

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS I

1. On Dandi March anniversary, PM Modi launches master plan for Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram redevelopment- The Hindu

Relevance: The Freedom Struggle — its various stages and important contributors/contributions from different parts of the country.

Prelims Takeaway

- Dandi March
- Non cooperation

News:

- The Prime Minister launched a **master plan for the Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram redevelopment project in Ahmedabad**, on the anniversary of the historic Dandi March.

Dandi March

- Mahatma Gandhi led a significant non-violent protest, **the Dandi March (also known as the Salt March or Salt Satyagraha), in March-April 1930.**
- This act marked the beginning of a larger civil disobedience movement against British rule in India, which continued into 1931.
- The protest targeted the British monopoly on salt production and distribution.
- Laws prevented Indians from making or selling their own salt, forcing them **to buy expensive, heavily taxed, often imported salt.**
- This significantly **impacted the poor majority** who couldn't afford it.
- News reports in February 1930 announced Gandhi's plan to defy the salt laws.
- The protest would start on March 12th and culminate in Dandi with Gandhi symbolically breaking the Salt Act on April 6th.
- This date held significance as it marked the beginning of National Week, established in 1919.
- Gandhi meticulously prepared for the march, emphasizing strict adherence to non-violent principles.
- He recruited participants from his ashram, known for their disciplined commitment to his teachings.
- In an attempt to avoid confrontation, Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy seeking concessions, including tax reduction and abolishing the salt tax.
- However, the Viceroy dismissed these demands, prompting Gandhi to proceed with the march.

GS II

2. Why does statute not say in clearer terms only Parliament has power to impose tax on minerals, asks Supreme Court- Indian Express

Relevance: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Prelims Takeaway

- MMDRA

News:

- The Supreme Court asked the Centre as to why the statute does not say in clearer terms that **only Parliament has the power to impose tax on minerals and states are denied the authority to levy such an action.**

Key highlights

- **Under Section 9 of the MMDRA**, the central government has the power to fix royalty
- He said the fixation of rates by the Centre is not a unilateral but cooperative process involving the states, while also considering the supervening objective of mineral development in public interest, keeping the nation as a unit.
- **The issue arose after the 1989 verdict** in the case of India Cements Limited versus State of Tamil Nadu wherein a seven-judge bench of the apex court held that royalty was a tax.

- However, a five-judge bench of the apex court ruled in 2004 in the State of West Bengal versus Kesoram Industries Limited case that there was a typographical error in the 1989 verdict and that royalty was not a tax.
- The dispute was then referred to a larger nine-judge bench.
- The top court is hearing a batch of 86 appeals filed by mining companies, public sector undertakings (PSUs) and state governments arising from conflicting verdicts passed by different high courts on the issue.

3. SBI submits electoral bond data to Election Commission- The Hindu

Relevance: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

Prelims Takeaway

- Electoral Bond
- SBI

News:

- A day after the Supreme Court directive, the **State Bank of India (SBI) submitted to the Election Commission (EC) the details of electoral bonds purchased** and encashed since April 12, 2019.

Key Highlights

- The Supreme Court, while striking down the **electoral bonds scheme as unconstitutional**, had directed the SBI to submit electoral bonds data to the EC.
- The top court dismissed a plea filed by the SBI seeking time till June 30 to submit the data.
- The court asked that the data be submitted to the EC
- The **first sale** of electoral bonds took place in **March 2018**.
- Bonds worth ₹16,518 crore had been issued by the SBI since the inception of the scheme in 2018.

Electoral Bonds

- Electoral bonds are **money instruments like promissory notes**, which can be bought by companies and individuals in India from the **State Bank of India (SBI)**
- It is **donated to a political party, which can then encash these bonds**.
- The **bonds are only redeemable in the designated account of a registered political party**.
- A person **being an individual can buy bonds**, either singly or jointly with other individuals.

Electoral Bond Scheme

- **Electoral Bonds Scheme was launched in 2018** to cleanse political funding in India.
- The central idea behind the electoral bonds scheme is **to bring about transparency in electoral funding in India**.
- **The government had described the scheme as an “electoral reform” in a country moving towards a “cashless-digital economy”.**

GS III

4. Pokhran witness to self-reliance, confidence and glory, says PM- The Hindu

Relevance: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

News:

- Atma Nirbharta (self-reliance) to **meet the country's defense needs is a guarantee of confidence in the armed forces**
- Prime Minister witnessed a combined demonstration of **indigenous defence equipment in the form of a triservices live fire and manoeuvre exercise Bharat Shakti** at Pokhran in Rajasthan.

Prelims Takeaway

- Akash Weapons Systems
- Advanced Light Helicopter

Key Highlights

- The key equipment and weapons systems participating in the 'Bharat Shakti' exercise include **T-90 (IM) Tanks, Dhanush and Sarang Gun Systems, Akash Weapons Systems, Logistics Drones, Robotic Mules, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**

- and an array of unmanned aerial vehicles among others, from Indian Army showcasing the advanced ground warfare and aerial surveillance capabilities.
- Exercise Bharat Shakti **simulated realistic, synergised, multi-domain operations displaying integrated operational capabilities** of the Indian armed forces
 - to counter threats across land, air, sea, cyber, and space domains, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said.
 - The 'Bharat Shakti' exercise displays an array of indigenous weapon systems and platforms as a demonstration of the prowess of the country, premised on the nation's Aatmanirbharta initiative.
 - India was laying emphasis on **self-reliance from the production of edible oils** to fighter jets.

5. Tejas aircraft crashes in Jaisalmer, first since maiden flight in 2001- The Hindu

Relevance: Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

News:

- A Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) of the Indian Air Force crashed at Jaisalmer during an operational training sortie.
- This is the first crash of the indigenous jet since its maiden flight 23 years ago on January 04, 2001.
- The IAF currently **operates two LCA squadrons and is set to add the third squadron shortly**.
- The LCA achieved Initial Operation Clearance (IOC) in December 2013 and Final Operational Clearance (FOC) in February 2019.
- The MK-1A will have over 40 modifications over the MK1 variant including a new Electronic Warfare system, Advanced Electronically Scanning Array (AESA) radar, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missiles and network warfare system including Software Defined Radio (SDR).
- In December 2023, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved the procurement of 97 additional LCA Mk1A at an estimated cost of ₹67,000 crore.
- A larger and more powerful LCA-MK2 is also under development.

Defense Acquisition Council

- The **DAC is the highest decision-making body** in the Defence Ministry for deciding on new policies
 - and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.
- The Minister of Defence is the Chairman of the Council.
- It was formed, after the Group of Ministers recommendations on '**Reforming the National Security System**', in 2001, post Kargil War (1999).

Prelims Takeaway

- National Security System
- Post Kargil War

6. 'India was the top arms importer in 2019-2023'- The Hindu

Relevance: Security challenges and their management in border areas – linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

News:

- According to a recent report by SIPRI, a Swedish think tank, between 2019-23, India has been among the top arms importers of the world with 4.7% increase in arms imports compared to 2014-18.
- At the same time, arms imports by European countries increased by 94% due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Key Highlights of the Report

- Russia is a major arms supplier to India (36% arms imports).
 - It is decreased from its normal trends of 50% arms imports of India.
- 9 out of the 10 biggest arms importers are from Asia and Oceania or the Middle East.
- Ukraine became the fourth biggest arms importer globally after it received transfers of major arms from over 30 states in 2022-23.

Prelims Takeaway

- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)
- Map based Question

- Imports of Pakistan, the fifth largest arms importer in 2019–23, went up by 43%, with China supplying as much as 82% of all its arms imports.

7. Govt. issues marketing code for pharmaceutical firms- The Hindu

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

News:

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals issued **the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024**

Key Highlights

- It specifying the rules of the use of the words “safe” and “new” for drugs, and stated that medical representatives must not employ any inducement or subterfuge
 - to gain an interview, and that they must not pay, under any guise, for access to a healthcare professional.
- Engagement of the pharmaceutical industry with healthcare professionals for Continuing Medical Education (CME) should only be allowed
 - through a well-defined, transparent, and verifiable set of guidelines, and conduct of such events in foreign locations is prohibited by the uniform code.
- Companies or their representatives should not pay cash or monetary grants to any healthcare professional or their family members (both immediate and extended) under any pretext.**
- The latest UCPMP also notes that paid travel, hotel stays, etc., should not be extended to healthcare professionals or their family members by pharmaceutical companies
- The UCPMP is to be circulated for strict compliance**, and all associations have been requested to constitute an Ethics Committee for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices
 - set up a dedicated UCPMP portal on their website, and take further necessary steps for the code’s implementation.
 - All Indian pharmaceutical associations are to upload the UCPMP on their website along with the detailed procedure for lodging of complaints, which will be linked to the UCPMP portal of the Department of Pharmaceuticals.

Prelims Takeaway

- UCPMP
- Ethics Committee for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices

8. Index of industrial production grows by 3.8 per cent in January 2024- The Print

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

News:

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the Quick Estimates of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for January 2024, revealing a growth of 3.8 per cent.

Index of Industrial Production (IIP):

- It is one of the prime indicators of economic development for the measurement of trends in the behavior of industrial production over a period of time with reference to a chosen base year.
- It is a short-term indicator measuring industrial growth until the **actual result of detailed industrial surveys become available**.
- It indicates the relative change in physical production in the field of industries **during a specified year as compared to the previous year**.
- It is computed and **published by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**, on a monthly basis.
- The IIP is a quantum index, the production of items is expressed in physical terms.
- However, the unit of reporting in respect of certain items like machinery, machine tools, shipbuilding, etc. is in value terms.
- It is compiled as a simple weighted arithmetic mean of **production relatives by using Laspeyre’s formula**.

Prelims Takeaway

- IIP
- Laspeyre’s formula

- In order to remove the effect of price rises from the index, the production figures of such items are deflated on the basis of Wholesale Price Indices (Base 2011-12), compiled by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, before the compilation of the index.
- The base year is always given a value of 100.
- The current base year for the **IIP series in India is 2011-12.**
- So, if the current IIP reads as 116, it means that there has been 16% growth compared to the base year.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. How nuclear waste is generated- The Hindu

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

Context:

- India's nuclear program achieved a milestone by loading its prototype fast breeder reactor core.
- This advancement aligns with their goal of using abundant thorium reserves for energy independence.
- However, a significant challenge remains: managing the nuclear waste produced.

Key Highlights

- **Nuclear waste generation:** When fuel in a reactor absorbs neutrons, it creates radioactive elements.
- This waste, called spent fuel, is highly radioactive and requires underwater storage for decades.
- Later, it's transferred to secured casks for further storage.
- **Global challenge:** Countries with established nuclear programs face substantial waste accumulation.
- The US, Canada, and Russia serve as examples.

Nuclear waste concerns:

- **Health hazards:** This waste remains radioactive and poses a threat to human health for millennia.
- **Environmental impact:** Accidents like Fukushima and Chernobyl demonstrate the severe consequences of radioactive material release into the environment.
- **Financial burden:** Strict regulations govern handling, transport, storage, and disposal of nuclear waste to ensure safety. Maintaining these facilities incurs significant costs and manpower requirements.

India

10. GI tag for Majuli masks of Assam- Indian Express

Relevance: Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).

Context:

- Adding to their growing national and international recognition, **the traditional Majuli masks in Assam were given a Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Centre**
- Majuli manuscript painting also got the GI label.

Key Highlights

- A GI tag is conferred upon products originating from a specific geographical region, signifying unique characteristics and qualities.
- Essentially, it serves as a trademark in the international market.
- Majuli, the largest river island in the world and the seat of Assam's neo-Vaishnavite tradition, has been home to the art of mask-making since the 16th century.

What are Majuli masks?

- The handmade masks are traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas, or theatrical performances with devotional messages under the neo-Vaishnavite tradition, introduced by the 15th-16th century reformer saint Srimanta Sankardeva.
- The masks can depict gods, goddesses, demons, animals and birds — Ravana, Garuda, Narasimha, Hanuman, Varaha Surpanakha all feature among the masks.
- They can range in size from those covering just the face (mukh mukha), which take around five days to make
 - to those covering the whole head and body of the performer (cho mukha), which can take up to one-and-a-half months to make.
- According to the application made for the patent, the masks are made of bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton, wood and other materials available in the riverine surroundings of their makers.

Why is the art practised in monasteries?

- Sattras are monastic institutions established by Srimanta Sankardev and his disciples as centres of religious, social and cultural reform.
- Majuli has 22 sattras, and the patent application states that the mask-making tradition is by and large concentrated in four of them
 - Samaguri Sattra, Natun Samaguri Sattra, Bihimpur Sattra and Alengi Narasimha Sattra.

The makers of the masks

- Hemchandra Goswami is the sattradhikar or the administrative head of the Samaguri Sattra, and a well-known practitioner of the traditional mask-making art.
- According to him, masks had historically been made in all sattras, but the practice gradually died out over time.
- Majuli masks The masks are made of bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton, wood and other materials available in the riverine surroundings of their makers.
- He said that the Samaguri Sattra had been practising mask-making since its establishment in 1663.

Mentorship

India

Quick Look

1. Forever Chemicals

- Recently, the researchers demonstrated a new lab-based method to detect traces of Forever Chemicals in just three minutes or less.
- PFAS (Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances), also known as the Forever Chemicals, are a large chemical family of over 4,700 highly persistent man-made chemicals.
- These were first developed in the 1940s and are now found in a variety of consumer products.
- These include nonstick pans, water-resistant textiles, and fire suppression foams, due to their ability to repel both grease and water.
- PFAS are the most persistent synthetic chemicals to date and hardly degrade in the natural environment.
- They have been found in the blood of people and animals all over the world, and are present at low levels in a variety of food products.
- Exposure to PFAS is linked to cancers, weakened immune systems among children, weight gain, and a wide range of other health problems.

2. Sandbox for Agricultural and Rural Security, Technology and Insurance (SARTHI) Portal

- Recently, the Union Agriculture minister unveiled the 'Sarathi' platform.
- Purpose: To provide a full suite of insurance products, including PMFBY, geared specifically for farmers and rural populations in India.
- It is the comprehensive digital insurance platform launched in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India.
- The portal will be a single-window platform for viewing, purchasing, and availing insurance products.
- The platform has digital payment options and streamlined premium collection, effortless claim initiation, tracking and resolution besides user-friendly interfaces for stakeholders.

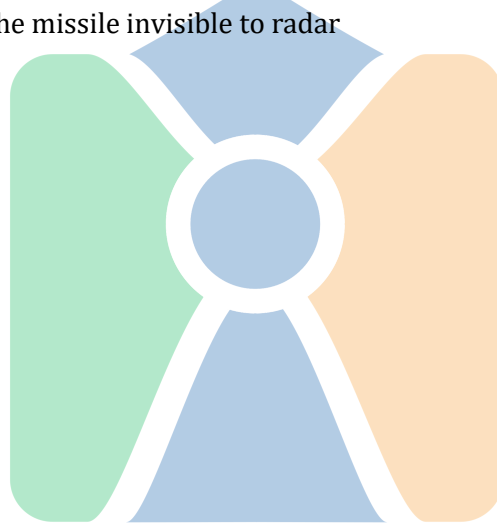
3. Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Model

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has come up with a list of high-traffic density corridors for private developers to build and operate under the build-operate-transfer (BOT) model.
- BOT is a type of agreement often used in infrastructure projects, particularly in the construction and operation of public facilities or utilities.
- It is a conventional public-private partnership (PPP) model in which a private entity is granted the rights and responsibilities to design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain a specific project or facility for a defined period of time.
- The private entity also bears the financial and operational risks associated with the project during the contract period.
- At the end of the contract period, the ownership and control of the facility are transferred back to the government or public authority, which may have been the original owner.
- The transfer is often accompanied by a predetermined valuation or compensation mechanism.
- The private company gains revenue during the concession period, while the government benefits from infrastructure development without upfront investment.

- BOT is particularly well-suited for greenfield projects (new projects without prior work) and large-scale, capital-intensive projects.

4. Zircon Missile

- In an attempt to hit a target in Kyiv, Russian forces recently launched a 3M22 Zircon missile.
- The 3M22 Zircon, or SS-N-33, is a scramjet-powered manoeuvring anti-ship hypersonic cruise missile developed in Russia.
- The missile is reportedly capable of flying with speeds up to Mach 9 and a range of 1000 km.
- It is a two-stage missile that uses solid fuel in the first stage and a scramjet motor in the second stage.
- The missile uses cooled supersonic combustion ramjet engines, which facilitate combustion by compressing air flowing at supersonic speeds due to the missile's forward motion.
- Guidance System: Active and Passive Radar Seeker.
- During flight, the missile is completely covered by a plasma cloud that absorbs any rays of radio frequencies and makes the missile invisible to radar.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about Electoral bonds

1. it can be directly purchased by political parties and struck down as unconstitutional by the supreme court.
2. These are similar to regular bonds and offer interest.
3. Only Indian citizens can purchase electoral bonds.

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 with reference to the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

1. The scheme seeks to provide 300 units of free electricity per month to one crore households.
2. The scheme provides central subsidies for the installation cost for 10 kW systems.
3. It has provisions for developing a "Model Solar Village" in each district to showcase rooftop solar adoption in rural areas.

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

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

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to the SWAYAM Plus Platform

1. It offers courses developed collaboratively with the industry leaders focusing on employability and professional development.
2. It features innovative elements such as multilingual content, AI-enabled guidance and credit recognition.

3. It will be operated by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

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

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

Q4. What is the objective of the 75/25 initiative launched by the India government?

- A. A plan to increase agricultural exports by 75% and reduce imports by 25%.
- B. A program aimed at reducing carbon emissions by 75% by 2025
- C. A strategy to prioritize economic development with a 75% focus on infrastructure and 25% on social welfare.
- D. An initiative to screen and provide standard care to 75 million individuals suffering from hypertension and diabetes by 2025.

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Lahore Resolution of 1940:

1. The resolution was adopted by the All-India Muslim League and demanded a separate Muslim homeland within British India.
2. The resolution was based on the concept of "Two-Nation Theory," which argued that Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations.
3. The resolution called for the creation of a single, united Muslim state encompassing all Muslim-majority areas in British India.

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

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

Q6. Which of the following statements best describes the term 'Regulatory Sandbox'?

- It is a live testing of new low-cost financial products.
- It is a framework to curb money laundering across the country.
- It is a technology to test adulteration of food products.
- It is a single window system to get licences for AI startups.

Q7. With reference to the Indian Leopard, consider the following statements

- They are nocturnal animals.
- They are known for their ability to adapt to a variety of habitats.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest number of leopard population.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) in India:

- It is an independent agency under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- Its primary function is to foster innovation and technological advancements in the Indian defence sector.
- The DIO has the authority to directly award contracts to private companies for defence procurement.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q9. With reference to Rajya Sabha elections, consider the following statements

- The representatives of each State to the Rajya Sabha are elected indirectly by the elected members of their Legislative Assembly.
- The voting in elections to Rajya Sabha shall be through an open ballot.
- The provisions of the Tenth Schedule with respect to voting against the instruction of the party is not applicable for a Rajya Sabha election.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q10. The Agaléga island, seen in the news recently, is a dependency of which of the following countries?

- Madagascar
- Mauritius
- Indonesia
- Maldives

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Political parties cannot buy electoral bonds. Electoral bonds are meant to be purchased by individuals or entities and donated to registered political parties. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Electoral bonds are not interest-bearing instruments. They function more like bearer bonds, where the bearer (possessor) can encash them. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Electoral bonds can be purchased by any individual or entity registered in India. This includes companies, trusts, and societies. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced in the Union Budget 2018.
- Aims to increase transparency in political funding by replacing anonymous cash donations.
- Bonds are available for purchase in specified denominations during designated periods.
- Only registered political parties with verified accounts can encash the bonds.

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana with a budget of ₹75,021 crore.
- The free electricity scheme was earlier announced by the Finance Minister in the interim budget speech.
- Objective: To promote rooftop solar installations across India, promising 300 units of free electricity per month to one crore households. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The government guarantees no financial burden on the beneficiaries by providing significant subsidies directly to their bank accounts and by offering highly concessional bank loans.
- It will fund 60% of the installation cost for 2 kW systems and 40% for systems from 2-3 kW capacity. Systems beyond 3 kW won't be eligible for central subsidies. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The remaining installation costs will be covered by households through collateral-free, low-interest loans, currently available at around 7%.

- It has provisions for developing a "Model Solar Village" in each district to showcase rooftop solar adoption in rural areas. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The Urban Local Bodies and Panchayats will be incentivised to promote rooftop solar systems in their jurisdictions.

Answer 3 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched the 'SWAYAM Plus' platform.
- This platform offers courses developed collaboratively with industry leaders focusing on employability and professional development. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It will offer programmes in several sectors like manufacturing, energy, computer science, engineering, management studies, healthcare, hospitality, tourism, and Indian knowledge systems.
- It features innovative elements such as multilingual content (available in 12 major Indian languages of the country), AI-enabled chatbot and credit recognition. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT Madras) will operate the 'SWAYAM Plus' Platform. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 4 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Union Health Ministry launched the 75/25 initiative, aimed at screening and providing standard of care for 75 million individuals with hypertension and diabetes by 2025. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- By prioritizing hypertension and diabetes, two prevalent NCDs, the aim is to improve the overall well-being of millions of individuals.
- This initiative acknowledges the significance of early detection, treatment, and adherence to Standard Care protocols in combating NCDs.

Answer 5 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- The Lahore Resolution, also known as the Pakistan Resolution, was passed by the All-India Muslim League at its annual session in Lahore in 1940. This resolution marked a significant turning point in the Indian independence movement as it formally articulated the demand for a separate Muslim state within British India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The resolution was heavily influenced by the "Two-Nation Theory" propounded by Muslim leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This theory argued that Hindus and Muslims constituted two distinct nations with different religions, cultures, and social practices, making it impossible for them to coexist peacefully in a united India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Lahore Resolution did not call for a single, united Muslim state encompassing all Muslim-majority areas in British India. Instead, it envisaged the creation of "independent states" in areas where Muslims were in a majority, leaving the exact nature and number of these states ambiguous. This ambiguity later allowed for the partition of India into two separate states: India and Pakistan. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 6 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- The RBI had issued the 'Enabling Framework for Regulatory Sandbox' in August 2019.
- The scheme involves live testing of new financial products or services in a controlled regulatory environment. **Hence, option A is correct.**
- It acts as a "safe space" for business as the regulators may or may not permit certain relaxations for the limited purpose of testing.
- It allows regulators, innovators, financial service providers, and customers to test new financial innovations, collecting evidence on benefits and risks.
- It facilitates the development of innovation-friendly regulations, enabling the delivery of low-cost financial products.

Answer 7 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Recently, the Environment Ministry released a report on the Status of Leopards in India.
- India's leopard population increased from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2022, an 8% rise.
- Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number of leopards (3,907), followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The Indian Leopard, smallest of the big cats, is a leopard subspecies widely distributed in the Indian subcontinent.
- They are elusive and nocturnal animals whose size and colour depend on the habitat. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- They are known for their ability to adapt to a variety of habitats. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- They are strong and agile predators that can climb trees and drag their prey up for safety.

Answer 8 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- The Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) is an agency established under the Department of Defence Production within the Ministry of Defence (MoD). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- : The DIO's primary role is to promote innovation and technological self-reliance in the Indian defence sector. It achieves this by fostering research and development, facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and the defence establishment, and supporting startups and entrepreneurs in the defence and aerospace domains. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The DIO does not have the direct authority to award contracts for defence procurement. The acquisition of defence equipment and systems in India is primarily handled by the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) through various established procedures that involve diverse stakeholders, including the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC). **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 9 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- As per Article 80 of the Constitution, representatives of each State to the Rajya Sabha are elected indirectly by the elected members of their Legislative Assembly. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- In order to rein in the MLAs from cross-voting, an amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951 was carried out in 2003.
- Section 59 of the Act was amended to provide that the voting in elections to Rajya Sabha shall be through an open ballot. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The 52nd constitutional amendment introduced the 'anti-defection' law through the Tenth Schedule in 1985. However, it does not apply to Rajya Sabha elections, as clarified by the Election Commission in 2017.
- The Supreme Court ruled that voting against one's party candidate does not warrant disqualification under the Tenth Schedule. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Furthermore, political parties cannot issue any whip to its members for such elections.

Answer 10 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Recently, India and Mauritius jointly inaugurated an airstrip and jetty on Agaléga island, enhancing connectivity and security in the region.
- Agaléga is a two-island Mauritian dependency 1,100 km to the north of Port Louis and 2,500 km southwest of Malé. **Hence, option B is correct.**
- The inauguration underscores India's commitment to supporting Mauritius in meeting its development goals and enhancing maritime security.
- This would lead to more effective monitoring of Mauritius' vast 2.3 million sq km Exclusive Economic Zone.
- Further, it will equip Mauritius to better counter-piracy, terrorism, narcotics and human trafficking, and illegal and unregulated fishing.



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