

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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2. CrPC remedy not barred by 1986 law: SC - Indian Express
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4. A supercomputer and the AI in AIIMS: How they are helping identify therapies for cancer patients - Indian Express
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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. Why was there a political deadlock in Northern Ireland? - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

**News:**

- **Northern Ireland (NI) recently formed a new government**, ending a political hiatus since the 2022 elections.

**Why the Delay in Government Formation?**

- The DUP, part of the Conservative-led government, **objected to the internal trade border between NI and the rest of Britain**
  - leading to a boycott of Stormont since the 2022 elections.
- **The border in the Irish Sea resulted from the 2020 withdrawal agreement**, aiming for a clean break with the EU.
- After negotiations, NI now operates under the dual jurisdiction of the UK and the EU.

**The 2023 Windsor Framework**

- **Addressing concerns over the UK's withdrawal protocol**, the Windsor framework simplified paperwork for goods between NI and Great Britain.
- The Command Paper proposed in January further eases procedures, exempting 80% of goods from checks and establishing a body to preserve NI's status in the UK's internal market.
- However, **companies from Great Britain will continue to face more paperwork due to NI's dual jurisdiction.**

**Challenges Ahead**

- Brexit-related pressures persist, and political deadlock hinders compulsory coalitions between unionists and nationalists.
- **The Irish Prime Minister calls for reform of the system**, suggesting a need to reevaluate the current arrangement to address ongoing challenges in NI's political landscape.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Map based question

#### 2. CrPC remedy not barred by 1986 law: SC - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986**, enacted by the government **does not say that a divorced Muslim woman cannot file a petition** under Section 125 of the CrPC, 1973

**Key Highlights**

- The act was enacted by government in the **aftermath of the Shah Bano case judgement**
- It says that muslim **women can seek maintenance from her former husband**
- The Supreme Court observed as it reserved decision on the question as to which of these two laws would prevail.
- The Act does not say no petition under Section 125 shall be filed by Muslim women.

**The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019**

- **The Act makes all declarations of talaq**, including in written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal.
- The Act makes a **declaration of talaq a cognizable offence**, attracting up to three years imprisonment with a fine.
- **The offence will be cognizable only if information relating to the offence is given by married woman** (against whom talaq has been declared), or any person related to her by blood or marriage

#### Prelims Takeaway

- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019
- Section 125 of the CrPC, 1973



## GS III

### 3. Army to set up new corps for ops along LAC - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **The Army is converting its Headquarters Uttar Bharat (HQ UB) area into a full-fledged operational corps**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Line of Actual Control
- Map Based question

#### Key Highlights

- It is a move that will **shift its focus towards operations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)** from its current responsibility of peacetime duties,
- **Based in Bareilly, the HQ UB area is currently a static formation** looking after peacetime locations and training establishments of Uttarakhand and western Uttar Pradesh
  - In addition to the LAC running along Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand — also referred to as the central theatre.
- A corps comprises elements of all arms and services with adequate reserves to carry out operations in its area of responsibility.
- It is structured to hold three divisions, but can hold more or less as per existing operational requirements. Each division comprises 15,000 to 18,000 troops.
- Earlier, the UB area had only one brigade and a few scouts battalions under it to patrol key border areas.
- But considering frequent face-offs with Chinese troops at certain disputed points along the LAC and an enhanced focus on dominating the border
- The formation was gradually upgraded and its combat capability increased by putting three independent brigades and an infantry division based in Uttarakhand under it.
- As per officials, the increased troop density in the area and additional emerging operational requirements have necessitated a change of focus towards operational tasks.

#### Line of Actual Control (LAC)

- The LAC is **the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.**
- It is divided into **three sectors:**
  - The eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim
  - The middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh
  - The western sector in Ladakh.
- India considers the **LAC to be 3,488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2,000 km.**
- India's **claim line is the line seen in the official boundary marked on the maps as released by the Survey of India, including both Aksai Chin and Gilgit-Baltistan.**
- This means **LAC is not the claim line for India.**
- In China's case, **LAC is the claim line except in the eastern sector, where it claims the entire Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet.**



## 4. A supercomputer and the AI in AIIMS: How they are helping identify therapies for cancer patients - Indian Express

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

### Prelims Takeaway

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Cancer

**News:**

- **A supercomputer and AI, developed** by researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi, can help doctors identify the best cancer therapy for their patients

**Key Highlights**

- **iOncology AI aims to sequence the genomes of 3,000 cancer patients** who are currently seeking treatment at AIIMS,
- The AI model has been trained on 1,500 breast and ovarian cancer patients from AIIMS and was found to be over 75 per cent accurate when compared to the diagnosis provided by the clinicians.
- Genomic data is a powerful tool for medical researchers and doctors.
- It helps them understand **how variations in DNA affect our health.**
- Through genomic sequencing, they decipher our genetic makeup and spot alterations in our genes.

**How does the AI tool work?**

- The platform, developed **with Pune's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing**, allows doctors to store cancer patients' blood test and lab reports, scans and ultrasound reports and their history.
- Along with collecting and collating data, **the AI-enabled platform is also capable of reading the different types of datasets** and helping the doctors make decisions.
- "After studying the clinical data and genomic make-up of, say, a couple of thousand cancer patients
  - the tool will be able to help the doctors in selecting the appropriate treatment for the next patient
- **Genomic testing cancer therapy ai Genomic data** is a powerful tool for medical researchers and doctors.
- AI will be able to automatically flag the ones that have certain abnormalities.
- For example, haemoglobin levels of people in India are less as compared to the Caucasian population. Our treatment protocols can be adjusted to account for this

**AI and cancer care: The big shift**

- Globally, there is an **increasing interest in the use of AI for cancer treatment as it can help doctors**
  - from developing new therapies to diagnosing patients at early stages of the disease and selecting appropriate treatments.

## 5. Govt raises funding for development of natural rubber sector for two years - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Natural Rubber
- Kerala

**News:**

- The union government has **increased the allocation sustainable development of the natural rubber sector scheme** for the next two financial years (2024-26) by 23 per cent

**Key Highlights**

- This comes amid a shortfall in availability of natural rubber which has resulted in **rising import of natural rubber from countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations.**
- There are over **13 lakh rubber growers in the country with Kerala** accounting for a major chunk of the production

- funds will be used for:
  - supporting the plantation of rubber
  - generation of planting material
  - productivity enhancement
  - formation of rubber producers societies
  - rubber research and training.
- **In non-traditional areas like Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and north-east states**, 3,752 hectares will be brought under rubber cultivation during 2024-26.
- The scheme is **implemented through the Rubber Board**.
- "Research will aim at developing rubber clones suitable for different agro-climatic regions of the country to expand rubber cultivation to new areas

## 6. ODYSSEUS SPACECRAFT - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

**News:**

- Recently America launched a **Robotic lunar lander** into space.
- If successful, it will become the **first American spacecraft** to land gently on the Moon since the **Apollo 17 moon landing in 1972**.
- It would also become the **first private effort** to reach the surface of the Moon **intact**, following three failed attempts by other companies.

**Why is it called Odysseus?**

- It was named Odysseus after a contest among employees of Intuitive Machines of Houston, the company in charge of the mission.
- The name is inspired from the journey of the **hero of the ancient Greek epic poem "Odyssey"**.
- Odyssey's journey serves as an analogy for the **long and challenging nature** of the lunar mission.

**Significance of Odysseus**

- Signifies the **potential of private companies** to undertake lunar missions at significantly **lower costs** compared to traditional NASA endeavours.
- It could pave the way for **broader Moon exploration** by both NASA and commercial entities.

**NASA's Involvement**

- NASA is the **primary customer**, paying Intuitive Machines \$118 million for its **payloads**.
- The **payloads** include
  - **Stereo camera:** It will observe the plume of dust kicked up during landing.
  - **Radio receiver:** It measures the effects of charged particles on radio signals.
- The launch comes after **recent failures of other private lunar missions**, underscoring the risks involved.
  - A US company, Astrobotic Technology of Pittsburgh, attempted to send Peregrine, its lander, to the moon.
  - But a malfunction with its propulsion system prevented any possibility of landing.

**Commercial Lunar Payload Services Program (CLPS)**

- Both Odysseus and Peregrine are part of **NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services program (CLPS)**.
- **Objective:** To use commercial companies for lunar exploration rather than NASA building and operating its own moon landers.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Odysseus Spacecraft
- Commercial Lunar Payload Services Program (CLPS)
- NASA



## 7. Use dictionary meaning of 'forest', Supreme Court tells Central govt. - The Hindu/ SC says no new zoo, safari without its nod - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- Recently, the SC passed the order on petitions challenging the amendments introduced in 2023 to the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**.

**The Background**

- The 1980 statute was enacted to **check further deforestation** leading to ecological imbalance.
- Petitions argued that the amended Act **limited 'forest' to declared forests or those recorded as such in government records** after 1980.

**Government Records**

- The Centre, however, denied any attempt to trim the extent of forest coverage.
- It referred to the clarification provided in Section 1A, which broadened the definition of "government records".
- To encompass **lands identified as forests** by any State or Union Territory, local governing bodies, councils or acknowledged communities.

**The Judgement**

- The Supreme Court directed that the expression '**forest**' will continue to have a "**broad and all-encompassing**" meaning for the time being.
- It directed the government to revert to the "**dictionary meaning**" of '**forest**' as upheld by it in a 1996 decision in the **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad case**.
- It clarified that 'forest' includes lands not just in official records but **as per the dictionary meaning**.
- It will include **1.97 lakh square km of undeclared forest lands**.

**Interim Measures**

- The States and Union Territories must **compile comprehensive records of forest lands** by March 31, adhering to previous court orders.
- The dictionary meaning would continue till the States and UTs prepare a "consolidated record" of all the lands recorded as 'forest' in government records.

**Control Over Zoos**

- The Bench further directed that the **establishment of zoos or safaris** will **require final approval** from the **Supreme Court**.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
- Forest (Amendment) Act, 2023

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 8. Greece's gateway to Asia, India's gateway to Europe - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- The state visit by the Greek Prime Minister to India will be another important step in building a **strategic relationship** between India and Greece.

**Historical Context**

- The process of building a strategic relationship between Greece and India commenced with the present Prime Minister's visit to Greece in August 2023.
- This visit generated significant enthusiasm among Greek political leaders and business figures, recognizing the potential benefits of a strategic partnership with India.

**Strategic Importance**

- Both countries, situated in geopolitically volatile regions, recognize the necessity of security, stability, and prosperity in their respective regions for global stability.
- Recent events in the Red Sea highlight the interdependence of the East Mediterranean region, where Greece is located, and the Indian Ocean region.

**Cooperation Across Various Sectors**

- Bilateral cooperation, including strategic, military, and business, has been gradually progressing over the years.
- The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force have been participating in joint exercises with the Greek armed forces.
- Business collaborations range from construction projects to investments in the food and shipping sectors.
- Notably, Indian-Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa has been a key advocate for Greek-Indian business cooperation.

**Potential for Further Collaboration**

- As Greece undertakes economic reforms and positions itself as a reliable partner in the EU and NATO, the concept of an India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor gains traction.
- Both countries aim to enhance economic ties, with Greece supporting deeper EU-India relations.
- Greece is also working to ensure the conclusion of the EU-India bilateral trade and investment agreement (BTIA).

**Cultural and People-to-People Ties**

- Efforts to strengthen people-to-people connections are crucial in preserving the historical ties between both the countries while modernising.
- These include university exchanges, cultural initiatives and media collaboration.

**Urgency in Relationship Building**

- The successive visits of political leaders from both countries underscore their commitment to advancing the bilateral relationship.
- Policymakers and businesses must seize the opportunities presented in 2024 to solidify the Greece-India strategic partnership.

## India

**9. The recent report on local fintech players - The Hindu**

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

**Context:**

- Recently, the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology released a report highlighting the **dominance of fintech apps** owned by foreign entities **in the Indian ecosystem**.



**Need for Effective Regulation**

- With the increasing use of digital platforms for payments in India, the committee emphasises the importance of effective regulation.
- It suggests that regulatory bodies like the RBI and NPCI would find it more feasible to regulate local apps compared to foreign ones, which operate in multiple jurisdictions.

**Market Share and Transactions**

- Apps like PhonePe and Google Pay, backed by global corporations, lead the market in terms of volume, while BHIM UPI, owned by NPCI, lags behind significantly.
  - PhonePe commands the leading market share in volume terms, followed by Google Pay, at 46.91% and 36.39% respectively.
  - NPCI's BHIM UPI's market share (in terms of volume) stands at a mere 0.22%.
- The report indicates the dominance of foreign-owned apps in facilitating digital transactions in India.

**Regulatory Measures**

- The report aligns with the NPCI's directive to cap the volume of transactions (30%) facilitated by third-party apps using UPI.
- This measure aims to protect the UPI ecosystem and promote market equilibrium by limiting the dominance of individual players.

**Concerns about Fraud**

- The Committee has noted instances of fintech platforms being used for money laundering and scams.
- The fraud to sales ratio has largely remained around 0.0015%.
- The percentage of users affected by UPI frauds stood at 0.0189%.

**Future Outlook**

- Experts suggest that a balanced mix of local and foreign fintech players is necessary for the Indian ecosystem.
- While local players have an advantage in understanding the market and regulatory landscape, foreign players bring in new technologies and global connectivity.

**Revenue Growth and Consumer Behaviour**

- The McKinsey Global Payments Report indicates that instant payments, such as UPI, may contribute less than 10% of future revenue growth as no fees are charged for transactions.
- However, the report acknowledges the benefits of digital payments, including enhanced security, increased access to digital commerce channels, and reduced costs associated with managing cash transactions.

## 10. How MSP - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices

**Context:**

- The fluctuating prices of commodities like jeera highlight the **need for price assurance mechanisms** for farmers.
- For instance, despite a high modal price during sowing, current prices are significantly lower, causing concern among farmers.

**Price Volatility Factors**

- Price volatility in crops is influenced by various factors, including market demand, production levels, and external conditions like weather patterns.
- Expanded acreages in response to good prices can lead to bumper crops and subsequent price collapses.

**Cost Burden on Farmers**

- Increased expenses, such as soaring seed costs, have added to the financial burden on farmers.
- With higher input costs and uncertain price realisations, farmers face considerable risk and uncertainty in their livelihoods.

**Role of Minimum Support Price (MSP)**

- MSP serves as a crucial tool to insulate farmers from low prices and promote crop diversification.
- However, the effectiveness of MSP lies in its implementation and assurance of fair prices to farmers.

**Price Deficiency Payments (PDP)**

- Price deficiency payments (PDP) offer an alternative approach to ensure price assurance for farmers.
- Under this system, if market prices fall below the MSP, the government compensates farmers for the difference.

**Advantages of PDP**

- It doesn't interfere with the market mechanism; traders and farmers would continue buying and selling at market rates.
- **Formalisation of Farm Trade**
  - With PDP in place, farmers will likely demand receipts from buyers detailing the quantity and price of the produce sold.
  - This will incentivize formalisation of farm trade, which historically has been largely cash-based.
- **Establishment of Electronic Trading Platforms**
  - It will incentivise states to set up APMC mandis or even electronic trading platforms, where farmers can sell their produce.
  - These platforms will facilitate transparent transactions and enable farmers to sell their produce digitally.
- It aligns with the goals of formalization, digitization, crop diversification and the marketing reforms advocated by the government.

**Addressing Concerns**

- While there are concerns about potential market manipulations with PDP, regulatory measures can be implemented to mitigate such risks.
- Additionally, combining PDP with physical procurement or setting indicative market prices can help ensure transparency and fairness in the system.

## Quick Look

### 1. Students can appear for 10th, 12th boards twice from 2025-26

- Recently, the Union Education Minister announced that starting from the academic session 2025-26, students will have the option to appear for 10th and 12th class board examinations twice a year.
- It aims to ensure that students have enough time and opportunity to perform well and leads to reduced stress.
- Additionally, students will have the option to retain the best score.
- This initiative is in line with the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) introduced in 2020.

### 2. India Stack

- Recently, India and Colombia signed a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale which intends to promote digital transformation via India Stack.
- India Stack is a set of Application Programming Interface (APIs) that allows governments, businesses, startups and developers to utilise a unique digital Infrastructure.
- It consists of three layers of open APIs viz. identity, payments, and data.
- Although the name of this project bears the word India, it can be applied to any nation, be it a developed one or an emerging one.
- The four distinct technology layers provided are
  - Presence less layer: Where a universal biometric digital identity allows people to participate in any service from anywhere in the country.
  - Paperless layer: Where digital records move with an individual's digital identity, eliminating the need for massive amounts of paper collection and storage.
  - Cashless layer: Where a single interface to all the country's bank accounts and wallets to democratise payments.
  - Consent layer: This allows data to move freely and securely to democratise the market for data.
- Some of the APIs that are a central part of India Stack are Aadhaar Proof, Aadhaar e-KYC, e-Sign, Digital Locker, and Unified Payment Interface.

### 3. Rip Currents

- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and ISRO have embarked on a project to continuously monitor and issue operational forecast alerts of rip currents.
- Rip Currents are a strong flow of water running from a beach back to the Open Ocean, sea, or lake.
- These are one of the most well-known coastal hazards on beaches around the world.
- They are formed by a beach topography. They can occur in areas with hard-bottom (rocky) or soft-bottom (sand or silt) beach topography.
- Contrary to popular belief, a rip cannot pull a person down and hold him/her under the water.
- It simply carries floating objects, including people, out to just beyond the zone of the breaking waves.

### 4. Cliffside Bambootail

- Recently, a team of researchers discovered a new species of damselfly at the Ponmudi hills in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala.
- The new species of damselfly is named Cliffside Bambootail (*Phylloneura rupestris*).
- It belongs to a group called bambootails, so named because of their long abdomen that resembles bamboo stalks.
- It lays eggs in the moss beds in seasonal rills that flow over rock cliffs.



- The discovery is significant because, for over 160 years, the genus *Phylloneura* was considered monotypic, with a single described species, the *Myristica Bambootail*
  - *Myristica Bambootail*'s population is associated with myristica swamps and hence is known by its common name *Myristica Bambootail*.
  - It has remained the sole described species of the genus *Phylloneura*.
  - It is endemic to the Western Ghats and has been recorded only in the area between the Nilgiris Hills and Sharavathi Valley, north of the Palghat Gap.
  - IUCN Status: near-threatened

## 5. Central Asian Flyway

- The UN convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS) adopted India's initiative for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF).
- The Central Asian Flyway covers a large continental area of Eurasia between the Arctic and Indian Oceans and the associated island chains.
  - A flyway is a geographical region within which a single or group of migratory species completes its annual cycle - breeding, moulting, staging and non-breeding.
  - There are nine such flyways in the world.
- Geographically the flyway region covers 30 countries of North, Central and South Asia and Trans-Caucasus.
- There is an overlap between the CAF and the area of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA).
  - Sixteen out of the thirty countries encompassed by the CAF are located in the AEWA Agreement Area.
- CAF migration routes include the steppes and cold deserts of Central Eurasia, and much of the Himalayan chain.

**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Ireland**

1. Ireland is a member of the United Kingdom and shares a land border with Northern Ireland.
2. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 played a crucial role in addressing political and social issues in Ireland.
3. The recent creation of a new government in Northern Ireland marks the first time it has a nationalist Prime Minister

**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 Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019**

1. This Act criminalizes the practice of instant triple talaq (talaq-e-bid'ah) among Muslim men in India.
2. The Act provides for imprisonment and fines for those found guilty of pronouncing instant triple talaq.
3. The Act grants financial support to Muslim women who are victims of instant triple talaq.

**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 Line of Actual Control (LAC)**

1. The Line of Actual Control serves as the de facto border between India and China.
2. The LAC is a precisely demarcated and agreed-upon boundary between India and China.
3. The concept of the Line of Actual Control was formalized through a specific bilateral agreement between India and China.

**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 regarding supercomputers**

1. Supercomputers are primarily used for general-purpose computing tasks such as word processing and internet browsing.
2. The performance of supercomputers is measured in terms of FLOPS (Floating Point Operations Per Second).
3. Quantum computers are a type of supercomputer that utilizes quantum bits (qubits) for processing information.

**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 natural rubber production in India**

1. India is one of the leading producers of natural rubber globally.
2. The majority of natural rubber production in India comes from the northern states of Punjab and Haryana.
3. The Rubber Board of India is the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing and promoting the cultivation of rubber in the country.
4. The Hevea brasiliensis tree is the primary source of natural rubber in India.

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

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

**Q6. Consider the following statement regarding the Commercial Lunar Payload Services program?**

1. It aims to develop the market and technology ecosystem in the private space sector for lunar exploration.
2. It is a joint mission of NASA and ISRO.

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

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

**Q7. Consider the following statements on the Forest (Amendment) Act, 2023**

1. It seeks to amend the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.
2. It expands the list of permitted activities in the forest land.
3. It seeks to exempt all strategic linear projects of "national importance and concerning national security" within 100 km of international borders.

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

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

**Q8. Consider the following statements**

1. The fusion of Greek and Indian influences is visible in Gandhara Art.
2. Exercise INIOCHOS is an annual multi-national air exercise hosted by the air force of Greece.

**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

**Q9. Consider the following services**

1. Bharat Bill Payment Interface (BBPI)
2. United Payments Interface (UPI)
3. Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)
4. National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT)
5. Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)

**How many of the services mentioned above are provided by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)?**

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

**Q10. With reference to Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) System, consider the following statements**

1. Under PDP, farmers are compensated for the difference between the MSPs for select crops and their actual market prices.
2. Similar to MSP, the PDP System interferes with the market mechanism.

**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

### Answer 1 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- Ireland is not a member of the United Kingdom. Ireland is an independent sovereign nation and a member of the European Union. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and shares a border with the Republic of Ireland. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement) of 1998 played a crucial role in addressing political and social issues in Ireland. It aimed to bring an end to the conflict in Northern Ireland and establish a framework for political cooperation and power-sharing. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The recent creation of a new government in Northern Ireland marks the first time it has a nationalist Prime Minister, Michelle O'Neill, from the Sinn Fein party. This is a significant development in the political landscape of Northern Ireland. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

### Answer 2 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019 indeed criminalizes the practice of instant triple talaq (talaq-e-bid'ah) among Muslim men in India. This was done to protect the rights and dignity of Muslim women. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Act not only criminalizes instant triple talaq but also provides for imprisonment (up to three years) and fines for those found guilty of pronouncing such talaq. The penalties aim to act as a deterrent against the arbitrary and instantaneous termination of marriages. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The Act does not explicitly grant financial support to Muslim women who are victims of instant triple talaq. While it focuses on criminalizing the practice and providing legal protection, financial support is not a direct provision of this legislation. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

### Answer 3 Option A is correct

#### Explanation

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) serves as the de facto border between India and China. It is a loosely demarcated boundary that separates the two countries, and its perception can differ between India and China, leading to occasional border disputes. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The LAC is not a precisely demarcated and agreed-upon boundary. Unlike the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan, the LAC lacks a formal agreement on its exact alignment. This lack of clarity has been a source of tension and border disputes between India and China. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The concept of the Line of Actual Control was not formalized through a specific bilateral agreement between India and China. While there have been several agreements and protocols to maintain peace along the border, there is no comprehensive agreement on the exact alignment of the LAC. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

### Answer 4 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- Supercomputers are not primarily used for general-purpose computing tasks like word processing and internet browsing. They are designed for highly specialized and complex calculations, simulations, and scientific research, such as weather forecasting, nuclear simulations, and molecular modeling. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The performance of supercomputers is indeed measured in terms of FLOPS (Floating Point Operations Per Second). FLOPS quantifies the number of floating-point calculations a computer can perform per second, providing a standard measure of computing performance. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Quantum computers are a type of supercomputer that utilizes quantum bits (qubits) for processing information. Unlike classical computers that use bits, which can be either 0 or 1, qubits can exist in multiple states simultaneously, allowing quantum computers to perform certain types of calculations much faster than classical computers. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Answer 5 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- India is indeed one of the leading producers of natural rubber globally. It is an essential commodity for various industries, including the automotive sector. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The majority of natural rubber production in India comes from the southern states, particularly Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. These states have favorable climatic conditions for rubber cultivation. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The Rubber Board of India is the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing and promoting the cultivation of rubber in the country. It plays a crucial role in supporting research, development, and the overall growth of the rubber industry. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- The Hevea brasiliensis tree, commonly known as the rubber tree, is the primary source of natural rubber in India. The latex extracted from this tree is used to produce natural rubber. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

**Answer 6 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- NASA is partnering with diverse American companies under the CLPS initiative to transport science and technology payloads to the lunar surface. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- The CLPS contracts aim to facilitate lunar exploration, experimentation, and technology demonstrations in preparation for upcoming human missions.
- Under CLPS, so far, at least 14 private companies have been contracted to carry NASA payloads to the Moon. **Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**

**Answer 7 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- The Forest (Amendment) Act, 2023 seeks to amend the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It provides that two types of land will be under the purview of the Act
  - land declared/notified as a forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or under any other law

- land not covered in the first category but notified as a forest on or after October 25, 1980 in a government record.
- It seeks to exempt all strategic linear projects of "national importance and concerning national security" within 100 km of international borders, the LAC, and the LoC; land along a rail line or a public road maintained by the government providing access to a habitation, or to a rail, and roadside amenities.
- It extends the requirement for prior approval from the central government to assign forest land to any entity, whether government-owned or not.
- It expands the list of permitted activities in forest land, including Establishing zoos and safaris, Eco-tourism facilities, Silvicultural operations and other purposes specified by the central government. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Surveys and investigations in forest areas will not be considered non-forestry activities.
- It grants the central government the authority to issue directions for the implementation of the Act to any authority or organization recognized by the central, state, or union territory governments. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**Answer 8 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- India's engagement with Greece spans over 2500 years, marked by trade, literature, and art interactions.
- Trade links and cultural exchanges existed between Mauryan Kings and Greece, evidenced by coinage and writings.
- Chanakya's writings mention Megasthenes, an ambassador, in Chandragupta's court.
- The fusion of Greek and Indian influences is visible in Gandhara Art. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Exercise INIOCHOS is an annual multi-national air exercise hosted by the Hellenic Air Force, the air force of Greece. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It is based on the Single Base Concept, which means the entire exercise takes place from a single air base.

**Answer 9 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- It has been incorporated as a “Not for Profit” Company under the provisions of Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956 (now Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013).
- Payment systems that the NPCI can operate include National Financial Switch (NFS), Immediate Payment System (IMPS), Aadhaar-enabled Payments System (AEPS) and National Automated Clearing House (NACH).
- Services Offered by NPCI include Bharat Bill Payment Interface (BBPI), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), RuPay, BHIM, UPI etc.
- While NEFT and RTGS were introduced by RBI (Reserve Bank of India), IMPS was introduced by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). **Hence, option C is correct**

**Answer 10 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- Price deficiency payments (PDP) offer an alternative approach to ensure price assurance for farmers.
- Under this system, if market prices fall below the MSP, the government compensates farmers for the difference. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It doesn't interfere with the market mechanism; traders and farmers would continue buying and selling at market rates. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- With PDP in place, farmers will likely demand receipts from buyers detailing the quantity and price of the produce sold.
- This will incentivize formalisation of farm trade, which historically has been largely cash-based.
- It will incentivise states to set up APMC mandis or even electronic trading platforms, where farmers can sell their produce.
- These platforms will facilitate transparent transactions and enable farmers to sell their produce digitally.
- It aligns with the goals of formalization, digitization, crop diversification and the marketing reforms advocated by the government.



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