

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



**Date: 1 September 2023**

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2. After India, Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia protest China's map - The Hindu/ After India, now Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan reject China's latest map - Indian Express
3. Special Session of Parliament from Sept. 18 to 22; agenda under wraps - The Hindu/ Govt calls special session of Parliament later this month, keeps all guessing - Indian Express
4. Speedy trial can address jail overcrowding: SC panel - Indian Express
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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. E-buses will be allotted to cities based on population - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

**News:**

- The 10,000 **electric buses under the PM e-bus Sewa scheme**, would carry a uniform branding provided by the Centre
- It would be allocated **based on the population** of a particular city.
- As per the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation** the 169 eligible cities would be categorised into four groups based on population
  - 15-20 lakh
  - 10-15 lakh
  - 5-10 lakh
  - less than 5 lakh.
- The scheme which would be rolled out **on a Public-Private Partnership mode**.
- The scheme is aimed at enhancing **green mobility**

**Prelims takeaway:**

- PM e-bus Sewa scheme

**The PM e-bus Sewa Scheme**

- It intends to **augment city bus services** with 10000 e-buses on a **PPP model**.
  - An e-bus is any bus whose propulsion and accessory systems are powered exclusively by a zero-emissions electricity source.
- It will have an **estimated cost of ₹57,613 crore**, of which the Centre will provide ₹20,000 crore.
- It will **support the bus operations for 10 years**.

**Two segments of the Scheme**

- **Segment A – Augmenting the City bus services (169 cities)**
  - The approved bus scheme will augment city bus operations with 10,000 e-buses on a PPP model.
- **Segment B – Green Urban Mobility Initiatives (GUMI) (181 cities)**
  - It envisages green initiatives like bus priority, infrastructure, multimodal interchange facilities, NCMC-based Automated Fare Collection Systems, Charging infrastructure, etc.

**Coverage**

- The scheme will **cover cities of 3 lakh and above population** as per the **census 2011**.
- Priority will be given to **cities having no organised bus service**.

**Significance**

- **Promote e-mobility** and provide full **support for behind-the-meter power infrastructure**.
- Foster **innovation in the e-mobility sector** including for high-efficiency e-buses.
- Help develop a **resilient supply chain** for the electric vehicles segment.
- Bring in **economies of scale for procurement** of electric buses through aggregation for e-buses.
- The scheme is expected to **generate 45,000 to 55,000 direct jobs**.
- Help **reduce air and noise pollution** and **curb carbon emissions**.
- Increased share of bus-based transportation will **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**.

#### 2. After India, Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia protest China's map - The Hindu/ After India, now Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan reject China's latest map - Indian Express

**Relevance:** India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**News:**

- Recently, **The Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia** released separate statements **voicing their opposition to China's new "standard map"** for 2023

**Prelims takeaway:**

- South China Sea
- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982

- They said the drawing of territorial lines, including in the 2023 Edition of the Standard Map of China, **must be in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982).**
- UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982)**
- Adopted in 1982, it is also called the **Law of the Sea Convention**
  - It is an international agreement that establishes a **legal framework for all marine and maritime activities.**
  - As of June 2016, **167 countries and the European Union** are parties.
  - It divides marine areas into five main zones namely
    - Internal Waters
    - Territorial Sea
    - Contiguous Zone
    - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
    - The High Seas
  - The United Nations General Assembly develop an **international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS** on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of **areas beyond national jurisdiction**
  - While UNCLOS has been **signed and ratified** by nearly all the coastal **countries in the South China Sea**, its interpretation is still **hotly disputed.**

### 3. Special Session of Parliament from Sept. 18 to 22; agenda under wraps - The Hindu/ Govt calls special session of Parliament later this month, keeps all guessing - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**News:**

- Recently the Union government announced a Special Session of Parliament from September 18 to 22, shortly after the conclusion of the G-20 Summit in New Delhi.

**Prelims takeaway:**

- Session of parliament
- prorogation

**Sessions of Parliament:**

- The summoning of Parliament is specified in **Article 85** of the Constitution.
- The decision is taken by **the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** which is formalised by the **President**, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session.
- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar.
- By convention Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.

**Budget Session:**

- It is the longest session
- Starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May.
- The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.

**Monsoon Session:**

- The three-week session usually begins in July and finishes in August.

**Winter Session**

- held from November to December.

**Summoning of Parliament:**

- Summoning is the process of **calling all members** of the Parliament to meet.
- The **President** summons each House of the Parliament from time to time.
- The **gap between two sessions** of the Parliament **cannot exceed 6 months**, which means the Parliament meets at least **two times in one year.**

**Adjournment:**

- Adjournment **terminates the sitting of the House** which meets again at the **time appointed for the next sitting.**
- The postponement may be for a specified time such as hours, days or weeks.

**Adjournment sine die**

- If the meeting is **terminated without any definite time/ date fixed** for the next meeting, it is called Adjournment sine die.

**Prorogation:**

- Prorogation is the **end of session** and not the dissolution of the house (in case of Lok Sabha, as Rajya Sabha does not dissolve).
- The **time between the Prorogation and reassembly** is called **Recess**.

#### 4. Speedy trial can address jail overcrowding: SC panel - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**News:****Prelims takeaway:**

- Model prison act

- **The Supreme Court Committee on Prison Reforms** said living conditions in jails are not comparable to those envisaged under the Model Prison Manual, 2016.
- It requires urgent and **result-oriented attention**.
- 12 states were selected for study in the **first preliminary report on overcrowding in prisons**
- The highest rate of overcrowding was observed in:
  - district prisons (148 per cent)
  - central prisons (129 per cent)
  - sub-prisons (106 per cent).

**Key points:**

- **factors contributing to overcrowding in jails:**
  - stagnancy of prison infrastructure against steady increase in inmate flow
  - lack of initiative
  - drive of expansion or improvement in prison infrastructure
  - avoidable arrests
  - incarceration for petty offences
  - delay in investigation and trial.
- **Undertrial Review Committee (UTRC)** mechanism needs to be **strengthened** to address the issue of overcrowding
- Following steps can be taken to address the issue:
  - special fast track courts to be set up to extensively deal with petty offences and for cases pending for five years or more.
  - high courts should direct the District & Sessions Judge to regularly monitor the progress of cases pending in courts.
- Shortage of staff in prison departments across the country needs to be addressed immediately by **filling up the existing vacancies**.
- There are **existing legal provisions of sentencing, alternative** to one of **imprisonment**, for some offences should be used to their full potential by the courts such as:
  - Fine
  - Probation
  - admonition

### GS III

#### 5. Economy grows 7.8%, fastest in 4 quarters - The Hindu/ Services give fillip to growth, GDP up 7.8% in April-June - Indian Express

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

**News:**

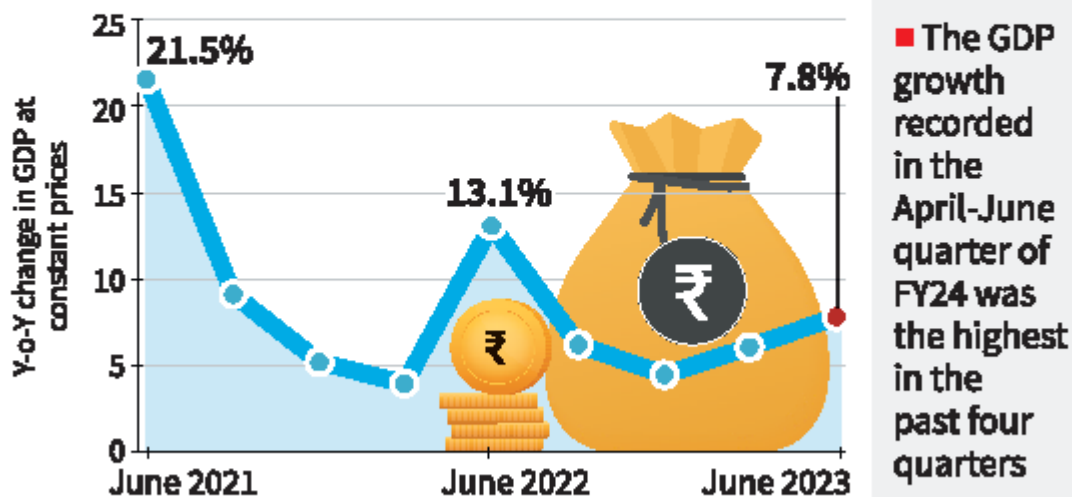
- According to data released by the **National Statistical Office**, India's **Real GDP growth** rose to a **four-quarter high of 7.8 percent** in April-June.
- The GDP measures the **monetary measure of all "final" goods and services**, those that are **bought by the final user, produced in a country** in a given period.
- This was mainly due to a **pickup in agriculture and services**, especially financial, real estate and professional services and contact-intensive services of trade, hotel and transportation.
- **Manufacturing and construction sectors**, however, recorded **slower-than-expected growth rates**.

**Prelims takeaway:**

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Gross Value Added (GVA)
- Tax-to-GDP Ratio

## Growth accelerates

India's gross domestic product grew by 7.8% in the first quarter of FY24 compared with 13.1% growth in Q1 FY23



#### 6. Core sectors grew 8% in July, output shrank 2.2% from June's level - The Hindu/ Key infra sectors grow 8% in July - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment.

**News:**

- All of **India's eight infrastructure industries** reported **growth for the first time in 14 months this July**, with **core sectors' output rising 8%** after a five-month high surge of 8.3% in June.

**Prelims takeaway:**

- Index of Industrial Production
- Eight core sectors

### Index of Industrial Production

- IIP is an indicator that measures the changes in the **volume of production of industrial products** during a given period.
- It is a **composite indicator** that measures the **growth rate of industry groups**
  - The industry groups that it measures are **classified** as
  - Broad sectors like manufacturing, mining, and electricity.
  - Use-based sectors like capital goods, basic goods, intermediate goods, infrastructure goods, consumer durables, and consumer non-durables.
- It is used by **government agencies** including the Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank of India, etc, **for policy-making purposes**.
- It is compiled and published **monthly** by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Base Year for IIP is **2011-2012**.

### Eight Core Sectors

- These comprise **40.27%** of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The eight core sector industries in **decreasing** order of their weightage: **Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilisers**.

## 7. 'ONDC a pivotal force set to enhance digital commerce' - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

### News:

- As per a whitepaper released by **Deloitte India** recently, **ONDC will be a pivotal force enhancing the digital commerce sector** in the country.
- It observed that the ONDC framework presents an **opportunity for businesses of all sizes to connect and transact seamlessly**.

### Prelims takeaway:

- Open Network for Digital Commerce
- Digital India

### Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

- It was **launched in late 2021** under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** by the **Ministry of Commerce** as part of the **Digital India push**.
- It works as a **network of interconnected e-marketplaces** through which **sellers**, including brands, can **list and sell their products directly to customers** bypassing any middlemen or intermediaries.
- It functions on the basis of an **open network in the form of a gateway** where buyers and sellers across different platforms will be able to connect.
- Along with food delivery, ONDC also offers **delivery services for groceries, home decor, cleaning essentials and other products**.

### Objectives

- **Democratisation and decentralisation** of e-Commerce
- **Inclusivity and access for sellers**, especially small and medium enterprises as well as local businesses
- **Increased choices and independency** for consumers
- Making goods and services **cheaper**

### Advantages of ONDC

- **Increased Transparency** by making government data more accessible to the public.
- **Increased Customer Choice** and **lower entry barriers**.
- **Spur Innovation** by providing entrepreneurs and researchers with access to government data that lead to the **development of new products and services benefitting society**.
- ONDC can **save money** by **reducing duplication of effort** and enabling more **efficient use of resources**.
- **Protecting the Consumers' Interest** by breaking the hegemony of existing e-commerce.
- ONDC is keen to **level the playing field for e-commerce operators** and **widen the digital market access** for MSMEs and small traders in the country.
- It aims at **fostering open networks developed on open-sourced methodology**, using open specifications and network protocols and independent of any specific platform.

## 8. HC permits stem cell therapy for two kids with autism - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**News:**

- The **Delhi High Court** recently permitted two children suffering from **autism spectrum disorder (ASD)** to undergo **stem cell therapy** for treatment of their condition.
- The order came in a petition against a **recommendation** of the **Ethics and Medical Registration Board (EMRB)** regarding stem cell treatment (SCT) in ASD.
- The doctors treating the children stopped the same because the recommendation stated that the **“use, promotion and advertisement of SCT shall amount to professional misconduct”**.
- HC stated, **no statutory provision of law** has been brought to our notice, which **prohibits the use of SCT in ASD**.

**Prelims takeaway:**

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Stem Cell Therapy

**Stem Cell**

- Stem cells are the **body's raw materials** i.e. cells from which all other cells with specialised functions are generated.
- Under **certain conditions** in the body or a laboratory, **stem cells divide to form more cells called daughter cells**.
- These daughter cells either become **new stem cells (self-renewal)** or become **specialised cells (differentiation)** with a **more specific function**.
  - Such specialised cells include blood cells, brain cells, heart muscle cells or bone cells.
- **No other cell** in the body has the **natural ability to generate new cell types**.

**Stem Cell Therapy**

- Also known as **regenerative medicine**, it **promotes the repair response** of diseased, dysfunctional or injured tissue **using stem cells or their derivatives**.
- Stem cells can then be **implanted into a person** to replace the damaged or lost cells.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

- ASD refers to a **range of conditions** characterised by some degree of **impaired social behaviour, communication, language** and a **narrow range of interests and activities** that are both **unique** to the individual and carried out repetitively.
- It is a **complex brain development disability** which makes itself visible during the **first 3 years of a person's life**.
- It is **not mental retardation** as people with autism may show **excellent skills in spheres like art, music, writing etc**.
- The level of **intellectual functioning** in individuals with ASDs is **extremely variable**, extending from profound impairment to superior levels.
- There are probably **many factors** that make a child more likely to have an ASD, including **environmental and genetic factors**.
- Although autism is **not curable**, its **symptoms can be addressed with appropriate interventions**.

## 9. Chandrayaan probe finds sparse plasma on moon - The Hindu/ Another payload detects sulphur presence - Indian Express

**Relevance:**

**News:**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) put out **samples of data** collected from the **Moon by three more instruments**.

**Prelims takeaway:**

- Chandrayaan-3
- RAMBHA



- Chandrayaan-3 is carrying **seven scientific payloads, four installed on the lander, two on rover, and one on the propulsion module** that is going around the Moon in an orbit.

#### Key findings:

- The seventh instrument, called **LASER Retroreflector Array**, is a **set of mirrors** that will remain on the Moon for much longer duration.
- It does not collect any data on its own but is meant **to reflect laser beams fired from Earth**.
- Scientists use these kinds of experiments to accurately measure the **distance of the Moon from the Earth**.
- **RAMBHA or Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere** is meant to **measure the plasma density** (concentration of ions and electrons) near the lunar surface.
- It indicated that the **plasma near the lunar surface** was “**relatively sparse**”.
- The **Alpha Particle X-ray Spectroscope, or APXS**, installed on the rover, **detected signals of the presence of Sulphur** and other minor elements.

#### Chandrayaan-3 Mission

- It is **India's third lunar mission** and **second attempt at achieving a soft landing** on the moon's surface.
- The mission took off from the **Satish Dhawan Space Center (SDSC) in Sriharikota on July 14, 2023**.
- **Objectives**
  - To demonstrate Safe and Soft Landing on Lunar Surface
  - To demonstrate Rover roving on the moon
  - To conduct in-situ scientific experiments
- **Components**
  - Indigenous Lander module (LM), Propulsion module (PM) and a Rover.
  - The lander (Vikram) and rover payloads (Pragyan) of Chandrayaan-3 remain the same as the Chandrayaan-2 mission.
  - The lander and the rover will have a mission life of one lunar day (about 14 Earth days) as they work on solar energy.
- **Launch Vehicle:** The LVM3 M4 launcher has been successfully utilized to launch Chandrayaan-3

#### Payloads

- The **scientific payloads** on the lander aim to **study various aspects of the lunar environment**.
- These payloads include **studying lunar quakes, thermal properties of the lunar surface, changes in plasma near the surface and accurately measuring the distance between Earth and the moon**.
- The **propulsion module** of Chandrayaan-3 features a new experiment called **Spectro-polarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth (SHAPE)**.
  - SHAPE aims to search for smaller planets with potential habitability by analyzing reflected light.

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. A bigger BRICS. Better too? - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context:**

- Recently, the leaders of **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa** took a call to **expand the BRICS grouping from five countries to 11**.
- The Johannesburg declaration, issued after the summit, said Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had been invited to become full members from January 1, 2024.

#### Origin of BRICS

- The acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs'.
  - The paper projected that the four economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China would be among the world's largest economies in the next 50 years or so.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of the UNGA in New York in 2006.
- The first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.
- It was decided to include South Africa at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in 2010.
- Accordingly, South Africa attended the 3rd BRICS Summit in Sanya, China, in 2011.
- BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing
  - Around 41 percent of the global population
  - Around 24 percent of the global GDP
  - Around 16 percent of global trade.

#### BRICS Expansion

- The Johannesburg declaration said that BRICS countries reached a consensus on the guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures of the expansion process.
- By growing to a size of 11 members, BRICS has become larger than ASEAN (10 members) and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (9).
- While many portrayed the new expanded grouping as an alternative to western blocs like the G7, India doesn't view this as an "anti-West" grouping.
- The new entrants are emerging economies with the potential to scale up.
- Many belong to the Global South or the developing countries and want to hedge their bets in the increasingly polarised geopolitical landscape.
- India has strategic partnerships with four of the new six members namely Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran and Egypt.

#### Africa and Latin America

- With a GDP of approximately US\$610 billion, Argentina, one of the largest economies in Latin America, was selected as a new member.
- From Africa, Ethiopia and Egypt are added as new members
- Ethiopia
  - A Christian-dominated country, it is seen as a careful balancer of both the US and China.
  - According to the World Bank, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria.
  - It is also one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, with an estimated 6.4% growth in FY 2021/22.
- Egypt
  - It occupies a crucial geo-strategic location; 12 percent of global trade passes through the Suez Canal and is a key player in the region.
  - An important economic powerhouse, it is an emerging economy with reforms brought in by the government led by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

### China's Influence

- However, both Argentina and Egypt have strong economic dependency ties with China.
- Beijing lent a helping hand to Argentina so that it could avert a default with the International Monetary Fund for the second time in 30 days.
- The Egyptian government has been wooing Chinese investments and has travelled to China seven times in the past eight years.
- China's bilateral trade with Egypt is currently at \$15 billion, double that of India's \$7.26 billion in 2021-22.

### Countries from Asia

- Of the three Asian countries, Saudi Arabia and UAE are strong partners of the US, and along with Egypt, have close ties with the US.
- Iran, which has had a complicated relationship with the US, has been wooed by China in recent years.
- The inclusion of Saudi Arabia and the UAE is expected to lead to more mobilisation of financial resources for the New Development Bank, the BRICS alternative for developing countries.

### Potential Limiting Factor

- Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia share a common regional space.
- This might give salience to the West Asian and North African region, and the rivalries and geopolitical tensions here might play out in the grouping as well.
- These contradictions within the member countries could limit the potential of BRICS.

### Russia, China's stakes

- With the expansion of the grouping, China is seen as trying to build its own bloc against the Western powers.
- But India has maintained that decisions have to be made "through consensus", the guiding principle in the grouping so that it is not completely led by Beijing.
- Russia, the other major player in the grouping, will host the next BRICS summit in Kazan in 2024.
- An expanded grouping of 11 members attending will work for Moscow, which has been facing diplomatic isolation.
- It will use the opportunity to portray Russia's relevance despite Western pressures.
- India has the unenviable task of guarding against the grouping being swayed by Beijing, which wants to pack it with countries indebted to China.

## 2. Managing conflict, cherishing diversity and nurturing oneness - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

**Context:**

- **Parliaments** are the **supreme expression of the will of sovereign peoples**.
- **Members of Parliament** in a constitutional democracy are legally obligated to **periodically seek endorsement** for their plans and programmes from their constituents through **free, fair and open elections**.
- Therefore, **Parliaments constituted by popular will** are bestowed with **constitutional and moral authority** to enact laws, determine political goals, allocate resources, give voice to the common citizens and hold the executive accountable for their acts of omission and commission.
- It is the **people of a nation** that are the **beating heart of parliamentary democracy**.

### India regarded as "Mother of Democracy"

- This recognition is founded on the solid bedrock of our multidimensional historical and cultural legacy that goes back several millennia.
- Our ancient texts refer to institutions and political structures that facilitated deliberation and debate.
- They also clearly indicate the presence of participative governance, particularly at the village community level.
- Undeterred by macro-level political upheavals, the Indian people have held onto the democratic ethos.
- The strengthened and flourishing parliamentary democracy in independent India is in itself an eloquent testimony to this democratic ethos.

### Indian Parliament represents Will of people

- When India attained independence in 1947, serious doubts were expressed by many political analysts from overseas about the viability of the democratic experiment.
- However, our founding fathers who had an intuitive faith in the political judgement and wisdom of our common people had no such hesitation or self-doubt.
- India adopted a most enlightened Constitution at the dawn of our freedom.
- The journey in the last seven decades has proved that faith in the people of India and in their capability to make the right choice.
- India's robust and accommodative parliamentary system has helped it to manage conflicts, and cherish diversity, yet nurture oneness of spirit.
- The Parliament of India has provided space and respect for diversity in all its dimensions and yet never hesitates to reach out to the weaker sections of society.
- It is the final watchdog of the public exchequer, approves the allocation of funds, and finances and monitors expenditure.
- It also serves as an effective mouthpiece of the people in bringing their issues, concerns, problems and difficulties to the attention of governments and the nation.
- Ever since its establishment, the Parliament of India has played a determined and purposive role in bringing about positive socio-economic change through progressive legislation and debates on matters of contemporary national interest.
- These have gone a long way in informing the public about the nuances and varied dimensions of the issues at hand.

**Role of Parliamentary Committees**

- Our parliamentary committees are extensions of Parliament and are referred to as parliaments in a microcosm.
- These committees are vested with great authority and responsibility to carry out detailed scrutiny of bills, budgetary proposals, programmes and policies and the working of different ministries of the Union government.
- Committees complement and support the work of Parliament enormously since they enjoy greater flexibility in their functioning.
- They can devise their own methodology, take evidence of government officials and elicit views directly from the people, organisations and experts.
- These feedback mechanisms help to sharpen parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of government ministries and departments.

**Rights come with Responsibilities**

- The Constitution grants members, individually and collectively, certain rights, privileges and immunities to enable them to discharge their responsibilities efficiently, effectively and without fear or favour.
- Parliamentary privileges shield and safeguard the autonomy, authority and dignity of Parliament so as to enable members to express their views freely.
- These privileges include
  - immunity from prosecution for speech made in the Houses of Parliament
  - immunity from arrest in civil matters during parliamentary sessions or committee meetings
- However, rights come with responsibilities, which members have to remain cognisant of.
- So that these privileges are not used for frivolous, baseless and defamatory allegations.

**Parliament: Living house of vibrant democracy**

- Parliament is not a lifeless institution but a vibrant and living embodiment of the will of more than a billion Indians.
- Individually and collectively, Parliamentarians are committed to working towards the welfare of citizens.
- In this, their authority is amply fortified by the Constitution, the laws of the land and the moral authority bestowed by the people of India.
- In the seven decades of its existence, the Parliament of India has successfully created an elegant symphony of democracy, that rises above the occasional discordant notes.

**Mentorship**  
India

## Quick Look

### 1. National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- It was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008.
- It is a central agency to investigate and prosecute offences
  - affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of State,
  - friendly relations with foreign States.
  - against atomic and nuclear facilities.
  - smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency.
- It implements international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the
- United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations.
- Its objective is also to combat terror in India.
- It acts as the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency.
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Branches: Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur and Jammu

### 2. Phishing

- It is a cybercrime in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone, or text message.
- This is done by someone posing as a legitimate institution to lure individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.

### 3. Long Period Average (LPA)

- It is the average rainfall recorded during the months from June to September, calculated during the 50-year period.
- It is kept as a benchmark while forecasting the quantitative rainfall for the monsoon season every year.
- IMD maintains an independent LPA for every homogeneous region of the country, which ranges from 71.6 cm to 143.83 cm.
- IMD maintains five rainfall distribution categories on an all-India scale.
  - Normal or Near Normal: When per cent departure of actual rainfall is +/-10% of LPA, that is, between 96-104% of LPA.
  - Below Normal: When departure of actual rainfall is less than 10% of LPA, that is 90-96% of LPA.
  - Above Normal: When actual rainfall is 104-110% of LPA.
  - Deficient: When departure of actual rainfall is less than 90% of LPA.
  - Excess: When departure of actual rainfall is more than 110% of LPA.

### 4. Kokborok

- Kokborok is the official language of Tripura.
- Kok means language and borok means people.
- Kokborok (Tripuri) is one of the most widely spoken Tibeto-Burman languages.
- The language is widely spoken by the Tripuri tribes such as Debbarma, Kalai, Reang, Jamatia, Tripura, Noatia, Rupini, Murasing and Uchoi.

- Kokborok Day is a festival celebrated in Tripura to celebrate the development of the Kokborok language.

## 5. Ramon Magsaysay Award

- It was established in 1957 and is considered Asia's premier prize and highest honour.
- It is named after Ramon Magsaysay, the third president of the Republic of the Philippines.
- Recognises and honours individuals and organisations in Asia, regardless of race, creed, gender, or nationality, who have achieved distinction and have helped others generously without aiming for public recognition.
- Awardees are presented with a certificate, a medallion with an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay and cash prize.
- The award is internationally-recognized as the Nobel Prize counterpart of Asia.
- Surgical oncologist R. Ravi Kannan, Assam, is one of the Ramon Magsaysay award winners for 2023.
- He is credited with revolutionising cancer treatment in Assam through people-centric and pro-poor healthcare.

## 6. Jaya Verma

- The Union government recently appointed Jaya Verma Sinha Chairperson of the Railway Board, the top decision-making body of the Railway Ministry.
- She becomes the first woman to head the Board in its 118-year history.
- She was at the forefront in handling the aftermath of the Balasore train accident which killed 291 people.

## 7. Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3), Gujarat

- It is the country's first 700 MWe unit and the biggest indigenously developed variant of the Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR).
- A PHWR is a nuclear power reactor, commonly using unenriched natural uranium as its fuel, that uses heavy water (deuterium oxide D<sub>2</sub>O) as its coolant and moderator.
- PHWR technology was started in India in the late 1960s with the construction of the first 220 MWe reactor, Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS-1).

## 8. Green Crackers

- These are dubbed as 'eco-friendly' crackers and are known to cause less air and noise pollution as compared to traditional firecrackers.
- These crackers were first designed by the National Environmental and Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), under the aegis of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 2018.
- Most green crackers do not contain barium nitrate, which is the most dangerous ingredient in conventional crackers.
- Green crackers use alternative chemicals such as potassium nitrate and aluminium as well as carbon instead of other harmful pollutants.

## 9. Fiscal Deficit

- It is the difference between the government's total expenditure and its total revenue (excluding borrowings).
- It is an indicator of the extent to which the government must borrow in order to finance its operations.
- It is expressed as a percentage of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- A high fiscal deficit can lead to inflation, devaluation of the currency and an increase in the debt burden.
- While a lower fiscal deficit is seen as a positive sign of fiscal discipline and a healthy economy.
- As per recent data, the Centre's fiscal deficit in the first four months of 2023-24 touched 33.9% of the full-year target.
- In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to 5.9% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the current 2023-24 financial year.

## 10. The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

- OCCRP has made fresh allegations of stock manipulation against the Adani Group.
- OCCRP is a global network of investigative journalists with staff on six continents.
- It was founded in 2006 and specialises in organised crime and corruption.
- It works with and supports 50+ independent media outlets in Europe, Africa, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.
- Initially funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), the OCCRP network first opened an office in Sarajevo.
- The idea is to have a global network of journalists with easy communication and information-sharing so that global networks of corruption and crime can be better understood and exposed.
- The OCCRP is supported both by state and non-state institutional actors, as well as smaller individual donors.



**Mentorship**  
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**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to the PM e-bus Sewa Scheme**

1. It intends to augment city bus services with e-buses on a PPP model.
2. Augmenting the City bus services (169 cities) and Green Urban Mobility Initiatives are two segments of the scheme.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q2. Consider the following statements about UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982):**

1. It is an international agreement that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities in the high seas.
2. The United Nations General Assembly develop an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction

**Which one of the following statements is correct?**

- (a) Statement I is correct but statement II is incorrect
- (b) Statement I is incorrect but Statement II is correct
- (c) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement I
- (d) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement I

**Q3. Consider the following statements about Sessions of Parliament**

1. The decision to summon the Parliament Is taken by **the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** which is formalised by the **President**.
2. India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar

3. As per constitution, Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.

**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Q4. With reference to bail in India, consider the following statements:**

- (a) The term bail is clearly defined in the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).
- (b) 2.The CrPC empowers magistrates to grant bail for bailable offences as a matter of right.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q5. Consider the following sectors**

1. Steel
2. Electricity
3. Cement
4. Crude Oil

**How many of the sectors mentioned above constitute the Core Sectors of the Indian Economy?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Q6. Consider the following statements about Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**

1. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Finance as part of the Digital India push.
2. Under this, all seller and buyer platforms will work through one open protocol and can connect through ONDC.
3. ONDC function is limited to delivery of food only.



**How many of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Q7. Which of the following statements define "stem cells" most aptly?**

- (a) Specialized cells with a limited capacity for self-renewal and differentiation.
- (b) Cells found only in plants that help in structural support.
- (c) Undifferentiated cells with the potential to self-renew and differentiate into various cell types.
- (d) Immune cells responsible for fighting infections in the human body.

**Q8. Consider the following statements about Chandrayaan-3:**

- 1. It is carrying seven scientific payloads, four installed on the lander, two on rover, and one on the propulsion module that is going around the Moon in an orbit.
- 2. RAMBHA or Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere is meant to measure the plasma density (concentration of ions and electrons) near the lunar surface.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Q9. The Johannesburg Declaration seen in the news recently is related to**

- (a) Expansion of BRICS membership
- (b) Strengthening Climate Change mitigation in island countries
- (c) Providing financial aid to Africans nations
- (d) Humanitarian aid to war stricken areas

**Q10. Consider the following statements on Parliamentary Privileges**

- 1. These are the rights and immunities enjoyed by MPs in India to enable them to discharge their duties and functions without interference or intimidation.
- 2. These privileges are derived from the Constitution of India only.
- 3. These parliamentary privileges are absolute in nature.

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

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Prelims Track Answer****Ans. 1 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- It intends to augment city bus services with 10000 e-buses on a PPP model. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- An e-bus is any bus whose propulsion and accessory systems are powered exclusively by a zero-emissions electricity source.
- It will have an estimated cost of ₹57,613 crore, of which the Centre will provide ₹20,000 crore.
- It will support the bus operations for 10 years.
- Two segments of the Scheme
- Segment A - Augmenting the City bus services (169 cities)
- The approved bus scheme will augment city bus operations with 10,000 e-buses on a PPP model.
- Segment B - Green Urban Mobility Initiatives (GUMI) (181 cities). **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- It envisages green initiatives like bus priority, infrastructure, multimodal interchange facilities, NCMC-based Automated Fare Collection Systems, Charging infrastructure, etc.

**Ans. 2 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- Adopted in 1982, it is also called the Law of the Sea Convention
- It is an international agreement that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities.
- As of June 2016, 167 countries and the European Union are parties.
- It divides marine areas into five main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas. **Hence statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The United Nations General Assembly develop an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

**Ans. 3 Option B is correct****Explanation****Sessions of Parliament**

- The summoning of Parliament is specified in **Article 85** of the Constitution.

- The decision is taken by the **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** which is formalised by the **President**, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- By convention Parliament meets for three sessions in a year. **Hence statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 4 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- The Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) does not define the word bail but only categories offences under the Indian Penal Code as 'bailable' and 'non-bailable'. **Hence Statement 1 is incorrect**
- The CrPC empowers magistrates to grant bail for bailable offences as a matter of right. This would involve release on furnishing a bail bond, without or without security. **Hence Statement 2 is correct**
- For non-bailable offences which enable the police officer to arrest without a warrant, a magistrate would determine if the accused is fit to be released on bail.

**Ans. 5 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- Eight Core Sectors comprise 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- The eight core sector industries in decreasing order of their weightage: Refinery Products> Electricity> Steel> Coal> Crude Oil> Natural Gas> Cement> Fertilisers. **Hence, all options are correct.**

**Ans. 6 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) was launched in late 2021 under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) by the Ministry of Commerce as part of the Digital India push. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It works as a network of interconnected e-marketplaces through which sellers, including brands, can list and sell their products directly to customers bypassing any middlemen or intermediaries. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It functions on the basis of an open network in the form of a gateway where buyers and

sellers across different platforms will be able to connect.

- Along with food delivery, ONDC also offers delivery services for groceries, home decor, cleaning essentials and other products. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 7 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- Stem cells are undifferentiated cells that have the unique ability to self-renew (create more stem cells) and differentiate (develop into specialized cell types) into various cell types. **Hence, Option C is correct.**
- Such specialised cells include blood cells, brain cells, heart muscle cells or bone cells.
- No other cell in the body has the natural ability to generate new cell types.
- This characteristic makes them essential for tissue repair, regeneration, and development in multicellular organisms.

**Ans. 8 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) put out samples of data collected from the Moon by three more instruments.
- Chandrayaan-3 is carrying seven scientific payloads, four installed on the lander, two on rover, and one on the propulsion module that is going around the Moon in an orbit. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- The seventh instrument, called LASER Retroreflector Array, is a set of mirrors that will remain on the Moon for much longer duration.
- It does not collect any data on its own but is meant to reflect laser beams fired from Earth.
- Scientists use these kinds of experiments to accurately measure the distance of the Moon from the Earth.
- RAMBHA or Radio Anatomy of Moon Bound Hypersensitive Ionosphere and Atmosphere is meant to measure the plasma density (concentration of ions and electrons) near the lunar surface. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

- It indicated that the plasma near the lunar surface was “relatively sparse”.
- The Alpha Particle X-ray Spectroscope, or APXS, installed on the rover, detected signals of the presence of Sulphur and other minor elements.

**Ans. 9 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- Recently, the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa took a call to expand the BRICS grouping from five countries to 11.
- The Johannesburg declaration, issued after the summit, said Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had been invited to become full members from January 1, 2024. **Hence, Option A is correct**

**Ans. 10 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Parliamentary privileges are the rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament (MPs) in India to enable them to discharge their duties and functions without interference or intimidation. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- These privileges are derived from the Constitution of India, parliamentary conventions, laws made by the Parliament, rules of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and judicial interpretations. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The members of Parliament are exempted from any civil or criminal liability for any statement made or act done in the course of their duties.
- The privileges are claimed only when the person is a member of the house.
- These privileges are essential so that the proceedings and functions can be made in a disciplined and undisturbed manner.
- These parliamentary privileges are not absolute and are subject to certain limits. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- For example, MPs are expected to use their privileges responsibly and not abuse them for personal gain.

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