

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. Constitute nodal authority for declared foreigners, Gauhati High Court tells Assam govt. - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Gauhati High Court hears a writ petition **challenging a 2017 Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) judgement** declaring him a non-citizen in Assam.
- The central issue is the **rights and entitlements of individuals declared foreigners** during their stay in India, particularly in Assam.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Election Commission

**Appointment of Nodal Authority**

- Court suggests the **Chief Secretary of Assam appoint a nodal authority** to coordinate inter-departmental actions and liaise with other departments to ensure compliance.
- Nodal authority's responsibilities include **coordinating with the Election Commission** and other Central government departments.

**Enforcement Measures**

- If a declared foreigner does not cooperate** or disappears, the court advises taking appropriate legal action, including custody, **to complete the necessary processes.**

**Applicability of Rights**

- The court specifies that rights (e.g., work, education, shelter, food, health) will apply only to declared foreigners **who incorrectly claimed Indian citizenship earlier.**
- Such rights will **not extend to individuals involved in future migrations** in Assam or elsewhere
  - who will be subjected to laws addressing illegal migrants, potentially including deportation.

#### 2. Madras HC: whether killing of Hindu religious leaders is a terrorist act is debatable - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- The Madras High Court has said that it is **debatable whether conspiracy to kill religious leaders** fell under the ambit of terrorism under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- UAPA

**Key Points**

**Question the applicability of UAPA**

- It states that evidence shows a conspiracy to attack religious leaders but doesn't establish **how it qualifies as a terrorist act under Section 15 of UAPA.**

**Interpretation of UAPA**

- Emphasises that for an **act to fall under Section 15 of UAPA**, it must be done with the intent to :
  - threaten India's unity, integrity, security, economic security, or sovereignty, or with the intent to strike terror in the people.
- Raises doubts on whether killing Hindu religious leaders** alone can be deemed a terrorist act.

**Legal Procedural Issues**

- Highlights that any delay in obtaining sanction could be grounds to waive the prohibition **on bail imposed by Section 43 D(5) of the Act.**

**Adherence to Procedural Safeguards**

- Stresses the importance of **adhering to procedural safeguards** in cases involving severe restrictions on personal liberty.

- **Grants bail, asserting that even if prosecution** materials might lead to conviction, detention pending trial cannot be indefinite.

### 3. Delisting parties with religious names: 'only House can decide' - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- A PIL was filed seeking **de-registration of political parties with religious, caste, ethnic,** and linguistic connotations.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Election Commission

**Key Points**

- Petitioner argued that such names could prejudice candidates' poll prospects, constituting a **corrupt practice under the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951.**

**High Court's Response**

- HC asserts that the **issue falls within the domain of Parliament**, stating that the court does not decide laws.

**Importance of Policies**

- It emphasises that **political parties' names alone are not decisive**; their policies must also be considered.

**Election Commission's Response**

- Election Commission of India (ECI) submits that since 2005, **it has not registered any political party with a name having religious connotations.**
- It points out that parties registered **before 2005 with such names won't lose their registration.**

**Previous Legal Stance**

- Refers to the Supreme Court's refusal in May to interfere with a **plea seeking to ban political parties with religious connotations in their names.**
- ECI had mentioned that such names **limit electoral appeal to specific groups** and are not beneficial for the concerned party's electoral prospects.
- **ECI reiterates its stance and notes that there's no statutory provision** barring registration of parties with names having religious connotations under the RPA.

### 4. Anthrax outbreak in South Africa: All you need to know about the infectious disease - India Today

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

**News:**

- The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has reported a significant **anthrax outbreak in Zambia**, marking an alarming spread of the disease

**Prelims Takeaway**

- WHO

**Key Points**

- **First human** cases reported on May 5, 2023.

**What is Anthrax**

- **Caused by the gram-positive bacteria** *Bacillus anthracis*.
- It affects animals like **cows, sheep, and goats.**
- **Humans can get infected through contact with infected animals** or contaminated animal products.

**Symptoms of Anthrax**

- Three forms: **cutaneous, gastrointestinal, and inhalational.**
- **Cutaneous:** Itchy bumps developing into black sores, fever, and muscle aches.
- **Gastrointestinal:** Resembles food poisoning, may lead to severe abdominal pain and bloody diarrhea.
- **Inhalational:** Cold-like symptoms progressing to severe respiratory distress and shock.

**Diagnosis of Anthrax**

- Identifying *Bacillus anthracis* in blood, skin lesions, or respiratory secretions **through laboratory tests**.
  - PCR, ELISA tests used.
- No specific test for exposure**; public health investigations crucial.

#### Treatment for Anthrax

- Antibiotics like **ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, or levofloxacin**.
- Early diagnosis **allows cure with antibiotics**.
- Severe cases may require hospitalisation**, continuous fluid drainage, and mechanical ventilation.
- Vaccines available for both livestock and humans**, with human vaccines reserved for high occupational risk.

#### WHO's Assessment

- WHO assesses the risk of **further spread within Zambia as high**.
- It emphasises the need for **continued vigilance and preventive measures**.

## 5. After troop removal demand, Maldives says ending pact with India on water survey - Indian Express

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

#### News:

- Maldives President decides **not to renew the hydrography agreement with India**.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- hydrography agreement

#### Key Points

- Agreement, signed in 2019, **allowed India to conduct a hydrographic survey of Maldivian waters**, studying reefs, lagoons, coastlines, ocean currents, and tide levels.

#### Notification to India

- India was informed of Maldives' decision** not to proceed with the hydrography agreement.
- Decision seen as part of Muizzu's policy shift**, focusing on improving Maldivian military capabilities for survey operations.
- Future hydrography **works to be carried out under 100% Maldivian management** with only Maldivians privy to the information.

#### Shift in Foreign Policy

- Muizzu's government shifts from the 'India First' policy**, choosing Turkey as the first foreign destination.
- Previous Maldivian Presidents** traditionally chose India as **their first foreign stop after entering office**.

#### Indian Military Presence

- The Maldives has **two helicopters and an aircraft provided by India** for emergency evacuations and disaster relief.
- 77 Indian military personnel** operate these platforms in the Maldives.

## 6. Urgent need to control use of e-cigarettes, says WHO - The Hindu

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

#### News:

- The **WHO** recently declared that **e-cigarettes are not proven effective for quitting tobacco use** at the population level.
- Instead, alarming evidence indicates **adverse population health effects**, prompting an urgent call for control measures.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- e-Cigarettes
- Prohibition of Electronic Cigarette Act (PECA)
- World Health Organisation

#### e-Cigarettes

- These are **battery powered devices** that work by **heating a liquid into an aerosol** that the user inhales and exhales.
- The e-cigarette liquid typically contains **nicotine, propylene glycol, glycerin**, flavourings and other chemicals.

### Concerns for Children and Non-Smokers

- The WHO Director-General emphasized the **urgent need to protect children and non-smokers**.
- He cited evidence of **early recruitment and nicotine addiction** in young users.
- It urged countries to **implement strict measures to prevent uptake**, especially among children and young people.

### Global Market and Regulations

- E-cigarettes have been **aggressively marketed to young people globally**, with **34 countries banning their sale**.
- Inconsistencies exist, as **88 countries lack a minimum age for e-cigarette purchases**, and **74 countries have no regulations** for these products.
- **India**, for example, considers the **possession of e-cigarettes a violation** under the **Prohibition of Electronic Cigarette Act (PECA) 2019**.

### Impact on Youth

- Studies show that **brief exposure to e-cigarette content** on social media **increases the intention to use** these products.
- Young e-cigarette users are nearly **three times more likely to use traditional cigarettes** later.
- WHO highlighted alarming rates of **e-cigarette use among 13 to 15 year olds**.

### Health Risks and Addictiveness

- E-cigarettes with nicotine are deemed **highly addictive and harmful to health**.
- While the long-term effects are not fully understood, they **generate toxic substances linked to cancer, heart and lung disorders**.
- The use of e-cigarettes can **impact brain development** and lead to **learning disorders** in young people.
- It can also adversely **affect foetal development** in pregnant women.
- **Exposure to emissions** also poses risks to bystanders.

## GS III

### 7. Amrit Technology For Removal Of Arsenic And Metal Ions From Water - PIB

**Relevance:** Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

#### News:

- Recently, the IIT-Madras developed a technology called **AMRIT (Arsenic and Metal Removal by Indian Technology) technology**.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- AMRIT Technology
- Arsenic

#### AMRIT Technology

- IIT-Madras has developed the 'AMRIT' technology for the **removal of Arsenic and Metal ions from water**.
- It uses **nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide** to selectively **remove arsenic and metal ions** when water is passed through it.
- This technology is recommended for **both domestic and community use**.
- It has been recommended by the erstwhile '**Standing Committee**' of the **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation** for the examination of the best technologies concerning water and sanitation.

#### Arsenic

- It is a **natural component of the earth's crust** and is **widely distributed throughout the environment** in the air, water and land.
- It is **highly toxic in its inorganic form**.
- In its most stable elemental state, arsenic is a **steel-grey, brittle solid with low thermal and electrical conductivity**.
- Although **some forms of elemental arsenic are metal-like**, the element is best classified as a nonmetal.
- It has been recognized as a **toxic element** and is **considered a human health hazard**.

- Long-term intake of arsenic contaminated water leads to **arsenic poisoning or arsenicosis**, with cancer of skin, bladder, kidney or lung or diseases of skin.
- The World Health Organisation's provisional guideline **value for arsenic in drinking water is 0.01 mg/l.**
- **Permissible limit of arsenic in India** in absence of an alternative source is **0.05 mg/l.**

## 8. ISRO to launch Chandrayaan-4 to bring back samples from Moon in 4 yrs: Somanath - Indian Express

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

### News:

- ISRO's chairperson, while elaborating **ISRO's Vision 2047**, stated that ISRO has planned to **launch Chandrayaan-4 to bring back samples from the Moon** in four years.

### Prelims Takeaway

- SPADEX Experiment
- Bharatiya Antariksh Station
- Chandrayaan-4

### Bharatiya Antariksh Station and Vision 2047

- ISRO also plans to launch the **first module of India's space station, by 2028.**
- Bharatiya Antariksh Station will **conduct experiments using robots.**
- The Prime Minister has set ambitious goals for ISRO, urging the **establishment of a space station by 2035 and sending a man to the Moon by 2040.**

### SPADEX Experiment

- In the next three to four months, ISRO will launch the **SPADEX experiment, demonstrating autonomous docking capability.**
- Docking is a process where **two spacecrafts are aligned in a precise orbit and joined together.**
- Two satellites connected to each other will **separate, travel and then autonomously dock back together**, showcasing a crucial technology for sustained human spaceflight.

### Technological Developments for Sustained Human Spaceflight

- ISRO is actively working on developing technologies for **sustained human presence in space.**
- This includes a **robotic arm for sample collection**, mechanisms for **docking in various orbits**, and the **ability to re-enter Earth's atmosphere** without burning up.
- These technologies will be **crucial for the Gaganyaan mission**, which will send astronauts to low Earth orbit.

### Inflatable Habitat Module and Collaborations

- ISRO is developing an inflatable habitat module for **astronauts to walk around and conduct experiments.**
- It is also in discussions with NASA and the European Space Agency to **create a common interface** between the Indian space station and those of other countries.
- This collaboration would enable joint work and the **possibility of docking with the International Space Station (ISS).**

### Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)

- To support the space station initiative, ISRO is working on **designing the Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) with a capacity to carry 16 to 25 T to low Earth orbit.**
- This marks a significant step toward **achieving the ambitious goals set by ISRO for future space exploration.**

## GS II

## 9. Maldives will not renew agreement for joint hydrographic survey with India: top official - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Maldives **Rejects Renewal of Hydrographic Surveying MoU** with India

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Greater Male Connectivity Project

**Key Points**

- The Maldivian Cabinet has **decided not to renew a 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with India for hydrographic surveying.

**Background of Hydrographic Surveys**

- The 2019 agreement facilitated joint hydrographic surveys by the **Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) and the Indian Navy** in 2021, 2022, and 2023.
- Surveys aimed to update navigational charts** and electronic charts, enhancing navigational safety and supporting the Blue Economy of the Maldives.

**India-Maldives relation**

- India provides the **largest number of training** opportunities for Maldivian National **Defence Force (MNDF)**, meeting around 70% of their defense training requirements.
- A drug detoxification and rehabilitation centre** in Addu built with Indian assistance.
- In August 2021, Afcons, an Indian company, signed a contract for the **largest-ever infrastructure project in Maldives** which is the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).
- The **India-Maldives relationship suffered a setback** when Maldives entered into a **Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) with China** in 2017

## 10. ICT import duty: India challenges WTO panel ruling in favour of EU - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- Settlement talks between **India and the EU on the ICT** (Information and Communication Technology) **import duty case have broken down**
- New Delhi took the matter to the appellate body, the **World Trade Organisation's highest court for dispute resolution**.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- WTO

**Key Points**

- Brussels had dragged **New Delhi into WTO's dispute settlement mechanism in 2019**
  - Challenging its levy of import duty on a wide range of ICT products
  - On the grounds that the duty was inconsistent with global trade norms and was hurting €600 million of its tech exports to India.
- During the negotiations, the **EU was seeking customs duty concessions** on certain goods, which was not acceptable to India as it violates WTO rules.
- These concessions can only be **given in a free trade agreement**



- **India has imposed higher duties on ICT** products as it looks to boost the manufacturing of electronic products with the help of the production-linked incentive scheme.
- The current strategy has also paid off as **India's electronic products have been on the rise even** as broader goods exports have declined during the current fiscal.
- However, amid the current deadlock over the **appointment of judges at WTO's appellate body**, a decision on the ongoing India-EU dispute could take years.
- **Several disputes are already pending with this body** and reforms to address the issue are expected to be taken up during the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference in February next year.

## 11. India, UK working on mobility regime for service sector workers under FTA: Official - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- The **United Kingdom (UK) is not keen on providing easier mobility norms** for India's services industry
  - a demand that New Delhi is seeking as part of the proposed Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two nations.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Tariff Rate Quotas

**Key Points**

- **India wants easier visa norms for its companies** in the services sector that function out of Britain, the UK has been reluctant given migration concerns.
- The UK, on the other hand, is worried about easing visa restrictions, **since it could lead to more migration.**
- Elaborating on outstanding issues, the official said that **India is mulling Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) to meet the UK's demand** for a reduction in import duties on electric vehicles from Britain as part of the trade deal.
- **A TRQ allows a lower tariff rate on imports** of a given product up to a specified quantity.
- **New Delhi is said to be considering a concessional tariff** of 30 percent on 2,500 electric vehicles imported annually from the UK priced above \$80,000.

## GS III

## 12. Exports shrink again, trade deficit narrows as imports fall faster - The Hindu/ Imports shrink 4.3%, trade deficit narrows in November - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- According to the data released by the commerce department recently, **exports declined 2.8 per cent year-on-year to \$33.9 billion** in November
- **Imports dipped 4.3 per cent to \$54.5 billion**, leading to the narrowing of the trade deficit at \$20.6 billion.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Balance of Payment
- Trade Deficit

**Trade deficit**

- A trade deficit is an amount by which the **cost of a country's imports exceeds its exports.**

- It's one way of measuring **international trade**, and it's also called a **negative balance of trade**.
- A trade deficit can be calculated by **subtracting the total value of a country's exports from the total value of its imports**.

## Surprise drop

Nov. trade deficit narrows beyond expectations to \$20.58 bn after the decline in imports outpaces the contraction in exports

■ November's trade deficit is 6.7% narrower on a year-on-year basis and 31.2% less than October's tally

■ Trade deficit this fiscal 12.1% narrower than in same period last fiscal when commodity prices shot up



■ Commerce Secretary Barthwal asserts trade is not one-way traffic and should be seen in a global context

## 13. Unnati becomes the first entity to list on the social stock exchange - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Economy

**News:**

- Recently, the **SGBS Unnati Foundation (SUF)** became the **first entity to list on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE)** marking a new era in impact investing.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Social Stock exchange

### SGBS Unnati Foundation (SUF)

- SUF, a not-for-profit organization established in 2011, specializes in youth training, having trained over 45,000 individuals.
- SUF's listing involves Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments with a face value of ₹1 each, credited to donors' demat accounts.
- These instruments, non-tradable, signify zero value for donors after one year, coinciding with the completion of SUF's project.

### Social Stock Exchange

- Introduced in the **FY20 Budget**, SSEs functions as a **separate segment within the existing stock exchange**.
- It helps social enterprises **raise funds from the public** through its mechanism **promoting impact investing and sustainability**.
- It would serve as a medium for enterprises to **seek finance for their social initiatives, acquire visibility and provide increased transparency**.
- **Retail investors** can only invest in securities offered by **for-profit Social Enterprises (SEs)** under the main Board.
- In all other cases, only **institutional investors and non-institutional investors** can invest in securities issued by SEs.

**Eligibility Criterias**

- Any social enterprise, Non-Profit Organisation or For-Profit Social Enterprises, that establishes its **primacy of social intent** can get registered or listed.
- As per the SEBI's regulation, the **enterprises must be serving to**
  - eradicate either hunger, poverty, malnutrition and inequality
  - promoting education, employability, equality, empowerment of women and LGBTQIA+ communities
  - working towards environmental sustainability
  - protection of national heritage and art or bridging the digital divide etc.

**Regulatory Framework and Transparency**

- Listing on SSE imposes checks and balances, necessitating **disclosure of fundraising purposes** and **providing a timeline for fund utilisation**.
- **Social audit firms will audit annual impact reports**, enhancing transparency and accountability.



**Mentorship**  
India

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. The nature of the future - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

**Context:**

- The **COP28** to the UNFCCC recently concluded with mixed outcomes, highlighting the **challenges in addressing climate change**.
- The **first global stocktake** presented at COP28 indicates the **inadequacy of current NDCs in reducing global GHG emissions substantially by 2030**.

#### Key Challenges

- **Implementation Gap**
  - o The current NDCs, if fully implemented, would result in only a 2% reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
  - o This is falling far short of the required targets for limiting temperature rise.
  - o A 50 percent chance of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2050 requires the peaking of global emissions by 2025 and their reduction by 43 percent by 2030 and by 60 percent by 2035.
- **Finance and Technology Support**
  - o Developing countries' NDC achievements are often contingent on financial and technological support from developed nations.
  - o However, the promised \$100 billion per year to support climate action has never been achieved.
  - o There are questions about the definition of climate finance and concerns over reported figures.
- **Financial Gap**
  - o The IPCC estimates that developing countries need \$800 billion per year for the next seven years to implement their NDCs.
    - For implementing their NDCs, developing countries need \$5.8-\$5.9 trillion or roughly \$800 billion a year for the next seven years.
  - o This is in addition to additional funds required for adaptation and loss and damage.
    - For adaptation alone, about \$215-\$387 billion a year would be required in the same period.
  - o However, the current pledges fall significantly short of these needs.

#### Positive Outcomes

- **Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels**
  - o COP28 is the first COP that recognized the need to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems by 2050.
  - o However, the declaration also acknowledges the role of "transitional fuels," including natural gas.
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Targets**
  - o Credible targets include tripling global renewable energy capacity to 11,000 GW by 2030 and doubling the rate of energy efficiency gains to 4% annually by 2030.
  - o India is actively involved in these areas.
- **Inclusion of Nuclear Energy and Hydrogen**
  - o Nuclear energy, green hydrogen and blue hydrogen were acknowledged as clean energy sources for the first time.
  - o India also has a focus on these sectors.
- **Acknowledgment of Interconnected Challenges**
  - o COP28 explicitly linked climate change to adverse impacts on health, food security, and biodiversity loss.
  - o This signals a move towards recognizing the broader ecological challenges.

#### Concerns

- **Coal Power Phase-Down**
  - o There is relief in India that the declaration calls for a "phase-down" rather than a "phase-out" of unabated coal power.
  - o However, there are tensions and challenges in addressing the role of coal in energy transitions.
- **Grouping Initiatives**
  - o There is a trend of countries forming initiatives and pledges outside of UNFCCC consensus targets.
  - o India has generally stayed away from such groupings but remains engaged in the broader UNFCCC framework.

**Conclusion**

- The world is finally moving towards acknowledging that **climate change is only one component of a larger ecological challenge**.
- There is **no alternative to adopting a cross-domain and cross-disciplinary approach** to resolving such deeply interconnected challenges.

### 2. ASYMMETRIC FEDERALISM - Indian Express

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

**Context:**

- India's governance structure is described as **quasi-federal, blending elements of both federalism and unitarism**.

- In the Indian context, while **states do have autonomy, the Constitution tilts towards the Centre** on certain areas.

#### **Seventh Schedule of the Constitution**

- The **distribution of legislative powers** between the Centre and states is outlined in the **Seventh Schedule of the Constitution**.
- It contains the **Union, State, and Concurrent lists**, specifying subjects on which each level of government can legislate.
- In areas falling **under the Concurrent list, Union law prevails in case of a conflict** between laws made by the Parliament and state legislatures.

#### **Differentiated Equality and Special Status**

- However, even in this quasi-federal structure that leans more towards the Centre, **not all states are equal**.
- India's diverse landscape necessitates **differentiated equality for states**, considering factors like **fiscal, political and administrative variations**.
- The **Constitution provides for special provisions**, often referred to as **asymmetric federalism**, granting varying degrees of autonomy to certain states.
- Critics argue that such special statuses can **foster regionalism and separatism**.

#### **Examples of Asymmetric Federalism**

- **Article 370 (Jammu and Kashmir)**: Abrogated in 2019, it formalised Jammu and Kashmir's unique relationship with India, providing a level of internal sovereignty.
- **Article 371 A to 371 I**: The Constitution offers special provisions for at least nine states with negotiated autonomies, protecting religious practices and land rights.
- **Article 239AA**: Delhi, though not a state, has unique arrangements under Article 239AA, allowing legislative powers on state and concurrent list subjects.

#### **Supreme Court's Clarification on Article 370**

- The Supreme Court, in a recent ruling, clarified that **Article 370 was a feature of asymmetric federalism**, not synonymous with internal sovereignty.
- This decision **rejected arguments** that Jammu and Kashmir had an **element of internal sovereignty that couldn't be unilaterally revoked**.

#### **Conclusion**

- **Asymmetric federalism in India** reflects the complexity of **managing diversity within a unified constitutional framework**.
- Special provisions, while addressing specific needs and historical contexts, continue to be subject to legal and political debates.

### **3. A time-honoured connect that will help bridge the Gulf - The Hindu**

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

#### **Context:**

- **Oman has a pivotal role to play in India** seeking deeper engagement and collaboration in West Asia.
- The Sultan of Oman will be **visiting India on a state visit**.
- The Indian Prime Minister had **visited Oman in February 2018** in his first visit to Oman as Prime Minister.
- **Key agreements on trade, defence and security** were agreed upon, making it a milestone in diplomatic relations between India and Oman.

### Geopolitical Significance

- Oman, India's closest neighbour in the Arabian Gulf, holds pivotal strategic importance due to its geographic location.
- Along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman completes the trio of key strategic partners of India in the Gulf region.

### Strong Connection with India

- The ruling family of Oman has always had a strong connection with India.
- Sultan Qaboos was always favourably disposed towards India.
- He invited Indian companies and professionals to undertake projects apart from sourcing supplies from India.
- At the people-to-people level too, India and Oman enjoy close ties.
  - There is a large Indian community of almost seven lakh people which has contributed to the constantly evolving vibrant relations.
- During the Cold War era, and even thereafter, it was Oman which kept its doors open to India.

### India-Oman Strategic Partnership

- It was signed during former PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Oman in November 2008 and is based on twin pillars of mutual trust and shared interests.

### Key pillars

#### Defence and Security

- It forms a key pillar of this strategic partnership and is governed by a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in 2005.
- Oman is the first Gulf country with which all the three wings of India's defence forces hold joint exercises.
- Since 2012-13, an Indian naval ship has remained on duty in the Gulf of Oman for anti-piracy operations.
- During the Persian Gulf crisis in June 2019, the Indian Navy launched 'Operation Sankalp'.
  - Objective: To ensure the safe passage of Indian flagged ships which most often operated off the coast of Oman.
- The MoU on Duqm Port is a historic landmark in our security cooperation, providing basing facilities for Indian naval ships, enhancing operational capabilities.

#### Trade and Commerce

- Bilateral trade during FY2022-23 reached \$12.388 billion.
- There are over 6,000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman, with an estimated investment of over \$7.5 billion.
- India was the second largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2022 after China.
- In October 2022, India and Oman launched the Rupay debit card in Oman.

#### Prospects for Future Collaboration

- India and Oman are looking forward to increased engagement in strategic areas such as space cooperation with an MoU signed during the Indian PM's visit.
- The possibility of an agreement on joint exploration of rare earth metals, vital to modern electronic equipment, could add strength to the partnership.
- The proposed India-Middle East-Europe Connectivity Corridor (IMEEC) and a potential undersea gas pipeline from Oman to India offer avenues for future collaboration.

#### India's Gateway to West Asia

- India is seeking deeper engagement and collaboration in West Asia, of which Oman is an important pillar.
  - As a part of its broader global outlook and its outreach in the extended neighbourhood.
- Security challenges in the region have a ripple effect in India.
- Therefore, any instability in the region has a direct bearing on the
  - safety and security of the Indian diaspora
  - India's energy security
  - steadily growing trade relations
- Oman is also an integral part of all important groupings in the region viz. the GCC, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League.
- Its ability to manage rival ideologies and power games in the region makes it vitally important to India.
- Both countries consider themselves as ambassadors of peace and enjoy goodwill across ideologies in the world.

## 4. Opportune moment to rediscover Chennai's hydrology - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Disaster and disaster management.

**News:**

- Unusually **heavy rainfall years have been becoming more frequent** in recent decades in India.

**Key Points**

- As a result, people are also experiencing **more frequent occurrences of floods in several parts** of the country including Chennai.
- These are considered **climate change-induced floods/disasters**.

### Are we hiding behind climate change for all the blunders made so far?

- Chennai suffered the serious impacts of floods in 2005, 2015 and, again, in 2023.
- The flood in 2023 is considered the worst in the past 47 years.

### Have we resorted to corrective measures?

#### Upstream and downstream watersheds

- Chennai city and the adjoining districts are richly endowed with wonderful watersheds.
- There are 3,588 irrigation tanks (some are very large) in Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur districts, respectively, as highlighted in tank memoirs.
- These are man-made but magnificent watersheds created through a series of earthen embankments, constructed across streams which carried heavy flows during the monsoon months.
- Unfortunately, these tanks are neglected, silted up with broken bunds and control structures.
- In addition, catchment areas, flood plains, feeder and supply channels and even the water spread area in many of these tanks are heavily silted and encroached.
- Since these districts are already substantially urban, there is a dire need to protect these water bodies from encroachments.
- Not just tanks, but catchment areas, inlet and surplus channels, foreshore areas (tank flood plains) and tank bunds are equally important.

### Tackling Chennai's flood problem

- A comprehensive hydro-elevation (drainage) mapping needs to be drawn up covering the upstream-downstream watersheds with Chennai and the sea.
- Chennai is in fact geographically very uniquely placed, which is a blessing.
- It has three waterways (rivers) that run through the city, something which no other city in the country and in South Asia can boast of.
- The Kosasthalaiyar river runs through the northern part of Chennai, the Cooum which takes care of central Chennai, the Adyar which caters to southern Chennai, and further south, the Palar which carries the flow.
- Each of these rivers also feeds numerous tanks before reaching the Bay of Bengal.
- There is the Buckingham canal which cuts across all the four rivers in close proximity to the sea.
- Unfortunately, these major drainage systems are in pretty bad shape due to heavy encroachments, more so on the flood plains.
- These rivers have also lost their gravity and velocity due to sludge and silt deposits.
- These drains as well as the 2,900 kilometre long Storm Water Drain network constructed in the GCC area also deserve year-long attention and maintenance

### Why Chennai went under water again

- Rising urban expansion
- it is important to recognise that the urban expansion process is irreversible and can be disastrous if not regulated.
- In the process, Chennai has lost many water bodies (lakes and ponds) and much of the Pallikaranai marsh land and coastal wetlands.

### Why was Chennai so badly flooded?

- Chennai city and the CMA can be permanently saved from floods while, at the same time, get round the clock water supply even in a drought year
  - provided the measures indicated above are followed truthfully and scientifically.
- This is what is called converting disaster into an opportunity.

## 5. On AI, innovation vs safety - Indian Express

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

**Context:**

- The **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)**, comprising 29 members, has unanimously adopted **the New Delhi Declaration**.
- The declaration underscores the importance of **mitigating risks associated with AI while fostering innovation and equitable access** to essential resources.

### Key Points from the GPAI New Delhi Declaration

#### Balanced Perspective on AI

- Recognizes the rapid advancements in advanced AI systems and their potential for economic growth, innovation, and job creation across sectors.
- Stresses the need to strike a balance between the economic benefits of AI and the associated risks.
- For e.g. issues around fairness, privacy, and intellectual property rights
- The New Delhi declaration has attempted to find a balance between innovation and the risks associated with AI systems.

#### Values and Principles

- Advocates for a global framework rooted in democratic values and human rights.
- Emphasizes the protection of personal data, intellectual property rights, privacy, security and safeguarding dignity and well-being.
- Promotes innovation and advocates for responsible, sustainable, and human-centred AI use.

#### Equitable Access

- Supports equitable access to critical resources for AI innovation, including computing, diverse datasets, algorithms, software, and testbeds.
- Agreed to support AI innovation in the agriculture sector as a new "thematic priority", recognizing its potential impact on global food security.

#### Diverse Membership and Inclusivity

- Commits to pursue a diverse membership, particularly focusing on low- and middle-income countries to ensure a broad range of expertise and experiences.
- Senegal, a current member of the grouping, was elevated to the steering committee of the GPAI.

#### Contrast with Bletchley Declaration

- The GPAI New Delhi declaration addresses the need to tackle AI-related risks.
- However, it largely supports innovation in technology in various sectors, including agriculture and healthcare.
- It contrasts with the Bletchley Declaration signed at the UK AI Safety Summit.
- The Bletchley Declaration placed a primary focus on addressing security and safety risks associated with AI.
- It highlighted the potential for serious harm and the need for global action to mitigate these risks.

#### Evolution of India's Stance on AI Regulation

- India's perspective on AI regulation has shifted over recent months
- Initially, India did not consider legal intervention for AI regulation.
- However, the current approach involves actively formulating regulations based on a "risk-based, user-harm" strategy.
- The Prime Minister, at the GPAI Summit, emphasized the dual potential of AI and called for a global framework to ensure responsible use.

## 6. WILDFIRES, FISH SIZE: HOW HOTTEST ARCTIC SUMMER IMPACTED REGION - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

**Context:**

- The **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** recently released its annual **Arctic Report Card for 2023**.
- The report highlights the **region's record-breaking temperatures**, contributing to unprecedented events and environmental changes.

#### Record-Breaking Summer Temperature

- The 2023 summer in the Arctic marked the warmest on record, amplifying the ongoing trend of accelerated warming in the region.
- Overall, the past year was the sixth-warmest year the Arctic had experienced since reliable record-keeping began in 1900.

#### Unprecedented Wildfires

- Rising temperatures fueled unprecedented wildfires, particularly in Canada, where the worst wildfire season on record occurred.
- More than 10 million acres in the Northwest Territories were burned, leading to evacuations and severe air quality issues.

#### Thawing of Subsea Permafrost

- Subsea permafrost is essentially frozen soil beneath the seabed that contains organic matter.
- Warming ocean temperatures accelerated the thawing of subsea permafrost.
- This releases methane and carbon dioxide, contributing to global warming and ocean acidification.
- Also, limited research hinders accurate estimates of future greenhouse gas releases from subsea permafrost.

#### Food Insecurity

- Climate change adversely affected salmon populations in Western Alaska.
  - Chinook and chum salmon numbers declined 81% and 92% below the 30-year mean, respectively.
- Reduced salmon availability led to fishery closures, user conflicts, and significant food security impacts in Indigenous communities.

#### Raging Wildfires in Canada

- Canada experienced its worst wildfire season, burning over 10 million acres in the Northwest Territories.
- High temperatures, dry vegetation, and below-average rainfall created ideal conditions for widespread wildfires.

#### Severe Flooding in Alaska

- Thinning of the Mendenhall Glacier in Alaska, attributed to rising temperatures, caused annual floods, with a notable disaster in August 2023.
- A glacial lake burst through its ice dam, leading to unprecedented flooding and property damage in Juneau.

#### Greenland Ice Sheet Melting

- The highest point on Greenland's ice sheet experienced melting for the fifth time in the 34-year record.
- Despite above-average winter snow accumulation, the ice sheet lost approximately 350 trillion pounds of mass, contributing to sea-level rise.



### Conclusion

- NOAA's Arctic Report Card 2023 paints a **dire picture of the Arctic's escalating climate crisis**.
- From wildfires and flooding to thawing permafrost and diminishing food resources, the report underscores the **urgent need for global climate action** to mitigate these impacts.

## 7. On the farm, and beyond - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Agriculture

**Context:**

- In India, where tractors play a central role, **farm mechanisation is crucial for enhancing agricultural efficiency**.
- Tractors help farmers **save labour and optimise their precious time**, apart from **boosting crop yields**.
- Policymakers are exploring **reforms to promote mechanisation further**, especially with **emerging agricultural technologies and sustainability goals**.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Current Scenario</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tractors are vital for Indian agriculture, but only 4.6% of farmers own them, causing delays and inefficiencies in farming tasks for smallholders.</li> <li>• India is, in fact, the world's largest tractor market by volume, nearly 2.5 times of China and 3.5 of the US.</li> <li>• Nearly 9.5 lakh tractors were sold domestically in 2022-23 and 4 million cumulatively in the last five years.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Government Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government support for agriculture has been robust through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ investment in rural infrastructure</li> <li>◦ financial assistance for the purchase of machinery under the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAC) scheme</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The government has simplified the certification process for new tractor models, reducing tests from 17 to 4.</li> <li>• Moreover, the companies (manufacturers) have been permitted to self-certify these tests.</li> <li>• These steps promote trust-based governance, ease of doing business, and quicker adoption of advanced technologies like precision farming.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Challenges and Reforms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upcoming emission standards (Bharat Stage TREM V) from April 2024 pose challenges for tractor manufacturers, requiring investments in new engine technologies.</li> <li>• India needs to look beyond tractors and focus on developing farm machinery tailored for various crops and landholding sizes under the Make in India initiative.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Global Disparity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globally, the farm machinery industry is valued at \$100 billion, with tractors contributing \$60 billion.</li> <li>• In India, tractor sales are \$7-8 billion, while farm machinery is only \$1.2 billion.</li> <li>• The government can support the development of affordable, locally customized non-tractor farm machinery to align with smallholders' needs.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Industry Investments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant investments in India's farm mechanisation industry are focusing on cutting-edge technologies, productivity, and sustainability.</li> <li>• Import restrictions on low-quality machinery, timely subsidy disbursement, and discouraging imports from China can support industry growth.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diversifying Tractor Usage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tractors have a 30% usage for non-farm activities, such as construction and transportation.</li> <li>• Customising tractors for these tasks can create new avenues for rural employment.</li> </ul>
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## Quick Look

### 1. Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023 has been jointly awarded to Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Awwad.
- They have been awarded for their efforts in bringing together the youth and peoples of Israel and the Arab World for a non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development was instituted in the memory of the former PM by a trust in her name in 1986.
- It consists of a monetary award of 25 lakh rupees along with a citation.
- The award is given to individuals or organisations that work towards ensuring international peace and development, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used to further the scope of freedom and better humanity, and creating a new international economic order.

### 2. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

- The High Court of Karnataka recently directed conducting pregnancy test of every victim of rape and sexual offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
- It is along with other mandatory medical examinations after registration of a FIR on the alleged offences.
- This measure will help to ascertain, among other relevant medical conditions
  - The gestation period for termination of pregnancy at the earliest
  - The physical and mental status of the victim
  - The ability to undergo medical termination of the pregnancy
  - Aggravating factors that will impinge upon the health and well-being of the victim
- The POCSO Act was enacted in 2012 in consequence to India's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992.
- Objective
  - To protect children from sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography offences.
  - To provide for the establishment of Special Courts for the trial of such offences.
- It defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years.
- The Act recognizes that both girls and boys can be victims of sexual abuse.
- The Act provides punishment as per the gravity of offence.
- Non-reporting has been made a specific offence under the POCSO Act.
- A victim can report an offence at any time, even a number of years after the abuse has been committed.
- It prohibits disclosure of the victim's identity in any form of media, except when permitted by the special courts established under the act.

### 3. ENACT Partnership

- Recently, six new countries and a United Nations agency joined the ENACT Partnership.
- Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT) was launched by Germany and Egypt along with IUCN.
- It was launched at the COP27, which took place at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022.
- Objective
  - To coordinate global efforts to address climate change, land and ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss through Nature-based Solutions.
  - To enhance the protection from and resilience to climate impacts of at least 1 billion vulnerable people.
  - To secure up to 2.4 billion hectares of healthy natural and sustainable ecosystems, and significantly increase global mitigation efforts through protecting and restoring carbon-rich ecosystems.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) hosts its secretariat.

- Other Members: Canada, European Union, France, Japan, Malawi, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Belgium, Pakistan, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States.

#### 4. Barracuda

- Barracuda, claimed to be India's fastest solar-electric boat, was launched at the Navalt Solar and Electric Boats yard in Alappuzha, Kerala.
- The vessel, named after the swift fish, is designed for eco-friendly maritime transportation.
- The Barracuda, designed by Navalt, is equipped to operate in rough seas.
- The boat can achieve a top speed of 12.5 knots (23 km/h) and has a range of seven hours on a single charge.
- It is engineered to navigate waves as tall as four metres and operates silently without noise, vibration, or air pollution.
- It is suitable for workboat applications and is intended to contribute to cleaner and quieter oceans as an affordable substitute for conventional fossil-fueled boats.

#### 5. Constitutional Monism

- In a parliamentary federal democracy, constitutional monism is a concept that pertains to the relationship between law at the centre and law enacted by states within a particular legal system.
- It is a perspective that emphasises the unity of the legal order, asserting that both law at the centre and states' law form a single, integrated legal system.
- In constitutional monism, there is a hierarchy of norms, with the constitution (or a constitutional document) at the apex.
- According to this perspective, law passed by the parliament is considered an integral part of the domestic legal system and is automatically incorporated at the level of states without the need for specific legislation.
- If there is a conflict between law passed by the parliament and any law enacted by a state of the union, the former prevails, as it is an inherent part of the national legal order.

#### 6. Vyommitra

- Vyommitra is a combination of two Sanskrit words Vyoma (Space) and Mitra (Friend).
- It is a female robot designed and developed by the ISRO to fly aboard unmanned test missions ahead of the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission.
- It is referred to as a half-humanoid robot as she doesn't have legs. However, she can bend forward and sideways.
- Besides going on uncrewed Gaganyaan missions, she will accompany astronauts on manned missions too.

#### 7. Terai

- Terai, or Tarai, is a lowland belt of flat, alluvial land stretching along the Nepal-India border and running parallel to the lower ranges of the Himalayas.
- A strip of undulating former marshland, it stretches from the Yamuna River in the west to the Brahmaputra River in the east.
- It is the northern extension of the Gangetic Plain in India, commencing at about 300 metres above sea level and rising to about 1,000 metres at the foot of the Siwalik Range.
- In India, the Terai extends over the states of Haryana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal.
- It extends nearly 800 km from east to west and about 30-40 km from north to south.

#### 8. Doosra App

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in India recently issued an order to cease operations of the Doosra app to protect against spam messages or calls.

- Doosra app sells virtual mobile numbers that users can provide at shops or online, allowing them to safeguard their primary numbers.
- Users are required to provide identification, similar to traditional telecom firms, ensuring accountability.
- It offers virtual SMS inboxes that filter out spam messages and selectively allow incoming calls.
- Commonly used by companies like Amazon and Uber, it helps maintain user privacy when interacting with delivery agents or drivers.

## 9. Vijay Diwas

- The Nation is celebrating Vijay Diwas on December 16 to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war.
- On December 16, 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini, in Dhaka after their defeat in the Liberation war.
- The war resulted in the birth of Bangladesh, which was then East Pakistan.
- The day is also observed in Bangladesh as 'Bijoy Dibos', marking the country's formal independence from Pakistan.
- Eight months after the war, in August 1972, India and Pakistan settled the Shimla agreement.
- Under the agreement, India agreed to release the 93,000 Pakistani prisoners-of-war.

## 10. INS Tarmugli

- Recently, INS Tarmugli, a Fast Attack Craft has been commissioned into the Navy at a ceremony held at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam.
- INS Tarmugli is the first Follow-on Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (WJFAC).
- It is an improved version of WJFAC, earlier constructed by GRSE.
- It is built by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE).
- It is conceived, designed and built indigenously.
- It would be deployed for coastal patrol and surveillance operations along the East Coast of India.
- It is named after a picturesque island in the Andaman group.
- The ship is capable of operating in shallow waters at high speeds and is equipped with enhanced fire power.
- It is built for extended coastal and offshore surveillance and patrolling.
- It is fitted with advanced MTU engines, water jet propulsion and the latest communication equipment.

## 11. Mumps

- Recently, Mumps cases in children are on rise in the states of Maharashtra and Telangana which has become a cause of concern for parents.
- Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a paramyxovirus.
- It can cause the parotid glands, the ones on each side of the face to swell and they may also be tender or painful.
- It is an acute disease which infects children and young adults.
- Humans are the only known host for mumps virus, which is spread via direct contact or by airborne droplets from the upper respiratory tract of infected individuals.
- Symptoms
  - After an incubation period of some 2 to 4 weeks mumps begins with non-specific symptoms such as myalgia, headache, malaise and low-grade fever.
  - Within days, these symptoms are followed by unilateral or bilateral swelling of the parotid salivary glands, with other salivary glands affected in 10% of cases.
  - Orchitis (a painful inflammation of the testes) occurs in 20% of young adult males who develop mumps.
- Treatment
  - There is no specific treatment for mumps.

- The various symptoms may be relieved with medicines.
- Prevention: The best way to protect kids is to make sure they're immunised against mumps.

## 12. PACE (Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, Ocean Ecosystem) Mission

- NASA is gearing up to enhance our understanding of Earth's atmosphere with the upcoming PACE mission, scheduled for launch in early 2024.
- The mission will employ advanced polarimeters to study the interplay of light, aerosols, and clouds, contributing to a deeper comprehension of their impact on air quality and climate.
- The PACE mission will not only analyse aerosols but also delve into studying the colour of the ocean.
- The primary science instrument for PACE is the Ocean Colour Instrument (OCI).
  - It is designed to measure the ocean's colour across a spectrum from ultraviolet to shortwave infrared.
- It will feature two polarimeters viz. the Spectro-polarimeter for Planetary Exploration (SPEXone) and the Hyper Angular Research Polarimeter (HARP2).
- This combination aims to provide improved atmospheric correction and a comprehensive range of aerosol and cloud science data beyond what the OCI alone could achieve.
- The synergistic payload of OCI, SPEXone and HARP2 is poised to make significant breakthroughs in aerosol-cloud-ocean research.

## 13. "Di tankia Chaula" Scheme

- The Odisha Chief Minister recently announced the extension of the State Food Security Scheme for five years, ensuring continued coverage for 10 lakh people who were left out of the NFSA.
- The beneficiaries, belonging to 3.14 lakh households, will receive free 5 kg of rice per month under the extended scheme.
- Odisha launched the subsidised rice scheme, known as "Di tankia Chaula," in 2008, well before the implementation of the NFSA.

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Foreigners' Tribunal:**

1. Foreigners' Tribunal is a judicial body established to resolve citizenship disputes in India.
2. The cut-off date for detecting and deporting "illegal migrants" or foreigners in Assam, according to the tribunal, is March 25, 1971.
3. The Gauhati High Court recently recommended the appointment of a Chief Secretary as the nodal authority for coordinating actions against persons declared foreigners.

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

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

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA):**

1. UAPA primarily deals with offences related to terrorism and unlawful activities threatening the sovereignty and integrity of India.
2. Section 43-D(5) of UAPA empowers courts to grant bail if police materials establish accusations as 'prima facie true.'
3. The recent judgement by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir emphasised the need for circumspection in enforcing UAPA, particularly concerning personal liberty.

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

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

**Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951:**

1. RPA, 1951, provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections in India and the qualifications of electors.
2. As per election commission, parties registered before 2005 with religious names won't lose their registration.

**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

**Q.4 Consider the following statements regarding Anthrax:**

1. It is caused by a virus and primarily affects humans through direct person-to-person transmission.
2. Its most common form is cutaneous, characterised by itchy bumps developing into black sores.
3. Vaccines are available for both livestock and humans, with human vaccines typically reserved for those at high occupational risk.

**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 a Hydrography Agreement:**

1. It is a legal arrangement primarily concerned with the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbon resources in a maritime region.
2. The agreement signed between India and the Maldives in 2019 allowed India to conduct a hydrographic survey of the Maldivian territorial waters.
3. The recent decision by the Maldives government not to renew the hydrography agreement aims to enhance national security by managing surveys under 100% Maldivian control.

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

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

**Q6. Consider the following statements regarding e-Cigarettes**

1. These are battery powered devices that work by heating a liquid into an aerosol that the user inhales and exhales.
2. In India the possession of e-cigarettes is allowed under the Narcotic-Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.

**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

**Q7. Consider the following statements with reference to the AMRIT technology**

1. It is used for the removal of arsenic and metal ions from water.
2. It is developed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Q8. Consider the following statements**

1. The Chandrayaan-4 Mission aims to bring back samples from the Moon.
2. The SPADEX Experiment aims to demonstrate autonomous docking capabilities.
3. India's space station, Bharatiya Antariksh Station, will conduct experiments using robots.

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

- A. Only one

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

**Q9. Consider the following pairs**

1. IPCC Assessment Report 1 (AR1) : Basis of UNFCCC, 1992
2. IPCC Assessment Report 3 (AR3): Basis of Kyoto Protocol
3. IPCC Assessment Report 4 (AR4): Basis of the Paris Agreement
4. IPCC Assessment Report 6 (AR6): Informs the global stocktake in 2023

**How many of the pairs mentioned above are correctly matched?**

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

**Q10. With reference to the Seventh Schedule, consider the following statements**

1. It deals with the division of powers between the union and the states.
2. The Constitution provides federal supremacy to Parliament on concurrent list items in case of a conflict.
3. Subjects like Agriculture and Education are listed under the concurrent list.

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

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

## Prelims Track Answer

**Ans. 1 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- Foreigners' Tribunal specifically established to hear and decide cases concerning the status of individuals as 'foreigners' in the context of citizenship disputes. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The cut-off date for detecting and deporting "illegal migrants" or foreigners in Assam, according to the Foreigners' Tribunal, is March 25, 1971.
- This date is crucial for determining citizenship status in Assam. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The Gauhati High Court recommended the appointment of a Chief Secretary as the nodal authority for coordinating actions against persons declared foreigners.
- This is to ensure effective coordination among various departments for actions like document retrieval, deleting names from voters' lists, and land takeover. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Ans. 2 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- UAPA primarily deals with offences related to terrorism and unlawful activities that threaten the sovereignty and integrity of India.
- It provides legal frameworks to combat such activities. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Section 43-D(5) of UAPA places an embargo on courts from granting bail if they find that police materials establish accusations as 'prima facie true.'
- This provision restricts the grant of bail in cases where the accusations are deemed serious. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The recent judgement by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir emphasised the need for circumspection in enforcing UAPA, particularly concerning personal liberty.
- The court highlighted that provisions like Section 43-D(5) should not become insurmountable obstacles preventing the

release of individuals. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Ans.3 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- RPA, 1951, indeed provides the legal framework for the conduct of elections in India and specifies the qualifications and disqualifications for electors and candidates. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- As per election commission, parties registered before 2005 with religious names won't lose their registration. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

**Ans.4 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Anthrax is not caused by a virus; it is caused by the gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis*.
- It primarily affects humans through contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The most common form of Anthrax is cutaneous, characterized by itchy bumps that develop into black sores.
- This form is often accompanied by fever and muscle aches. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Vaccines are available for both livestock and humans.
- Human vaccines are typically reserved for those at high occupational risk, such as laboratory workers dealing with Anthrax or individuals in certain professions with a higher likelihood of exposure. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Ans. 5 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- A Hydrography Agreement is not primarily concerned with the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbon resources.
- It is typically an agreement related to the study and charting of the physical features of a body of water for navigation and other purposes. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**



- The agreement signed between India and the Maldives in 2019 allowed India to conduct a hydrographic survey of the Maldivian territorial waters.
- Hydrographic surveys focus on mapping underwater features for navigation and safety. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The recent decision by the Maldives government not to renew the hydrography agreement aims to enhance national security by managing surveys under 100% Maldivian control.
- This is often done to ensure sensitive information related to the country's maritime features is controlled by national authorities. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Ans.6 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- e-Cigarettes are battery powered devices that work by heating a liquid into an aerosol that the user inhales and exhales. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The e-cigarette liquid typically contains nicotine, propylene glycol, glycerin, flavourings and other chemicals.
- E-cigarettes have been aggressively marketed to young people globally, with 34 countries banning their sale.
- India considers the possession of e-cigarettes a violation under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarette Act (PECA) 2019. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- E-cigarettes with nicotine are deemed highly addictive and harmful to health.
- While the long-term effects are not fully understood, they generate toxic substances linked to cancer, heart and lung disorders.

**Ans. 7 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- IIT-Madras has developed the 'AMRIT' technology for the removal of Arsenic and Metal ions from water. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- It uses nano-scale iron oxy-hydroxide to selectively remove arsenic and metal ions when water is passed through it. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- This technology is recommended for both domestic and community use.
- It has been recommended by the erstwhile 'Standing Committee' of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation for the examination of the best technologies concerning water and sanitation.

**Ans. 8 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- Recently, ISRO planned to launch Chandrayaan-4 in four years.
- Unlike its predecessors, Chandrayaan-4 is expected to bring back lunar samples to Earth. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- ISRO also plans to launch the first module of India's space station, by 2028.
- Bharatiya Antariksh Station will conduct experiments using robots. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In the next three to four months, ISRO will also launch the SPADEX experiment, demonstrating autonomous docking capability. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Docking is a process where two spacecrafts are aligned in a precise orbit and joined together.

**Ans. 9 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- The IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988.
- The main activity of the IPCC is the preparation of reports assessing the state of knowledge of climate change.
- Various IPCC Reports
  - AR1 : 1990 : Formed the basis of UNFCCC, 1992
  - AR2 : 1995 : Formed the basis of Kyoto Protocol
  - AR4 : 2007 : IPCC won the Nobel Peace Prize
  - AR5 : 2014 : Formed the basis of the Paris Agreement

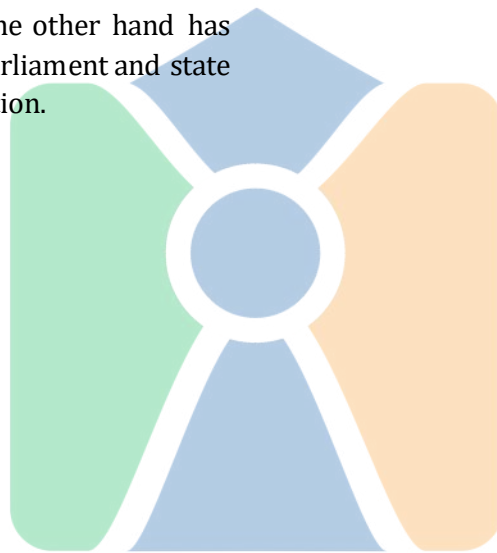
- AR6 : Inform the global stocktake in 2023. **Hence, option B is correct**

**Ans. 10 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- The seventh schedule under Article 246 of the constitution deals with the division of powers between the union and the states. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It contains three lists namely Union List, State List and Concurrent List.
- The union list details the subjects on which Parliament may make laws while the state list details those under the purview of state legislatures.
- The concurrent list on the other hand has subjects in which both Parliament and state legislatures have jurisdiction.

- In areas falling under the Concurrent list, Union law prevails in case of a conflict between laws made by the Parliament and state legislatures. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Union List Includes subjects like Defense, Atomic Energy, Foreign Affairs, Banking, Foreign Trade Currency etc.
- State List Includes subjects like Agriculture, Police, Local government, Land, Public Health, Land etc.
- Concurrent List Includes subjects like Education, Forests, Trade unions etc. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**



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## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements about Maldives**

1. The Maldives is an archipelagic nation located in the Indian Ocean
2. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Maldives extends up to 200 nautical miles from its baselines."

**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

**Q2. Consider the following statements about WTO**

1. The WTO has regional offices in major financial centres such as London and New York to facilitate global trade negotiations.
2. The WTO was established in 1995 as a successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), with the aim of promoting free and fair international trade.

**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 about Tariff Rate Quotas**

1. These are trade policy measures that combine elements of both tariffs and import quotas.
2. TRQs are often used by countries to restrict the import of specific agricultural products and protect domestic farmers
3. TRQs always involve a fixed quantity of imports and do not allow for any flexibility in response to changing market conditions

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

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

**Q4. Consider the following statements about trade deficit**

1. A trade deficit occurs when a country's imports exceed its exports.
2. Trade deficits are always detrimental to a country's economy as they indicate financial instability and weak economic performance."

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Q5. With reference to the Social Stock Exchange, consider the following statements**

1. It helps social enterprises in raising funds from the public.
2. Only institutional investors can invest in securities issued by the social enterprises.
3. Listing on SSE necessitates disclosure of fundraising purposes and providing a timeline for fund utilisation.

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

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

**Q6. Consider the following pairs**

1. Duqm port: Oman
2. Fujairah port: UAE
3. Haifa port: Greece

**How many of the pairs mentioned above is/are correctly matched?**

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

**Q7. Consider the following statements about watershed**

1. It is an area of land where all the water that falls or flows into it drains to a common point, such as a river or lake.
2. It plays a crucial role in the hydrological cycle, influencing the

flow of water, erosion, and the distribution of precipitation.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Bletchley Park Declaration**

1. It aims to establish a shared understanding of the risks and opportunities posed by "frontier AI."
2. It contrasts with the GPAI New Delhi declaration that largely supports innovation in technology in various sectors.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Q9. Which of the following organisations released the Arctic Report Card for 2023, seen in the news recently?**

- A. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- B. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- C. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- D. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

**Q10. Consider the following statements about Indian Agriculture**

1. The Green Revolution in India, initiated in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily focused on increasing the productivity of wheat and rice.
2. The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at promoting holistic development of agriculture and enhancing farmers' incomes."

**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

## Prelims Track Ans.

**Ans.1 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- The Maldives is an archipelago comprising 26 atolls, situated in the Indian Ocean southwest of India and Sri Lanka. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Like many coastal states, the Maldives has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extending up to 200 nautical miles from its baselines. Within this zone, the country has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

**Ans. 2 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- The WTO primarily operates from its headquarters in Geneva, and it does not have regional offices in major financial centres like London and New York. The organisation conducts its activities mainly from its central location. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The WTO was indeed established in 1995 as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The primary goal of the WTO is to facilitate negotiations and agreements between member countries to promote free and fair international trade. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

**Ans. 3 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) involve a two-tier system where a lower tariff is applied to a certain quantity of imports, and a higher tariff is applied to quantities exceeding that quota. TRQs aim to strike a balance between promoting trade and protecting domestic industries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- TRQs are commonly employed in the agricultural sector to manage the import of specific products. They allow a certain quantity of agricultural goods to enter a country at a lower tariff rate, after which a higher tariff applies to additional quantities. This helps protect domestic farmers while allowing for some level of international trade. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- While TRQs do specify a fixed quantity for lower-tariff imports, they can also have mechanisms for flexibility. In some cases, unused quota from one period may be carried over to the next, or the quota may be expanded based on certain conditions or

negotiations. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

**Ans. 4 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- A trade deficit arises when the value of a country's imports exceeds the value of its exports, resulting in a negative balance of trade. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- While persistent and large trade deficits may raise concerns, trade deficits alone do not necessarily indicate financial instability or weak economic performance.
- Economic factors, such as the overall economic health, productivity, and competitiveness, need to be considered in conjunction with trade deficit figures. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**

**Ans. 5 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Introduced in the FY20 Budget, Social Stock Exchanges function as a separate segment within the existing stock exchange.
- It helps social enterprises raise funds from the public through its mechanism promoting impact investing and sustainability. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Retail investors can only invest in securities offered by for-profit Social Enterprises (SEs) under the main Board.
- In all other cases, only institutional investors and non-institutional investors can invest in securities issued by SEs. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Any social enterprise, Non-Profit Organisation or For-Profit Social Enterprises, that establishes its primacy of social intent can get registered or listed.
- Listing on SSE imposes checks and balances, necessitating disclosure of fundraising purposes and providing a timeline for fund utilisation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Social audit firms will audit annual impact reports, enhancing transparency and accountability.

**Ans. 6 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Duqm port: Oman
- Fujairah port: UAE
- Haifa port: Israel **Hence, option B is correct**

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

- A watershed, also known as a drainage basin, is an area of land defined by the topography that channels rainfall and snowmelt to a common outlet, such as a river, lake, or ocean. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Watersheds are integral components of the hydrological cycle, influencing the movement of water, soil erosion, and the distribution of precipitation.
- They serve as natural boundaries that collect and channel water resources. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

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

- The Bletchley Park Declaration aims to establish a shared understanding of the risks and opportunities posed by “frontier AI.” **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It placed a primary focus on addressing security and safety risks associated with AI.
- It contrasts with the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence’s (GPAI) New Delhi declaration.
- The New Delhi declaration addresses the need to tackle AI-related risks.
- However, it largely supports innovation in technology in various sectors, including agriculture and healthcare. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**Ans.9 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently released its annual Arctic Report Card for 2023. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- The report highlights the region's record-breaking temperatures, contributing to unprecedented events and environmental changes.
- The 2023 summer in the Arctic marked the warmest on record, amplifying the ongoing trend of accelerated warming in the region.
- Overall, the past year was the sixth-warmest year the Arctic had experienced since reliable record-keeping began in 1900.

**Ans. 10 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- The Green Revolution in India aimed at increasing the productivity of staple crops, particularly wheat and rice.
- It involved the introduction of high-yielding varieties, improved irrigation, and the use of fertilisers and pesticides. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is a centrally sponsored scheme launched to promote the holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors by providing flexibility to states for planning and executing programs to suit their specific needs. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

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+91 9999 057869  
www.mentorshipindia.com

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

 @mentorship.india