

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Appointing Deputy CMs not a breach of Constitution: SC - The Hindu

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

News:

- The **Supreme Court dismissed a petition** challenging the appointment of Deputy Chief Ministers in States on the ground that **no such position exists in the Constitution.**

Prelims Takeaway

- Sardar Vallabhai Patel
- Deputy CM

Key Highlights

- A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India **found no harm in the appointment of Deputy Chief Ministers**
 - Reasoning that they were after all Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) of the States and Ministers of State governments, and never mind the nomenclature.
- Deputy Chief Ministers are **first and foremost Ministers** in the government of the State.
- A person who holds the **office of the Deputy Chief Minister** must at any event, within a stipulated period, be an MLA.
- persons **appointed did not draw a higher salary** and were like any other Minister in the government, and may just be more senior than the others.

The post of Deputy CM

- Deputy CM is a political post, and it's not a constitutional post like the Vice President of India.
- Its origin can be traced to the post of Deputy Prime Minister which was appointed in 1947 post-independence, **Sardar Vallabhai Patel is the first Deputy PM of India.**
- This led to the development of the post of Deputy CM in India.
- The **appointment and removal of Deputy CM** is entirely at **the discretion of the Chief Minister.**
- The Chief Minister can appoint more than one Deputy CM.
- For example: Maharashtra has two Deputy CMs and Andhra Pradesh has five Deputy CMs.
- There is no fixed tenure as the Chief Minister may reshuffle the portfolio or remove a deputy CM at any point of time.

2. RuPay, UPI rolled out in Mauritius, Sri Lanka - The Hindu/ UPI launched in SL, Mauritius; uniting partners, says PM Modi - Indian Express

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

News:

- RuPay cards and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) connectivity** between India and Mauritius, as well as **UPI connectivity between India and Sri Lanka were established**

Prelims Takeaway

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
- NPCI

Key Highlights

- Objective: To **deepen financial integration** and to facilitate digital payments among citizens of the three countries.
 - An Indian traveller to Mauritius will now be able to pay a merchant in Mauritius using UPI.
 - Similarly, a Mauritian traveller will be able to pay a merchant in India using the Instant Payment System (IPS) app of Mauritius.
- With the adoption of RuPay technology, the MauCAS card scheme of Mauritius will enable banks in Mauritius to issue RuPay cards domestically.
- Such cards can be used at ATMs and PoS terminals locally in Mauritius as well as in India.
- With this, Mauritius becomes the first country outside Asia to issue cards using RuPay technology.
- Indian RuPay cards would also be accepted at ATMs and PoS terminals in Mauritius**

- The digital payments connectivity with Sri Lanka will enable Indian travellers to **make QR code-based payments at merchant locations in Sri Lanka using their UPI apps.**
- These projects had been developed and **executed by NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL)** along with partner banks / non-banks from Mauritius and Sri Lanka, under the guidance and support of the RBI.
- The above facilities have been made operational through select banks/non-banks/ third party application providers in India, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.
- The collaborations on India's digital payments connectivity with Mauritius and Sri Lanka through UPI and RuPay will
 - deepen financial integration
 - strengthen the long historical cultural, and economic relations of India with Mauritius and Sri Lanka

3. BREAKTHROUGH - Indian Express

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

News:

- **Qatar has released eight veterans of the Indian Navy** who were sentenced to death on espionage charges.
- Seven of the eight former Indian Navy personnel have now returned to India.

India - Qatar Bilateral Relation

- The two countries have had friendly relations for decades.
- In 2021, India was among the top four **export destinations for Qatar**;
- It is also among the top three sources of Qatar's imports.
- India's total imports from Qatar in FY2022-23 were valued at \$16.81 billion, of which LNG imports alone were worth \$8.32 billion, or 49.5%.
- **Qatar is India's largest source** of liquefied natural gas (LNG).
- India's exports to Qatar were valued at just \$1.97 billion in FY2022-23.
- The **major exports include** cereals, copper articles, iron and steel articles, vegetables, fruits, spices, and processed food products.
- In January 2024, India and Qatar agreed to prolong their LNG supply agreement, extending it until 2048.
- India's Petronet has secured a monumental deal to continue purchasing 7.5 million tonnes of LNG annually from Qatar starting in 2029.
- This agreement, hailed as **the world's largest extension for liquefied natural gas**, builds on an original 25-year contract initiated in 1999, with deliveries commencing in 2004.

Prelims Takeaway

- Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)
- Map based question

4. Report by law panel suggests plan to tackle epidemics - Indian Express

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

News:

- The **286th Law Commission Report** recommended creation of an Epidemic Plan and Standard Operation Procedure to address future epidemics

Key Highlights

- It underlines that there is no clear demarcation between **the powers of the Centre, state, and local authorities during an epidemic**
 - Which leads to uncoordinated responses.
- Highlighting the limitations of the **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 (EDA)**, the **286th Law Commission Report states**
 - The management, control and prevention of epidemic diseases cannot be restricted to a century-old law.

Prelims Takeaway

- Epidemic
- Epidemic Diseases Act

- The report notes that the EDA was not designed to combat modern issues with the spread of infectious diseases.
- it states, can result in infectious diseases rapidly turning into epidemics or pandemics.
- After the Covid-19 pandemic, the Law Commission suo moto decided to extensively examine the existing legal framework
 - To tackle what it calls “significant deficiencies in addressing the containment and management of future epidemics in the country”.
- The report claims that as a **colonial-era legislation, the EDA has great potential for abuse.**
- The most dramatic change suggested is the creation of an Epidemic Plan and a **Standard Operating Procedure to address the spread of infectious diseases.**
- This, the report states, would make sure the powers and obligations of different levels of government are clearly demarcated
 - So that there is a coordinated response to any public health emergency.
- The report recommends that the EDA must include provisions to ensure that the Epidemic Plan is prepared, enforced, and revised at regular intervals.
- The report states that the **plan should include provisions on quarantine, isolation, and lockdowns**
 - While ensuring that the measures are implemented fairly, without violating the fundamental rights of citizens.
- It should also contain provisions on
 - Privacy-friendly disease surveillance
 - Regulating the distribution
 - Availability and transport of medical supplies
 - Proper dissemination of information to the public
 - Medical testing and research for vaccinations and medicines
 - The safe disposal of infectious waste among a variety of other subjects.
- The report suggests the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which will “**ensure proper and coordinated response to any epidemic with pre-defined powers.**”

GS III

5. India examining reworking of Merchant Shipping Act - The Hindu

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

News:

- India is looking at **reworking its merchant shipping laws as it replaces the existing eponymous Act of 1958.**

Key Highlights

- The new provisions will look to include up-to-date international maritime conventions to which the country is a party
 - Allow for easier registration of ships under Indian flag by NRIs, overseas citizens of India, corporates including limited liability partnerships
 - Enable electronic registration of vessels and granting recognition to e-documents like log-books, record books.
- Merchant shipping refers to **activities that are carried out for commerce rather than for defence or warfare.**
- Changes to the law that have been proposed are currently being deliberated with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways being the nodal ministry.

The proposals

- Proposed under the new provisions is a **three-tier dispute resolution mechanism.**
- It will look to resolve disagreements arising between ship-owners and salvors (those engaged in salvaging ships lost at sea)

Prelims Takeaway

- Air pollution
- Merchant Shipping Act

- And also between sea-farers and owners or masters or agents of ship.
- The resolution mechanism will look **“to make the award of the shipping master enforceable instead of enforcement by a Magistrate**
- Previously ambiguous terms like “abandoned vessels” have been defined, while the new rules call for action against “unsafe vessels” too.
- The Centre has been empowered to direct port authorities and others to take measures in respect of abandoned vessels.
- **The Merchant Shipping Act of 1958** provided for registration of Indian ships and enabled provisions looking to accelerate the pace of development of the sector.
- **The Act is divided into 24 parts**, each part dealing with specific aspects of merchant shipping like:
 - Registration of ships, sailing vessels and fishing vessels, National Shipping Board, manning of ships, engagement, discharge and repatriation of seamen and apprentices etc.
- Air pollution arising out of ships operating in the sea has also been covered with appropriate actions.

6. Industrial output witnessed mild recovery in December - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Index of Industrial Production (IIP)
- Retail Inflation

In recovery mode

Industrial output growth recovered from an eight-month low of 2.4% in November 2023 to 3.8% in December 2023

■ Consumer durables production recovered in December, albeit aided by a 11.2% dip recorded a year earlier

■ Consumer non-durables also bounced back from a 3.6% contraction in November to rise a moderate 2.1% in December



■ Consumption demand to remain soft as past Interest rate hikes and RBI regulations dampen credit growth

7. Proposals for industry body rejected, Centre to regulate e-gaming - Indian Express

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

News:

- MeitY will now prepare a framework for **permitting and certifying online games which involve money**.
- This means, the Government of India will act as a **regulator for the online gaming sector** rather than an industry-led self-regulatory organisation (SRO).

Prelims Takeaway

- Online Gaming
- Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO)

Rejection of Industry-Dominated SROs

- As per IT rules, **online real money games require approval** from a **regulatory body**, while those without monetary involvement do not need regulation.
- The government had notified the online gaming rules last year and had given 3-months to the industry to come up with proposals for SROs.
- However, the proposals received were **heavily dominated by gaming companies** and their **industry associations**.
- Therefore, MeitY rejected the SRO proposals emphasizing the **need for a neutral regulatory body**.

Different types of online gaming

1. e-Sports

- These are video games that were **played privately or on consoles** in video game stores in the 1990s
- Now, they are played **online** in a **structured manner** between professional players, either individually or in teams.

2. Fantasy sports

- These are games in which the **player selects a team of real sports players** from several teams and **earns points** based on how well the players perform in real life.

3. Online casual games

- These could be **skill-based**, where the outcome is heavily impacted by **mental or physical skill or chance-based**
- A game of chance may be considered as **gambling** if players bet money or **anything of monetary value**.

The Indian online gaming market

- The online gaming industry **grew exponentially** during the **Covid-19 pandemic**.
- The **revenue** of the Indian mobile gaming industry is expected to **reach \$5 billion in 2025**.
- The industry in the country grew at a **Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 38% between 2017-2020**, as opposed to 8% in China and 10% in the US.
- India's percentage of **new paying users (NPU)** in gaming has been the **fastest growing** in the world.
 - With 40% in 2020 and expected to reach 50% in 2021.
- According to a **FICCI report**, transaction-based games revenue increased by 26% in India, while the number of paying players increased from 80 million in 2020 to 95 million in 2021 (by 17%).

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

8. A global alliance to bridge the gender equity gap - The Hindu

Relevance: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context:

- India's development journey prioritises **equality and inclusion**, as demonstrated by the **New Delhi Leaders' Declaration** at the G-20 summit under India's presidency.
- The declaration focuses on areas such as socio-economic empowerment, bridging the digital divide, climate action, and food security, **advocating for women-led development**.

Government's Focus on Gender Equality

- The Indian government has long emphasised mainstreaming gender equality.
- Initiatives like the Women's Reservation Bill, allocating funds under the gender budget illustrate this commitment.
 - The government allocated nearly \$27 billion under the gender budget in 2023-24.

Progress in Female Empowerment

- India has seen improvements in female labour force participation and enrollment in higher education, particularly in STEM fields.
 - As per the Periodic Labour Force Surveys, there has been an increase in India's female labour force participation rate, from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23.
 - Female enrolment in higher education has gone up by 28% in the last 10 years.
 - In terms of enrolment in STEM courses, the share of women is a significant 43%, one of the highest enrolment rates in the world.
- Within rural India, there is a participation of over nine crore women in 83 lakh self-help groups, improving the socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

Global Recognition and Partnerships

- Global leaders are acknowledging India's success stories, leading to meaningful collaborations and platforms like the We-Lead Lounge.
 - We-Lead Lounge was set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Confederation of Indian Industry at Davos.
- The Alliance for Global Good, supported by various stakeholders including the World Economic Forum, aims to drive inclusive development globally.

Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality

- India launched the "Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality" at the World Economic Forum in January, this year to accelerate socio-economic causes globally.
- The Alliance seeks to develop practical solutions in areas such as education, healthcare, skill development, agrotech, and enterprise development.
- It aims to leverage India's expertise and leadership to address global gender disparities.
- It presents an opportunity for industries worldwide to
 - learn from India's practices
 - invest in proven initiatives and enable them reach scale
 - collaborate to make inclusion a fundamental aspect of business conversations.
- The Alliance aims to be a significant player in addressing gender-related issues globally, resonating with principles like "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" and "Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayaas, Sabka Vikaas".

9. A science for us - Indian Express

Relevance: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context:

- Recently, a panel representing India's science academies launched **SWATI**, a portal aimed at **documenting women in science**.
- This initiative marks the latest effort to address the long standing **gender gap in Indian science**.

Historical Context

- Initiatives to address gender gap began with a 2004 report by Indian National Science Academy (INSA).
- The report highlighted discrimination in the workplace based on gender and caste, and proposed solutions.
- The INSA report spurred further efforts like the Indian Academy of Sciences' (IASC) compendium and national conference in 2008.
- The Conference featuring over a thousand women scientists featured promises by then Science Minister Kapil Sibal for women scientists.
 - These included scientists' flexible working hours, in-house creches, work-from-home options, research grants and residential accommodation.

Challenges and Unfulfilled Promises

- Unfortunately, the standing committee set up to implement Sibal's promises never took off.
- A 2010 report examining reasons for women scientists leaving academia, highlighted lack of opportunities and organizational barriers (flexible timings, logistics and infrastructure, discrimination, etc).
 - The men, however, believed that their female peers could also benefit from refresher courses, fellowships, awareness and sensitisation campaigns.
- There is a need for more inclusive policies addressing multiple marginalities such as caste, transgender identity, and disability.

Progressive Initiatives

- Newer initiatives like Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) charter and the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020 adopt a more progressive language and inclusive approach.
 - For instance, they bring up transgender identities and gender-neutral parental leave.
- Recently, Science for Women: A Technology & Innovation (SWATI) Initiative was launched on International Day for Girls and Women in Science, representing collaboration between INSA, IASC, and NASI.
 - Positive signs include inclusivity of all non-male genders and diverse composition of panel.

10. Jail and bail under UAPA - Indian Express

Relevance: Polity

Context:

- Recently, the Supreme Court denied bail to Gurwinder Singh, an accused in an alleged "Khalistan module."

- This judgement highlights the stringent bail provisions within the **Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)**.

<p>Bail Provisions under UAPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gurwinder Singh's arrest stemmed from his involvement in displaying banners advocating for Khalistan, leading to allegations of conspiracy with Sikhs for Justice, a proscribed pro-Khalistan group. Section 43D (5) of the UAPA outlines the criteria for bail, emphasizing that the accused individuals must show to the court that it is unreasonable to believe the accusations are prima facie true. This deviates from the principle of criminal law that a person is innocent till proven guilty. <p>Narrowing the room for Bail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali, the Supreme Court in 2019 confirmed that courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits while granting bail. It directed courts not to analyse evidence or circumstances but look at the totality of the case presented by the state while deciding on bail petition. The judgement severely limited courts' ability to question the prosecution's case, raising concerns about individual liberty. 	<p>Recent Supreme Court Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Union of India vs KA Najeeb, bail was allowed by the Supreme Court under UAPA after prolonged incarceration. It acknowledged that bail under UAPA is an exception but it needs to be balanced with the right to a speedy trial. The SC was of the view that the legislative policy against grant of bail would not hold ground if <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is no likelihood of trial being completed within a reasonable time and the period of incarceration already undergone has exceeded a substantial part of the prescribed sentence. However, in Vernon Gonsalves v State of Maharashtra, a different interpretation of the prima facie truth test was proposed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The test wouldn't be satisfied unless there's some basic analysis of the evidence's value during the bail examination, and the quality of evidence convinces the court of its worth. In the Gurwinder Singh case, the two-judge bench relied on the Watali ruling entirely without considering the Gonsalves ruling. <p>Future Prospects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since both the Watali and Gonsalves rulings came from benches with the same number of judges, it remains to be seen how future benches will use the test. If there's significant disagreement between different two-judge benches, a larger bench will need to settle the law.
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11. Death in Wayanad: What is behind Kerala's rising human animal conflict - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context:

- A recent tragic incident where a wild elephant killed a man in Wayanad highlights the **increasing human-animal conflict**.

<p>Rising human-animal conflict in Kerala</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased incidence of wild animals, mainly elephants, tigers, bison, and wild boars, attacking human beings have been reported from across Kerala. Districts like Wayanad, Kannur, Palakkad, and Idukki are particularly affected. Beyond posing risk to humans, these attacks also devastated Kerala's agriculture sector. Government Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022-23 recorded 8,873 wild animal attacks, of which, 4193 were by wild elephants, 1524 by wild boars, 193 by tigers, 244 by leopards, and 32 by bison. Of 98 reported deaths, 27 were due to elephant attacks. <p>Wayanad worst-affected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayanad, which boasts of a forest cover of 36.48%, has lost 41 lives to elephant attacks and seven to tiger attacks over the last decade. Its geographical location plays a role in this; the interconnected forested areas contribute to animal movement across state borders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district's forests are a part of a greater forested area comprising Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, Bandipur National Park, and BR Tiger Reserve in Karnataka, and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Sathyamangalam Forest in Tamil Nadu. 	<p>Factors Contributing to Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 2018 study found two major drivers of human-animal conflict in the state. It was conducted by the Dehradun's Wildlife Institute of India and the Periyar Tiger Conservation Foundation in Kerala. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in forest quality due to cultivation of alien plants (like acacia and eucalyptus) in forest tracts for commercial purposes. Changing agricultural practices that lure animals, which do not find enough fodder in their habitats, out of forests into farmland. Waste disposal, habitat fragmentation, and increased human presence exacerbate the conflict. <p>Efforts to Address the Crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kerala has implemented various schemes such as elephant-proof trenches and solar-powered fencing. Eco-restoration programs have also been undertaken to restore natural habitats and prevent animals from entering settlements. Relocation initiatives and Rapid Response Teams are also established to mitigate conflict instances. In 2022, Kerala requested the Centre a sum of Rs 620 crore to tackle the crisis but was asked to find innovative solutions locally.
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Quick Look

1. 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.

2. Alaskapox

- Recently, an elderly man from Alaska became the first person to die after contracting Alaskapox.
- Alaskapox is an orthopox virus that was first discovered in Alaska, USA, in 2015.
- It is a double-stranded DNA virus belonging to the same genus Orthopoxvirus as smallpox, monkeypox, and cowpox.
 - Orthopoxviruses are zoonotic viruses that can infect various mammals, including humans.
- Current evidence indicates that the Alaskapox virus primarily occurs in small mammals.
 - The virus has been most commonly identified in red-backed voles and shrews.
- Symptoms: One or more skin lesions (bumps or pustules), swollen lymph nodes and joint and/or muscle pain. Immunocompromised people might be at increased risk for more severe illness.
- Transmission: While human-to-human transmission of Alaskapox has not yet been observed, some orthopoxviruses can spread by direct contact with lesions.

3. Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)

- The Prime Minister will inaugurate the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha BAPS Mandir, the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi.
- BAPS is a socio-spiritual Hindu faith based on the Vedic teachings propagated by Bhagwan Swaminarayan (1781-1830 CE).
- It is an NGO with a Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
- It was formally established in 1907 CE by Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj.
- Five-lifetime vows of BAPS followers: No Alcohol, No Addictions, No Adultery, No Meat, No Impurity of body and mind.

4. National Creators Award

- It is the first-of-its-kind award that will be targeted at "Gen Z", a reference to the young generation hooked to the internet and social media.
- Objectives
 - Put change-makers on centre stage – recognizing and boosting digital creators that are making an impact
 - Elevate the influence of digital media on social impact
 - Bring a community of creators, leaders and government on one platform to spur a social revolution, a national movement during 'Amrit Kaal'
 - Using creativity to drive positive change.
- Eligibility Criteria
 - Participants must be 18 years of age or above at the time of nomination.
 - 19 categories are open exclusively to individuals of Indian nationality. One category is dedicated to international digital creators.
 - Content must be published on one or more digital platforms viz. Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook.
 - Language: English or any other Indian language.
 - Creators can self-nominate in a maximum of three categories. Those nominating others can nominate in all 20 categories.

5. SWATI Portal

- Recently, the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India launched "Science for Women- A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)" Portal.
- Aim: To create a single online portal representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine).
- The database of the SWATI Portal will serve in policy-making to address the challenges of Gender-gap.
- It is developed, hosted and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi.
- The various Sections in the portal include Icons - Awardees and Directors, Secretaries Academy Presidents; Faculty- Indian Universities, Autonomous organisations.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Deputy Chief Minister (Deputy CM) in the context of the Indian political system

1. The position of Deputy CM is explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India.
2. The appointment and removal of Deputy CM is entirely at the discretion of the Chief Minister.
3. The Deputy CM holds the same rank and powers as the Chief Minister of the state.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in the context of the Indian financial system

1. UPI is a real-time payment system developed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to facilitate instant money transfers between banks using mobile devices.
2. UPI transactions can only be initiated and completed through mobile applications, and it is not accessible through internet banking or other digital platforms.
3. UPI uses a unique identifier called UPI ID, which is linked to the user's Aadhaar number for secure transactions.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the India-Qatar Bilateral Relations

1. India and Qatar share strong economic ties, with Indian expatriates forming a significant part of Qatar's population and contributing to the country's development.
2. India and Qatar signed a comprehensive bilateral trade

agreement, facilitating the free flow of goods and services between the two nations.

3. Qatar has been an active participant in India's development projects, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and energy.

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 regarding the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, in the context of public health emergencies

1. The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, empowers state governments to take special measures to control the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases.
2. The Act provides legal protection to healthcare professionals and others acting in good faith during the implementation of preventive measures.
3. The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, is a comprehensive legislation that outlines specific diseases and corresponding actions for containment.
4. The Act allows the central government to declare any area as an epidemic zone and take necessary measures to prevent the spread of diseases.

How many of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Merchant Shipping Act

1. The Merchant Shipping Act is a legislation that primarily governs the registration and regulation of merchant ships in India.
2. The Act includes provisions related to the safety of navigation, prevention of marine pollution, and the welfare of seafarers.

3. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, is the current legislation regulating merchant shipping activities in India.
4. The Act grants exclusive jurisdiction to the High Courts for matters arising under its provisions.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q6. Consider the following statements with reference to Global Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality

1. It was established at the G20 summit 2023 under India's Presidency.
2. It aims to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investments in the identified areas of women's health, education, and enterprise.

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

1. As per IT rules, online games, with or without monetary involvement, require approval from a regulatory body.
2. Fantasy sports are the games in which the player selects a team of real sports players from several teams and earns points based on how well the players perform in real life.

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. Consider the following statements regarding the SWATI Portal

1. It aims to create a single online portal representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM.
2. It is developed by the National Informatics centre in collaboration with NITI Aayog.

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 Watali case seen in the news recently is associated with which of the following?

- A. Decriminalization of Section 377
- B. Protection of human rights in India, particularly concerning freedom of expression
- C. Bail provisions under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)
- D. Strike down section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000

Q10. What is the primary objective of the RE-HAB initiative?

- A. To study the behaviour of elephants in human habitations
- B. To train captive elephants (kumkis) for operations such as trapping, rescuing, and tranquillizing wild elephants.
- C. To provide financial compensation to victims of animal attacks.
- D. To reduce human-elephant conflicts through the creation of bee fences

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The position of Deputy Chief Minister is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India. It is a political position that is created based on the discretion of the Chief Minister of a state. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect**
- The appointment and removal of Deputy CM is entirely at the discretion of the Chief Minister. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- While the Deputy CM assists the Chief Minister in various responsibilities, the Deputy CM does not hold the same rank and powers as the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is the head of the government, and the Deputy CM acts as a subordinate to the Chief Minister. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**

Answer 2 Option C is correct

Explanation

- While UPI is a real-time payment system, it was not developed by the Reserve Bank of India. UPI was developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an initiative of the RBI. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect**
- UPI transactions can be initiated through mobile applications, but it is not limited to mobile devices. UPI transactions can also be conducted through internet banking and other digital platforms, making it accessible through various channels. **Hence, statement 2 is INcorrect**
- UPI ID is a unique identifier, but it is not linked to the user's Aadhaar number. UPI ID is created by the user during the registration process and is linked to the user's bank account. Aadhaar is not directly involved in the UPI transaction process. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- India and Qatar have a substantial economic relationship, with a large Indian expatriate community in Qatar. Indian workers contribute significantly to Qatar's infrastructure and development projects. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- there was no specific comprehensive bilateral trade agreement between India and Qatar. Bilateral trade relations exist, but a

comprehensive agreement was not in place.

Hence, statement 2 is INcorrect

- Qatar has shown interest and investment in India's development projects, especially in areas like infrastructure and energy. Both countries have engaged in discussions and collaborations for mutual benefit. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, empowers both the state and central governments to take special measures and prescribe regulations as they consider necessary to prevent the outbreak of dangerous epidemic diseases. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Act provides legal immunity to individuals, including healthcare professionals, for actions taken in good faith during the implementation of measures to control the spread of epidemic diseases. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, is not a comprehensive list of specific diseases and corresponding actions. It provides a broad framework empowering authorities to take necessary measures to control the spread of epidemic diseases without specifying particular diseases. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**
- The Act empowers both the state and central governments to declare any area as an epidemic zone and take measures to prevent the spread of diseases. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

Answer 5 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Merchant Shipping Act is a comprehensive legislation that regulates various aspects of merchant shipping, including the registration and regulation of ships. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Merchant Shipping Act includes provisions related to safety at sea, prevention of marine pollution, and the welfare of seafarers, among other aspects. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, was indeed in force. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- The Merchant Shipping Act does not grant exclusive jurisdiction to the High Courts.

Jurisdiction for matters arising under the Act is determined based on the nature and subject matter of the case. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect**

Answer 6 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- India established the "Global Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality" at the 54th annual World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The primary objective of this new Alliance is to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investments in the identified areas of women's health, education, and enterprise. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the alliance will be housed and anchored by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Centre for Women Leadership.
- The WEF has come on board as a 'Network Partner' and Invest India as an 'Institutional Partner'.
- The alliance aims to champion women-led development, leveraging India's spectacular inclusive growth story and its philosophy of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Prayas".

Answer 7 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- As per IT rules, online real money games require approval from a regulatory body, while those without monetary involvement do not need regulation. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Types of online gaming
 - e-Sports: These are video games that were played privately or on consoles in video game stores in the 1990s. Now, they are played online in a structured manner between professional players, either individually or in teams.
 - Fantasy sports: These are games in which the player selects a team of real sports players from several teams and earns points based on how well the players perform in real life. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- Online casual games: These could be skill-based, where the outcome is heavily impacted by mental or physical skill or chance-based.

Answer 8 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- Recently, the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India launched "Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)" Portal.
- Aim: To create a single online portal representing Indian Women and Girls in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The database of the SWATI Portal will serve in policy-making to address the challenges of Gender-gap.
- It is developed, hosted and maintained by the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), New Delhi. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The various Sections in the portal include Icons - Awardees and Directors, Secretaries Academy Presidents; Faculty- Indian Universities, Autonomous organisations.

Answer 9 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- In the case of Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali, the Supreme Court in 2019 confirmed that courts must accept the state's case without examining its merits while granting bail under UAPA.
- In other words, it directed courts not to analyse evidence or circumstances but look at the totality of the case presented by the state while deciding on bail petition. **Hence, option C is correct.**

Answer 10 Option D is correct**Explanation**

- RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees) aims to create "bee fences" to thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- The bee boxes will dissuade elephants without causing any harm to them.
- The project is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- It is a sub-mission of KVIC's National Honey Mission.

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