

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS I

1. Ancient terracotta figurines found during archaeological explorations at megalithic dolmen site near Moodbidri - The Hindu

Relevance: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

News:

- Archaeological explorations were conducted in the **megalithic dolmen site at Mudu Konaje**, near Moodbidri, in Dakshina Kannada.
- It is the **biggest megalithic dolmen site** which consists of **nine dolmens** on the slope of a stone hill.
- Recently, **unique terracotta figurines** in different states of preservation, with **bone and iron pieces** have been found.

Prelims Takeaway

- Megalithic Dolmen Site
- Terracotta
- Location Based Questions

Key Findings

- The **terracotta figurines** found at Mudu Konaje in a megalithic context are a **rare find of India**.
- Mudu Konaje terracotta figurines were **datable to 800-700 BC**.
- Of the **eight figurines found**, there are **two cow bovines, one mother goddess, two peacocks, a horse, a hand of a mother goddess and an unknown object**.
- **First Cow Bovine**
 - One of the two cow bovines is a **solid handmade human body with a bull's head**.
 - It has a **clear snout of a bull** and its **femininity is well attested** by two breasts attached by the applique method.
 - A **thin line of groove** is created from below the right arm till the left side of the neck.
 - It has **two arms, but the hands are broken** and the left arm is turned towards the front.
 - **Flatten wide belly** and a round section below the belly is seen.
 - Indication of **two legs** is clearly found.
 - **Elongated round bun** at the back of the head **as headgear** is seen.
- **Second Cow Bovine**
 - The second cow bovine is another **solid handmade figurine**.
 - It has a **bovine snout and an archtype head gear**.
 - It has **applique ornamentation** round the neck and below the belly.
 - At the bottom there are **no legs but a prop to stand the image**.
- **The Peacocks**
 - One of the two peacocks is a **solid peacock**.
 - It is dipped into **red ochre** and its **feathers are down** towards the earth.
 - Another peacock has the **elongated head created separately**, which can be insertable into a shallow body.
 - The **body is missing** and the **feathers are designed upwards**.
- The **torso of a mother goddess** has **no head, hands and legs**.

Significance of Findings

- The **cow bovines** found in the dolmens helps to **determine the chronology of the dolmens**.
- **Terracottas** found in the megalithic burial provides a solid ground for the study of the **Bhoota cult or Daiva Aradhane of coastal Karnataka**.
- **Cow bovines** had its parallels in **Malampuzha megalithic terracotta figurines of Kerala and Egypt**.

Megalithic Dolmen Site

- Megalithic culture is known for its **different types of burials** and **use of iron in India** and **Dolmen is one among them**.

- Under a dolmen, **huge stone slabs** known as **orthostats** are erected in **clockwise order**, which creates a square room.
- This square chamber is **closed by another huge stone slab** as a **capstone**.
- Generally, on the Eastern slab, a **round or U-shaped entrance** known as **port hole** is created.
- It is **known by different names in South India** like Kalmane, Pandavara Mane, Moriyara Mane, Moriyara Betta etc. which **reveals its popularity among the common people**.

GS II

2. Nipah breaks out again in Kerala, claims 2 lives - The Hindu

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

News:

- Recently, **Nipah scare returned to Kerala**, with two deaths reported from Kozhikode district.
- The Union Health Minister **confirmed that the deaths were due to Nipah virus**.

Prelims Takeaway

- World Health Organization
- Nipah virus

Nipah virus

- Nipah virus infection **is a zoonotic illness**.
- It is transmitted to **people from animals**.
- It can be **transmitted through contaminated food** or directly from person to person.
- Among infected people, it causes a range of illnesses, from asymptomatic (subclinical) infection to **acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis**.
- While the Nipah virus **does not spread as quickly as the Covid-19** virus, it is more deadly.
- According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the overall **global case fatality rate of Nipah is estimated at 40% to 75%**
- The **first outbreaks of the Nipah virus** among humans was **reported from Malaysia (1998) and Singapore (1999)**.
- The animal **host reservoir** for this virus is known to be the **fruit bat**, commonly known as **flying fox**.
- Fruit bats are known to **transmit this virus to other animals like pigs, and also dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep**.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **Nipah has a relatively high case fatality ratio**.
- It is an **emerging zoonotic disease of public health importance** in the South East Asia and Western Pacific WHO Regions.

3. Kim Jong Un arrives in Russia amid US warning against sale of weapons - Indian Express

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

News:

- Recently, **North Korean leader has arrived in Russia**, for what the Kremlin said would be a comprehensive discussion with the Russian President.
- He attended the **plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Eastern Economic Forum
- Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Eastern Economic Forum

- The EEF was **established in 2015 to encourage foreign investments** in Russia's Far East (RFE).
- The EEF displays the **economic potential, suitable business conditions and investment opportunities** in the region.
- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from 217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles.
- The agreements focus on **infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture**.

- **China, South Korea, Japan and India** are the Key Players in the region, where **China is the biggest investor**.
- China who sees potential in promoting the **Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Polar Sea Route in the RFE**.
- **China's investments** in the region account for **90% of the total** investments.
- Russia has strategically developed the region with the aim of **connecting Russia to the Asian trading routes**.
- With the fast modernisation of cities like Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita and more, **Russia aims to attract more investments in the region**.
- **To survive the economic crisis** and the sanctions with the help of China and other Asian powers.

4. South Korea keen on joining Quad, says envoy Chang Jae-bok - The Hindu

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

News:

- **South Korea** is very **keen on joining the Quad** grouping and the ball is now in the Quad's court to decide on expansion.
- On the bilateral front, **India and South Korea are negotiating expansion of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
- Quad

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

- India has signed **CEPAs with South Korea and Japan**.
- It is a kind of **free trade pact** that covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership.
- It may even consider negotiation in areas such as **trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and IPR**.
- **Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements** are more comprehensive than Free Trade Agreements.
- CEPA also looks into the **regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues**.

5. Honourable President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, to virtually launch Ayushman Bhav Campaign on September 13, 2023 - The Hindu

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

News:

- The **Honourable President** will virtually inaugurate the visionary '**Ayushman Bhav**' campaign today.
- It will mark a **significant leap towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and ensuring healthcare for all.

Prelims Takeaway

- Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
- Ayushman Bhav Campaign
- Ayushman Bharat Scheme

'Ayushman Bhav' Campaign

- Initiated by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, it is a **comprehensive nationwide healthcare initiative**.
- **Objective:** To provide saturation coverage of healthcare services, reaching every village and town in the country.
- It builds upon the success of the **Ayushman Bharat program** and signifies a **paradigm shift in healthcare services**.

The Approach

- It embodies a **whole-of-nation and whole-of-society approach**.
- It **unites government sectors, civil society organizations and communities** under a common mission.
- This is to ensure that **every individual receives essential health services** without any disparity or exclusion.

The Components

- This synergistic approach aims to **saturate coverage of health services** through its **three components**
 - Ayushman - Apke Dwar 3.0
 - Ayushman Melas at Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs)
 - Ayushman Sabhas in every village and panchayat.

Ayushman Apke Dwar 3.0

Objective

- To **provide Ayushman cards to remaining eligible beneficiaries** enrolled under the PM-JAY scheme
- To ensure that **more individuals have access to essential health services.**

Ayushman Melas at HWCs and CHCs

- These Melas will **facilitate the creation of ABHA IDs (Health IDs) and issuance of Ayushman Bharat Cards.**
- They will also offer **early diagnosis, comprehensive primary health care services, teleconsultation** with specialists and **appropriate referrals.**

Ayushman Sabhas

- These **gatherings in every village and Panchayat** will play a **pivotal role in**
 - distributing Ayushman cards
 - generating ABHA IDs
 - raising awareness about vital health schemes and disease conditions
 - raising awareness about blood donation and organ donation drives

Recognition

- **Panchayats that successfully saturate the health schemes** will earn the prestigious title of **'Ayushman Gram Panchayat'** or **'Ayushman Urban Ward'**.
- This will **symbolise their dedication** to equitable healthcare provision.

GS III

6. Small islands take ocean protection case to UN court - The Hindu

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

News:

- Recently, the **UN maritime court will hear a landmark case** brought by a group of small island states
- The **nine island states have turned to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to:**
 - determine if carbon dioxide emissions absorbed by the oceans can be considered pollution
 - what obligations countries have to prevent it.

Prelims Takeaway

- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- Vanuatu island

Key Highlights

- The counties have pointed to the **international treaty UNCLOS that binds countries to preventing pollution of the oceans.**
- the UN General Assembly in March adopted a resolution calling on the **International Court of Justice to lay out nations' obligations on protecting Earth's climate**
- It talks about the **legal consequences countries will face if they fail to do so.**
- The **UN treaty defines pollution** as the introduction by humans of "**substances or energy into the marine environment**" that leads to harm to marine life.
- **Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe** and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities.
- **increasing emissions** can warm and **acidify seawaters, harming marine life.**
- Entire marine and **coastal ecosystems** are dying in waters that are becoming **warmer and more acidic.**

- **Small islands like Vanuatu are particularly exposed to the impact of global warming**, with seawater rises threatening to submerge entire countries.
- Across the two-thirds of the planet covered by seas, **nearly 60% of ocean surface waters experienced at least one marine heatwave in 2022**

7. Rajnath lays foundation stone for Nyoma airfield near the LAC in eastern Ladakh - The Hindu/ LAC focus as Rajnath inaugurates 90 border infrastructure projects - Indian Express

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

News:

- As many as **90 border infrastructure** projects across **11 states and Union Territories** were inaugurated by the Defence Minister from the Nechiphu tunnel to a key military airfield in eastern Ladakh's Nyoma
- the **Nechiphu tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity** to the strategic Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh

Prelims Takeaway

- Nechiphu Pass
- BRO

Key points

- Of the 90 projects of the Border Roads Organisation, **64 are in Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Sikkim.**
- In the last three years, India has ramped up **infrastructure development along the LAC, both in eastern Ladakh and the North-East.**
- The projects include 11 in **Jammu and Kashmir**, five in **Mizoram**, three in **Himachal Pradesh**, two each in **Uttarakhand and West Bengal** and one each in **Nagaland, Rajasthan and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- Other key projects inaugurated include the **Bagdogra and Barrackpore airfields in West Bengal.**
- The BRO will **begin construction of the Shinku La tunnel, the world's highest tunnel** at an altitude of 15,855 feet.
- The **Devak Bridge on the Bishnah-Kaulpur-Phulpur Road in J&K's Samba district** was inaugurated.

Significance

- The lines of communication from **Tawang also stretch to Guwahati and the extended Siliguri Corridor**, which makes it militarily important.
- The tunnel **will bypass the Nechiphu Pass** that has foggy weather conditions, a major hindrance for military convoys and other traffic.
- It will facilitate **faster mobility of troops and equipment to the LAC** by cutting short the existing distance by around 5 km.
- India uses **Bomdila, Nechiphu and Se La for deployment of forces.**
- Reconstructed at a cost of over Rs 500 crore, the **airfields are a significant addition to air infrastructure in the North-East**
- **It will bolster the preparedness of the IAF** while facilitating commercial flight operations in the region.
- **Devak bridge is of strategic importance** as it will "enhance the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces and **boost socio-economic development of the region.**
- These projects will help in **faster mobility of troops and equipment to the Line of Actual Control in case of a contingency**
- It will also improve **overall connectivity for the population.**
- **The Tawang region provides the easiest access to the Brahmaputra plains** and the shortest route to Tezpur in Assam.

Border Roads Organisation

- Initially, BRO was functional under the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.**
- since 2015, it is being managed and is functional under the **Ministry of Defence**

- The **BRO has constructed infrastructure projects** in several countries such as **Myanmar and Bhutan** and helped in strengthening peace and cooperation with them.
 - It also plays a **key role in the socio-economic development of far-flung areas.**

8. 2,300 dead, many missing as flash floods hit Libya city - The Hindu

Relevance: Disaster and disaster management.

News:

- Recently, about a quarter of **Libya's eastern city of Derna** was wiped out **after dams burst in a storm.**
- Approx. **10,000 people were feared to be missing** across the country in floods.

Prelims Takeaway

- Flash Floods
- Landslides

Flash Floods

- **Excessive or continuous rainfall** over a period of days or during particular seasons, can **lead to stagnation of water and cause flooding.**
- It occurs in a much **shorter span of time**, say, when rainfall creates flooding in **less than 6 hours** and is **highly localised.**
- These are **accompanied by landslides**, which are sudden movements of rock, boulders, earth or debris down a slope **which makes it dangerous.**

Factors Responsible for Flash floods

- Apart from heavy rain, **flash floods can also be caused by**
 - dam or levee failures
 - ice or debris jams
 - sudden release of water from natural reservoirs such as glacial lakes.
- The **following factors are also responsible** for flash floods
 - The intensity and duration of rainfall
 - The steepness of terrain
 - The nature of the soil
 - The presence of man-made structures that impede water flow
- In **India**, flash floods are **often associated with cloudbursts** i.e. sudden, intense rainfall in a short period of time.

Features of Flash Floods

- Flash floods are known for their **extreme force and velocity**, carrying a **tremendous amount of water, debris and sediment.**
- They can **overwhelm drainage systems**, cause rivers to **overflow their banks and inundate low-lying areas.**
- It commonly happens more where **rivers are narrow and steep**, so they flow more quickly.
- They can occur in **urban areas located near small rivers**, since **hard surfaces** such as roads and concrete **do not allow the water to absorb into the ground.**

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. A Privacy Report Card - Indian Express

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

Context:

- After **over half a decade of deliberations and numerous iterations of India's data protection law**, recently, both houses of Parliament passed the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act**.
- In the **K S Puttaswamy vs Union of India judgement**, the **Supreme Court (SC)** reaffirmed the **right to privacy** and stressed the **need for a dedicated data protection law**.

K S Puttaswamy vs Union of India

- The judgement formed the cornerstone of privacy jurisprudence in the country.
- It held that the right to privacy was an integral part of the fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution.
- Six separate opinions of the Court spelt out an expansive interpretation of the right to privacy.
- The Court construed privacy not as a narrow right against physical invasion, but as one that
 - includes the body and mind
 - enables us to make free decisions
 - is deeply tied to human dignity and autonomy
- Privacy enables us to make meaningful choices, like concerning our sexual and reproductive health, choice of partners, control over personal information etc.

Evolution of Right to Privacy in the SC

- The SC has explored principles of autonomy, dignity and identity in relation to privacy to strengthen the framework of constitutional rights.
- For instance, it decriminalised all sexual relations between consenting adults, including adults of the same sex.
- In multiple judgments, it has reaffirmed the right of adults to marry across religious and caste lines.
- It decriminalised adultery both based on protecting sexual autonomy and privacy and on the grounds of excessive state involvement.
- It also examined the role of privacy in the context of end-of-life care and reaffirmed the right to die with dignity.
- Since Puttaswamy, the SC has deliberated on and expanded the ambit of the right to privacy.

Right to Privacy in Digital Arena

- The High Courts have provided more nuanced versions of the right to privacy, especially in cases relating to the right to be forgotten.
 - Here, individuals can ask for information about themselves to be removed from public records in some cases
- Privacy, among other grounds, has been used as the basis for taking down intimate images of individuals where they were shared without consent.
- It also clarifies the limitations on the powers of investigative authorities in relation to surveillance, search and seizure, and DNA testing.

Right to Privacy is NOT Absolute

- The right to privacy hasn't always prevailed and the SC has restricted this right in certain cases.
 - For example, in a split verdict, the Court limited the right to privacy in public spaces.
 - It curtailed the right of women to wear a hijab in educational institutions.
- Additionally, the Court has also decided to review its verdict in the Sabarimala case.
 - The case struck down the customary prohibition on women between the ages of 10-50 from entering the Sabarimala shrine.

Conclusion

- Since Puttaswamy, the Court has **steadily built up jurisprudence** that has **expanded the scope of the right to privacy**.
- It should continue to do so to **allow individuals to more effectively exercise their rights and freedoms** in India.

2. Gadkari mentions tax on diesel vehicles: why is the fuel under pressure? - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context:

- Recently, the Road Transport Minister said that **people needed to move away from fuels such as petrol and diesel**.
- He also mentioned that **if the use of diesel-run vehicles and equipment continued**, he might propose an **additional 10% GST** be imposed on them as **"pollution tax"**.

Why a pushback against diesel?

- A **Committee** appointed by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recommended a **ban on diesel four-wheel vehicles by 2027** in **cities with a population of more than 1 million**.

- The government already imposes a **28% tax on diesel cars, plus an additional cess** depending on the engine capacity, **taking the total tax to almost 50%**.
- As part of its goal to achieve **net zero emissions by 2070**, Government aims to
 - reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - produce 40% of India's electricity from renewables

Report

- Diesel accounts for about 40% of India's petroleum products consumption.
- Around 87% of total diesel sales are to the transport segment.
- Trucks and buses account for about 68% of diesel sales in the country.
- Three states namely Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana account for almost 40% of the diesel sold in India.

Why are carmakers moving away from diesel?

- **Increased emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx)**
 - **Higher compression ratio** of diesel engines means **increased emissions of NOx**, one of the **main drawbacks of diesel engines** versus petrol.
- **Volkswagen Scandal, 2015**
 - The German automaker was found to be **activating emissions controls** in its diesel engines during lab tests.
 - On the other hand, it allowed them to **emit dozens of times more NOx in actual driving**.
 - This led to a **rise in the negative perception about diesel** across markets, including India.
- **New BS-VI emission norms**
 - The reason why Maruti Suzuki and other carmakers **announced an exit from the diesel segment** was the rollout of the **new BS-VI emission norms**.
 - BS-VI emission norms **increased the cost of upgrading their diesel engines** to meet the new standards.
 - The Government's decision to leapfrog **directly from BS-IV to BS-VI** made the **retention of diesel** in their portfolio **unviable**.

Reasons an individual user might prefer diesel to petrol

- **Higher fuel economy**
 - Diesel has **greater energy content per litre**, and diesel engines are **inherently efficient** when compared to petrol.
 - They **do not use high-voltage spark ignition** and **use less fuel per kilometre** as they have **higher compression ratios**.
 - This makes diesel the fuel of **choice for heavy vehicles**.
- **Better haulage**
 - Diesel engines **offer more torque** and are **less likely to stall** as they are **controlled by a mechanical or electronic governor**
- **Cost of running the vehicle**
 - **In 2013**, diesel cars accounted for **48% of passenger vehicle sales** in the country.
 - The main reason for this was the significantly **lower price of diesel compared to petrol** - at its peak, the difference was Rs 25 per litre.
 - This changed when the **decontrol of fuel prices started in late 2014** with the difference around Rs 7 per litre only.
 - Diesel cars accounted for **less than 20% of overall passenger vehicle sales in 2021-22**.
 - A further increase in taxation on diesel vehicles will impact sales further.

Quick Look

1. Tax Haven

- It is a jurisdiction that has very low tax rates such that it varies from 2% to sometimes as low as 0.02%.
- This is done in order to increase foreign investment as well as the flow of cash flow in their economy.
- Due to lower tax rates, it provides a platform for big multinational corporations and firms to incorporate themselves in these countries which could help in the development of their economy.
- It eventually causes base erosion and profit shifting where corporations shift their profits from high-tax to low-tax jurisdictions.
- Countries that act as tax havens have no residency requirements for individuals which makes investing more favorable.

2. Gene-drive technology

- A gene drive is a type of genetic engineering technique that modifies genes.
- This technology was conceived by Austin Burt, a professor at Imperial College London.
- This technique could be an effective way to eradicate nuisance species, such as malaria-causing mosquitoes.
- Under this technique, mosquitoes will selectively inherit some genes rather than the inheritance to follow the rules of Mendelian genetics.
- In this, a protein cuts the mosquito's DNA at a part that doesn't encode a particular sequence in the genome.
- This triggers a natural mechanism in the cell containing the DNA to repair it and forces the cell to incorporate a sequence called the drive sequence into the damaged portion.

3. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar awards

- The award is named after the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) India, the late Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.
- The Prize is given each year for outstanding contributions to science and technology.
- It carries a prize amount of Rs 5,00,000 (Rupees five lakh only).
- It is given for notable and outstanding research, applied or fundamental in the following disciplines:
 - Biological Sciences,
 - Chemical Sciences,
 - Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Sciences,
 - Engineering Sciences,
 - Mathematical Sciences
 - Medical Sciences
 - Physical Sciences.

4. Great Indian Bustard

- It is mainly found in the Indian subcontinent and is the flagship grassland species of India.
- It is one of the largest flying birds in the world and India's heaviest flying bird.
- Its population of about 150 in Rajasthan accounts for 95% of its total world population.
- They are mainly in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan, including the Desert National Park, which is the natural habitat of the species.
- Grasslands of Kutch in Gujarat, which is home to the second-largest bustard population in India.
- Arid regions of Maharashtra (Solapur), Karnataka (Bellary and Haveri) and Andhra Pradesh (Kurnool)
- It is the State bird of Rajasthan.
- Conservation status
 - IUCN: Critically Endangered.
 - CITES: Appendix I
 - The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Megalithic Dolmen Sites.

1. Megalithic culture is associated with different types of burials.
2. Under a Dolmen, mud walls are erected in clockwise order only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Consider the following statements about Nipah virus infection

1. Nipah virus infection is a zoonotic illness that is transmitted from animals to humans.
2. The disease spreads through 'flying foxes, who are natural reservoir hosts of the Nipah.

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

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to Eastern Economic Forum

1. The EEF was established in 2015 to encourage foreign investments in Russia's Far East (RFE).
2. China, South Korea, Japan and India are the Key Players in the region.
3. Russia is the biggest investor in this forum.

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

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

Q4. With reference to Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), consider the following statements

1. It is a kind of free trade pact that covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership.
2. India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- 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 'Ayushman Bhav' Campaign launched recently.

1. It aims to provide saturation coverage of healthcare services, reaching every village and town in the country.
2. It embodies a whole-of-nation and whole-of-society approach to ensure that every individual receives essential health services.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q6. Consider the following statements about global warming impact

1. Increasing emissions can warm and acidify seawaters, harming marine life.
2. Small islands are particularly exposed to the impact of global warming, with seawater rises threatening to submerge entire countries.

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 with reference to Border Roads Organisation

1. It is functional under the Ministry of Defence
2. functional in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka
3. The main objective of the Organisation was to maintain and develop the Indian remote areas of north and northeast situated near the borders.

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

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

Q8. Consider the following statements on Flash Floods

1. Excessive and continuous rainfall is the only factor responsible for flash floods.
2. The flash floods are accompanied by landslides which makes it dangerous.
3. It is common in areas where rivers are narrow and steep.

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

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

Q9. With reference to 'Right to Privacy' consider the following statements

1. It is protected under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
2. The SC in its multiple judgements has held that it is an absolute right.
3. The Puttaswamy judgement held that the right to privacy is an integral part of the fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution.

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

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

Q10. Consider the following statements.

1. Diesel engines are inherently efficient when compared to petrol engines.
2. Diesel engines are less likely to stall as they are controlled by a mechanical or electronic governor.
3. Higher compression ratio of diesel engines is one of the main drawbacks of diesel engines.

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

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

Prelims Track Answer

Ans. 1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Megalithic culture is known for its different types of burials and use of iron in India and Dolmen is one among them. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Under a dolmen, huge stone slabs known as orthostats are erected in clockwise order, which creates a square room. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- This square chamber is closed by another huge stone slab as a capstone.
- Generally, on the Eastern slab, a round or U-shaped entrance known as port hole is created.

Ans. 2 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Nipah virus infection is a zoonotic illness. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is transmitted to people from animals.
- It can be transmitted through contaminated food or directly from person to person.
- Among infected people, it causes a range of illnesses, from asymptomatic (subclinical) infection to acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis.
- While the Nipah virus does not spread as quickly as the Covid-19 virus, it is more deadly.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the overall global case fatality rate of Nipah is estimated at 40% to 75%
- The first outbreaks of the Nipah virus among humans was reported from Malaysia (1998) and Singapore (1999).
- The animal host reservoir for this virus is known to be the fruit bat, commonly known as flying fox. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Fruit bats are known to transmit this virus to other animals like pigs, and also dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Nipah has a relatively high case fatality ratio.

- It is an emerging zoonotic disease of public health importance in the South East Asia and Western Pacific WHO Regions.

Ans. 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The EEF was established in 2015 to encourage foreign investments in Russia's Far East (RFE). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The EEF displays the economic potential, suitable business conditions and investment opportunities in the region.
- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from 217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles.
- The agreements focus on infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture.
- China, South Korea, Japan and India are the Key Players in the region. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- China is the biggest investor. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- China who sees potential in promoting the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Polar Sea Route in the RFE.
- China's investments in the region account for 90% of the total investments.
- Russia has strategically developed the region with the aim of connecting Russia to the Asian trading routes.
- With the fast modernisation of cities like Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita and more, Russia aims to attract more investments in the region.
- To survive the economic crisis and the sanctions with the help of China and other Asian powers.

Ans. 4 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
- India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- It is a kind of free trade pact that covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment, and other areas of economic partnership. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It may even consider negotiation in areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and IPR.
- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than Free Trade Agreements.
- CEPA also looks into the regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.

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

- 'Ayushman Bhav' Campaign initiated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is a comprehensive nationwide healthcare initiative.
- Objective: To provide saturation coverage of healthcare services, reaching every village and town in the country. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It builds upon the success of the Ayushman Bharat program and signifies a paradigm shift in healthcare services.
- It embodies a whole-of-nation and whole-of-society approach.
- It unites government sectors, civil society organisations and communities under a common mission.
- This is to ensure that every individual receives essential health services without any disparity or exclusion. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- This synergistic approach aims to saturate coverage of health services through its three components viz. Ayushman - Apke Dwar 3.0, Ayushman Melas at Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) and Ayushman Sabhas in every village and panchayat.
- Panchayats that successfully saturate the health schemes will earn the prestigious title of 'Ayushman Gram Panchayat' or 'Ayushman Urban Ward'.

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

- Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities.
- increasing emissions can warm and acidify seawaters, harming marine life. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Entire marine and coastal ecosystems are dying in waters that are becoming warmer and more acidic.
- Small islands like Vanuatu are particularly exposed to the impact of global warming, with seawater rises threatening to submerge entire countries. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Across the two-thirds of the planet covered by seas, nearly 60% of ocean surface waters experienced at least one marine heatwave in 2022

Ans. 7 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- Initially, BRO was functional under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. But since 2015, it is being managed and is functional under the Ministry of Defence. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- BRO is operational in 21 Indian states and 1 union territory. But also, functional in our friendly countries like neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Organisation was formed on May 7, 1960, to maintain and develop the Indian remote areas of north and northeast situated near the borders. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The BRO Raising Day is celebrated on May 7, every year

Ans. 8 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Flash Floods are highly localised events of short duration with a very high peak and usually have less than six hours between the occurrence of the rainfall and peak flood.
- These are accompanied by landslides, which are sudden movements of rock, boulders,

earth or debris down a slope which makes it dangerous. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- Apart from heavy rain, flash floods can also be caused by dam or levee failures, ice or debris jams or sudden release of water from natural reservoirs such as glacial lakes. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It commonly happens more where rivers are narrow and steep, so they flow more quickly. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- In India, flash floods are often associated with cloudbursts i.e. sudden, intense rainfall in a short period of time.

Ans. 9 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The nine judge Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court in Justice K. S. Puttaswamy vs Union Of India ruled that individual privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Also, it is an inherent part of the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It includes the preservation of personal intimacies, sanctity of family life, marriage,

procreation, the home and sexual orientation.

- It safeguards individual autonomy and recognizes one's ability to control vital aspects of his/her life.
- Privacy is not an absolute right, but any invasion must be based on legality, need and proportionality. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

Ans. 10 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Diesel accounts for about 40% of India's petroleum products consumption.
- Diesel has greater energy content per litre, and diesel engines are inherently efficient when compared to petrol. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- This makes diesel the fuel of choice for heavy vehicles.
- Diesel engines offer more torque and are less likely to stall as they are controlled by a mechanical or electronic governor. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Higher compression ratio of diesel engines means increased emissions of NO_x, one of the main drawbacks of diesel engines versus petrol. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

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