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By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

1. UNSC seeks 'humanitarian pauses, corridors' in Gaza - The Hindu/ UNSC adopts resolution calling for pauses in Gaza, Israel says no - Indian Express
2. Rijiju to attend Muizzu's inaugural in Maldives - The Hindu
3. Unimpeded freedom of navigation vital: Rajnath - The Hindu/ Rajnath stresses on unimpeded lawful commerce in int'l waters - Indian Express
4. India, EU close to settling \$600-mn WTO dispute - Indian Express
5. India to host 2nd Voice of Global South Summit today - Indian Express
6. New IT platform to track medicines end-to-end - Indian Express
7. RBI raises risk weights on consumer credit exposure of banks, NBFCs to 125% - The Hindu/ Unsecured credit surges, RBI tightens norms on personal loans, credit cards - Indian Express

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Branded, generic and the missing ingredient of quality - The Hindu
2. On the sub-categorisation within castes - The Hindu
3. India and the US-China truce - Indian Express

Quick Look

1. Windfall Tax
2. Trade Deficit
3. Yamuna River
4. Chhath Pooja
5. Nirbhay Missile

Important News Articles

GS II

1. UNSC seeks 'humanitarian pauses, corridors' in Gaza - The Hindu/ UNSC adopts resolution calling for pauses in Gaza, Israel says no - Indian Express

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

News:

- The UN Security Council has passed its initial resolution since the onset of the Israel-Hamas conflict, urging "urgent and extended humanitarian pauses" in Gaza.

Prelims Takeaway

- UN Security Council

Key Points

Resolution Overview

- The resolution calls for humanitarian pauses in Gaza to address the crisis for Palestinian civilians during Israel's military actions.
- Israel rejected the resolution, while the US, UK, and Russia abstained from voting.

Content Modification

- The final draft altered language from "demands" to "calls" for humanitarian pauses and the release of hostages held by Hamas and other groups.
- Despite modifications, the resolution marked progress, overcoming previous obstacles.

US and UK Abstentions

- The US and UK abstained due to the resolution's failure to condemn Hamas' cross-border attacks on Israel and its inability to demand a humanitarian cease-fire.

Russian Opposition

- Russia abstained due to its dissatisfaction with the resolution's effectiveness and expressed disappointment in the Security Council's response.

Legal Binding and Monitoring

- UN Security Council resolutions are legally binding, and despite Israel's rejection, proponents emphasize its binding nature.
- The resolution is considered a positive step, changing perceptions of the Security Council's indifference.
- Critics argue it lacks real political pressure on Israel, and significant change depends on altering facts on the ground.

2. Rijiju to attend Muizzu's inaugural in Maldives - The Hindu

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

News:

- Minister of Earth Sciences, visited Maldives recently, to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President-elect Mohamed Muizzu
- It reflects India's commitment to bilateral ties.

Prelims Takeaway

- Map based question

Key Points:

- India's visit emphasizes the longstanding partnership between India and Maldives.

Purpose of Visit:

- It signifies India's commitment to strengthening cooperation and people-to-people ties with the Maldives.
- India aims to deepen substantive cooperation with the Maldives through high-level ministerial representation.

President-elect Mohamed Muizzu

- His election has raised questions about the future of India-Maldives relations, as he has pledged to negotiate the removal of Indian military personnel stationed in the Maldives.

Indian Troops in Maldives

- Around 75 Indian **military personnel are stationed in the Maldives** to operate gifted aircraft and helicopters.
- Muizzu has promised to engage in peaceful and democratic negotiations with India to remove them, **fulfilling one of his main election promises.**
- Despite seeking the removal of Indian troops, **he assures that it is not to make room for military presence from other countries.**

3. Unimpeded freedom of navigation vital: Rajnath - The Hindu/ Rajnath stresses on unimpeded lawful commerce in int'l waters - Indian Express

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

News:

- Defence Minister, addressing the **ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Indonesia**
- He reaffirmed India's **commitment to maritime security and collaboration with ASEAN** and its dialogue partners.

Prelims Takeaway

- ADMM-Plus Platform

Key Points

- India's Maritime Commitment:
- **India supports the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, showcasing its commitment to maritime principles.

ASEAN's Centrality

- India values ASEAN as a key partner and collaborator in regional security and defence initiatives.

ADMM-Plus Platform

- The ADMM-Plus **serves as a platform for enhancing security and defence cooperation** among ASEAN member states and eight dialogue partners, including India.
- **India, as an ASEAN dialogue partner since 1992**, actively contributes to regional security.

India's Role in ASEAN Activities

- **India and Indonesia co-chair ASEAN's expert working group** on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities.

Counter-Terrorism Collaboration

- India proposed to **co-chair the expert working group on counter-terrorism**, endorsed by ADMM-Plus.

4. India, EU close to settling \$600-mn WTO dispute - Indian Express

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

News:

- India is on the verge of **resolving a major trade dispute with the European Union (EU)** regarding **Information Communications Technology (ICT) products.**
- The recent success in **settling disputes with the US**, its largest trade partner, at the World Trade Organization (WTO) adds to positive developments.

Prelims Takeaway

- World Trade Organization (WTO)
- WTO Dispute Settlement System
- PLI Scheme

Background of the Dispute

- Brussels challenged India at the **WTO in 2019 over import duties on various ICT products**, claiming inconsistency with global trade norms.
- The EU argued that **these duties** were adversely impacting €600 million worth of its **tech exports to India.**
- India imposed higher duties on ICT products to **boost electronic manufacturing through the PLI scheme.**
- An adverse ruling could **disrupt the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**, impacting India's flagship production initiatives.

- The dispute is crucial for India's efforts to **boost electronic manufacturing and reduce dependence on China**.
- India cites **losses due to EU restrictions on Indian steel**, emphasising the broader context of trade issues between the two partners.

High-Level Trade and Tech Council (TTC) Meeting

- Recent TTC meeting between India and the EU discussed outstanding issues, given the **absence of a functional dispute resolution mechanism** at the WTO.
- The TTC is significant for **fostering technology partnerships** amid global tensions, especially in light of the **EU having a similar council only with the US**.

Legal Challenge by India

- India questioned the **legality of the WTO dispute resolution body's order** favouring the EU.
- It highlights a **legal error** in presuming **India's prior notice of tariff line expansion**.

5. India to host 2nd Voice of Global South Summit today - Indian Express

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

News:

- India will host the **2nd Voice of Global South Summit**.
- The Summit will be held in a **virtual format**.
- This summit is the **second time** since January 2023.
- The second summit will start with an **Inaugural Leaders' Session** chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

Prelims Takeaway

- First Voice of Global South Summit
- Second Voice of Global South Summit

Relevance of the Voice of Global South Summit

- India had hosted the inaugural Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) on **12-13 January 2023**.
- This **unique initiative** brought together 125 countries of the Global South to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform.
- Even during the G-20 Presidency **India has raised the concerns** of the Global South Summit.
- The Summit aimed at more **inclusive, representative** and **progressive** world order.

Details of Summit

- The 2nd summit will be structured **into 10 sessions**.
- The **concluding sessions** would be at Head of State / Government level, and hosted by PM Modi.
- The **theme** of the Inaugural Leaders' Session is "Together, for Everyone's Growth, with Everyone's Trust"
- The **theme** of the Concluding Leaders' Session is "Global South: Together for One Future".

Ministerial Sessions during Summit

- There will be **eight Ministerial Sessions**.
- The themes of **various sessions** are
 - **Foreign** Ministers' Session on "India & the Global South: Emerging Together for a Better Future",
 - **Education** Ministers' Session on "Making Human Resources Future Ready",
 - **Finance** Ministers' Session on "Financing People-Centric Development",
 - **Environment** Ministers' Session on "Sustainable Solutions for Climate Resilience and Climate Finance".
- It will also include
 - Foreign Ministers' Session on "Global South and One Development"
 - **Energy** Ministers' Session on "Affordable & Inclusive Energy Transition for Sustainable Development"
 - **Health** Ministers' Session on "Solutions from the Global South for One Health"
 - **Commerce / Trade** Ministers' Session on "Global South & Resilient Supply Chains".
- Countries from across the world would be participating
 - **Pacific** Islands in the **East to Latin America** in the **West**.
- The key focus would be to share the **beneficial outcomes and progress** achieved in the concerns/priorities of the Global South during India's G20 Presidency.

Details of First Voice of Global South Summit

- The **theme for the first** Voice of Global South Summit was “Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose”.
- It had a total of **10 sessions**.
- It sought inputs from the Global South for the agenda of ‘**Bharat G20 Summit**’.

GS III**6. New IT platform to track medicines end-to-end - Indian Express**

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

News:

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization has been working on bringing in **transparency** and **uniformity** in all its processes.
- It is working on an **integrated IT platform** for the said purpose.

Prelims Takeaway

- The Government e-Marketplace
- Bureau of Indian Standards
- Clinical Trial Registry

Developments before the launch of the Portal

- Indian manufactured syrups were found to be **contaminated** and were even linked to deaths of children in the Gambia and Uzbekistan.
- The **global standard** for good manufacturing practices will be made mandatory for all Indian companies.
- The government is **regulating the smaller companies** that do not comply with it to do so.

Expectations from the Platform

- It will be able to **create confidence** in domestic and international markets.
- The platform will be able to **track products** right from the stage of
 - procuring raw material
 - to supply chain
 - finally patterns of consumption categorised by
 - quantity,
 - area
 - season.
- Apart from manufacturers, distributors and retailers will also need to upload their **invoices** on the portal.
- This will promote **end to end tracking**.
- The portal will **create provisions** to capture information from various stakeholders routinely “similar to ITR returns and GST filing”.
- The government has called for **software service providers** to develop the system.
- Once operational, all other portals used by drug regulators will be **discontinued**.

Features of the Portal

- The portal will become a **single window** for all drug regulatory activities.
- Another important function of the portal will be to share information about spurious and not standard quality medicines.
- State regulators will **tackle the problem of** the movement of these drugs across state boundaries.
- **Investigations and prosecution** launches will also be done through the portal in such cases.
- It will also **help track** all types of court cases for prosecution and convictions.

Process of Execution of Portal

- The upcoming portal will have **separate dashboards** for separate stakeholders, allowing them access to custom reports on a need to know basis.
- One of the portal's requirements is to have **enough parameters** to make the data searchable.
- The platform will **bring online activities** that are still done physically
 - like periodic safety updates, show cause notices, adverse event reporting and post approval changes.
- The portal will help **improve inspections by**
 - assigning inspectors at random to various sites in a masked manner,

- randomised allocation of work such as processing applications for licences and approvals,
- assigning QR codes to samples collected
- reports to allow verification at every stage of the process.
- It will also **automatically generate** officials' performance reports.
- The portal will **create searchable registries** of manufacturers, marketeers, retailers, pharmacies, and even subject matter experts.
- The online platform will need to be **compatible** with other government portals such as
 - the Government e-Marketplace,
 - Bureau of Indian Standards
 - Clinical Trial Registry.
- It will also have a provision to **sign documents** using **authentication** mechanisms like OTP, Aadhaar, PAN card, and DigiLocker.

7. RBI raises risk weights on consumer credit exposure of banks, NBFCs to 125% - The Hindu/ Unsecured credit surges, RBI tightens norms on personal loans, credit cards - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued **regulatory measures** towards consumer credit and bank credit to Non Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs.)
- The bank has **increased risk weights** by an additional 25 percentage points to 125%.

Prelims Takeaway

- Scheduled Commercial Banks
- Non-Banking Financial Companies

Developments in Credit Market

- The **high growth seen** in consumer credit.
- **Increasing dependency** of NBFCs on bank borrowings.
- The housing loans, education loans, vehicle loans and loans secured by gold and gold jewellery and microfinance/SHG loans are **not a part of this credit relaxation**.
- Credit card receivables of **scheduled commercial banks (SCBs)** attract a risk weight of 125% while that of NBFCs attract a risk weight of 100%.
- Now, the risk weights on **such exposures by 25 percentage** points to 150% and 125% for SCBs and NBFCs respectively.
- In all this process the **recommendations** of the accredited external credit assessment institutions (ECAI) do play a role.
- **Loans which are eligible** for classification as priority sector in terms of the extant instructions will be excluded.

Instructions of Reserve Bank of India

- The **instructions** have been granted to the lending institutions to review their extant sectoral exposure limits for consumer credit.
- In particular, limits must be prescribed for all **unsecured consumer credit exposures**.
- The limits so fixed have to **be strictly adhered to** and **monitored on** an ongoing basis by the Risk Management Committee.
- The cut off date to implement these norms is **February 29, 2024**.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Branded, generic and the missing ingredient of quality - The Hindu

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

Context:

- Patients in India often seek a **second opinion on medications from salespersons in medical shops**, particularly regarding generic medicines.
- Patients often **rely on non-pharmacists** to interpret prescriptions and **recommend medicines**.

NMC Directive

- On August 3, 2023, the NMC mandated doctors to prescribe only generic names, leading to protests.
- In 1975, the Hathi Committee demanded that all brand names should be weeded out gradually.
- Brand names are avoided due to cost, and the perception that generic names are more affordable.
- There is an alleged nexus between pharmaceutical companies and doctors.
- They can be influenced to give in to unethical marketing and promotional offers or kick-backs.

Quality Assurance

- National drug surveys indicate a prevalence rate of 4.5% for spurious medicines and 3.4% for “not standard quality” medicines.
- The government should ensure the quality of medicines through Universal Health Coverage and private healthcare networks.
- Existing mechanisms for quality control are in place but not earnestly implemented.

Recommendations

- There should be periodic sampling for testing, banning batches that fail quality tests, and taking punitive action against manufacturers.
- Tamil Nadu’s practice of keeping supplied medicines under quarantine until quality testing is done can be replicated.
- Until the government can assure the standard quality of all medicines, the doctors should be allowed to mention the company name in their generic prescriptions.
 - Without such assurance, control over brand choice may shift to chemists or less-informed sales staff.
- The availability rate of essential medicines should be above 90%.
- There must also be a ban on unscientific combinations of medicines - currently around 40% of the retail market in India.

Conclusion

- Following protests, the NMC **withdrew the order on generic prescribing**.
- While this is a step forward, challenges remain in **achieving universal access to affordable generic medicines** without brand names.

2. On the sub-categorisation within castes - The Hindu

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

Context:

- Recently, the Prime Minister promised to explore **sub-categorization of Scheduled Castes (SCs)** to identify and help the most backward.

Legal Background

- Various states, including Punjab, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu, have attempted to implement reservation laws for sub-categorization of SCs, but these efforts are held up in courts.
- The Supreme Court, in a 2004 judgement, asserted that only Parliament has the authority to create and notify lists of SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- The Constitution has provided that these lists can only be made by Parliament and notified by the President.

Contradictory Views

- However, a 2020 judgement suggested that states could decide on the quantum of benefits within the already notified lists of SCs/STs.
- This led to a contradiction and the reference of the matter to a larger Bench.

Government Initiatives

- The 2004 SC judgement pushed the Union government to explore legal options for the sub-categorisation of SCs.
- In 2005, the Attorney-General of India (AGI) had opined that it was possible to sub-categorise SCs.
- No such classification could be allowed only if there was "unimpeachable evidence to indicate a necessity" for it.
- This sub-categorization was possible through a constitutional amendment.
- However, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) disagreed.
- They stated that Article 16(4) already allows states to create special laws for under-represented backward classes.

Arguments for Sub-Categorization

- Graded inequalities among SC communities: More forward communities tend to benefit more, leaving the more backward ones underrepresented.
- It would ensure fair representation for the most backward communities within the larger SC category.

Counter Arguments for Sub-Categorization

- SC and ST Commissions contend that separate reservations within categories might not address the root cause.
- They suggest that existing schemes and government benefits should reach the most backward sections before considering sub-categorization.

Challenges

- Legal experts emphasise the need for concrete data supporting sub-categorization, including population numbers and socio-economic data for each community.
- Without this data, determining how castes can be categorised and deciding on appropriate percentages remains challenging.

3. India and the US-China truce - Indian Express

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

Context:

- The recent **US-China summit in San Francisco** on the sidelines of the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit** has attracted global attention.
- **India has little reason to worry** about a significant structural shift in the US-China relationship despite the global interest in the summit.

The US-China Summit

- The summit aimed to **organise a truce in the conflictual US-China relationship** rather than restore a strategic partnership.
- While **no substantive issues were resolved**, both leaders adopted a broadly conciliatory tone.

India's Tasks

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- India needs to pay attention to **new areas of US-China engagement**, particularly in **regulating artificial intelligence (AI)**.
 - This can impact global rules on AI in the long term.
- India must note China's efforts to woo back US business leaders, emphasising the **need for continued engagement with Western capital**.

2. Indo - Pacific

- India should also **monitor follow-up actions** on discussions related to **regional security in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East crisis, and the Ukraine war.**
- **No major breakthrough** was observed in the regional security dialogue, especially regarding Taiwan.

US Gains and Concerns

- The US Administration has gained **geopolitical advantages in Asia** but **faces crises in Europe and the Middle East.**
- The focus of the summit was on **confidence-building measures and engaging China.**

India's Strategic Approach

- India should focus on **strengthening ties with the US, maintaining relations with Russia and managing its ties with China.**
- India's rise in the international system positions it to handle shifts in great power relations effectively.



Mentorship
India

Quick Look

1. Windfall Tax

- Windfall taxes are designed to tax the profits a company derives from an external, sometimes unprecedented event.
 - For instance, the energy price-rise as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
 - A windfall is defined as an “unearned, unanticipated gain in income through no additional effort or expense”.
- These are profits that cannot be attributed to something the firm actively did, like an investment strategy or an expansion of business.
- Governments typically levy a one-off tax retrospectively over and above the normal rates of tax on such profits, called windfall tax.
- One area where such taxes have routinely been discussed is oil markets, where price fluctuation leads to volatile or erratic profits for the industry.

2. 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.
- It can be calculated by subtracting the total value of a country's exports from the total value of its imports.

3. Yamuna River

- The river Yamuna, a major tributary of river Ganges, originates from the Yamunotri glacier near Bandarpooch peaks in the Mussoorie range of the lower Himalayas
- It meets the Ganges at the Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh after flowing through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi.
- Important Dam: Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
- Important Tributaries: Chambal, Sindh, Betwa and Ken.

4. Chhath Pooja

- A Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun god and his wife Usha to thank them for bestowing the bounties of life on earth.
- The Goddess worshipped during the famous Chhath Puja is known as Chhathi Maiya (also known as Usha, wife of the sun god).
- The word chhath means sixth and the festival is celebrated on the sixth day of the month Kartika of the Hindu lunar Bikram Sambat calendar.
- Observed over a period of four days, the rituals include holy bathing, fasting, standing in water for long periods of time, and offering prayers and food to the setting and rising sun.
- The main worshippers, called Parvaitin, are usually women.
- Observed most elaborately in Mithila Province of Nepal, Terai-Madhesh region of Nepal, Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP.

5. Nirbhay Missile

- Nirbhay is a Long-Range Subsonic Cruise Missile, which can be deployed from multiple platforms.
- It is capable of loitering and cruising at Mach 0.7 (subsonic) at an altitude as low as 100 metres.
- It can carry a nuclear warhead.
- It has been indigenously designed & developed by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about A United Nations Security Council resolution

1. It is a United Nations resolution adopted by the fifteen members of the Security Council (UNSC).
2. Draft resolutions on “procedural matters” can be adopted on the basis of an affirmative vote by any nine Council members.
3. Resolutions by the Security Council are legally binding.

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

1. Under Operation Cactus the Indian Armed Forces have helped the government of Maldives in the neutralization of the coup attempt.
2. Under Operation Neer India supplied drinking water to Maldives to deal with the drinking water crisis

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

Q3. Consider the following statements about the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus.

1. It is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners including Australia, China, India, Japan
2. It aims to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.
3. It was first convened at Ha Noi, Vietnam in 2010.

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 on India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC)

1. It aims to create a High-level coordination platform to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security.
2. It consists of three Working Groups (WGs) that report on roadmaps for future cooperation
3. India has similar councils with other developed countries including the US.

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

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

Q5. With reference to developments and features of Global South, consider the following statements

1. It refers to most of the countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.
2. The term is used to categorise countries based on their geographical location relative to the equator.
3. India had hosted the inaugural Voice of Global South Summit.

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

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

Q6. With reference to the Clinical Trial Registry-India , consider the following statements

1. The registration of clinical trials under it is provided free of cost.
2. The trial is hosted at the National Medical Commission of India.
3. It is one of the public trial registries under the International Clinical Trials Registry Portal.
4. It is one of the primary registers recognized by WHO.

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

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

Q7. With reference to a Non-Banking Financial Company in India, consider the following statements ;

1. It is registered under the Reserve Bank of India Act , 1934.
2. The regulatory and supervisory framework of NBFCs should be based on a three-layered structure.
3. It cannot accept demand deposits.
4. It cannot issue cheques drawn on itself.
5. Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs.

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

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

Q8. With reference to Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, consider the following statements

1. It offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for primary care.
2. It targets the beneficiaries on the basis of latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.
3. The National Health Authority (NHA) has been constituted for effective implementation of PM-JAY.
4. It is a central sector scheme with 100% funding from the centre.

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

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

Q9. Consider the following statements on National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)

1. It is a constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes
2. It comprises a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and not more than ten additional Members.
3. It is also required to discharge functions with regard to the other backward classes (OBCs) along with SCs.

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

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

Q10. With reference to Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), consider the following statements

1. It is a US-led initiative that aims to strengthen economic partnership among participating countries.
2. It allows members to negotiate along four main “pillars” and India has joined all the four pillars.

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 Answer

Ans. 1 Option C is correct

Explanation

- A United Nations Security Council resolution is a United Nations resolution adopted by the fifteen members of the Security Council (UNSC). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The UN Charter specifies (in Article 27) that a draft resolution on non-procedural matters is adopted if nine or more of the fifteen Council members vote for the resolution, and if it is not vetoed by any of the five permanent members.
- Draft resolutions on “procedural matters” can be adopted on the basis of an affirmative vote by any nine Council members. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The term “resolution” does not appear in the text of the United Nations Charter.
- Resolutions by the Security Council are legally binding. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 2 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Under Operation Cactus the Indian Armed Forces have helped the government of Maldives in the neutralization of the coup attempt. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Under Operation Neer India supplied drinking water to Maldives to deal with the drinking water crisis. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Ans. 3 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region. **Hence, statements 1 and 3 are correct.**
- The ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member State and eight Plus countries, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russian Federation, and the United States.
- It aims to promote mutual trust and confidence between defence establishments through greater dialogue and transparency.
- The first ADMM-Plus was convened at Ha Noi, Vietnam in 2010. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- 2nd ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting (ADMM) in 2007 at Singapore adopted a resolution to establish the ADMM-Plus
- The chairmanship of the ADMM-Plus follows the chairmanship of the ADMM.
- Currently, the ADMM and ADMM Plus is chaired by Thailand
- It has five areas of practical cooperation, namely maritime security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations and military medicine.

Ans. 4 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The formation of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) was announced by the Indian Prime Minister and President of the European Commission in 2022.
- Objective: Creating a High-level coordination platform to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Ministerial meetings of the TTC will be held annually, ensuring regular high-level engagement between India and the EU.
- These meetings will alternate in terms of location, taking place in either India or the EU, to foster balanced participation and strengthen bilateral cooperation.
- The TTC consists of three Working Groups (WGs) that report on roadmaps for future cooperation
 - WG on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance, and Digital Connectivity
 - WG on Green and Clean Energy Technologies
 - WG on Trade, Investment, and Resilient Value Chains. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The EU-India Trade and Technology Council is the second bilateral forum for the EU and the first one established with any partner for India. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Ans. 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Global South refers to most of the countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**

- The Global North includes countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia, and New Zealand.
- It's a term used to categorise countries based on economic development and historical factors. **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- India had hosted the inaugural Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) on 12-13 January 2023 .**Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 6 Option C is correct

Explanation

- CTRI is a free and online public record system for registration of clinical trials conducted in India. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- It is hosted at the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Medical Statistics.**Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Initially it was launched on a voluntary basis in 2007.
- In 2009, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) mandated all trials to be registered in the CTRI.
- CTRI is one of 17 public trial registries under the International Clinical Trials Registry Portal.**Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- It is one of the 18 primary registries recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO).**Hence, Statement 4 is correct.**

Ans. 7 Option B is correct

Explanation

- A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956.**Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The regulatory and supervisory framework of NBFCs should be based on a four-layered structure:**Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- NBFC cannot accept demand deposits. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**
- NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself. **Hence, Statement 4 is correct.**
- Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs. **Hence, Statement 5 is correct.**

Ans. 8 Option B is correct

Explanation

- PM-JAY is the world's largest health insurance scheme fully financed by the government.
- Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The National Health Authority (NHA) has provided flexibility to States/UTs to use non- Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) beneficiary family databases.
- The funding for the scheme is shared – 60:40 for all states and UTs with their own legislature, 90:10 in Northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect.**
- The National Health Authority (NHA) has been constituted as an autonomous entity for effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

Ans. 9 Option A is correct

Explanation

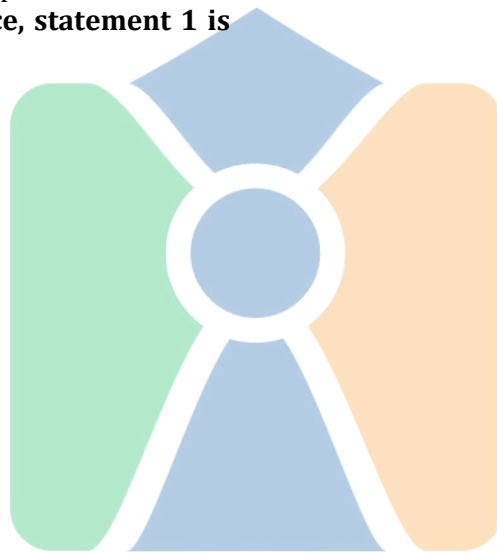
- The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) is a constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Initially, the constitution provided for the appointment of a Special Officer under Article 338 who was designated as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Till 2018, the commission was also required to discharge similar functions with regard to the other backward classes (OBCs).
- It was relieved from this responsibility by the 102nd Amendment Act, 2018. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

- The NCSC comprises a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and three additional Members. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- These positions are filled through the President's appointment, indicated by a warrant under his hand and seal.
- Their conditions of service and tenure of office are also determined by the President.

Ans. 10 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) is a US-led initiative that aims to strengthen economic partnership among participating countries to enhance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The IPEF is not a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but allows members to negotiate the parts they want to.
- The negotiations will be along four main "pillars" viz. Supply-chain resilience; Clean energy, decarbonisation and infrastructure; Taxation and anti-corruption; and Fair and resilient trade.
- India agreed to three out of four pillars, which are Supply Chains, Tax & Anti-Corruption and Clean Energy. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Members: India, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam.



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