

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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2. Govt. revises guidelines for community radio stations - The Hindu
3. India, UAE ink pacts on linking digital payment platforms, trade, energy - Indian Express
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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Centre rules out MSP law, invites farmers to talks - The Hindu/ MSP issue: what govt committee set up in 2022 has done so far - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Centre yet again made it clear that **announcing a guaranteed minimum support price (MSP)**, the key demand of the farmers, **will not be possible**.

Key Highlights

- As the protests by farmers belonging to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha
 - Non-Political (SKM-NP), a splinter group of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM)
- Escalated into a full-blown conflict with the security forces at various points on the Haryana-Punjab border
- The government, however, offered a third round of talks with the leaders of the groups.
- Heavy police deployment was also witnessed on Delhi's borders with Uttar Pradesh.

The MSP

- It is a guaranteed price for their produce from the Government.
- MSP is a form of market intervention** by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- MSP in India is a **price floor set by the government** to ensure that farmers receive a minimum price for their agricultural produce, thereby safeguarding their income and encouraging agricultural production
- The government announces **MSPs for 22 mandated crops** and **Fair and Remunerative Prices (FRP) for sugarcane**.
- The mandated crops are 14 crops of the kharif season, 6 rabi crops and two other commercial crops

Prelims Takeaway

- Fair and Remunerative Prices
- MSPs

2. Govt. revises guidelines for community radio stations - The Hindu

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

News:

- Minister of Information and Broadcasting released the **revised policy guidelines for setting up community radio stations** at the Regional Community Radio Sammelan (South).

Key Highlights

- The revised guidelines allowed a single institution to **set up a maximum of six stations in different districts of operation**
 - increased the advertising time for the stations from seven minutes to 12 minutes per hour,
 - increased the rate of advertisement from ₹52 per ten seconds to ₹74 per ten seconds.
- Pointing out that the **first community radio was launched in 2004** by former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani
- There were **481 community radio stations** in India at the moment,

Community Radio

- It serves as a platform for airing local voices on various community issues, **including health, education, agriculture, and more**.
- It empowers marginalised communities and preserves local culture and heritage by broadcasting in local languages and showcasing local talent.

Prelims Takeaway

- Community Radio
- Minister of Information and Broadcasting

- Community Radio plays a pivotal role in **promoting community empowerment and facilitating positive social change.**

3. India, UAE ink pacts on linking digital payment platforms, trade, energy - Indian Express

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

News:

- Recently, the Indian Prime Minister met the UAE's President in Abu Dhabi and **signed several pacts.**
- These **include** bilateral investment promotion, port infrastructure development, power trade, interlinking of digital payment platforms like the UPI, credit and debit card.

Key Agreements Signed

- A **Bilateral Investment Treaty** and a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** to promote investments.
- An intergovernmental framework agreement on the **India-Middle East Economic Corridor** furthering regional connectivity.
- Agreements on **interlinking of digital payment platforms** viz. UPI (India) and AANI (UAE) to facilitate seamless cross-border transactions between the two countries.
- Pact on **interlinking domestic debit/ credit cards** - RuPay (India) with JAYWAN (UAE).
 - This will enhance the universal acceptance of RuPay across the UAE.
- Pacts on energy, an MoU on cooperation in the field of **electrical interconnection and trade.**
 - This opens new areas of collaboration in the field of energy, including energy security and energy trade.
- An MoU on cooperation in **digital infrastructure projects** creating a framework for wide ranging cooperation and facilitating sharing of technical knowledge, skills and expertise.
- MoUs in the cultural domain to promote cultural exchange and collaboration such as **cooperation in heritage preservation and museums.**
- Agreements on **port infrastructure development** to enhance connectivity and trade facilitation.

Prelims Takeaway

- Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
- Bilateral Investment Treaty
- India-Middle East Economic Corridor
- UPI

4. MEA told to monitor organ transplantation process for foreigners - The Hindu/ Govt readies mechanism to monitor organ transplants for foreigners - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Union Health Secretary has urged the Ministry of External Affairs to appoint a **nodal person to oversee the transplantation of organs** in foreigners to curb the illegal buying and selling of organs.

Concerns Raised

- Recent concerns regarding the **authenticity of documents** establishing the relationship between donors and recipients have prompted this action.

Prelims Takeaway

- National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)
- Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994

- Media reports highlighted irregularities in documentation, including the issuance of '**Form 21 certificates**' by the Myanmar embassy on plain paper.
- The veracity of such documents, including identity papers and proof of residence, has been questioned, indicating potential illegitimacy.

Significance of Form 21

- Form 21 plays a crucial role in the **authorization process for organ transplants**.
- It serves as **evidence of the genuine relationship** between donors and recipients.
- It contains essential details such as names, addresses, photographs etc.
- It also requires **embassy certification of the relationship's authenticity**.

Future Measures and Implications

- Officials are currently finalising the mechanism for monitoring transplantation cases involving foreign nationals.
- A nodal person is likely to oversee all such cases to ensure compliance with regulations and prevent illegal activities.

5. 'Specific duration' clause in draft India-EFTA pact may affect drug industry - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- EFTA
- Patented Drugs

News:

- A clause in a draft free trade agreement text being negotiated between India and the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway**
- It could delay access to affordable, generic versions of patented drugs in India by a minimum of six years

Key Highlights

- There is also a line that suggests this should **apply not only to 'new' chemical drugs but also a class of drugs called 'biologics drugs'**,
 - Monoclonal antibodies, vaccine formulations — that involve complex mixtures of organic and inorganic entities, and are harder to make copies of.
- Many Indian biotechnology **companies are developing biologics drugs**.
- This is mostly because India's generic drug industry has over the years made affordable versions of expensive drugs and become a large global supply itself.
- **The Indian pharma industry is the third largest** in the world and produces over 60,000 generic drugs across 60 therapeutic categories and had an annual turnover of ₹3.4 lakh crore,
- "These effectively means that drugs such as bedaquiline (for TB) under provisions of data exclusivity wouldn't be available

"Balanced solutions"

- India's Commerce Minister for negotiations on the TEPA, following which they had reached **"balanced solutions" to concerns around the agreement**.
- While details of these solutions are not public, intellectual property (IPR) concerns are a major sticking point.
- **Patented drugs give exclusive marketing rights** to the inventor, or whoever files for the patent first, for 20 years.
- This has often resulted in essential drugs and medicines being unaffordable in several countries, including in India.

'Data exclusivity'

- The current practice, whereby generic drug makers make a copy-cat, establish that it's for all practical purposes the same drug
 - Rely on the published clinical trial data to prove that it is safe and effective, ceases to be legal.
- even extend to drugs that have not been patented in India and require generic manufacturers to either wait out the exclusivity period or repeat expensive clinical trials.

- For instance, **Colchicine, a traditional medicine used for gout saw its price rise by 5000% in the United States**
 - After one company was granted data exclusivity rights blocking other companies' rights to manufacture it.
- The India EFTA text is a broad-ranging agreement that has been negotiated between India and the four countries since 2008
 - To increase investment by these countries in India and reduce tariffs, on a range of exports from these countries.

GS III

6. 'India susceptible to trade disputes without permanent solution for food security' - Indian Express

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

Prelims Takeaway

- WTO
- Bali ministerial

News:

- India will be susceptible to trade disputes at the **World Trade Organization (WTO) and face increased push back over food subsidies**

Key Highlights

- **India will be susceptible to trade disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO)** if it fails to achieve a permanent solution on public stockholding for food grains
 - at the 13th ministerial conference in Abu Dhabi later this month
- A permanent solution at WTO will give India and a coalition of developing countries the flexibility to give out higher farm support.
- This assumes special significance as farmers are holding yet again protests in the national capital seeking a law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for all crops.
- However, giving out higher farm support could land India into legal disputes at WTO on account of distorting global trade.
- India is already **facing pushback from the Cairns Group**
 - a group of agricultural exporting countries that include Australia, Brazil and Canada
 - who claim that India's public stockholding (PSH) programme is highly subsidised, especially for rice, and that this is affecting food security of other countries.
- The main reason why India is very keen on a permanent solution is that some of the provisions in the peace clause are ambiguous.
- **India has invoked the 'peace clause' several times** at the WTO for breaching the prescribed 10 per cent subsidy ceiling on rice procurement.
- **India's subsidy on rice had exceeded** the threshold on multiple occasions forcing it to invoke the **'peace clause' agreed during the Bali ministerial in 2013**
 - which allows developing countries to breach the 10 per cent ceiling without invoking legal action by members.
- "Cairns Group is also pushing all countries to cut agriculture support by 50 per cent by 2030
 - which will result in countries such as India making huge sacrifices compared to developed countries

The peace clause

- It says that you are **distorting trade due to your subsidies but nobody will sue you provided you meet certain conditions.**
- The conditions include that a **country should not hurt the food security** of other countries or be trade distorting.
- These **conditions are vague in nature** and that is why India can be taken to dispute.
- This is the reason why India and other developing nations are pushing for a permanent solution

7. Food prices may keep inflation high - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Retail Inflation
- Disinflation

A brief respite

The drop in retail inflation in January is seen as temporary with prices of vegetables, cereals and pulses still elevated



- Economists say high frequency vegetables price data so far suggest inflation may not fall any further
- Prices of vegetables and other food items have held firm through the first 10 days of the current month
- Last week, RBI Governor Das had cautioned that food price shocks may interrupt the disinflation process

8. NITI Aayog Launches Greening India's Wastelands with Agroforestry (GROW) Report and Portal - PIB

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

News:

- NITI Aayog **unveiled the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland** with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal
- It aims to bolster efforts in environmental conservation and sustainable land use across India.

Key Highlights

- Utilising cutting-edge remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies The report offers a comprehensive state-wise and district-wise analysis
 - Providing crucial insights to government departments and industries engaged in greening and restoration projects.
- Under the leadership of NITI Aayog, the **report employed remote sensing and GIS techniques**
 - To evaluate the suitability of agroforestry practices across all districts of India.
- Additionally, it introduced an Agroforestry Suitability Index (ASI) for national-level prioritization, utilizing thematic datasets.
- **The GROW initiative includes the launch** of the "Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW)-Suitability Mapping" portal on 'Bhuvan'
 - Ensuring universal access to state and district-level data.
- This portal is expected to significantly **boost the promotion of agroforestry initiatives by government bodies.**
- Presently, agroforestry covers 8.65% of India's total geographical area, encompassing approximately 28.42 million hectares.
- The GROW report emphasizes the immense potential of converting underutilized areas, particularly wastelands, into productive agroforestry zones.

Prelims Takeaway

- United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification
- The Paris Agreement

- This initiative aligns with national commitments to **restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030**
 - establish an additional carbon sink capable of sequestering 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The urgent need to promote agroforestry for three primary reasons:

- reducing the import of wood and wood products, mitigating climate change through carbon sequestration, and optimizing the use of arable land.
- India, as the pioneer of **the National Agroforestry Policy in 2014**, is committed to enhancing productivity, profitability, and sustainability through agroecological land use systems.
- Agroforestry, which integrates trees, crops, and livestock, addresses multifaceted challenges related to food security, nutrition, energy, employment, and environmental conservation.
- These efforts are in alignment with global commitments such as:
 - the Paris Agreement
 - Bonn Challenge
 - UN Sustainable Development Goals
 - United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD)
 - Doubling Farmers' Income initiative
 - Green India Mission, among others.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Why India needs deep industrialisation - The Hindu

Relevance: Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Context:

- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has reshaped the economic perspectives, leading to a retreat from globalisation and a **resurgence of industrial policy and state-led interventions worldwide**.
- Initiatives like the Inflation Reduction Act in the US, the European Green Deal, and India's Atmanirbhar Bharat highlight this shift.

India's Growth Trajectory

- India's economy has shown resilience in recovering from the pandemic, but it faces challenges of "premature deindustrialization."
- Despite growth, disparities persist, with benefits primarily shared by a small minority, worsening pre-existing gaps.
- While luxury items like high-end cars sell well, ordinary citizens are struggling with rising food prices.

Industrial Stagnation

- Despite decades of efforts, India has struggled to industrialise significantly, with manufacturing's share in output and employment remaining stagnant and below 20%.
- Even reforms in 1991 failed to boost labour-intensive industrialization.
- India now grapples with stagnant industrial investment, high unemployment with chronic disguised unemployment, and widening trade deficits.

Unconventional Perspective: Services-Led Growth

- Economists Raghuram Rajan and Rohit Lamba propose a departure from traditional manufacturing-led growth.
- In *Breaking the Mould: Reimagining India's Economic Future*, they advocated for high-skill services driven by information technology.

Challenges of Services-Led Growth

• **Poor Employment Elasticity**

- Services-led growth struggles to absorb labour, particularly from agriculture, and exacerbates inequality due to the demand for highly skilled workers.
- Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2021-22: The Gini index of inequality for regular wages in the services sector was 44 compared to 35 for manufacturing.

• **Inequality in Education**

- Early emphasis on higher education neglects mass schooling, perpetuating inequality in access to quality education and exacerbating societal divisions.
 - India is one of the world's most unequal countries in terms of education.
- Despite high school enrollment rates and improved accessibility to higher education, there are significant disparities in educational quality and subsequent labour market outcomes.
- These disparities exacerbate existing class divisions in India, which are deeply rooted in the caste system.

A Culturally Rooted Diagnosis

- Industrial stagnation in India is attributed to a lack of mass education, hindering technological progress and cultural attitudes towards labour and innovation.
- India's historical undervaluation of certain occupations and lack of emphasis on vocational skills hinder organic innovation and industrial progress.
- Mass education and a revaluation of vocational skills are necessary for deep industrialization and societal transformation.

10. On the rights of forest-dwellers - The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

Context:

- The recent notification regarding the **Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadu's Erode district has raised concerns among forest-dwelling communities in the vicinity.
- These communities fear that the notification may lead to the denial of their rights under the **FRA (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act) of 2006**.

<p>Sanctuary Composition and Exclusion of Forest Villages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary comprises several reserved forests, including North and South Bargur, Thamarai Karai, Ennamangalam, and Nagalur. • It is located between the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu and the Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka. • However, six tribal forest villages have been excluded from the sanctuary, despite their traditional presence in the area. • These exclusions raise concerns about the denial of rightful habitation and access to resources. <p>Forest Villages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1990, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had ordered that all forest villages be converted to revenue villages. • The FRA also mandates the conversion of forest villages into revenue villages, ensuring the recognition of community rights. • However, this conversion process has been slow and incomplete, perpetuating injustices against forest-dwelling communities. <p>Rights and Exclusions within the Sanctuary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notification of the Thanthai Periyar Sanctuary restricts certain activities, such as cattle grazing, impacting traditional practices of forest-dwelling communities. • In March 2022, the Madras High Court revised the order imposing a total ban on cattle grazing in all the forests of Tamil Nadu. It restricted the ban to National Parks, Sanctuaries, and Tiger Reserves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tamil Nadu is the only State in the country where there is such a ban. • Despite the FRA's recognition of grazing and traditional resource access rights in all forests, the sanctuary's notification imposes limitations. 	<p>Legal Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 governs the establishment of sanctuaries and national parks, with provisions for recognizing existing rights. • People inside Sanctuaries continue to enjoy all their rights unless prohibited, but they don't in National Parks. • However, the implementation of these laws often disregards the rights of forest-dwelling communities, perpetuating historical injustices. • The FRA, enacted in 2006 to rectify these injustices, mandates the recognition of forest rights by gram sabhas, yet its implementation remains inadequate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All provisions in the WLPA that contravene provisions in the FRA are null and void. <p>Tamil Nadu's Implementation of FRA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamil Nadu's implementation of the FRA has been particularly deficient, with a minimal area recognized and titled under individual and community rights. • Despite the legal framework provided by the FRA, violations persist, undermining the rights and livelihoods of forest-dwelling communities.
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11. WHAT DID TRUMP SAY ABOUT NATO FUNDING AND WHAT IS ARTICLE 5? - Indian Express

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

Context:

- Former US President Donald Trump's recent comments regarding NATO have drawn widespread criticism.
- His remarks suggest a departure from traditional NATO principles, raising questions about the alliance's future and its collective defence commitments.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- NATO is a political and military alliance comprising countries from North America and Europe.
- Its cornerstone principle - principle of collective defence - is enshrined in Article 5 i.e. an attack on one member is considered an attack on all.
- It takes decisions by consensus, however, the United States holds significant influence within NATO due to its military strength.

Membership and Expansion

- NATO currently consists of 31 members, primarily European nations along with the United States and Canada.
- Recent additions include Finland which joined last April in reaction to Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.
- NATO was established in 1949 during the Cold War to counter the Soviet Union.
- After the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, it expanded to take in former communist bloc countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

Trump's NATO Criticism

- During his presidency, Trump frequently criticised NATO members, particularly Germany, for insufficient defence spending and reliance on US protection.
- His recent comments at a campaign rally suggest a willingness to abandon NATO's collective defence principle if members fail to meet their financial obligations.

NATO Funding and Defence Spending

- Contrary to Trump's portrayal, NATO operates on member contributions.
- While NATO has common funds, the bulk of its strength comes from members' national defence spending.
 - To maintain forces and buy arms that can also be used by NATO.
- However, most members have not met the agreed-upon target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence annually.

Article 5 and Trump's Comments

- Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty emphasises collective defence, but it lacks an automatic military response clause.
- In other words, the strength of Article 5 depends on clear statements from political leaders that it will be backed up by action.
- Trump's comments undermine the alliance's credibility and cohesion, particularly amid heightened tensions with Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.



Mentorship
India

Quick Look

1. IIT Zanzibar

- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-Madras) inaugurated its first-ever international campus in Zanzibar (Tanzania) last year.
 - Zanzibar is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Tanzania, and is a semi-autonomous province of Tanzania.
 - It is Stone Town, a historic trade centre with Swahili and Islamic influences.
- The Zanzibar campus is part of the Indian government's efforts to showcase India's education system on the global stage.
- This move aligns with India's National Education Policy 2020 and aims to enhance educational cooperation between the two nations.
- It is located in the Bweleo district, near Zanzibar Town, and will offer programs in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence at the Bachelor's and Master's levels.
- The inaugural batch included students from Zanzibar, mainland Tanzania, Nepal, and India, with a noteworthy 40% representation of women.
- The campus will also engage in academic collaborations, including study abroad programs, internships, and exchanges with the Chennai-based IIT-Madras campus.

2. Biodiversity Heritage Site

- Recently, the Odisha government declared the Gupteswar forest in Koraput district as its fourth Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS).
- Biodiversity Heritage Sites are areas that are unique, ecologically fragile ecosystems having rich biodiversity.
- Under the Biological Diversity Act, the State Governments are empowered to notify in the official gazette, in consultation with 'local bodies', areas of biodiversity importance as Biodiversity Heritage Sites.
- Also, the State Government in consultation with the Central Government may frame rules for the management and conservation of BHS.
- The State Governments are empowered to frame schemes for compensating or rehabilitating any person or section of people economically affected by such notification.

3. Hastsal Minar

- Also known as Mini Qutab Minar, it is located in a small village in western Delhi.
- Among the locals, it is also known as Hastsal Ki Laat and Kaushal Minar.
- Its construction was finished in 1634 during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.
- It was constructed using lakhori bricks and clad with red sandstone.
- The minar is 17 metres (five storeys) tall, standing on a square platform and with an octagonal body.
- A staircase inside the five-storey tower led to the domed Chhatri pavilion at the top.
- It has three storeys, each with a reducing diameter, and is accessible through a narrow staircase
- Shah Jahan utilised Hastsal as one of his hunting lodges during the 17th century.

- In 2018, the minaret was deemed as Grade A in heritage value and was given permission to be conserved under Phase IV of the Delhi government's project to protect lesser-known monuments in the capital.

4. Floor Test

- A floor test is a Constitutional mechanism under which a CM appointed by the Governor (Article 164) can be asked to prove majority on the floor of the Legislative Assembly of the state.
- This is done through a vote among the members.
- When the House is in session, it is the Speaker who can call for a floor test. But when the Assembly is not in session, the Governor's residuary powers under Article 163 allow him to call for a floor test.
- In 2020, the Supreme Court, in Shivraj Singh Chouhan case upheld the powers of the Speaker to call for a floor test if there is a prima facie view that the government has lost its majority.
- The Composite Floor Test is conducted only when more than one person stakes a claim to form the government.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Minimum Support Price (MSP) in the context of agricultural economics

1. MSP is a guaranteed price at which the government purchases agricultural produce from farmers.
2. MSP is determined by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) based on factors such as production cost, market demand, and price trends.
3. MSP is applicable only to crops notified by the central government, and its implementation is uniform across all states.

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 Community Radio Stations in India

1. Community Radio Stations in India primarily focus on commercial advertising to sustain their operations.
2. The licensing and regulation of Community Radio Stations in India are overseen by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
3. Community Radio Stations are encouraged to address local issues, promote cultural diversity, and serve as a platform for community participation.

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

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

Q3. With respect to the Indian Middle East Economic Corridor, consider the following statements

1. The corridor will consist of Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks and Road transport routes.
2. The North Corridor will be connecting India to the Arabian Gulf.

3. The East Corridor will be connecting India to the Gulf to Europe.

4. The IMEC corridor will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable.

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

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

Q4. With respect to the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, consider the following statements

1. It also covers the storage of human organs.
2. It also regulates the transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purposes.
3. It prevents commercial dealings in human organs.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

1. EFTA is a political and economic union of European countries, similar to the European Union (EU).
2. EFTA member countries are part of the EU's Single Market and Customs Union.
3. EFTA was established with the aim of promoting free trade and economic cooperation among its member states.

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

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding "The Peace Clause" in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

1. The Peace Clause provides immunity to developing countries from legal

- challenges regarding violation of domestic support limits in agriculture.
- The Peace Clause is a permanent provision in the WTO agreements, applicable to all member countries.
 - The Peace Clause allows developing countries to provide unlimited domestic support to their agricultural producers without any restrictions.
 - The Peace Clause was a temporary measure that expired after the 10th Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) initiative

- GROW is an initiative aimed at restoring degraded and barren land through agroforestry practices.
- GROW focuses exclusively on afforestation and does not involve any agricultural activities.
- The GROW initiative is primarily implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in India.
- The objective of GROW is to enhance biodiversity, provide livelihood opportunities, and contribute to climate change mitigation.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding industrial stagnation in India

- Industrial stagnation refers to a prolonged period of slow or stagnant growth in the industrial sector.

- Factors contributing to industrial stagnation in India may include policy uncertainties, inadequate infrastructure, and global economic conditions.
- Industrial stagnation is solely caused by domestic factors, and global economic conditions have minimal impact on it.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q9. Consider the following bodies

- Central Zoo Authority
- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)
- National Board of Wildlife

How many of the bodies mentioned above are constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

Q10. With reference to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), consider the following statements

- It is a security alliance established by the Washington Treaty.
- NATO has never invoked the collective defence clause.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is indeed a guaranteed price at which the government commits to purchasing agricultural produce from farmers. This is done to ensure that farmers receive a minimum remunerative price for their crops, preventing them from incurring losses. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) plays a crucial role in determining the Minimum Support Price. The CACP considers various factors such as production cost, market demand, domestic and international prices, inter-crop price parity, and overall demand-supply conditions while recommending MSP for different crops. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- MSP is applicable only to crops that are notified by the central government. The implementation of MSP is not uniform across all states, as state governments may offer additional bonuses or incentives to farmers on top of the MSP set by the central government. This creates variations in the effective procurement prices across different states. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Community Radio Stations in India are not primarily focused on commercial advertising. Unlike commercial radio stations, they operate with the primary objective of serving the local community and promoting community development. Their funding sources include grants, donations, and institutional support, but commercial advertising is limited to a certain extent. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect**
- The licensing and regulation of Community Radio Stations in India are overseen by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The policy framework and guidelines for Community Radio are provided by the Ministry to ensure that these stations adhere to the principles of community service and local development. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

- Community Radio Stations in India are encouraged to address local issues, promote cultural diversity, and serve as a platform for community participation. They are expected to reflect the local ethos, provide a voice to marginalized communities, and contribute to the social and cultural enrichment of the region they serve. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The proposed Indian Middle East Economic Corridor Will consist of Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks and Road transport routes extending across two corridors. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The East Corridor – connecting India to the Arabian Gulf. **Hence Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Northern Corridor – connecting the Gulf to Europe. **Hence Statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The IMEC corridor will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable. **Hence Statement 4 is correct.**

Answer 4 Option C is correct

Explanation

- In India, the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 provides various regulations for the removal of human organs.
- It also covers the storage organs. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- It also regulates the transplantation of human organs for therapeutic purposes **Hence, Statement 2 is correct.**
- It prevents commercial dealings in human organs. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is not a political and economic union like the European Union (EU). EFTA is an intergovernmental organization that focuses on promoting free trade and economic cooperation among its member states, but it does not involve the same level of political integration as the EU. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect**
- EFTA member countries are not part of the EU's Single Market and Customs Union. While they may have bilateral agreements or

arrangements with the EU, EFTA itself is a separate organization with its own agreements and objectives. EFTA member countries have the flexibility to negotiate individual trade agreements with third countries. **Hence, statement 2 is INcorrect**

- EFTA was indeed established with the primary aim of promoting free trade and economic cooperation among its member states. It was founded in 1960 as an alternative to the growing political integration of the European Economic Community (EEC), the predecessor of the EU. EFTA member countries aim to facilitate trade among themselves while also engaging in trade agreements with other nations. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 6 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Peace Clause, officially known as the "Understanding on the Interpretation of Article 13 of the Agreement on Agriculture," provides immunity to developing countries from legal challenges in the WTO regarding violation of domestic support limits in agriculture. It was designed to shield developing countries from disputes related to their agricultural support policies. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Peace Clause is not a permanent provision in the WTO agreements. It is a temporary measure that was negotiated as a part of the Agreement on Agriculture. The duration and conditions of its application have been subject to negotiations and revisions over time. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The Peace Clause does not allow developing countries to provide unlimited domestic support. It provides temporary protection to developing countries if they breach their domestic support limits, under certain conditions, without facing legal challenges in the WTO. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**
- the Peace Clause has been extended beyond its initial expiration date. The duration and conditions of the Peace Clause have been subject to negotiations, and it has been extended to provide developing countries with immunity from legal challenges for a specific period. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect**

Answer 7 Option B is correct

Explanation

- GROW (Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry) is an initiative that focuses on restoring degraded and barren land through agroforestry practices. Agroforestry involves the integration of trees and shrubs into agricultural land, combining agricultural crops with tree cultivation to achieve environmental and economic benefits. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- GROW does not focus exclusively on afforestation. Instead, it emphasizes agroforestry practices, which involve integrating trees and shrubs with agricultural activities. Agroforestry is a sustainable land-use system that combines agricultural and forestry practices for ecological and economic benefits. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- While the details of the implementing agencies may vary, GROW is generally implemented through collaboration between multiple ministries, including the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Agriculture or related departments at the state level. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**
- The primary objectives of the GROW initiative include enhancing biodiversity, providing livelihood opportunities to local communities, and contributing to climate change mitigation. Agroforestry, as promoted by GROW, has the potential to sequester carbon, improve soil health, and support sustainable agricultural practices. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

Answer 8 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Industrial stagnation refers to a situation where there is a prolonged period of slow or stagnant growth in the industrial sector. This could be characterized by low investment, low productivity, and limited expansion of industrial activities. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Factors contributing to industrial stagnation in India can include a range of issues such as policy uncertainties, inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic hurdles, regulatory challenges, and fluctuations in global economic conditions. These factors

can collectively contribute to a slowdown in industrial growth. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

- Industrial stagnation is influenced by a combination of domestic and global factors. While domestic factors like policy uncertainties and infrastructure constraints can play a significant role, global economic conditions, such as changes in demand, trade dynamics, and economic crises, can also impact the industrial sector in India. Economic interdependencies make it essential to consider both domestic and global factors when analyzing the causes of industrial stagnation. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 9 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Wild Life (Protection) Act, of 1972 provides a legal framework for the protection of various species of wild animals and plants, management of their habitats, regulation, and control of trade in wild animals, plants, and products made from them
- The act also lists schedules of plants and animals that are afforded varying degrees of protection and monitoring by the government.

- Bodies Constituted under the Act: National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), State Board for Wildlife (SBWL), Central Zoo Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB). **Hence, option D is correct.**

Answer 10 Option A is correct

Explanation

- NATO is a political and military alliance comprising countries from North America and Europe.
- It was established in 1949 during the Cold War to counter the Soviet Union with the signing of the Washington Treaty. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- After the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, it expanded to take in former communist bloc countries from Central and Eastern Europe.
- Its cornerstone principle - principle of collective defence - is enshrined in Article 5 i.e. an attack on one member is considered an attack on all.
- NATO has only once invoked Article 5, on 12th September 2001 following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- NATO currently consists of 31 members, primarily European nations along with the United States and Canada.

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