmatha Friendship – 2017" began on Sunday in Nepal Army's paratraining school in Maharajganj and will continue for 10 days.

Mother of All Bombs

The GBU-43 Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB), popularly called the Mother of All Bombs, is the largest non-nuclear bomb used in a battlefield. Weighing roughly 10,000 kg, and measuring 10 metres in length and a metre in width, the MOAB is a very high yield conventional GPS-guided munition, which was designed in 2002 by the US Air Force Research Laboratory. It packs in 8,000 kg of explosives – in comparison, the average weight of most deployed conventional bombs is roughly 250 kg. It was used by US in Afghanistan very recently.

"Quality Mark" Award Scheme for Dairy Cooperatives initiated by NDDB

National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) developed an initiative called "Quality Mark" Award Scheme for dairy Cooperatives aimed at bringing about process improvement in the entire value chain from producer to the consumer to ensure availability of safe and quality of milk and products both for the domestic and foreign market. The initiative does not propose any new/ additional system for Food Safety and

Quality Management but lays down minimum standards against each link of the processes required for ensuring quality and safety.

‘Oorja’ –CAPFs Under -19 Football Talent Hunt Tournament-2017 begins

India is hosting FIFA Under – 19 World Cup in October this year. The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been tasked to conduct ‘Oorja’, - CAPFs Under-19 Football Talent Hunt Tournament – 2017. CAPFs will be jointly organizing the tournament under the aegis of All India Police Sports Control Board throughout the country. It is part of Mission XI Million - a school contact programme that aims at improving the football ecosystem and ultimately widening the talent pool for the national team.

Web Portal “Bharat ke Veer”

The Union Home Minister, inaugurated the web portal and mobile application named “Bharat ke Veer” on the occasion of Valour Day of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) here today. The portal is an IT based platform, with an objective to enable willing donors to contribute towards the family of a braveheart who sacrificed his/her life in line of duty. The amount so donated will be credited to the account of ‘Next of Kin’ of those Central Armed Police Force/Central Para Military Force soldiers.

URJA MITRA App, Rural Feeder Monitoring Scheme

URJA MITRA empowers citizens by real time information sharing on power supply. The app is a first of its kind application which provides a central platform, Web-Portal (www.urjamitra.com) as well as Mobile App (iOS version and android version), for State Power Distribution utilities to disseminate power outage information to urban/rural power consumers across India through SMS/email/push notifications.

Government has launched ‘Rural Feeder Monitoring Scheme’ to monitor the quantity and quality parameters of power supply in rural areas of the country. The entire data shall also be hosted on National Power Portal (NPP) on real time basis and may be accessed by various stakeholders through web services.

PM launches projects related to SAUNI Yojana at Botad

The Prime Minister, dedicated to the nation, Phase-1 (Link 2) of the SAUNI (Saurashtra Narmada Avtaran Irrigation) Yojana, at Botad.(Gujarat) SAUNI Yojna is a project to divert one million acre feet (MAFT) of floodwater of Narmada to Saurashtra region and fill up 115 reservoirs of Saurashtra through a 1126-kilometre-long network of giant pipelines. The project envisages to channel the floodwater, which otherwise overflows the Narmada dam during monsoon and drains into the sea, to Saurashtra through Narmada main canal and Saurashtra branch canal (CBC) of the Narmada dam project. The entire SAUNI project targets to provide irrigation water for 10.22 lakh acres of land in Saurashtra region.

The trial run of the vistadome coach from Visakhapatnam to Araku inaugurated.

Vistadome coach have features like glass roof, LED lights, rotatable seats, GPS based info system etc will offer to tourists to enjoy scenic beauty not only at destination but also along the journey.

Cabinet approves setting up of a Special Purpose Vehicle to be called Government e-Marketplace (GeM SPV)

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the following Setting up of a Special Purpose Vehicle to be called Government e-Marketplace (GeM SPV) as the National Public Procurement Portal as Section 8 Company registered under the Companies Act, 2013, for providing procurement of goods & services required by Central & State Government organizations. GeM SPV shall provide an end-to-end online Marketplace for Central and State Government Ministries / Departments, Central & State Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs & SPSUs), Autonomous institutions and Local bodies, for procurement of common use goods & services in a transparent and efficient manner.

Portal and Mobile App of RUSA

The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, is going to launch its own portal and mobile app. The portal is a one-stop for States' Higher Education Plans, decision of the States' Higher Education Councils and details of the resources under this scheme.

RUSA is the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of the Department of Higher Education, MHRD which aims to provide strategic central funding to State Higher Education Departments and Institutions and achieve the broad objectives of access, equity and excellence. The State Higher Education Departments and Institutions undertake certain governance, academic and administrative reforms as a pre-requisite to be entitled for RUSA grants.

Flying to become paperless soon - DigiYatra plan

The Government is working on a DigiYatra plan to allow paperless travel for air passengers, including digital boarding passes at airports. The Centre is looking to make either Aadhaar or passport mandatory to book air tickets so that passengers needn't carry a printout of the ticket or document proof while entering the airport.

Micro and Small Enterprise Facilitation Council (MSEFC) Portal and MyMSME Mobile App

Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Council (MSEFC) portal and MyMSME Mobile App was launched by Union minister Venkaiah Naidu. The web portal would facilitate

implementation of the delayed payment provisions of the MSME Act 2006 and also assist in monitoring of delayed payment cases. The MyMSME mobile app on, provides information on all schemes implemented by the Ministry of MSME at one place. And MSMEs can also lodge grievances pertaining to Ministry of MSME through this app.

Indo - Mongolian Joint Exercise : Nomadic Elephant

Twelfth edition of Indo - Mongolian Joint Military Exercise Nomadic Elephant is presently underway at Vairengte - Mizoram. Nomadic Elephant is aimed at training the troops in Counter Insurgency & Counter Terrorism Operations under the United Nations mandate.

Belmont Forum

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of the Collaborative Agreement with French National Research Agency (ANR), France for supporting the Belmont Forum Secretariat. The Belmont Forum, created in 2009, is a high level group of the world's major and emerging funders of global environmental change research and international science councils. It provides an opportunity to identify study and deliver international environmental research priorities, for the society, in an accelerated way through trans-national research collaboration between natural and social scientists and alignment of international resources.

Ameenpur lake gets biodiversity heritage tag - “Biodiversity Heritage Sites” (BHS)

Ameenpur lake, located in the metropolitan area limits of Hyderabad has been designated a biodiversity heritage site. A major attraction for admirers of birds, particularly the majestic flamingos, is the first water body in the country to get such a status.

“Biodiversity Heritage Sites” (BHS) are ***well defined areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems - terrestrial, coastal and inland waters and, marine having rich biodiversity*** comprising of any one or more of the following components: richness of wild as well as domesticated species or intra-specific categories, high endemism, presence of rare and threatened species, keystone species, species of evolutionary significance, wild ancestors of domestic/cultivated species or their varieties, past pre-eminence of biological components represented by fossil beds and having significant cultural, ethical or aesthetic values and are important for the maintenance of cultural diversity, with or without a long history of human association with them.

Kerala hotspot of subterranean fishes

Kerala is the 'hotspot of Indian subterranean fishes, say scientists. Fishes, which live in the underground water bodies are called subterranean fishes. Of the eight subterranean fish species known from the country till date, six are found in Kerala. Due to the close resemblance with snakes people often kill them as soon as they are spotted. Due to the large-scale reclamation of water bodies, overexploitation of groundwater resources and introduction of the exotic predatory species like African catfishes into the wells, these fishes are moving towards 'silent extinction'.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS TEST - 01

1. With reference to the Nai Manzil scheme, which of the following statement is/are correct?

1. It falls under the Ministry of Skill Development
2. It is aimed at improving the employment opportunities of youth from Muslim community only.
3. The scheme is intended to cover people in between 17 to 35 age group
4. The scheme covers the entire country.

Select the correct option from the codes given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation

Object of the Nayi Manzil Scheme

To help young people from minority communities complete their education and improve their employment opportunities, employment generation of the youths and also extending loans for opening enterprises

Ministry concerned:

Ministry of Minority Affairs

Partners in the scheme:

World Bank has signed a \$50 million credit agreement for the project.

Target population:

Minority communities in general and Muslims in particular as it lags behind other minority communities in terms of educational attainments, with minimum of 30% seats for minority girls.

Target Age:

17 - 35 years

Target area:

Whole country

2. Consider the following statements with respect to CBFC.

1. CBFC is a statutory body constituted under the Copyright Act 1952.
2. The object of CBFC is to regulate the public exhibition of films.
3. It assigns certifications to films only.

Identify the correct statements.

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

Answer: C

Explanation:

Constitution:

The CBFC was constituted under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 and therefore is a statutory body.

Role:

Films can be publicly exhibited in India only after they have been certified by the Central Board of Film Certification.

It assigns certifications to films, television shows, television ads, and publications for exhibition, sale or hire in India

HQ: Mumbai

Important Committee related to CBFC, in news: Justice Mukul Mudgal Committee

3. Universal Account Number sometimes seen in news, is related to:

- A. The Income Tax Act
- B. The Aadhar Card

- C. The EPFO
- D. National Health Mission

Answer: C

The EPFO

Explanation:

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation won the National Award on e-Governance 2015-16 for launching the Universal Account Number (UAN).

About EPFO:

Employees' Provident Fund Organization is a statutory body.

It is one of the largest social security organizations in India in terms of volume of financial transactions undertaken and number of covered beneficiaries.

Concerned Ministry: Ministry of Labor and Employment.

UAN

Prime Minister of India launched universal account number for Employees covered by EPFO to enable PF number portability, in 2014.

Through UAN, active employees are provided a universal number which can be linked to various provident fund account numbers provided to them while working in different organizations.

A single account number can be used through all of workers' employments with various organizations.

The online portal allows a worker to view his provident fund balance on a real-time basis.

4. ANUBHAV was sometimes seen in news, is related to:

- A. Employment
- B. Satellite technology
- C. Women Empowerment
- D. Anti Corruption measures

Answer: A

Explanation :

ANUBHAV is a platform for retirees to share experience of working with the Government. This facility provides a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction to the retirees and also create a database of useful suggestion and information.

5. Kilkari was recently in news. It is related to:

- A. Coal Mine Allocations
- B. Mother and Child Development
- C. Sports and Youth
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation:

Kilkari, a mobile voice message service which will deliver weekly messages to families about pregnancy, family planning, nutrition, childbirth and maternal and child care. It will help monitor pregnant women and babies. The database for the Kilkari programme will be taken from the successful Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) to monitor pregnant women and babies. Every woman registered with MCTS will receive weekly messages relevant to the stage of pregnancy and age of the infant. In all, 72 free audio messages, each of about two-minute duration, will reach targeted beneficiaries from the fourth month of pregnancy until the child is a year old. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has provided the mobile phone application for Kilkari and mobile academy; the latter is a 240-minute free training module for ASHAs. RailTel Corporation of India Ltd, a mini ratna company, has been selected to provide data centre services for hosting the apps.

6. Which of the following best describes the aim of River Information System (RIS) of the Government of India?

- 1. RIS are modern traffic management systems enhancing a swift electronic data transfer between water and shore through in advance and real –time exchange of information.
- 2. It is managed by the Ministry of Water Resources

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation





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The first of its kind in India, the new system will facilitate safe and accurate navigation on National Waterway – 1 on the Ganges River. RIS is being implemented under the overall responsibility of Inland Waterway Authority of India, a statutory body administered by the Ministry of Shipping.

River Information Services (RIS) are combination of modern tracking equipment related hardware and software designed to optimize traffic and transport processes in inland navigation. The system enhances swift electronic data transfer between mobile vessels and shore (Base stations) through advance and real-time exchange of information. RIS aims to streamline the exchange of information between waterway operators and users. This would facilitate:-

- Enhancement of inland navigation safety in ports and rivers.
- Better use of the inland waterways
- Environmental protection

RIS enables achievement of safe and efficient inland water transport by avoiding the following risks:-

- i) Ship- to - Ship collisions
- ii) Ship - Bridge collisions
- iii) Groundings

7. World Development Report is published by:

- A. World Bank
- B. IMF
- C. WTO
- D. UNO

Answer : A

Explanation

The World Bank's World Development Report, published annually since 1978, is an invaluable guide to the economic, social, and environmental state of the world today. Each report provides in-depth analysis and policy recommendations on a specific and important aspect of development—from agriculture, the role of the state, transition economies, and labor to infrastructure, health, the environment, and poverty.

World Development Report 2016 was based on the theme “ **Digital Dividends**”

It explores the impact of the internet, mobile phones, and related technologies on economic development. It proposes policies to expand connectivity, accelerate complementary reforms in



sectors beyond information and communication technology (ICT), and address global coordination problems.

8. With reference to World Economic Forum, consider the following statements.

1. It is a part of the United Nations Organisation
2. It is headquartered at Geneva.
3. It is a forum to engage business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: B

Explanation

WEF is a Non-Profit foundation, based in Geneva aimed at public - private cooperation.

'**Fourth Industrial Revolution**' or Industry 4.0 was the theme of the 2016 annual meet of World Economic Forum.

9. Which is true regarding the UID Authority under the Aadhaar Bill?

1. Its composition is One Chairperson, 2 Members and a CEO
2. The Members and CEO are elected from technology or Governance field with ten years' experience.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: A

Explanation

The Aadhar Act was enacted with the intention to provide for targeted delivery of subsidies and services to individuals residing in India by assigning them unique identity numbers, called Aadhaar numbers.

To further the intentions sought to be achieved under the Act, an authority known as **Unique Identification Number Authority (UID Authority) has been created.**

Functions and composition of authority:

The key functions of the UID authority include,

- (i) specifying demographic and biometric information to be collected during enrolment,
- (ii) assigning Aadhaar numbers to individuals,
- (iii) authenticating Aadhaar numbers, and
- (iv) specifying the usage of Aadhaar numbers for delivery of subsidies and services.

Composition:

The UID authority will consist of

1. a chairperson,
2. two part-time members and
3. a chief executive officer.

The chairperson and members are appointed by the Centre and are required to have experience of at least ten years in matters such as technology, governance, etc. Term of Appointment : Three years and eligible for re-appointment.

10. Which of the following is true regarding Forward Markets Commission?

1. It was originally regulated under the Ministry of Finance and lately came under Ministry of Consumer Affairs
2. FMC was merged with SEBI in 2015
3. Raghuram Rajan Committee recommended the merger of FMC with SEBI

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

D. 2 only

Answer :D

Explanation

Wajahat Habibullah Committee recommended merger of SEBI with FMC. FMC was initially under MoCA and later came into MoF.

About Forward Markets Commission:

The Forward Markets Commission (FMC) is a statutory body set up under the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952.

It functioned under the administrative control of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance since September 2013.

(Before this, FMC used to function under Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.)

Composition:

The Commission comprises of

I. a Chairman, and

II. two Members.

Functions of the FMC:

The Forward Markets Commission performs the role of a market regulator.

It provides regulatory oversight in order to ensure financial integrity (i.e. to prevent systematic risk of default by one major operator or group of operators), market integrity (i.e. to ensure that futures prices are truly aligned with the prospective demand and supply conditions) and to protect & promote interest of consumers /non-members.

The Forward Markets Commission performs the role of a market regulator.

In 2015, FMC ceased to exist and the responsibility of regulating commodity markets have been given to the securities market regulator, SEBI

11. World Bank releases which of the following reports:

1. Ease of Doing Business report
2. World Development report

3. Global Economic Prospects
4. International Debt Statistics

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Ans: B

Self explanatory

12. Fourth Industrial revolution refers to:

- A. Use of Nuclear Power in generating electricity
- B. Input of Digital technology in doing business
- C. Use of Green and renewable Energy in Manufacturing products
- D. None of the above

Ans: B

Explanation

Fourth Industrial revolution was the theme of WEF Meet 2016.

This includes use of Technology and Innovation in conducting business. 3D Tech, auto cars, Internet of Things etc.

13. Identify the correct statements from the following:

1. Stand Up India Campaign is to pool the potential from the backward classes, physically disabled and women entrepreneurs.
1. Its aim is to leverage fund for a section of population to enter entrepreneurship
2. Ministry of WCD, Ministry of SC/ST are the moot agencies involved in implementation of the Scheme.



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Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Ans: C

Explanation

The Stand Up India Scheme provides for:

- Refinance window through Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) with an initial amount of Rs. 10,000 crore.
- Creation of a credit guarantee mechanism through the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC).
- Handholding support for borrowers both at the pre loan stage and during operations. This would include increasing their familiarity with factoring services, registration with online platforms and e-market places as well as sessions on best practices and problem solving.

The details of the scheme are as follows:

- Focus is on handholding support for both SC/ST and Women borrowers.
- The overall intent of the approval is to leverage the institutional credit structure to reach out to these under-served sectors of the population by facilitating bank loans repayable up to 7 years and between Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 100 lakh for greenfield enterprises in the non farm sector set up by such SC, ST and Women borrowers.
- The loan under the scheme would be appropriately secured and backed by a credit guarantee through a credit guarantee scheme for which Department of Financial Services would be the settler and National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd. (NCGTC) would be the operating agency.
- Margin money of the composite loan would be up to 25%. Convergence with state schemes is expected to reduce the actual requirement of margin money for a number of borrowers. • Over a period of time, it is proposed that a credit history of the borrower be built up through Credit Bureaus.

Background:

The "Start up India Stand up India" initiative was announced by the Prime Minister in his address to the nation on 15th August, 2015. The Stand up India component is anchored by Department of Financial Services (DFS) to encourage greenfield enterprises by SC/ST and Women entrepreneurs.



Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134220>>

14. With reference to Export Promotion Council which of the following is true?

1. Export Promotion Councils is to promote and develop the exports and imports of the country.
2. It covers both goods and services
3. EPC are statutory bodies enacted by the Parliament.
4. EPCs function autonomously and do not get financial assistance from the Centre

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: B

Explanation

EPCs deals only with exports.

They are registered under the Companies Act or the Societies Registration Act and therefore are not statutory bodies.

They function autonomously but when required they are provided financial assistance by the Government of India.

It comes under Ministry of Commerce.

15. Identify the correct statements from the following:

1. For the first time, BRICS nations have been listed in the top ten largest members of the IMF.
2. India is a founding member of IMF.



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3. India's Voting Rights have increased with the recent reforms, but the Quota share remains the same.
4. Chinese Renminbi is the Fifth Currency to be inducted into the Basket of currency of IMF.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

1. 1 and 3 only
2. 2 and 4 only
3. 1 and 2 only
4. All

Answer: B

Explanation

Except for the South Africa, all other BRICS nations are listed in top ten.

IMF Quota, Vote and share was reformed recently which led to increase in Quota share and Voting rights as well.

16. Identify the correct statements:

1. The Base Year of IIP is currently 2010-11
2. It represents the status of production in industrial sector for a given period of time.
3. Electricity has the highest weightage whereas Fertilisers have the least weightage from amongst the Eight Core Sectors.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. All of the above
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation



Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is prepared by Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) at 2004-05 base year measures performance of industrial production in the country.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=137566>>

17. State the correct one in decreasing order of weightage of eight Core Sectors

1. Electricity > Steel > Crude Oil > Coal > Fertilizer
2. Electricity > Coal > Crude Oil > Steel > Fertilizer
3. Electricity > Steel > Coal > Crude Oil > Fertilizer
4. Electricity > Steel > fertiliser > Crude Oil > Coal

Answer: A

Explanation

Electricity > Steel > Refinery > Crude > Coal > cement > Natural Gas > Fertilizer

18. Aadhar Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha as a Money Bill. What necessitated the introduction of Aadhaar Bill?

1. It was to provide for the effective, secure and accurate delivery of benefits, subsidies and services from the Consolidated Fund of India to targeted beneficiaries.
2. The use of Aadhaar number has been increased manifold.
3. The need for a credible system to authenticate the identity of beneficiaries.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. All of the above
- D. None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 was introduced in the Parliament as a Money Bill. It provides legal backing to the Aadhaar unique identification number project. The Act was passed in 2016 and gives a statutory backing to the UID Authority.

The Act provides for the expenditure for efficient, transparent, and targeted delivery of subsidies, benefits and service. This amount is incurred from the Consolidated Fund of India and therefore is designated as a Money Bill.

The benefits of the Aadhaar service is targeted to individuals residing in India through assigning of unique identity numbers to such individuals.

19. Which of the following is correct regarding the passage of Aadhaar Act?

1. The pre-condition to get an Aadhaar number is citizenship of India
2. The presence of Aadhaar number would make in itself a proof of citizenship of the country.
3. Biometric information of an individual can be revealed in the interest of national security.
4. Any Court also can order revealing info relating to photograph/Aadhaar number, when it deems so.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Court (District Judge or High Court) can order for revealing Aadhar Number and photograph and Demographic Information, but not Biometric Information.
- Govt at rank of Joint Secretary, can order revealing for relating to Biometric/Demography/Photo/ Number.
- The same will be reviewed by Oversight Committee with Cab Secretary, Secretary of Legal Affairs, and Secretary of Electronic as members in it. It will be valid for six months
- Every resident shall be entitled to obtain an Aadhaar number. A resident is a person who has resided in India for 182 days, in the one year preceding the date of application for enrolment for Aadhaar.
- It doesn't hold proof for citizenship.

- It does not extend to J&K.

20. The Aadhar Bill has defined the term "Demographic information" in it. Which of the following constitutes "Demographic Information" according to the Act?

1. Name
2. Date of birth
3. Address
4. Religion
5. Caste.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1,2 and 3 only
- B. 1,2,3 and 4 only
- C. 1,2,3,4,5
- D. 1 and 2 only

Answer: A

Explanation

The Demographic information specifically **excludes Religion and Caste.**

21. What is correct about Seed Capital?

1. It is an initial capital used to start a Start Up
2. It generally involves low risk while investing
3. Angel Investors and Venture Capital funding form part of this Seed Capital Funding

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: A

Explanation

Seed capital is the very first source of capital that an entrepreneur receives for his or her idea, especially for a Start Up.

It may come from family members, friends, banks, or Angel investors. It's very risky investing in it.

Venture capital, on the other hand, refers to capital that's required for larger businesses.

It is typically sourced from — yep, you guessed it — venture capitalists who raise the funds from their own internal pools of investors.

22. The Government is proposing a Rail Development Authority of India . What is true about the same?

1. It separates the tariff fixing power from Government of India to an independent authority.
2. It will focus on competition, managing efficiency and dissemination of information.
3. The Government of India will free itself from tariff related matters and keep it free from interference.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer : D

Explanation

Minister of Railways in Rail Budget 2015-16 had chalked out a path for an orderly development of infrastructure services by enabling competition and protection of customer interest. It is important to have a regulation mechanism independent of the service provider. The concept paper has been prepared in line with the vision presented by the Ministry of Railways.

National Transport Development Policy Committee (NTDPC) Report of 2014 had recommended that a Rail Tariff Authority should be set up which should become the overall regulator. Later Bibek Debroy Committee Report had also recommended a regulator with overarching functions.

Many of the countries like U.K, Russia, US, Australia, Germany have regulatory structure in some form or the other.

· The Authority will discharge functions in a manner to protect the interest of consumers, ensuring quality of service, promoting competition, encouraging market development, efficient

allocation of resources, provide non-discriminatory open access specially on DFC and to benchmark service levels for ensuring quality, continuity and reliability of service.

· The Authority will undertake four key functions:

- o Fixing tariff.
- o Ensuring fair play and level playing field for private investment in railways.
- o Determination of efficiency and performance standards.
- o Dissemination of information.

· The Authority can initially be set up through an executive order and can be subsequently strengthen through a legislation process.

· The Authority will consist of Chairman and four other members who have experience and knowledge in railways, infrastructure, finance, law, management and consumer affairs.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134153>>

23. What is MEDIUM TERM DEBT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

- A. It is a 4 year plan for ensuring that debt level is affordable and sustainable
- B. It ensures that new borrowings are for good purpose and cost is minimised.
- C. It is a strategy by which RBI's powers are taken away to create an independent authority to manage Debt
- D. It is a strategy to focus on External Debt because of the Current Account Deficit Issue involved.

Explanation

Answer :B

Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy (MTDS) has been articulated for a period of three years (2015-16 to 2017-18). The strategy document contains the objectives, risk analysis of Government borrowings and strategy to be followed. MTDS is in consonance with the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy Statement (MTFPS). MTDS has been prepared based on sound international practices and taking into account the domestic economic and financial conditions.

MTDS would be updated on an annual basis to reflect the emergent conditions.

Here, RBI is the debt manager

It deals with External and Internal debt

From <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=134080>>

24. Tapan Ray Panel came up with recommendation on which of the following issues:

- A. To frame a law relating to Bankruptcy
- B. To review The Companies Act 2013
- C. To review the functioning of the FRBM Act
- D. To study on prospects of creating an independent rail Tariff Authority.

Answer :B

Explanation

Tapan Ray Panel was constituted to make it easier for companies to do business, a panel constituted to suggest amendments in the Companies Act, 2013.

Recommendations are aimed at making the transition from Companies Act 1956 to Companies Act 2013 easier, improve Ease of Doing Business and provide better environment to start-ups

25. Which is true regarding the recommendations of Tapan Ray Committee?

- 1. It sought to establish an independent body National Financial reporting Authority to provide for matters relating to accounting and auditing
- 2. Allowed Startups to issue 75 % of paid up capital as sweat equity against the existing norms of 50%.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both
- D. Neither

Answer: A

Explanation

Allowed Start Up to issue 50 % of paid up cap as sweat equity .

Sweat Equity the ownership interest, or increase in value, that is created as a direct result of hard work by the owner(s). It is the preferred mode of building equity for cash-strapped entrepreneurs in their start-up ventures, since they may be unable to contribute much financial capital to their enterprise

26. What is an Independent Fiscal Council?

- A. It was based on the recommendation of the Fourteenth Finance Commission.
- B. It is sought to be established by the RBI, as a body to monitor the fiscal condition of the Indian economy
- C. It is sought to be in place of the FRBM Act, which could not reach upto the expectations.
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

The proposed council would objectively evaluate budget announcements and forecasts and report to the Parliament. It is critical to improve the government's credibility on fiscal management.

While the union government monitors fiscal targets of states nobody oversees its own fiscal decisions. Therefore it was recommended. FRBM targets are not met most of the time and CAG monitors accounts only after the spending.

27. Which among the following is or are correct about Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for North East?

- 1. It is to leverage the hydrocarbon sector for the development of the North-East India.
- 2. Its main pillars are People, Policy, Partnership, Projects and Production.
- 3. Its aim is doubling Oil & Gas production by 2030.
- 4. States covered are: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 4 only
- B. 1,2 and 4 only
- C. 1,2, and 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for North East Region

The Vision Document has been a focused and consultative exercise to develop a common and shared aspiration for benefiting people of the north east region. With involvement and inputs of various stakeholders, industry players and state governments.

The objectives of the plan are to leverage the region's hydrocarbon potential, enhance access to clean fuels, improve availability of petroleum products, facilitate economic development and to link common people to the economic activities in this sector. The states covered include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

The Vision rests on five pillars: People, Policy, Partnership, Projects and Production.

28. "Market Economy Status" to China was in news recently. Identify the correct statements about it from the following codes given below.

- A. It is granted by one country to another in its process to boost the trade between the country.
- B. Once a country gets MES status, exports from it, will have to accepted at the production costs.
- C. This will enhance the competition in Indian economy and thus is seen as a major boost by Indian traders.
- D. None of the above.

Answer:B

Explanation

It is in consideration to grant China MES status by December 2016, according to WTO norms.

It will affect the trade because Chinese players involve lot of governmental control in regulating trade and therefore granting Market economy Status will not be productive to the market.

Once it is granted, Anti Dumping duties will not be allowed on those products and China is likely to dump its products to markets like India, thus affecting our trade.

29. ELECTRONIC DEVELOPMENT FUND (EDF) was in news recently. It is launched by:

- A. Ministry of Commerce
- B. Ministry of Power
- C. Ministry of Communications

D. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Answer: C

Explanation

EDF was launched to support early-stage, angel, venture and private equity funds focusing on electronics, nano-electronics and information technology.

Need for EDF:

The demand for electronics products in India will increase to \$400 billion by the year 2020 while production is expected to reach \$104 billion only by that time.

India will be importing more electronics than crude oil leading to huge CAD.

India has huge domestic market and a vast pool of technical resources, as well as skilled and semi-skilled labour.

30. INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INDEX ranked India 37 out of 38 countries. Which component of IPR is not included in its evaluation?

- A. Patent
- B. Trademark protections
- C. Geographical Indications
- D. All are included

Answer :C

Explanation

The Index -- produced by the Chamber's Global Intellectual Property Center (GIPC) -- is based on 30 criteria critical to innovation .

The Index considered the following:

Patent, copyright and trademark protections, enforcement, and engagement in international treaties.

31. Identify the correct statement regarding National Agriculture Market?

1. It is pan India electronic portal and creates a unified market for agricultural commodities.
2. Agri Tech Infrastructure Fund is created to manage the NAM

3. Ministry of Finance is in charge of Fund while Ministry of Agriculture implements NAM
4. NAM do not involve State participation because of its mode of functioning and presence of an online portal.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 2,3 and 4 only
3. 1,2 and 3 only
4. 1,2,3 and 4

Answer: A

Explanation

The Government Scheme approving NAM envisages implementation of the National Agriculture Market (NAM) by setting up of an appropriate common e-market platform that would be deployable in regulated wholesale markets in States/UTs desirous of joining the e-platform.

Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) will implement the national e-platform in 585 selected regulated markets and will cover 400 mandis in 2016-17 and 185 mandis in 2017-18. Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) will meet expenses on software and its customization for the States and provide it free of cost to the States and Union Territories (UTs).

DAC&FW will also give grant as one time fixed cost subject to the ceiling of Rs.30.00 lakhs per Mandi (other than to the private mandis) for related equipment / infrastructure in 585 regulated mandis, for installation of the e-market platform. State Governments will propose the regulated markets which are to be integrated with NAM .

NABARD is in charge of Fund

State participation is very crucial in success of NAM because Agriculture is a subject matter in State List

Plus States need to make sufficient reforms in its policies.

Such as: Single licence to be valid across States, single point levy of market fee

And provision for electronic auction.

32. Identify the correct statements:

1. Black-necked crane is a migratory bird commonly found in European countries.
2. It is Endangered as per IUCN Status

3. It is locally known as Dung Dung

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation

It is a migratory bird commonly found in China and is Vulnerable as per IUCN redlist

33. Albendazole is a drug effective in curing

- A. Deworming
- B. Malaria
- C. TB
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

The National Deworming Day is observed on February 10 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and its main objective is to deworm children between the ages of (1-19) at schools and anganwadi centres.

Children at the age of (1-2) are given half a tablet of albendazole (400mg), and above the age of 2 are given 1 full tablet of albendazole (400mg) to chew.

Albendazole is very safe and has very few side effects and it occurs with mild side effects like nausea and diarrhoea and pass quickly

34. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. India ranks first in Milk production in the world
- 2. India accounts for more than 30% of world's milk production

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer:A

Explanation

India accounts for 18.5% of global milk production

35. Which one of the following is a purpose of 'Jeevan Pramaan', a scheme of the Government?

- A. Provide Digital Certificate for Pensioners
- B. Provide insurance benefits to the unorganised sector
- C. Promote life insurance scheme among the unorganised
- D. None of the above.

Answer:A

Explanation

Through Jeevan pramaan, a pensioner can digitally provide Annual Life Certificate to the authorities for continuity of pension instead of presenting himself physically or through a Life Certificate issued by specified authorities every year.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelcontent.aspx?relid=136003>>

36. The term 'Zardozi' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- A. Embroidery
- B. Folk Dance
- C. Cultural festival
- D. Mughal architecture

Answer:A

Explanation

Zardozi is beautiful metal embroidery, which was used for the attire of the Kings and the royals in India. Persian terms Zar meaning gold and Dozi meaning embroidery.

It involves making elaborate designs, using gold and silver threads. Precious stones, diamonds, emeralds, and pearls are also used.

Uses: to adorn walls of the royal tents, scabbards, wall hangings and the paraphernalia of regal elephants and horses.

Zardosi attained its summit in the 17th century, under the patronage of Akbar.

In 2013 the Geographical Indication Registry (GIR) accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) registration to the Lucknow Zardozi.

37. With reference to 'microplastics', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. They are plastics pieces or fibre which is of size ranging around 10 - 50 mm.
2. They are a common component in toothpaste and body creams

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

Microplastics or Microbeads are plastic pieces or fibre which is very small, generally measuring less than 1mm.

They are found in use notably in personal care products like toothpaste, body creams, clothing and industrial use.

They have an ability to spread easily and provide silky texture and colours to the product. Thus adding visual appeal of the cosmetic products.

Recently a petition was filed before the NGT calling for Ban of Microplastics. The issues identified are:

Issues with Microplastics

They are non-biodegradable and flow through sewers to seas and oceans and add to the huge chunk of “plastic soup” in the environment.

They increase water pollution and have a potential to disrupt the aquatic ecosystem.

Once they enter water bodies they accumulate as act as carriers for other pollutants.

They are carcinogenic.

Due to their small size they pass through the waste water treatment filtration system as well.

38. Udaan is a scheme of the Government, which falls under the Ministry of :

- A. Minority Affairs
- B. Skill development
- C. Home Affairs
- D. Youth and Sports

Answer: c

Explanation

Udaan provides exposure to the youth of J&K to the best of corporate India and corporate India to the rich talent pool available in the State. So far, 67 leading corporates have partnered with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under UDAAN with a commitment to train youth from the State covering Organized Retail, Banking, Financial Services, IT, ITES, Infrastructure, Hospitality etc.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelcontent.aspx?relid=138318>>

39. Which of the following are the key features of Rotavac?

1. Rotavac is India's first indigenous vaccine
2. It is part of India's Universal Immunisation Programme

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

D. None of the above

Ans:C

Explanation

The Health Ministry launched India's first indigenous rotavirus vaccine (Rotavac) as part of the Universal Immunisation Programme.

It is an oral vaccine against diarrhoea that kills nearly 80000 children and hospitalizes nearly ten lakh children under the age of five, every year.

Rotavac has been introduced in India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) along with Inactivated Polio Vaccine(IPV); Measles, Rubella (MR) and Adult Japanese Encephalitis(JE).

About Rota::

Rota is a highly contagious virus infecting majority of children before their first year of age.

It is a wheel shaped pathogen (hence the name) and spreads through food and drink contaminated with infected faeces.

Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting and watery diarrhoea.

40. Which one of the following is a purpose of 'Inam - Pro', a portal of the Government?

- a. Register and procure cement directly from suppliers on cheaper rates on "cash and carry basis
- b. Lottery Scheme introduced by the NITI Aayog
- c. To help youth from minority to seek employment opportunities
- d. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Portal will enable central or state government agencies register and procure cement directly from suppliers on cheaper rates on "cash and carry basis.

It would facilitate contractors/cement buyers engaged in executing the Central/State funded Roads and Highways/Bridge construction projects to place cement orders online with the registered cement companies offering cement at competitive rates in the vicinity of project execution locations. Cement companies are facilitated to update their offered stock on the portal with the prices agreed upon with MoRTH.

41. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is applicable only for Kharif and Rabi crops
2. Government has fixed an upper limit to the Government subsidy, at 40%.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: D

Explanation

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) targets to cover half of India's cropped area in the next three years.

Present coverage is 23% approximately.

There will be a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops.

In case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium to be paid by farmers will be only 5%.

There is no upper limit on Government subsidy. However, the government liability on premium subsidy will be shared equally by the Centre and states.

The use of technology will be encouraged to a great extent. o Smart phones will be used to capture and upload data of crop cutting to reduce the delays in claim payment to farmers. o Remote sensing will be used to reduce the number of crop cutting experiments.

It will replace two schemes National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and the modified NAIS (MNAIS).

42. The term 'Zika Virus' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- A. Mosquito bites
- B. Bird flu

- C. H1N1
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Aedes mosquito transmits Zika virus disease which is widely prevalent in tropical and sub-tropical areas of the Americas, South East Asia, Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Pacific.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=137948>>

43. With reference to 'National RURBAN Mission', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. RURBAN effectively replaces the PURA Scheme of the Government
2. It is based on cluster approach

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

Answer:C

Explanation

The Rurban Mission would replace the previous government's Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) initiative.

Objectives of RURBAN:

Clusters would be developed by provisioning of economic activities, developing skills & local entrepreneurship and providing infrastructure amenities.

The scheme through development of Rurban growth clusters aimed at catalyzing overall regional growth, which would benefit the rural as well as urban areas of the country.

By achieving twin objectives of strengthening rural areas and de burdening the urban areas will lead to balanced regional development and growth of the country.

44. With reference to 'National Adaptation Fund', which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. It was launched in 2007 and is a part of the UNFCCC.
2. NABARD is the implementing agency in India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

India has established National Adaptation Fund following the international norm of Adaptation Fund under Climate Change Agreement.

It was established in 2007 at the 7th COP of UNFCCC. The NABARD is India's National Implementing Entity (NIE) for the Adaptation Fund created under the UNFCCC.

45. The term "Swachh Survekshan", is sometimes seen in the news. Which of the following statements best describes/describe the term?

1. It is a component of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan relating to ranking of cities, in order to assess Swachh Bharat Mission.
2. Ministry of Urban Development is conducting the ranking

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

To assess the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Ministry of Urban Development has decided to study and rank 75 cities under the mission "Swachh Survekshan".

The task of executing the mission has been entrusted with the Quality Council of India.

Parameters for evaluation:

Work will be evaluated under six measurable aspects of sanitation and hygiene.

1. Strategy for Open Defecation Free town (ODF) and Integrated Solid Waste Management (SWM).
2. Information, Education and Behaviour Change Communication (IEBC) activity.
3. Sweeping, door to door collection and transportation (of solid waste).
4. Processing and disposal of solid waste.
5. Provision of public & community toilet seats.
6. Construction of household individual toilets.

46. Sustainable Development Goals is set to be in force beginning 2016. Which of the following is correct with respect to the same?

1. Infrastructure is a component in SDG
2. It calls for global partnership for sustainable development
3. India's Total Sanitation Program and Swachh Bharat do not come under new set of targets of SDG's
4. There is no mention of tackling tobacco control and illegal drug trafficking

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1,2 and 3 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 2 and 3 only
4. All of the above

Ans:B

Explanation



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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, associated 169 targets and 304 indicators. This included the following goals:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Refer to :

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>

47. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Meitei Tribe is a Scheduled Tribe under the Constitution of India
2. Meitei Tribe is predominantly found in Bihar, Jharkhand region

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both
4. None of the above

Answer:D

Explanation

Meitei tribe of Manipur has not been included in the ST list so far.

48. Which of the following best describes the term 'Ebola disease', sometimes seen in the news?

- a. Viral disease
- b. Bacterial infection
- c. Type of Bird Flu
- d. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.

The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human to-human transmission.

The worst affected countries were Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. [All are African countries]

49. Which among the following is related to urban development?

1. Indira Awas Yojana
2. HRIDAY
3. Swach Bharat
4. Bharat Nirman
5. Smart City Mission

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1, 2 and 3 only
2. 2,3 and 5 only
3. 2,3,4 and 5 only
4. 1,4 and 5 only

Answer: B

Explanation

Bharat Nirman and Indira Awas Yojana related to improvement of Rural infrastructure.

50. Which one of the following is a purpose of 'Infracon', a scheme of the Government?

- a. Special Purpose Vehicle to boost PPP projects
- b. Portal relating to highway projects
- c. An investment fund relating to Infrastructure
- d. A Public Sector Company mooted to push the infrastructure projects in India

Answer: B

Explanation

Infracon'/ ePace - portal that provide all necessary details regarding highway projects. It will have all the information about individual consultants and consulting firms.

It would serve as a platform for infrastructure consultants where individual consultants as well as consulting firms could register themselves.

51. The term 'Exercise Lamitye' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- A. Joint Military Training between Indian Army and Seychelles Defence
- B. Naval Exercise of India, US and Japan
- C. Naval Exercise in South China Sea by India and Philippines
- D. A joint naval exercise by Laos, Malaysia, India and China.

Ans:A

Explanation

Exercise Lamitye-

It is the Seventh Joint Military Training Exercise between the Indian Army and the Seychelles People's Defence Forces (SPDF) -

LAMITYE 2016 was conducted at Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA), Victoria.

Since 2001 India and Seychelles have been conducting joint military drill 'Exercise Lamitye'.

Lamitye which means friendship in Creole (local dialect).

The exercise is conducted biennially with the aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries.

52. Identify the correct statements from the following:

- a. Sir Creek is located in the marshy lands of Sunderbans
- b. It is located in the western side of the country
- c. Sir Creek is important for its huge coal reserves
- d. Noe of the above.

Answer: B

Explanation

Significance of Sir creek

It is a marshy wasteland. (Please locate in the map). Its importance lies in its position. where the boundary line runs through it will determine how much Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) one country will lose or gain.

Much of the region is rich in oil and gas below the sea bed, and control over the creek would have a huge bearing on the energy potential of each nation.

53. Which of the following are the key features of National Deworming Initiative?

1. It is part of India's Universal Immunisation programme.
2. Initiative will be coupled with improved sanitation, hygiene, and availability of safe drinking water for reducing worm load and would help achieve aim of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer:B

Explanation

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched the National Deworming initiative.
- It aims to protect children in the ages of 1-19 years from intestinal worms.
- Albendazole tablets will be given to all targeted children; half tablet to 1-2 years children and one full tablet for 2-19 years.
- Initiative will be coupled with improved sanitation, hygiene, and availability of safe drinking water for reducing worm load.
- The deworming initiative would help to achieve the aim of 'Swachh Bharat'.
- Deworming is administering an anthelmintic drug to a human or animal to rid them of parasites, such as roundworm, hookworms, flukes and tapeworm.

- Mass deworming campaigns of school children have been used both as a preventive as well as a treatment method for helminthiasis, which includes soil-transmitted helminthiasis in children.

54. 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' launched by Government of India pertains to

- a. Domestic Violence
- b. Manual Scavenging
- c. LPG Gas
- d. Food Security

Answer: C

Explanation

PMUY is the first ever welfare scheme by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

5 Crore LPG connections will be provided to BPL families with a support of Rs 1600 each household in next three years.

LPG Connections will be given in the name of Women beneficiaries.

55. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) provides for uniform licence for exploration and production of all forms of Hydrocarbon.
2. It is the first kind of Pricing initiative by the Government of India in the space of oil and gas exploration

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Cabinet has approved the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) on 10th March 2016.

HELP replaces the present policy regime for exploration and production of oil and gas, known as New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), which has been in existence for 18 years.

Four main facets of HELP policy are:

- uniform license for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbon,
- an open acreage policy,
- easy to administer revenue sharing model, and
- marketing and pricing freedom for the crude oil and natural gas produced.

56. The term 'Swabhimaan Campaign' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- A. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
- B. Banking Sector
- C. Employment generation
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

Under the Swabhimaan campaign, the banks were advised to provide appropriate banking facilities to habitations having a population in excess of 2000 (as per 2001 census) by March 2012. The banks identified approximately 74000 habitations across the country having a population of over 2000 for providing banking facilities. As per reports received from Banks, 74351 villages with population of above 2000 have been covered with banking facilities either by branches; Business Correspondents, mobile banking etc by March 31, 2012.

Source <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=142570>>

57. Which of the following are the key features of Gravitational waves?

1. They are distortions or 'ripples' in the fabric of space-time caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe.
2. The effect of such waves is very strong over a vast area in space.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Explanation

Gravitational waves are distortions or 'ripples' in the fabric of space-time caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe.

Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916 in his general theory of relativity.

The effects of these waves are very weak, however, and only the biggest masses, moving under the greatest accelerations, are expected to warp their surroundings to any appreciable degree.

58. With reference to 'Fly Ash', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

- 1. It can be used in landfills
- 2. It includes substantial amount of oxides of Silica, Aluminium, Thorium and Calcium

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

Fly ash is one of the coal combustion products and is composed of fine particles that are driven out of the boiler with flue gases. Ash that falls at the bottom of the boiler is called bottom ash.

Fly ash includes substantial amounts of oxides of silica, aluminium and calcium.

Element like Arsenic, Boron, Chromium, lead etc are found in trace concentrations. It can be used as a construction material, filling old mines, building railway embankments, and reclamation of low-lying areas

It, however, poses hazards to environment and health. An expert panel of MoEF has expressed concerns over use of fly ash for filling mines as this can have environmental consequences in the form of:

Contamination of ground water due to leaching of heavy metals in fly ash.

Reduction in recharging of ground water due to fly ash filled mine voids.

Ash-filled voids cannot support tree species because of poor root system development which in turn results in uprooting of trees even by low velocity winds.

59. Which among the following nations do not form part of BIMSTEC?

1. Sri Lanka
2. Bhutan
3. Afghanistan
4. Bangladesh
5. Myanmar
6. Nepal
7. Thailand

Select the correct answer from the options given below:

- a. 3 and 7
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 5
- d. 2 only

Answer :B

Explanation

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation involving a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia. These are: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

60. Which of the following best describes the term 'Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' (DDUGJY)', sometimes seen in the news?

- a. Electricity for all by 2030
- b. Metering in Urban Areas
- c. Merging agriculture and non-agriculture feeders to facilitate distribution companies (discoms)
- d. Private sector discoms are eligible to have financial support

Answer : D

Explanation

A new scheme, the 'Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' (DDUGJY), has been launched with the objectives of Separating agriculture and non-agriculture feeders to facilitate distribution companies (discoms) in the judicious fostering of supply to agricultural and non-agricultural consumers and metering is to be done in rural areas.

61. Which one of the following is a purpose of 'Bank Board Bureau', recently set up by the Government of India?

- a. To bring in transparency and objectivity in the selection of heads of all Banks in India
- b. It is established under the RBI Act.
- c. It helps in developing differentiated strategies and capital raising plans through innovative financial methods and instruments.
- d. None of the above.

Answer: C

Explanation

The Government has set-up an autonomous Banks Board Bureau (BBB), which has started functioning with effect from 1.4.2016. The Bureau will search and select heads of public Sector Banks/Financial Institutions and help them in developing differentiated strategies and capital raising plans through innovative financial methods and instruments

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=142571>>

62. 'Sundarban Maitry' launched by Government of India pertains to

- a. Protection of Tigers in Sundarbans
- b. Indo - Bangladesh relations
- c. Wetland Protection of Sundarbans
- d. Making Sundarbans tourist friendly

Answer: B

Explanation

'Sundarban Maitry' (Sundarbans Alliance) Sundarban Maitry is a joint exercise between Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

It was first exercise held between BSF and BGB in the Sundarbans border area.

63. The usage 'Income Declaration Scheme' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of:

- a. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
- b. Tax payments
- c. Rural development
- d. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

Individual taxpayers who have not disclosed income in the past got an opportunity to disclose such income and be compliant by paying tax.

Highlights of the Scheme

Immunity

Assets Declared exempt from Income tax

- No Scrutiny/enquiry under Income-Tax Act/Wealth-Tax Act
- Immunity from Prosecution under Income-Tax Act/Wealth-Tax Act.

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- Immunity from Benami Transactions(prohibition) Act, 1988 subject to certain conditions.
- The information in respect of a valid declaration is confidential and shall neither be shared with any law enforcement agency nor shall be enquired into by the Income-tax Department.
- The assets declared under the Scheme are to be valued at cost of acquisition or at fair market price as on 1.6.2016 as determined by the registered valuer, whichever is higher.
- Credit for unclaimed TDS made on declared income shall be allowed.
- Neither any capital gains tax nor any TDS shall be levied on transfer of declared benami property from benamidar to the declarant without consideration.
- The amount of fictitious liabilities recorded in audited balance sheet and not linked to acquisition of an asset can be disclosed under the Scheme as such.
- No adverse action shall be taken by FIU or the income-tax department solely on the basis of the information regarding cash deposit made consequent to the declaration under the Scheme.

Compliance window

Declaration to be made up to 30th September 2016 Tax, surcharge and penalty is payable at 45% of the income declared: First instalment of 25% by 30th November, 2016, next instalment of 25% by 31st March, 2017, and balance by 30th September 2017

64. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Smart Grid Project is a pan India project
2. It aims to bring synergy between generation, transmission, distribution systems, consumers and also renewable sources.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: B

Smart Grid project is a part of the smart city initiative.



The project has been divided into three phases

1. Replacing old equipment and cables
2. Installing smart meters in households
3. Developing software to improve the efficiency of electricity distribution.

A major highlight of the NDMC's Smart City proposal is its plan to upgrade its electricity network into a smart grid system. It will bring synergy between generation, transmission, distribution systems, consumers and also renewable sources by integrating all into one seamless system

65. Which one of the following is the best description of "AlphaGo", that was in the news recently?

- a. It is a computer program
- b. It is a gene editing technology
- c. It is a Space mission program
- d. It is related to gravitational waves

Answer: A

Explanation

AlphaGo is a computer program developed by Google DeepMind in London to play the board game Go.

It is the first computer program to ever beat a professional player at the game of Go. It not only mastered what may be the world's most complex board game, it also changed the scope of future Artificial Intelligence (AI) research.

66. What is the importance of Raisina Dialogue recently in the news?

- a. It is a flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics.
- b. It is intended to engage all the world nations under one head, for economic security and anti-terrorism measures.
- c. It provides a platform for World financial institutions, International NGOs and World leaders to come together and discuss on international peace and security.
- d. None of the above.

Answer: A

Explanation

The Raisina Dialogue is envisioned as India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics.

It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.

The 2016 conclave focused on Asia's physical, economic, digital connectivity and fostering common global spaces with an emphasis on Asia.

67. Which of the following are the key features of Deendayal Upadhyay Swaniyojan Yojana (DUSY)?

1. It is aimed at promoting urban entrepreneurship under the Start Up Campaign
2. It is integrated with MUDRA Bank Loan Yojana to help with refinancing.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above.

Answer : B

Explanation

It is launched by Ministry of Rural Development to promote rural entrepreneurship under Start Up India campaign.

Its Salient features are:

Provide incentives such as financial assistance to the rural poor looking for self-employment options.

The scheme will be integrated with MUDRA Bank Loan Yojana, innovative credit linkages and self-help groups.

It will be funded by the existing National Rural Livelihood Mission.

68. Consider the following statements:



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1. IIBs will provide inflation protection to principal only.
2. Existing tax provisions will be applicable on interest payment and capital gains on IIBs.
3. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) can invest in IIBs.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer : C

Explanation

- Inflation Indexed Bonds (IIBs) were issued in the name of Capital Indexed Bonds (CIBs) during 1997.
- It provided inflation protection only to principal and not to interest payment.
- IIBs will provide inflation protection to both principal and interest payments.
- Tax provisions will be applicable on interest payment and capital gains on IIBs.
- There will be no special tax treatment for these bonds. IIBs would be Government securities (G-Sec) and the different classes of investors eligible to invest in G-Secs would also be eligible to invest in IIBs.
- FIIs would be eligible to invest in the IIBs but subject to the overall cap for their investment in G-Secs. For more details: <https://rbi.org.in/scripts/FAQView.aspx?Id=91>

69. The term 'CRISPR' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- a. Gene Editing technique
- b. Type of rock found in Mars
- c. Space Mission from NASA
- d. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation



It is a gene editing technique that scientists have borrowed from nature. CRISPRs (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) are sections of DNA, while CAS-9 (CRISPR-associated protein 9) is an enzyme.

Bacteria use them to disable attacks from viruses.

Crispr scans the genome looking for the right location and then uses the Cas9 protein as molecular scissors to snip through the DNA.

Cas9 endonuclease - guide RNAs direct it to a particular sequence to be edited.

When Cas9 cuts the target sequence, the cell repairs the damage by replacing the original sequence with an altered version.

Unlike other gene-editing methods, it is cheap, quick, easy, safer and more accurate to use because it relies on RNA–DNA base pairing, rather than the engineering of proteins that bind particular DNA sequences.

70. Which one of the following is a purpose of 'Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan', a scheme of the Government?

1. Promote Rural Development
2. Generate nationwide efforts to increase social harmony across villages
3. Strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Answer :D

- Central Government in collaboration with States and Panchayats organized a 'Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan' (Village Self Governance Campaign) from 14th April to 24th April 2016.
- The campaign aims to generate nation-wide efforts to increase social harmony across villages, strengthen Panchayati Raj, promote rural development, and foster farmers' progress.

71. What is QUANTUM SPIN LIQUID recently seen in the news?

- a. It is a new state of matter
- b. It is a component used extensively in space studies
- c. It is a part of human nucleus
- d. None of the above

Ans: A

Explanation

- Scientists have discovered a new state of matter called “Quantum Spin Liquid” which causes electrons to break down into smaller quasiparticles.
- “Liquid” mentioned here isn’t in the traditional sense, but refers to the fact that the quantum spins of the electrons in the material suddenly start interacting to create a disordered state (much in the way liquid water is in a disordered state compared to crystalline ice).

72. With reference to 'Mustard DMH-11', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. It is a Genetically modified Mustard crop
2. It is the first GM commercial crop developed in India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither of the above

Answer : A

Explanation

Mustard DMH-11 (Dhara Mustard Hybrid 11), is a genetically modified (GM) crop, developed at Delhi University and partly funded by the National Dairy Development Board.

The GM mustard, as claimed, gives 25-30 per cent more yield than the best varieties such as ‘Varuna’ currently grown in the country

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), of the ministry of environment and forests has deferred a decision on allowing commercial cultivation of Mustard DMH-11.

73. 'Lagrange points', sometimes seen in the news is related to:

- a. Mathematical expression
- b. Space Mission
- c. Economical term referring to inequality
- d. None of the above

Ans:B

Explanation

Lagrange point is a position in space where the combined gravitational forces of two large bodies, such as Earth and the sun or Earth and the moon, equal the centrifugal force felt by a much smaller third body.

These points are named after Joseph-Louis Lagrange, an 18th-century mathematician. · There are 5 such points between the earth and the sun namely – L1, L2, L3, L4 and L5.

74. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Payment Banks can accept demand deposits and saving bank deposits
- 2. They can take part in lending activities

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation

Recently RBI issued guidelines for the set up of Payment Banks.

What are Payment Banks?

Objectives

The objectives of setting up of payments banks will be to further financial inclusion by providing (i) small savings accounts and (ii) payments/remittance services to migrant labour workforce, low income households, small businesses, other unorganised sector entities and other users.

Scope of activities:

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- Acceptance of demand deposits. Payments bank will initially be restricted to holding a maximum balance of Rs. 100,000 per individual customer.
- Issuance of ATM/debit cards. Payments banks, however, cannot issue credit cards.
- Payments and remittance services through various channels.
- BC of another bank, subject to the Reserve Bank guidelines on BCs.
- Distribution of non-risk sharing simple financial products like mutual fund units and insurance products, etc.

Deployment of funds :

- The payments bank cannot undertake lending activities.
- Apart from amounts maintained as Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) with the Reserve Bank on its outside demand and time liabilities, it will be required to invest minimum 75 per cent of its "demand deposit balances" in Statutory Liquidity Ratio(SLR) eligible Government securities/treasury bills with maturity up to one year and hold maximum 25 per cent in current and time/fixed deposits with other scheduled commercial banks for operational purposes and liquidity management.

Capital : The minimum paid-up equity capital for payments banks shall be Rs. 100 crore.

https://rbi.org.in/scripts/bs_viewcontent.aspx?Id=2857http://www.business-standard.com/article/finance/all-you-want-to-know-about-smallbanks-and-payments-banks-114072100489_1.html

75. Grand Innovation Challenge is an initiative launched by:

- a. Ministry of Science and technology
- b. NITI Aayog
- c. An NGO
- d. Ministry of Earth Sciences

Answer :B

Explanation

It is an initiative to seek citizens inputs on the key developmental challenges facing India. The 'Grand Innovation Challenge' is being launched on the MyGov portal by NITI Aayog, to involve citizens at the very first stage in innovating for India's development. The idea is to work together



with the States and every citizen as Team India to ensure progress. leaving no one behind. The focus is on the social sector, the most vulnerable sections and to involve citizens in crowd sourcing ideas to address challenges facing India's development.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=138710>>

76. What is "ADITYA" recently in the news?

- a. An ISRO Mission
- b. Government of India's Solar Power Project
- c. An NGO working on child empowerment
- d. None of the above

Answer :A

Explanation

- Aditya L1 is a spacecraft whose Mission is to study the Sun. It was conceptualised by the Advisory Committee for Space Research of ISRO in January 2008.
- Currently, ISRO is planning to add another spacecraft under Aditya to observe the sun from a different stable orbital position called L5.
- It is India's first solar Mission, set to be launched in 2019.

77. The oil prices saw a slump in recent times. This is attributed to :

1. Increase in supply of oil
2. Weak demand globally
3. Global monetary and liquidity environment
4. Production of Shale gas

Select the correct code from the following:

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

Answer : D

78. What is/are the importance/ importances of the NAVIC?

- a. It is India's latest addition to submarines
- b. It is India's own GPS system
- c. It is first satellite that is used solely for Navy's purpose
- d. None of the above

Answer :B

Explanation

The positioning system of India which comprises of seven IRNSS satellite system is known as NAVIC.

What is IRNSS

IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1500 km around the Indian mainland.

Services provided :

- a. Standard Positioning Services (SPS) - provided to all users - and
- b. Restricted Services (RS), provided to authorised users.

With seven satellites, the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) will broadcast its signals primarily over India and to about 1,500 km beyond its borders.

Like the GPS of US, the Indian satellites would continually transmit data that allowed suitably equipped receivers to establish their location with considerable precision.

Positioning of the Satellites:

Three of the satellites will be placed over the equator, in what is known as the geostationary orbit. (they match the Earth's rotation and therefore appear from the ground to remain at a fixed position in the sky.).

The Other four satellites will be in pairs in two inclined geosynchronous orbits. From the ground, these satellites will appear to travel in figures of '8' during the course of a day.

79. With reference to 'Atal Pension Yojana', sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

- 1. It focuses on all citizens in the unorganized sector
- 2. A Bank account is necessary in order to avail benefits of APY

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer :C

Explanation

Atal Pension Yojana (APY), a pension scheme for unorganised sector workers such as personal maids, drivers, gardeners etc, was launched in June 2015 by the government. This social security scheme was introduced as a replacement to previous government's Swavalamban Yojana NPS Lite,

To address the longevity risks among the workers in unorganized sector and to encourage the workers in unorganized sector to voluntarily save for their retirement, the Government of India launched the APY.

The APY is focussed on all citizens in the unorganized sector. All bank account holders may join APY.

APY is applicable to all citizen of India aged between 18-40 years.

The scheme is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) through NPS architecture.

80. The term 'GARV APP' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of :

- a. Rural Electrification
- b. Smart Cities Mission
- c. Youth Empowerment
- d. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation

Power ministry has launched the GARV (Grameen Vidyutikaran) app to provide the first hand information with respect to village electrification programme in the country.

Key Highlights:

To speed up the work related to village electrification Grameen Vidyut Abhiyantas (GVAs or rural electrification engineers) have been appointed.

81. Which of the following are the key features of Insights Mission of NASA?

1. The mission's key focus is on the solar system.
2. Its objective is to study the processes that shaped the formation of all planets including Earth.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: D

Explanation

- Insight stands for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.
- It is NASA Discovery Program mission that will place a single geophysical Lander on Mars to study its deep interior.
- Objective is to study the processes that shaped the formation of rocky planets including Earth more than 4 billion years ago.

82. The tag line "I Led the Way" relates to :

- a. Women Empowerment
- b. LED lighting
- c. Youth empowerment
- d. Entrepreneurship programme

Answer : B

Explanation

I Led the Way is the tag line for Energy Efficiency Services limited (EESL), highlighting that this government owned company is now gearing up to set up its 21st overseas office in New York.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=139062>>

83. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Bedaquiline is a Drug to fight Malaria, effectively
2. Today, Bedaquiline Drug is a part of India's national programme under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Ans:B

Explanation

- On World Tuberculosis Day (24th March), Union Health Minister launched Bedaquiline – new drug for Drug Resistant TB - as part of the national programme.
- Bedaquiline is a bactericidal drug that belongs to a new class of antibiotics (diarylquinolines).

84. In the context of which of the following do you sometimes find the terms "KUNPENG-1B", in the news?

- a. Defence Technology
- b. Medical Science
- c. Space Science
- d. Mobile Technology

Answer: C

Explanation

It is a sounding rocket launched by China.

Sounding rockets are low-cost launch vehicles designed to carry scientific instruments that take measurements during the rocket's sub-orbital flight.

It will take measurements in upper atmosphere and help with high-speed flight and space tourism research

85. Which of the following human development indicators are published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)?

1. Multi-dimensional poverty Index (MPI)
2. Inequality-adjusted HDI
3. Gender Development Index
4. Gender Inequality Index

Choose the correct answer using the codes below.

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

Answer :D

Explanation

Please refer to:

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/map>

86. What is/are the importance/ importances of the Silica Aerogel, recently seen in news?

- a. It can be used in Indian defence in extremely cold conditions
- b. It is water based and can be used as coolant
- c. It is dense and thus is suitable for industrial uses
- d. None of the above

Answer :A

Explanation

Silica Aerogel is world's lightest thermal insulator. It can protect soldiers from extreme weather conditions.

It is actually a solid but within it encapsulates 99 per cent air.

Silica aerogel can also be used for insulating the tanks that hold the liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen in the cryogenic engines.

87. Which of the following are the key features of Sagarmala Project.?

1. It intends to promote port led development
2. It excludes coastal SEZs outside its purview, but includes inland waterways and port connecting rail corridors.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation

Sagarmala Project

Sagarmala Project shall, inter alia, aim to develop access to new development regions with intermodal solutions and promotion of the optimum modal split, enhanced connectivity with main economic centres and beyond through expansion of rail, inland water, coastal and road services.

Three pillars of the project

- (i) Supporting and enabling Port-led Development through appropriate policy and institutional interventions.
- (ii) Port Infrastructure Enhancement, including modernization and setting up of new ports
- (iii) Efficient Evacuation to and from hinterland.

It will involve more than 150 projects related to

- Modernisation of existing ports,
- Setting up 5-6 new ports,
- Port connectivity through heavy haul rail corridor,
- Inland waterways,
- Freight-friendly expressways,
- Coastal Special Economic Zones and industrial clusters.

88. 'Unnat Jyoti Scheme' launched by Government of India pertains to

- a. LPG Gas Distribution
- b. National LED Programme
- c. Distribution of solar panels to rural households
- d. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs) Scheme

- The UJALA is the world's largest Light Emitting Diode (LED) programme for the residential sector.
- Under this scheme Government of India is committed to achieving its target of replacing all the 77 crore inefficient bulbs in India with LEDs thus resulting result in reduction of 20,000 MW load, energy savings of 100 billion kWh and Green House Gas (GHG) reduction of 80 million tonnes every year.
- The initiative is being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) a public sector undertaking of Ministry of Power.
- The LED bulbs distributed under the UJALA scheme is one third the market price and these superior quality bulbs also come with a three-year free replacement warranty.

Source: <<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erecontent.aspx?relid=142596>>

89. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Graphene is stronger than steel

2. Graphene is a good conductor of heat and electricity

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer : C

Explanation

Properties of Graphene

- 1. Stronger than the steel.
- 2. Good conductor of heat and electricity.

Its applications include: Paints and coatings, lubricants, oils and functional fluids, capacitors and batteries, thermal management applications, display materials and packaging, solar cells, inks and 3D-printers' materials and films.

90. Where was the International Conference of Zero held?

- a. Brazil during BRICS Meet 2014
- b. World Economic Forum Meet
- c. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- d. World Meteorological Organisation

Answer :C

Explanation

Its applications include: Paints and coatings, lubricants, oils and functional fluids, capacitors and batteries, thermal management applications, display materials and packaging, solar cells, inks and 3D-printers' materials and films.

The international Conference on Zero was held at UNESCO headquarters to celebrate the rich and remarkable history of mathematics in collaboration with India on 6 April.

91. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Sun is capable of producing very high intensity Flares known as Superflares.

2. Kepler Mission is associated with Mars.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer : A

Explanation

- Solar flares on the sun frequently shower Earth with high-energy particles causing the Aurora Borealis and, occasionally, disruptions to power networks and communications.
- An international research team suggested of a possibility of our sun turning into a Superflare star i.e capable of producing very high intensity Flares known as Superflares.
- Superflares are very strong explosions observed on stars with energies up to ten thousand times that of typical solar flares.
- The magnetic fields on the surface of stars with super flares are generally stronger than ones on the surface of the Sun.
- However, of all the stars with Superflares that researchers analysed, about 10 per cent had a magnetic field with strength similar to, or weaker than, the Sun's. Thus there is a possibility that our sun might turn into a Superflare.
- Kepler Mission is launched to discover Earth-size planets orbiting other stars.

92. The Union government had introduced few changes to the GDP calculation method. Which of the following is/are correct with regards to these changes?

- 1. The new base year for the calculation of GDP is 2011-12
- 2. GDP will be measured by using gross value added (GVA) at market price, rather than factor cost.
- 3. The change in method of calculation has brought Indian GDP resonates with the global practice.

Select the correct from the following codes:

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 1 and 3

- c. 2 and 3
- d. All of the above

Ans:D

Explanation

Earlier, in India, income is calculated at factor cost, and so is the case with most of the developing countries. The reasons are – lack of uniformity in taxes, goods are not printed with their prices, etc.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=115084>

93. With reference to National Energy Efficient Agriculture Pumps Programme, sometimes seen in the news, which of the statements given below is/are correct?

1. It falls under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
2. It provides provision for Smart metering and Sim enabled Smart control panel

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer B

Explanation

Under the **National Energy Efficient Agriculture Pumps Programme**, farmers can replace their inefficient pumps **free of cost** with the new BEE star rated energy efficient agricultural pump-sets.

These pumps will come enabled with smart control panel and a SIM card, giving farmers the flexibility to remotely control these pumps from their mobile phones and from the comfort of their homes.

EESL will distribute 200,000 BEE star rated pump-sets to the farmers under this programme, which will lead to 30% of energy savings by 2019. This translates into an annual savings of

approximately Rs 20,000 crore on agricultural subsidies or a saving of 50 billion units of energy every year.

It falls under the Ministry of Power.

Sources : [pib](#)

94. What is "Panama disease" recently in the news?

1. Viral disease affecting monkeys
2. Fungal disease infecting plantations
3. Bacterial disease affecting women
4. It is not a disease

Ans:B

Explanation

Panama Disease is a soil borne fungus causing disease in the banana crops across Kerala. This is leading to a potential crisis for farmers which if not checked could turn into an epidemic.

95. What is/are the importance/ importances of the Nuclear Security Summit?

- a. The First NSS was held in New Delhi
- b. 2016 witnessed the hosting of fourth NSS
- c. The Summit highlighted the role of UN as prominent body in promoting nuclear security
- d. None of the above

Answer : B

Explanation

- Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), an initiative of President Barack Obama to coordinate international efforts to prevent terror organizations from acquiring nuclear weapons or material. · The first Nuclear Security Summit was held in Washington, DC in 2010, and was followed by Summits in Seoul in 2012 and The Hague in 2014.
- Summit endorsed the central role of the IAEA in promoting nuclear security

96. Which of the following are the key features of 'Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2015?'



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1. Provides recognition of transgender people before law and gives them rights and entitlements including reservation in education and government jobs under the SC/ST quota.
2. It casts duty upon the Government to take appropriate steps in protecting rights of Transgenders and to ensure that they are not being discriminated against.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

It provides recognition of transgender people before law and gives them rights and entitlements including reservation in education and government jobs under the OBC quota.

97. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) was first launched in 2006
2. The setting up of AIIMS and upgradation of medical colleges are taken under this Scheme

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Ans: C

Explanation

The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) was announced in 2003 with objectives of correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.

PMSSY was first launched in March 2006



PMSSY has two components:

- (i) Setting up of AIIMS like Institutions
- (ii) Upgradation of Government Medical College Institutions.

Sources : [PMSSY](#)

98. The Agastyamala Biosphere Reserve is seen in the news in the context of :

- a. UNESCO World Heritage Site
- b. UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Network
- c. Ramsar Site
- d. None of the above

Ans: B

Explanation

The Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve has recently been included in UNESCO's list of World Biosphere Reserve Network.

99. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Department of Happiness was first launched by Government of Madhya Pradesh
- 2. Madhya Pradesh is the first State in India to create a Department for Happiness

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only.
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: C

100. GSTN was recently in news. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to GSTN?



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1. GSTN is a government company with 51% of the shares held by the Centre and State government together.
2. GSTN is designed and developed by Infosys.

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. none

Answer: B

Explanation

Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) is a Section 8 (under new companies Act, not for profit companies are governed under section 8), non-Government, private limited company. It was incorporated on March 28, 2013. The Government of India holds 24.5% equity in GSTN and all States of the Indian Union, including NCT of Delhi and Puducherry, and the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers (EC), together hold another 24.5%. Balance 51% equity is with non-Government financial institutions. The Company has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The major chunk of expenses to be incurred by GSTN consists of payment to Managed Service Provider M/S Infosys for design and development of GST Systems, supply of all underlying infrastructure, software licenses, bandwidth and operation and maintenance of GST systems for five years from the go-live date.