DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By

Mentorship
India

----- SOURCES -----

THE HINDU | pib | THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS | ET Economic Times.com | live mint | आकाशवाणी | The Indian EXPRESS JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

Important News Articles

1. President's actions during State Emergency open to scrutiny: SC - The Hindu
2. Local bodies can be allocated a portion of GST collections, says N K Singh - Indian Express
3. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION - Indian Express
4. India ranks 7th in Climate Change Performance Index - AIR
5. Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) to feature in GPAI Summit 2023 - PIB
6. India-led Global River Cities Alliance launched at COP28 - Indian Express
7. Retail inflation is stable now: FM - The Hindu
8. Draft climate deal fails to 'phase out' fossil fuel - The Hindu/ Oil producers water down provision on fossil fuel phase-out - Indian Express

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Harvest the Odisha story to ensure food security - The Hindu
2. What are FSB's concerns about crypto asset intermediaries? - The Hindu
3. Key aspects of Article 370 verdict - Indian Express
4. All that can be saved - Indian Express
5. Can Bihar increase its reservation pool? - The Hindu

Quick Look

1. Road Safety Good Practices in India
2. Wheeler Island
3. Ghaggar River
4. Yellow Sea
5. Pangalokha Wildlife Sanctuary

Important News Articles

GS II

1. President's actions during State Emergency open to scrutiny: SC - The Hindu

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

News:

Prelims Takeaway
• President's Rule
• Article 370

- The Supreme Court recently ruled that the **declaration of a State emergency under Article 356** must have a **"reasonable nexus"** with the subsequent actions of the President.
- This decision allows petitioners to **question the President's objective in declaring a State emergency in Jammu and Kashmir** in December 2018.
- Whether the aim was to **ultimately abrogate the special status** of Jammu and Kashmir and **bifurcate the full-fledged State to two union territories.**

Background

- The crisis in Jammu and Kashmir began when the then **Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti resigned** on June 19, 2018.
- The Governor issued a **proclamation under Section 92** of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir on June 20, 2018.
- It entrusted the Governor with the **powers and functions of the State government** "in the event of a failure of the constitutional machinery in the State".
- Subsequently, the **State Legislative Assembly was dissolved** and **President's rule was imposed** on December 19, 2018.

Article 370 Abrogation

- On August 5, 2019, the **President issued the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order,** applying all Indian Constitution provisions to Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Article 367(4) was added** to replace the term 'Constituent Assembly of the State' in the proviso to Article 370(3) with **'Legislative Assembly of the State.'**
- On the same day, **Parliament abrogated Article 370** and **passed the reorganisation bill,** resulting in the bifurcation of the State into two union territories.

Judicial Scrutiny

- The Chief Justice of India emphasized that the **actions of the President during a State emergency are subject to judicial scrutiny.**
- The onus is on the party challenging these actions to **establish prima facie evidence** of "mala fide or extraneous exercise of power."
- If a prima facie case is established, the onus shifts to the Centre to justify that the exercise of power had a reasonable nexus with the proclaimed objective under Article 356.

2. Local bodies can be allocated a portion of GST collections, says N K Singh - Indian Express

Relevance: Devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein

News:

Prelims Takeaway
• Goods and Services Tax (GST)
• Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)
• Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

- Recently, the **chairperson of the 15th Finance Commission,** suggested allocating a **percentage of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to support local municipalities.**
- He emphasized **financial autonomy** and **adherence to constitutional requirements** for the **third tier of governance - local municipalities.**

Urbanization Challenges

- He underscored the rapid pace of urbanization, projecting that **by 2050, half of India's population will reside in urban areas.**

- He raised concerns about the **potential escalation of emissions** and emphasized the **need for institutions to balance environmental and growth compulsions.**

Challenges in Urban Governance

- He highlighted that the **scarcity of resources** faced by the third tier has been **exacerbated by the merging of taxes with the GST.**
- He also noted **deficiencies in implementing amendments** related to urban local bodies and panchayati raj.
- He highlighted the **need for regulatory framework improvements,** including land reforms, digitization of land records, and transparent market practices.

Private Capital for Developmental Banks

- He advocated for efficiently **harnessing private capital for developmental banks** and called for **innovative use of guarantees, hybrid capital and blended finance.**
- Success stories, like the **reduction of slums in cities like Surat and Ahmedabad,** were cited, offering hope for positive urban transformations.

3. TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION - Indian Express

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

News:

- The Supreme Court of India recently **unanimously upheld the abrogation of Article 370** by the Centre in 2019.
- It affirms that the former state of Jammu and Kashmir no longer holds **special status in the Indian Union.**

Prelims Takeaway
• Truth and Reconciliation Commission
• Article 370

Justice Sanjay Kaul's Recommendation

- Justice Sanjay Kaul, in his opinion, proposed the **establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.**
- **Objective:** To investigate alleged human rights violations by both state and non-state actors in Jammu and Kashmir.
- He emphasized the need for a **dialogue-based approach** rather than a criminal court process.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Also known as a **truth commission,** it is an official mechanism designed to **acknowledge and reveal past wrongdoings by governments or non-state actors**.
- Priscilla B Hayner **defined a truth commission** as one that
    o is focused on the past, rather than in ongoing events
    o investigates a pattern of events that took place over a period of time
    o engages directly and broadly with the affected population, gathering information on their experiences
    o is a temporary body, with the aim of concluding with a final report
    o is officially authorised or empowered by the state under review".

Countries with Truth Commissions

- **Several countries** have implemented truth commissions in the past.
- **Notable examples** include South Africa, Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.
- The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission focused on the **Indian Residential Schools system.**
    o About 150,000 indigenous children were removed from their families and communities to attend residential schools.
- The South Africa's TRC aimed to **uncover human rights violations during the apartheid era.**

GS III

4. India ranks 7th in Climate Change Performance Index - AIR

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:
- India secured the **7th position** in the **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)** recently released during the **global climate conference (COP-28) in Dubai.**
- This marks an **improvement of one rank from the previous year**.

Prelims Takeaway
• Climate Change Performance Index
• COP 28

Climate Change Performance Index
- It is an instrument to **enable transparency in national and international climate politics.**
- It is **published by Germanwatch,** the **New Climate Institute** and the **Climate Action Network annually.**
- The CCPI **evaluates the endeavours of 63 countries and the European Union,** encompassing **over 90% of global greenhouse gas emissions.**
- The climate protection performance is **assessed in four categories** viz. GHG Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use and Climate Policy.

Global Rankings
- **Denmark** retained the **top spot with a score of 75.59 percent.**
- **China**, the largest global polluter, secured the **51st position.**
- Th**e United States,** the second-largest emitter, stood at **number 57** in the CCPI rankings.

Historical Improvement
- India has sustained its **top 10 position for the fifth consecutive year,** underscoring its ongoing commitment to climate mitigation efforts.
- India's performance in the CCPI has shown a **noteworthy trajectory of improvement,** progressing from the 31st rank in 2014 to the current 7th position in 2023.
- This upward trend reflects **India's dedication to enhancing its climate mitigation strategies** over the years.
- India received a **high ranking in the GHG Emissions and Energy Use categories,** but a **medium in Climate Policy and Renewable Energy,** as in the previous year.
- India has relatively **high taxes on petrol and diesel,** which are intended to act as carbon taxes.

5. Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) to feature in GPAI Summit 2023 - PIB

Relevance: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

News:
- The **'YUVAi- Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI' initiative** will be featured at the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit.**

Prelims Takeaway
• Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit.
• YUVAi Initiative

YUVAi Initiative
- It is a **collaborative initiative** by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Intel India.
- This initiative focuses on **equipping youth with essential AI skills** for a future-ready workforce.
- It is designed to **deepen understanding of AI among school students** (class 8 to 12) nationwide, empowering them to become **human-centric designers and users of AI.**

Key Features

- The **program progresses in three phases,** aiming to guide students toward responsibly using AI to address real-world challenges.
- It introduces students to **several social themes** to direct their AI knowledge towards **solving real-world problems.**
- In the first cohort, over 8,500 students registered, attending **online orientation sessions to learn fundamental AI concepts.**
- **Teachers also enrolled** and underwent orientation sessions.
- Students then submitted **innovative AI-based ideas under one of the eight core themes** of the programme, with the top 200 shortlisted.
- Shortlisted students received **deep dive AI training and mentorship** with Intel AI coaches in Phase 2.
- Students then submitted their **AI projects to be evaluated for Phase 3.**
- In Phase 3, the top 50 students attended a **face-to-face rapid modeling workshop,** receiving mentorship from industry experts.
- The Top 10 finalists will **represent YUVAi at the GPAI Summit,** showcasing their **AI-based social impact projects.**

6. India-led Global River Cities Alliance launched at COP28 - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- Recently, the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** initiated the **Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)** as an **extension of the Namami Gange program.**
- The launch took place at the **United Nations Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai.**

Prelims Takeaway
• National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)
• Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)
• River Cities Alliance (RCA)

Expansion of River Cities Alliance

- The GRCA **expands the existing River Cities Alliance** formed by NMCG and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
- Notably, cities like **Den Haag (Netherlands), Adelaide (Australia)** and **Szolnok (Hungary)** have joined the GRCA.

River Cities Alliance (RCA)

- It is a **joint initiative** of the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- **Vision:** To connect river cities and focus on sustainable river centric development.
- Beginning with 30 member cities in November 2021, the Alliance has expanded to **109 river cities across India** and one international member city from Denmark.

International Collaboration

- The GRCA signed a Memorandum of Common Purpose (MoCP) with the **Mississippi River Towns and Cities Initiative** of the United States.
- This marked a **unique global alliance** for **river conservation** and **sustainable water management.**

Global Significance

- The GRCA launch is hailed as a significant step in **global efforts toward river conservation.**

- The alliance is expected to play a crucial role in **coordinating post-COP activities,** shaping the framework for effective implementation of river conservation initiatives.

7. Retail inflation is stable now: FM - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway
• Inflation
• Monetary Policy Committee

Easing inflation

FM asserts inflation has been within acceptable limits since the introduction of the tolerance band in 2016

- **Nirmala Sitharaman** says retail inflation is now stable and within the RBI's notified tolerance band of 2% to 6%

- **Core inflation has declined from 5.1% in April 2023 to 4.3% in October 2023, FM says**

- **Temporary increases in inflation reined in by supply-side and demand stabilisation measures, she asserts**

8. Draft climate deal fails to 'phase out' fossil fuel - The Hindu/ Oil producers water down provision on fossil fuel phase-out - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation
News:
- After four days of negotiations at COP28, a **new draft agreement text** emerged, sparking controversy over its **weakened provisions on fossil fuel elimination.**

Prelims Takeaway
• Paris Agreement
• COP 28

Key Highlights
Dilution of Fossil Fuel Provision
- The draft text called for countries to "**reduce both consumption and production of fossil fuels,** in a **just, orderly and equitable manner."**
- Fossil fuels, responsible for **nearly 80% of greenhouse gas emissions,** were **explicitly mentioned for the first time in COP decisions.**
- The dilution of the provision disappointed many, as it **fell short of explicitly outlining measures** needed to reduce fossil fuel emissions.
European Union's Rejection
- The European Union (EU) and some small island states **rejected the draft,** deeming certain elements **"wholly unacceptable."**
- The EU expressed disappointment, citing the **inadequacy of the text in addressing climate issues.**
Resistance from Oil Producing Countries
- Efforts to include a **strong provision on fossil fuel phase-out** faced **resistance from oil-producing nations** such as Saudi Arabia and Russia.

- A letter from the secretary general of OPEC urged members to **reject any stringent provision,** contributing to the diluted language in the draft.

Retained Phase-Down of Coal

- Despite the dilution, the draft maintained a **provision on the phase-down of coal.**
- New requirements were introduced **restricting the establishment of new coal-fired power plants.**
- This raised concerns about **potential conflicts with India's stance on coal reduction.**

India's Position

- India, a significant coal consumer, has been **cautious about phasing out coal** for accelerated reduction, **viewing it as discriminatory.**
- While India **did not immediately react to the draft**, it has consistently emphasized its **concerns about efforts to expedite coal phase-down.**
- The draft's retention of a **coal phase-down provision,** coupled with **restrictions on new coal-fired power plants,** may **pose challenges for India's stance.**
- India has previously indicated that **any compromise on the commitment to the 1.5 °C warming limit,** or attempts to **single out coal unfairly,** would be rejected.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Harvest the Odisha story to ensure food security - The Hindu

Relevance: Agriculture

Context:
- As leaders convene for COP28 in Dubai, **addressing rising disasters, hunger and malnutrition due to unchecked climate change,** becomes increasingly critical.
- **Odisha's development model** is cited as a source of ideas for **achieving food security** built around equity and sustainability.

Three Key Themes in Odisha's Transformation

1. Agricultural Transformation
- In the past two decades, Odisha has shifted from importing rice to producing a record 13.606 million tonnes of food grains in 2022.
- Noteworthy aspects include a majority of small/ marginal farmers and tripled rice yield despite a stable crop area in two decades.
- Kalahandi district was known as the "land of hunger," but has now been transformed into Odisha's rice bowl.
- The state has focused on small and marginal farmers and increasing their income.
- This has directly contributed to strengthening their food security and creating resilient livelihoods.
- Flagship schemes like Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) and the Odisha Millet Mission promote income increase, crop diversification, and climate resilience.

2. Resilience and Sustainability
- Due to its geographical location and physical conditions, Odisha is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
- It can disrupt current growth strategies and exacerbate poverty, as it may lead to a loss of life, livelihoods, assets, and infrastructure.
- Odisha has proactively developed a comprehensive Climate Change Action Plan, covering multiple sectors, to address these concerns.
- The approach towards climate resilience is being developed from the bottom up.
- It involves initiatives like the Crop Weather Watch Group for monitoring and timely interventions during adverse weather conditions.
- Crop planning is done at the district level by officials of allied departments, considering the agro-climatic zone.
- Farmers are adopting climate-resilient practices, including integrated farming, zero-input-based natural farming and non-paddy crops.
- Training farmers in crop-specific techniques, including integrated nutrient and pest management, has boosted food grains production.

3. Social Protection
- Odisha's agricultural improvements have made it a surplus state for paddy production.
- It is the fourth most significant contributor to the paddy pool of the Food Corporation of India.
- Collaborations with the United Nations World Food Programme have led to innovative pilots for improving food and nutrition security.
  - The WFP collaborates with the Government of Odisha on its food security, livelihood and climate resilience initiatives.
- Odisha tops the State Ranking Index for the National Food Security Act, showcasing its success in food security, livelihood, and climate resilience initiatives.

Conclusion
- Odisha's transformative journey from **food scarcity to surplus, coupled with sustained efforts** in climate-proofing agriculture, crop diversification, and social protection, offers a **unique development model.**
- It provides valuable insights for other regions facing **challenges related to global climate change.**

2. What are FSB's concerns about crypto asset intermediaries? - The Hindu

Relevance: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Context:
- The **Financial Stability Board (FSB)** recently released a report focusing on **crypto-asset intermediaries (MCIs)** and their potential risks to global financial stability.
- The report **addresses concerns about transparency, governance, concentration risk** and **potential spillovers** into the traditional financial system.

Definition of MCIs

- MCIs are individual firms or affiliated groups offering a range of crypto-based services, primarily centred around operating trading platforms.
- Examples include Binance, Bitfinex and Coinbase.
- In the traditional financial landscape, the functions are provided by separate entities, instead of the same entity.
- This prevents potential conflict of interest and promotes market integrity, investor protection and financial stability.
- MCIs pose structural vulnerabilities due to a lack of controls, operational transparency, disclosures and conflicts of interest.

Revenue Streams and Aspirations

- MCIs primarily generate revenue from transaction fees related to trading activities, including self-issued crypto assets.
- They may also offer additional services like prepaid debit cards and lending.
- Examples include Binance and Coinbase issuing debit cards.
- The report notes that MCIs aspire to become "one-stop shops" for crypto-based services, leveraging economies of scale and scope.
- These MCIs may also derive revenue from operating a blockchain infrastructure for which they may collect transaction validation fees.
- Another source of revenue could be proprietary trading (trading with their own individual capital rather than that of clients, with the aim of acquiring profits).
- FSB's report observes that the magnitude of these revenue sources is unclear because of the limited publicly disclosed information.

Transparency and Governance Issues

- The report observes that MCIs lack transparency about their corporate structure and are often privately held.
- Even if they disclose information, the report observes, it is typically for a small part of their business, specific to a jurisdiction.
- The report suggests this could be intentional, to limit understanding of their vulnerabilities, economic models and activities evading regulatory oversight.
- Poor risk management may facilitate misconduct and hide risks until negative shocks occur.
- Illiquidity and concentrated holdings coupled with opaque information could allow prices of self-issued crypto assets to be inflated.

Concerns about Binance

- Regulators globally, including the US SEC, expressed concerns about Binance's operations.
- Visa and Mastercard stopped issuing new co-branded cards with Binance.
- SEC Chair accused Binance of an "extensive web of deception" and lack of disclosure.
- Binance was alleged to mislead investors about risk controls and inflate trading volumes.

Concentration Risk

- The report highlights market dominance and concentration as potential vulnerabilities.
- They allow one or more MCIs to become major liquidity sources, leading to incorrect price realization and potential anti-competitive behaviour.
- High concentration may increase entry barriers and costs for users to switch to competitors.

Spillovers into the Traditional Financial System

- While the immediate threat to global financial stability from MCI failure is currently limited, the report acknowledges potential spillovers.
- Recent incidents like Silvergate Bank's winding down after the FTX collapse, revealed concentrated deposit exposures to firms reliant on crypto assets.
- Stress events in crypto-asset markets caused significant losses and shook investor confidence.

Leverage and Liquidity Mismatch

- The report identifies vulnerabilities in leverage and liquidity mismatch within MCIs, particularly concerning assets and liabilities.
- Dependency on formal banks for transaction services exposes MCIs to counterparty and credit risks.
  o especially if the bank fails to provide real-time operations or if the trading venue ceases operations.

3. Key aspects of Article 370 verdict - Indian Express

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context:
- The Supreme Court, in a unanimous 5-0 ruling, **upheld the Centre's abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.**

Sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir

- The court examined the constitutional set-up of Jammu and Kashmir to determine if it retained an element of sovereignty.
- Article 1 of the Constitution of India and Section 3 of the J&K Constitution affirmed the integration of J&K into India, refuting the argument for retained sovereignty.
- The court held that the gradual process of constitutional integration was ongoing, culminating in the declaration by the President.

Temporary or Permanent Nature of Article 370

- Arguments were made on the permanence of Article 370, with petitioners contending it couldn't be abrogated due to its permanence.
- The CJI and Justice Kaul concluded that Article 370 was always meant to be a temporary provision, and its mechanism did not end with the dissolution of the J&K Constituent Assembly.
- The CJI said that there were two aspects that showed the temporary nature of Article 370.
  o It was intended as an interim arrangement until the Constituent Assembly of the State was formed.
    ▪ Since in the interim, there was a need for a legal bridge between J&K and India.
  o The provision was adopted because of the special circumstances in the state, which was experiencing war conditions.

Legality of Abrogation

- The legal route for the abrogation of Article 370 was twofold.
- It involved issuance of CO 272 by the President, which amended Article 367 of the Constitution.
  o Article 367 deals with interpretation of the Constitution.
  o The CO added a new meaning to "Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir" to mean "legislative assembly of Jammu and Kashmir."
- CO 273 was promulgated seeking the consent of Parliament to recommend that "all clauses of the said article 370 shall cease to be operative".
- Justice Kaul upheld this process, while CJI Chandrachud suggested that changing the meaning of the Constituent Assembly of J&K was unnecessary.
  o The President could have unilaterally abrogated Article 370.

Action during President's Rule

- The court referred to the 1994 Bommai ruling to decide the validity of actions during the President's rule.
- The standard for validity was whether the action was not 'mala fide or palpably irrational', and if 'advisability and necessity of the action was not borne in mind by the President".
- The court also held that the petitioner and the Union government must show mala fides to the court.
- The ruling rejected the argument that irrevocable action being taken cannot be accepted as proof of mala fides.

4. All that can be saved - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation
Context:
- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** recently released its **14th Emissions Gap Report (2023).**
- The report detailed **how much humanity needs to cut down its carbon emissions** to limit the global temperature rise.

Emissions Gap Measurement
- The emission gap measures the disparity between planned emission levels and the necessary levels to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2100.
- The report underscores the urgency of global efforts to address climate change.
- The report focuses on the global shortfall in efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial period.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Impact
- The average temperature of Earth has been on the rise.
- There is a huge amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) being generated from energy-related activities, industry, agriculture and land use and waste.
- GHGs, including carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, trap heat in the atmosphere, leading to temperature rise and associated climate impacts.
- Compared to pre-industrial temperature, Earth's mean temperature has already increased by about 1 °C.
- This has caused unprecedented rains, floods, increased droughts, severe storms, cyclones, etc.

Contributors to GHG Emissions
- Fossil fuel burning for power generation, transport, manufacturing, construction, buildings, and industry contributes significantly to CO_2 emissions.
- Most of the CO_2 generated is through the burning of fossil fuels for power generation and process heat (43 percent)

Reducing GHG Emissions
- As far as power generation is concerned, to move away from fossil fuels, we need to adopt renewable generation, mainly solar and wind.
- For the transport sector, one needs to move to electric and also hydrogen-based vehicles.
- Replacing fossil fuels in the industrial sector is the most difficult task.
- Since renewable energy cannot supply high-intensity heat required for industries like iron and steel and aluminium.

Developed vs. Developing World Responsibilities
- Moving away from fossil fuels is a capital-intensive process and developing countries are not in a position to fund such activities.
- Hence, there is a need for the developed world to transfer not only finance but also technology.
- Developed countries, responsible for significant emissions historically, should provide financial aid and technology transfer, aligning with the "polluter pays" principle.
- Countries like the US have a cumulative CO_2 emission which is 25 percent of the global emissions.
- The corresponding figures for the EU and China are 22 percent and 12.7 percent, respectively.
- As compared to this, India's cumulative emissions are only 3 percent.
- In per capita terms also, it is only 1.8 tons, where the world average is 4.7 tons.

Climate Finance
- Since the past 15 years or so, there has been talk of transferring resources to the tune of $100 billion per year to developing countries.
- However, it is only about 15 percent compared to what is required to fund adequate mitigation and adaptation activities.
- But this is not really happening.
- The loss and damage fund, addressing climate-related losses, has seen progress, but decisions on the global stock take report are pending.
- COP28 discussions involve critical issues, including the global stock take report, climate equity and the phase-out of fossil fuels.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- The latest UNEP report suggests a projected temperature rise between 2.5 to 2.9 °C by 2100 based on current NDCs.
- Urgent action is needed to bridge the emissions gap and align efforts with the goal of limiting temperature rise.

5. Can Bihar increase its reservation pool? - The Hindu

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.
Context:
- With the declaration of **Caste Census data** in the State of Bihar in October, recently Bihar government has passed two laws increasing the quantum of **reservations in jobs and education in the State to 75%** on which has sparked the debate around the permissible limits of reservation in India.

What is the issue?
- Bihar has recently approved two laws increasing reservations in jobs and education in the State to 75% which **includes:**
  o 20% for Scheduled Castes,
  o 2% for Scheduled Tribes,
  o 18% for Other Backward Classes,

- o 25% for Extremely Backward Classes,
- o 10% for economically weaker sections (EWS).
- Whereas the **permissible limits of reservations in India is "50%"**, prescribed by the Supreme Court of India in the **Mandal Commission case (Indra Sawhney, 1992).**
  - o SC has emphasised on **"adequate" representation** of the oppressed classes as opposed to **"proportionate representation".**

The 50% Rule

- In 1963 the SC said that **reservations were "exception" or "special provision"** under our constitutional scheme. Therefore, they **cannot exceed 50%** of the posts or seats.
- In 1976 reservations was recognised as **a facet of equality rather than an exception** to it — the 50% limit has remained unaltered.
- In 1990, in the **Mandal commission case reaffirmed the 50% limit** and made it a **binding rule with exceptions:**
  - o A **State can exceed the limit** to provide reservations to far flung communities which are out of the mainstream of the society
- The SC upheld the **103rd Constitutional Amendment** which provides for **10% additional reservations to the EWS.**

New laws of Bihar and SC

- **Exceeding the reservation ceiling of the 50%** (now 60%).
  - o Thus, if challenged in court, the government of Bihar will have to prove that there case falls within the exception under the Mandal Commission case.
- The State government stated the **intent is to increase** the quantum of reservations **in view of the results of the caste Census**.
- However, the SC has repeatedly upheld that the **State cannot fix the quantum of reservation** simply **in proportion to the population** of the reserved classes.
- The **only aim of reservations is to secure "adequate" representation** of the depressed classes and not "proportionate" representation.

Other Examples of Such Breach

- Other States which surpassed the 50% limit are
  - o **Chhattisgarh** (72%),
  - o **Tamil Nadu** (69%, under a 1994 Act under the ninth Schedule),
  - o North-eastern States including **Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland** (80% each).
  - o **Lakshadweep** (100% reservations for ST)
  - o Maharashtra and Rajasthan (struck down by the courts)

Quick Look

1. Road Safety Good Practices in India

- The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways recently expressed concern over the rising number of road accidents in India.
- The Save Life Foundation report, titled 'Road Safety Good Practices in India,' presented case studies of 13 roads across the country to showcase successful safety stories.
- Key Highlights
  - 53 road accidents and 19 deaths occur every hour, indicating a serious issue.
  - A 12% increase in road accidents and a 10% increase in accident-related deaths.
  - Over 60% of those who lose their lives in road accidents are young individuals aged between 18 and 35.
  - The road suggested that scaling up corridor-based road safety practices could potentially save 40,000 lives annually.
- He cited the example of NH48 (Old Mumbai-Pune Highway), where fatalities witnessed a 61% drop between 2018 and 2021 due to effective problem-solving and road engineering.
- He announced the government's intention to reduce road accident deaths by 50% by 2030.

2. Wheeler Island

- Abdul Kalam Island, formerly known as Wheeler Island, is an island off the coast of Odisha.
- The island was renamed to honour the late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and also to encourage the youth to pursue a scientific temperament.
- It is the only place in India that has an integrated test range maintaining a missile testing facility, which is located on this island.
- All indigenous missiles, like Akash missile, Agni missile, Prithvi Missile etc. are tested from here.
- The island is 2 km long, having an area of 390 acres, and is basically a soil formation without rocks in the Bay of Bengal.

3. Ghaggar River

- It is an intermittent river that flows only during the monsoon season.
- Course
  - It rises from the Shivalik Range in northwestern Himachal Pradesh.
  - It flows about 200 miles (320 km) southwest through Haryana state, where it receives the Saraswati River.
  - It eventually dries up in the Thar Desert in Rajasthan.
- This seasonal river feeds two irrigation canals that extend into Rajasthan.
- The Hakra, which flows in Pakistan, is the continuation of the Ghaggar River in India, and they are together called the Ghaggar - Hakra River.
- Several historians identify Ghaggar with the Vedic Saraswati River.
- Along the banks of the Ghaggar River, many settlements of the Indus Valley Civilization have been excavated.
- It is believed that the rivers Sutlej and Yamuna once flowed into the Ghaggar-Hakra river bed.
- Tributaries: Kaushalya River, Markanda, Sarsuti, Tangri and Chautang.

4. Yellow Sea

- A US F-16 fighter appears to have crashed into Yellow Sea waters off the coast of South Korea recently.
- The Yellow Sea is a marginal sea in the western Pacific Ocean.
- It is situated between mainland China to the west and north, the Korean Peninsula to the east, and the Shandong Peninsula and Liaodong Peninsula to the south.
- It is positioned to the north of the East China Sea.

- The sea was named for the yellowish sand particles originating from the Gobi Desert that descend on the surface of the sea, thereby giving it a golden yellow colour.
- It is one of the largest shallow areas of the continental shelf in the world, with an average depth of 44 metres and a maximum depth of 152 metres.
- The main rivers that drain into the Yellow Sea include the Hai River, the Yalu River, the Han River, the Taedong River, and the Yellow River.
- The climate is characterized by very cold, dry winters and wet, warm summers.
- Islands: The Yellow Sea is dotted with numerous islands, the largest of which include Jeju Island (South Korea), Shandong Peninsula islands (China), and Ganghwa Island (South Korea).

5. Pangalokha Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is located in East Sikkim district and connected to the forests of Bhutan and Neora Valley National Park in West Bengal.
- The Pangolakha Range, extending below the Chola Range, separates Sikkim from Bhutan.
- The Sanctuary has typical alpine-temperate-subtropical vegetation with high altitude lakes around Jelep La.
- Flora: Rhododendron, Silver Fir, Juniper forest and associated ground flora, moss-filled oak forests with dense bamboo thickets etc.
- Fauna: It is home to a diverse range of charismatic species, including red pandas, snow leopards, Himalayan musk deer, Himalayan goral and Himalayan black bears.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. With reference to the the provisions of State Emergency under the Article 356 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements
1. The provision of state emergency was mentioned under the Government of India Act of 1935.
2. The ground for the declaration of emergency as mentioned in the Constitution of India is failure of constitutional machinery in the state.
3. It can be imposed for six months at a time for a maximum duration of three years.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

Q2. With reference to the Goods and Services Tax , consider the following statements
1. Central GST covers Service tax.
2. State GST covers VAT and Excise Duty.
3. IGST per se is not a tax but a system to coordinate state and union taxes.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

Q3. With reference to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which has remained in news recently, consider the following statements
1. It is focused on the past, rather than in ongoing events.
2. It is a permanent body.
3. It is officially not authorised by the state.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

Q4. Consider the following statements on Climate Change Performance Index
1. It is published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) annually.
2. The climate protection performance is assessed in four categories viz. GHG Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use and Climate Policy.

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 statements with reference to the Youth for Unnati and Vikas with AI (YUVAi) initiative
1. It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Google.
2. It is designed to equip the youth with essential Artificial Intelligence skills.

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)
1. It is the implementation wing of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA).
2. It envisages a three-tier structure to take measures for prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga.

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

Q7. Consider the following statements on Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)
1. It aims to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil in the world market.
2. OPEC membership is open to any country interested to join the group.

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

Q8. With reference to the World Food Programme (WFP), consider the following statements
1. It is founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
2. It deals with hunger eradication and promotes food security in the world.
3. It is funded by voluntary donations from governments, corporates and private donors.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding Multi-Function Crypto-Asset Intermediaries (MCIs) as per the Financial Stability Board's report
1. MCIs are individual firms or groups of affiliated firms providing a range of crypto-based services, primarily centred around operating trading platforms.
2. MCIs are known for their transparency, providing comprehensive disclosures about their corporate structure and business practices.
3. MCIs generate revenue from transaction fees related to trading activities only.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None

Q10. Who releases the Emissions Gap Report, seen in the news recently?
A. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
B. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
C. Germanwatch and Climate Action Network (CAN)
D. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Prelims Track Answer

Ans. 1 Option C is correct
Explanation
Article-356

- Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- Also called a 'State Emergency' or 'Constitutional Emergency'.
- It deals with the 'failure of constitutional machinery in the state' and allows the president to assume any and all functions of the state. **Hence, Statement 2 is correct.**
- It can be imposed for six months at a time for a maximum duration of three years. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- After six months, Parliament's approval is needed to reimpose President's Rule.
- In 1978, the 44th Amendment to the Constitution (1978) was made.

Ans. 2 Option B is correct
Explanation
Goods and Service Tax

- In India, GST Bill was first introduced in 2014 as The Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill.
- This got an approval in 2016 and was renumbered in the statute by Rajya Sabha as The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act, 2016.
- Its provisions:
  o Central GST to cover Excise duty, Service tax etc. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
  o State GST to cover VAT, luxury tax etc. **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
  o Integrated GST to cover inter-state trade. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
  o IGST per se is not a tax but a system to coordinate state and union taxes.
  o Article 246A – States have power to tax goods and services.

Ans. 3 Option A is correct
Explanation
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Also known as a truth commission, it is an official mechanism designed to acknowledge and reveal past wrongdoings by governments or non-state actors.
- **Priscilla B Hayner** defined a truth commission as one that
  o is focused on the past, rather than in ongoing events. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
  o investigates a pattern of events that took place over a period of time
  o engages directly and broadly with the affected population, gathering information on their experiences
  o is a temporary body, with the aim of concluding with a final report. **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
  o is officially authorised or empowered by the state under review". **Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Ans.4 Option B is correct
Explanation

- Climate Change Performance Index is an instrument to enable transparency in national and international climate politics.
- It is published by Germanwatch, the New Climate Institute and the Climate Action Network annually. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The CCPI evaluates the endeavours of 63 countries and the European Union, encompassing over 90% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- The climate protection performance is assessed in four categories viz. GHG Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use and Climate Policy. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Ans. 5 Option B is correct
Explanation

- YUVAi Initiative is a collaborative initiative by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Intel India. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**

- This initiative focuses on equipping youth with essential AI skills for a future-ready workforce.
- It is designed to deepen understanding of AI among school students (class 8 to 12) nationwide, empowering them to become human-centric designers and users of AI. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The program progresses in three phases, aiming to guide students toward responsibly using AI to address real-world challenges.
- It introduces students to several social themes to direct their AI knowledge towards solving real-world problems.

Ans. 6 Option A is correct
Explanation

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is the implementation wing of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The objective of the NMCG is to reduce pollution and ensure the rejuvenation of the Ganga River.
- The Act envisages a five-tier structure at the national, state, and district levels to take measures for prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
  - National Ganga Council under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
  - Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti.
  - National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
  - State Ganga Committees
  - District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

Ans. 7 Option A is correct
Explanation

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental

organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
- It aims to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil in the world market, in order to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- As of 2019, OPEC has a total of 14 Member Countries viz. Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates(UAE), Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Angola, Ecuador and Venezuela are members of OPEC.
- It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

Ans. 8 Option C is correct
Explanation

- The World Food Programme (WFP) is a branch of the United Nations that deals with hunger eradication and promotes food security in the world. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency and was established in 1961.
- It was founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is also a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- It provides food assistance during emergencies and works with communities to enhance nutrition and generate resilience.
- It is funded by voluntary donations from governments, corporates and private donors. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 9 Option C is correct
Explanation

- MCIs are individual firms or affiliated groups offering a range of crypto-based services, primarily centred around operating trading platforms. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- MCIs pose structural vulnerabilities due to a lack of controls, operational transparency, disclosures and conflicts of interest. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- MCIs primarily generate revenue from transaction fees related to trading activities, including self-issued crypto assets.
- They may also offer additional services like prepaid debit cards and lending.
- These MCIs may also derive revenue from operating a blockchain infrastructure for which they may collect transaction validation fees.

- Another source of revenue could be proprietary trading. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Ans. 10 Option D is correct
Explanation

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently released its Emissions Gap Report, 2023. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- It measures the disparity between planned emission levels and the necessary levels to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2100.
- The report underscores the urgency of global efforts to address climate change.
- The report focuses on the global shortfall in efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial period.
- The report detailed how much humanity needs to cut down its carbon emissions to limit the global temperature rise.

Mentorship
India

Our mission is crystal clear – to provide the finest UPSC mentorship and guidance available in India. We recognize that the path to success in the UPSC examination is both demanding and multifaceted. This is precisely why we have developed a comprehensive approach that goes beyond conventional coaching. Our commitment lies in fostering excellence by equipping aspirants with the necessary tools, knowledge, and unwavering support to not only excel in the examination but also in life itself.

Mentorship India represents more than just an organization; it is a community of ambitious individuals bound together by the shared objective of conquering the UPSC examination. We warmly invite you to embark on this transformative journey alongside us. Whether you are a novice taking your initial steps or a seasoned aspirant aiming for the pinnacle, Mentorship India is your dependable companion in the relentless pursuit of excellence.

+91 9999 057869
www.mentorshipindia.com

A-92, Third Floor, Hari Nagar
Delhi - 110064

@mentorship.india

Skill India
कौशल भारत - कुशल भारत

Digital India
Power To Empower

G20
भारत 2023 INDIA

MAKE IN INDIA