

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



**Date: 20 Mar. 2024**

### **Important News Articles**

1. Activist calls for border march in Ladakh to mark land lost to China -The Hindu
2. RITES conducting feasibility studies along IMEC corridor- The Hindu
3. SC directs States to give ration cards to 8 cr. workers- - The Hindu
4. 27.6 million people engaged in forced labour in 2021: ILO- - The Hindu
5. India to join U.S.-led carbon market project
6. the United States recently returned twenty-two historic artifacts to Japan that were taken following the Battle of Okinawa during World War II - The Hindu
7. Delhi world's most polluted capital city again: Report -The Hindu
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### **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

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3. Barberton Greenstone Belt:
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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. Activist calls for border march in Ladakh to mark land lost to China -The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Around 10,000 people from Ladakh will march to the border along China to showcase how much land has been lost to the neighbouring country, climate activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk said.

**Key Highlights**

- The march would be taken out in the **Finger area (north and south bank of Pangong Tso)**, Demchok, Chushul among others along the Line of Actual Control with China.
- “The march will also highlight the areas, prime pasture lands, that are being turned into solar parks.
- On one hand, nomads are losing their land to corporates who are coming to set up their plants, maybe mining in future
- on the other hand they are losing pasture land to China which is encroaching from the north, the Chinese have captured huge chunks of land in the last few years,”

**No-go areas**

- After the June 15, 2020 incident in Galwan where 20 Indian soldiers were killed in violent clashes with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army
- Several rounds of talks between the two armies have taken place leading to disengagement and creation of buffer zones or no-go areas.

**Significance of Ladakh**

- Ladakh has **Zaskar ranges in the south and Karakoram ranges in the north.**
- It also shares **borders with both Pakistan and China.**
- Its prime location makes it significant and **strategically important for India’s national security.**
- Since ancient times till partition between India and Pakistan, Ladakh remained an **important point along the silk route.**
- The passes of Ladakh connected some of the **economically significant regions of the world, including Central Asia, South Asia and China.**
- Historically, Ladakh includes Gilgit, Hunza, Kargil, Leh and Skardo.
- Despite the harshness of the land and climate, its location made it a desirable strategic location
  - which led to several wars fought by the then empires including Russian, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian and Indian to dominate the passes of the region.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Map based question
- Ladakh

#### 2. RITES conducting feasibility studies along IMEC corridor- The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Leading railway PSU, RITES Ltd. has emerged as a key contender among other Indian railway companies eyeing development along the strategic **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**

**Key Highlights**

- RITES and AD Ports are now analysing the feasibility of development along missing links across the existing rail corridor
  - That passes through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel,
- assessments are being done on the kind of capacity augmentation required, kind of designs and costs involved.
- Even though it is a desert area, the terrain is not that challenging that it can’t be done,”

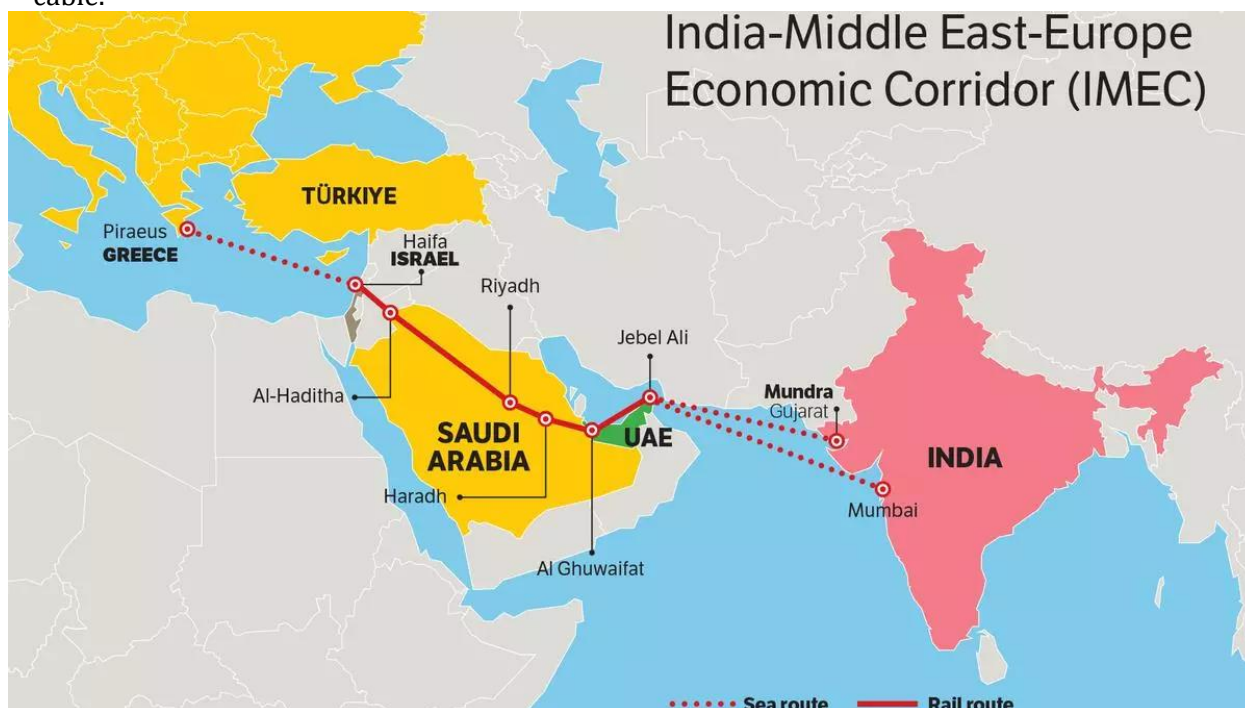
#### Prelims Takeaway

- India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor
- Map based question

- Similarly, a proposed rail route from Jebel Ali (UAE) to Haifa spans 2,565 km with missing link of 745 km
- Another route from Abu Dhabi to Haifa spans 2,449 km with 629 km of missing link, while the proposed route from Dammam port to Haifa is 2,149 km with 289 km of missing link.
- Lastly, Ras Al-Khair port to Haifa spans 1,809 km with 269 km of missing link.

### India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) Project

- The proposed IMEC will consist of Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks and Road transport routes extending across two corridors, that is,
  - The East Corridor – connecting India to the Arabian Gulf,
  - The Northern Corridor – connecting the Gulf to Europe.
- The IMEC corridor will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable.



### 3. SC directs States to give ration cards to 8 cr. workers- - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Antyodaya Anna Yojana
- eShram portal

#### News:

- The Supreme Court recently, took exception to the delays in the implementation of its April 2023 order to provide ration cards to about eight crore migrant workers

#### Key Points

- These migrant workers are registered in the eShram portal **but not covered under the National Food Security Act.**
- The portal has 28.6 crore registrants.
- Of this, **20.63 crore are registered on ration card data.**
- A Bench directed ration cards to be given to the remaining eight crore migrant and unorganized sector workers registered with the eShram portal in two months.

#### NFSA

- **Up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban** populations are covered by NFSA through the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme and the priority households.

- Priority homes are entitled to 5 kilograms of food per person per month.
- While AAY households represent the lowest of the poor or are entitled to 35 kilograms per family per month.
- The former Planning Commission (now Niti Aayog) **used the NSS household consumption survey data** for 2011-2012
  - To estimate the state-wise coverage under the NSSA.
- The task of identifying potential households within the scope under TPDS established for each state is to be completed by states/UTs.
- The development of a basis for selecting priority households and their actual **verification falls under the purview of the state government's duties.**

#### 4. 27.6 million people engaged in forced labour in 2021: ILO - - The Hindu

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

##### Prelims Takeaway

- ILO
- FORCED LABOUR

**News:**

- A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), released in Geneva has found that **forced labour generates illegal profits worth \$36 billion per year.**

**Key Highlights**

- This is an increase of 37% of such illegal profits since 2014 and the study said this is fuelled by both a growth in the number of people forced into labour,
  - as well as higher profits generated from the exploitation of victims. For the study, surveys have been conducted among workers, including Indians in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

**The report titled "Profits and poverty:**

- "Total annual illegal profits from forced labour are **highest in Europe and Central Asia followed by Asia** and the Pacific the Americas ,Africa and the Arab States ," the report said.
- The report also said forced commercial sexual exploitation accounts for more than two-thirds (73%) of the total illegal profits
  - despite accounting for only 27% of the total number of victims in privately imposed labour.
- "After forced **commercial sexual exploitation, the sector with the highest annual illegal profits from forced labour is industry**, followed by services ,agriculture, and domestic work .
- These illegal profits are the wages that rightfully belong in the pockets of workers but instead remain in the hands of their exploiters, as a result of their coercive practices,"
- The international community must urgently come together to take action to end this injustice

**International Labour Organization**

- **Established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations.
- Became the first affiliated specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.
- Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland**
- Promotes internationally recognized human and labour rights.
- Received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.**

**Working toward**

- For improving peace among classes
- Pursuing decent work and justice for workers
- Providing technical assistance to other developing nations

#### 5. India to join U.S.-led carbon market project

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

**News:**

- India has decided to join at least one of the four cooperative work programmes unveiled recently, under the '**clean energy pillar**' of the **U.S.-led Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)**

##### Prelims Takeaway

- Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)\
- Map based questions

- It is one of facilitating and promoting carbon-market activities.

### Key Highlights

- New Delhi is also considering two of the other co-operative work-programme initiatives, one on clean electricity
  - the other on the use of sustainable aviation fuel but will take a call on whether to join or not after thorough analysis.
- **India will join the cooperative working group** on carbon markets **through the Ministry of Power and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency** will be the nodal body
- The IPEF, an initiative led by the U.S. was unveiled in May 2022, bringing together 14 regional partners
  - Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the U.S. and Vietnam.
- It 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.

### Four pillars

- Seen by many analysts as an attempt by the U.S. to counter China's growing influence in the region
- the IPEF aims at having a common set of rules and standards around four pillars viz. connectivity and digital trade
  - resilient supply chains
  - clean energy
  - corruption-free fair trade.

## 6. The United States recently returned twenty-two historic artifacts to Japan that were taken following the Battle of Okinawa during World War II - The Hindu

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

### News:

- **The United States has returned twenty-two historic artifacts to Japan** that were looted following the Battle of Okinawa during World War II, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

### The Battle of Okinawa

- **the final major clash of World War II**, raged for over 80 days in 1945.
- **US forces fought to capture Okinawa**, a strategically located island close to mainland Japan, from a determined Japanese defense.
- The intense fighting resulted in horrific casualties on both sides and ultimately helped shape the decision **to use atomic bombs to end the war**.
- Code named Operation Iceberg, the invasion of Okinawa and other islands in the Ryukyus began on April 1, 1945.
- The immense size of the invasion forces made it the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific War.
- The United States secured Okinawa on June 22, 1945.
- The enormous casualties and the brutal fighting that occurred on Okinawa forced military planners to reconsider the invasion of Japan.
- **It directly influenced** the American decision to **use atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki**.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Map based question

## GS III

### 7. Delhi world's most polluted capital city again: Report -The Hindu

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- WHO
- AQI

**News:**

- Bihar's Begusarai emerged as the world's most polluted metropolitan area while Delhi was identified as the capital city with the poorest air quality, according to a new report.

**Key Highlights**

**The World Air Quality Report**

- This report by IQAir, an air quality tech company, examines air pollution levels globally.
- They rank countries and cities based on how clean or dirty their air is.

**How They Measure It:**

- PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) is their main indicator of air quality.
- Data comes from over 30,000 monitoring stations in 134 countries.
- They use info from both government agencies and their own sensors.

**WHO Air Quality Guidelines:**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) sees air pollution as a major health threat.
- In 2021, they updated their air quality guidelines, recommending stricter limits for six pollutants.

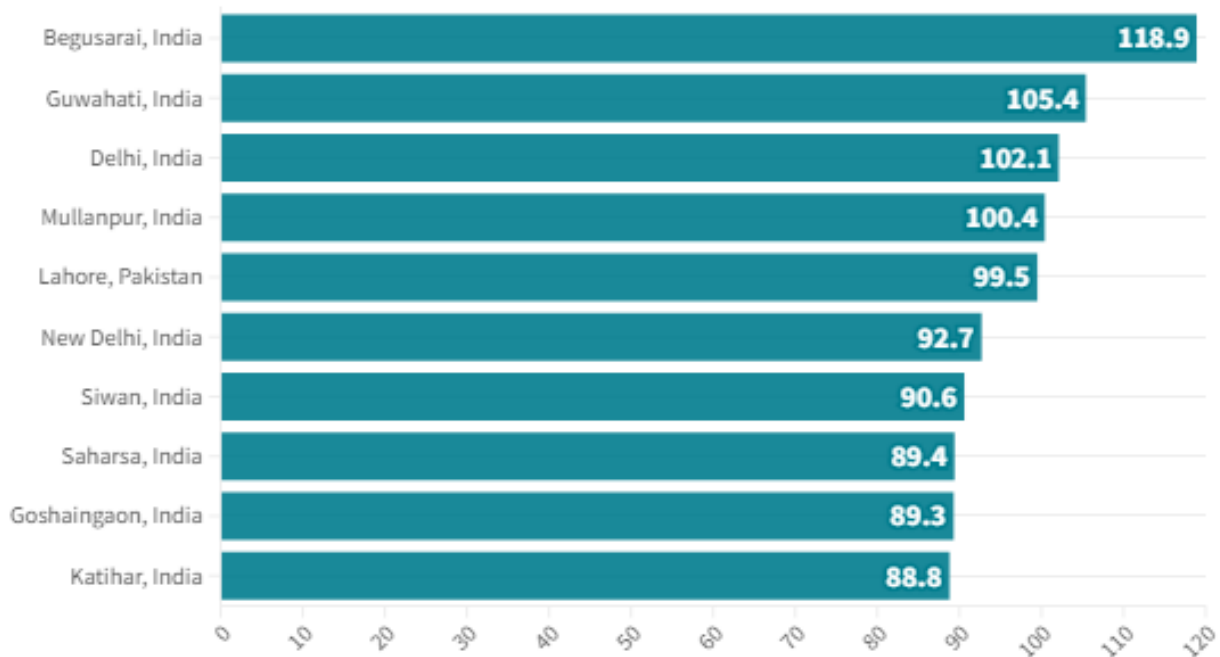
**Key Findings (2023):**

- Most of the world has unhealthy air. Only 7 countries met the WHO's PM2.5 guideline.
- The top five most polluted countries are in Asia and Africa.
- India was the third most polluted country, with 42 of its cities in the top 50 most polluted globally.
- Nine out of the ten most polluted cities are in India.
- Overall, the report paints a concerning picture of global air quality.

| Rank | Country                          | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|------|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1    | Bangladesh                       | 79.9 | 65.8 | 76.9 | 77.1 | 83.3 |
| 2    | Pakistan                         | 73.7 | 70.9 | 66.8 | 59   | 65.8 |
| 3    | India                            | 54.4 | 53.3 | 58.1 | 51.9 | 58.1 |
| 4    | Tajikistan                       | 49   | 46   | 59.4 | 30.9 | --   |
| 5    | Burkina Faso                     | 46.6 | 63   | --   | --   | --   |
| 6    | Iraq                             | 43.8 | 80.1 | 49.7 | --   | 39.6 |
| 7    | United Arab Emirates             | 43   | 45.9 | 36   | 29.2 | 38.9 |
| 8    | Nepal                            | 42.4 | 40.1 | 46   | 39.2 | 44.5 |
| 9    | Egypt                            | 42.4 | 46.5 | 29.1 | --   | 18   |
| 10   | Democratic Republic of the Congo | 40.8 | 15.5 | --   | --   | 32.1 |

## World's most polluted cities

Most polluted city ranking based on annual average PM2.5 concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )



## 8. Delhi's biomining project to clear landfill sites likely to miss 2024 deadline. Slow progress due to fresh waste dumping and weather challenges.-The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Delhi's biomining project to clear landfill sites is likely to miss the 2024 deadline. Slow progress due to fresh waste dumping and weather challenges.

**Harnessing Tiny Miners: Biomining**

- Biomining is a new wave of **metal extraction that uses microscopic allies - bacteria, algae, fungi, or even plants**
- These tiny workers break down rocks and minerals, freeing valuable metals like copper or gold.
- This eco-friendly method doesn't rely on harsh chemicals** and has a much lower impact on the environment compared to traditional mining.

**There are two main biomining techniques:**

- Bioleaching:** Here, microbes dissolve the metals directly, making them easier to collect.
- Biooxidation:** In this approach, microbes weaken the rock around the metal, making it easier to extract.
- Biomining is particularly good at dealing with metals trapped in sulfur-rich minerals.
- This method is still under development, but it holds promise for a cleaner future of metal extraction.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Bioleaching
- Biooxidation



## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 9. Selection and election: The Election Commission needs a selection panel free of executive bias - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

**Context:**

- The quick, if not hasty, filling up of two vacancies in the Election Commission of India (ECI) has attracted justified criticism.

| Key Highlights  | Interim arrangement   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The multi-member body got two new members within days of the resignation of the last Election Commissioner (EC)</li> <li>whose appointment itself came in the midst of a Constitution Bench hearing for a truly independent process of selecting members of the panel that conducts and supervises India's elections.</li> <li>Act setting out the process of selecting the Chief Election Commissioner and other ECs appeared to fall short of the sort of independence the Constitution Bench verdict of March 2023 envisaged.</li> <li>The real problem may lie with the law that Parliament chose to enact last year in response to the Supreme Court of India questioning the absence of any legislation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>since the inception of the Constitution, as required under Article 324, laying down an appointment process for the ECs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The Court's emphasis was on the ECI's independence from the executive so that the elections the panel conducts are truly free and fair.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Towards that end, it sought to fill the vacuum by an interim arrangement under which the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India (CJI) formed the selection committee to choose the CEC and ECs.</li> <li>However, it was meant to be in place only until Parliament enacted a law.</li> <li>In response, the government enacted a law that constituted a panel comprising the Prime Minister and any Union Minister, besides the Leader of the Opposition, or the leader of the largest single party in the Opposition.</li> <li>The question now before the Court is whether a committee in which the executive has a two-one majority can be a truly independent authority.</li> <li>The argument that Prime Ministers have always been selecting the CEC and ECs seems attractive</li> </ul> |

**Conclusion**

- Ultimately, an executive-driven process has to yield to one more rooted in the constitutional principle of having an independent body
  - To hold free and fair elections, even if the CJI, as an institutional head, might not be the person most suited to be a part of the selection process.

### 10. Ties that epitomise India's neighbourhood first policy - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- The King of Bhutan paid a visit to India in November 2023 during which **he hinted at his plans for a Mindfulness City at Gelephu in southern Bhutan**
- On its part, Bhutan has long known that there is no real threat to its sovereignty or identity from its southern flank.
- Hence, it has looked to India to help it grow, develop and prosper.

**The Gelephu project**

- It is to be like a Special Economic Zone to attract foreign investment and advance prosperity for that nation.
- Simultaneously, the Gelephu Mindfulness City is to keep sustainability, well-being and environmental concerns at the forefront.
- Gelephu city is expected to focus on human well-being too with an emphasis on yoga, rest and recreation, spa therapies and mental relaxation channels.
- This is a good augury for the continued growth and development of India-Bhutan ties. It epitomizes India's Neighbourhood First policy approach.

**The anchor of hydropower cooperation**

- Hydropower cooperation is the bedrock of India's relations with Bhutan.
- The delayed Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project is expected to be completed in 2024 — yet another successful example of the government-to-government model of cooperation in hydropower.
- In recent years, a new joint venture model was developed for the construction of hydroprojects between India and Bhutan
  - but none of the proposed five projects has really taken off.
- India has also been a major development assistance partner to Bhutan and contributed ₹5,000 crore to its 12th Five Year Plan which just concluded.

**Measures to consider**

- In the years ahead, India must contribute to the success of the Gelephu Mindfulness City and can perhaps consider the following measures:
  - commence direct flights between Mumbai/Delhi and Gelephu;
  - provide our technology and knowledge in building hard infrastructure to Bhutan (the private sector will take the lead);
  - encourage high-end Indian tourists and businesspersons to visit Gelephu in controlled numbers;
  - Encourage Indian businesses to set up shop in the city.

**Conclusion**

- Gelephu is next to remote parts of West Bengal and Assam and the success of the Mindfulness City will have positive socio-economic spillovers for these geographies as well.
- It will provide yet another example of the win-win cooperation between India and Bhutan.



# Mentorship

  
India

## Quick Look

### 1. Defamation

- Under Indian law, defamation can be a civil wrong or a criminal offence.
- Civil defamation can be libel (through writing) or slander (spoken word), and is based on tort law (law imposing civil liability).
- It is punishable with financial compensation, and damages are computed based on probabilities.
- In criminal cases, defamation must be proven beyond reasonable doubt. Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code (criminal defamation) says:
  - “Whoever, by words or by signs or by visible representations, makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person intending to harm the reputation of such person, is said to defame that person.”
  - Criminal defamation can attract a jail term up to two years, with or without fine (Section 500 IPC).

### 2. Global Progress in Financial Inclusion

- Financial inclusion has emerged as a crucial driver of economic growth and development globally, with India making significant strides in this domain.
- The WB's Global Findex Database highlights a notable increase in adult ownership of bank accounts worldwide between 2011 and 2020
  - with India experiencing a commendable rise of 42 percentage points during this period.
- This surge underscores the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at expanding access to financial services, particularly for marginalised populations, including women.

### 3. Barberton Greenstone Belt

- It is situated on the eastern edge of the Kaapvaal Craton in South Africa.
- It is known for its gold mineralisation and for its komatiites, an unusual type of ultramafic volcanic rock named after the Komati River that flows through the belt.
- Some of the oldest exposed rocks on Earth (greater than 3.6 Ga) are located in the Barberton Greenstone Belt of the Eswatini-Barberton areas,
  - these contain some of the oldest traces of life on Earth
- second only to the Isua Greenstone Belt of Western Greenland. The Makhonjwa Mountains make up 40% of the Baberton belt.

### 4. Ultramafic rocks

- Ultramafic (or ultrabasic) rocks are dark-colored igneous and meta-igneous rocks that are rich in minerals containing magnesium and iron ("mafic" minerals) and have a relatively low content of silica.
- They are generally composed of more than 90 percent mafic minerals
- they have a high content of magnesium oxide (more than 18 percent MgO) and iron oxide (FeO).
- Their silica content is less than 45 percent, and their potassium content is low.
- The Earth's mantle is thought to be composed of ultramafic rocks. Most of the exposed ultramafic rocks have been found in orogenic (mountain-forming) belts.

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following pairs**

**Region in news : countries**

1. Chushul : India
2. Gelephu : United Kingdom
3. Okinawa : USA

**How many pairs given above are correctly matched?**

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

**Q2. Consider the following statements about India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor**

1. The proposed IMEC will consist of Railroad routes extending across east corridors connecting India to the Arabian Gulf only.
2. India, the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the European Union, Italy, France, and Germany are signatory
3. India will join the cooperative working group on carbon markets through the Ministry of Power and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency will be the nodal body

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

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

**Q3. Consider the following statements**

1. Up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban populations are covered by NFSA through the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme and the priority households.
2. AAY households represent the lowest of the poor or are entitled to 35 kilograms per family per month.
3. The development of a basis for selecting priority households and their actual verification falls under the purview of the central government's duties.

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

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

**Q4. Statements I:** As per ILO The report titled "Profits and poverty, Total annual illegal profits from forced labour are highest in Central Asia followed by Asia and the Pacific, the Americas.

**Statements II:** The Constitution of India prohibits forced labour under Article 24

**Which one of the following statements is correct?**

- A. Statement I is correct but statement II is incorrect
- B. Statement I is incorrect but Statement II is correct
- C. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement I
- D. Both Statement I and Statement II are incorrect and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement I

**Q5. Consider the following statements about Indo-Pacific Economic Framework**

1. It 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 Indian Ocean
2. The IPEF is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and allows members to negotiate the parts they want to
3. India and 13 countries located in the Pacific Ocean are its members,

**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**

**Battle : countries**

1. Battle of the Atlantic : Western Allies and the Axis powers
2. Battle of the Okinawa : USA & Japan
3. The Korean War : USA & North Korea

**How many pairs given above are correctly matched?**

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

**Q7. Consider the following statements about the World Air Quality Report**

1. Most of the world has unhealthy air and only 7 countries met the WHO's PM2.5 guideline.
2. The top five most polluted countries are in Asia and Africa.
3. India was the third most polluted country, with 42 of its cities in the top 50 most polluted globally.
4. Nine out of the ten most polluted cities are in India.

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

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

**Q8. Consider the following statements regarding the Conference of the Parties (COP) in the context of climate change:**

1. COP is an annual gathering organized by the United Nations to address international climate-related issues and negotiate global agreements.
2. COP28 is currently focused on implementing the Global Stocktake (GST), a review mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement to enhance climate actions.

3. The host country, UAE, has successfully operationalized the Loss and Damage Fund during COP28.

**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 statements regarding the National Broadcasting Policy:**

1. The policy in India outlines guidelines and regulations for the functioning of television and radio broadcasting.
2. The formulation of the policy is the exclusive domain of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
3. The primary objective of the policy is to ensure government control over media content and programming.

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

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

**Q10. Which of the following is a key indicator used to measure unemployment in a country?**

- A. Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- B. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- C. Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)
- D. Wholesale Price Index (WPI)

## Prelims Track Answer

**Answer 1 Option A is correct.**

### Explanations

- the final major clash of World War II, raged for over 80 days in 1945.
- US forces fought to capture Okinawa, a strategically located island close to mainland Japan, from a determined Japanese defense. OKINAWA is in Japan
- Chushul is a village in the Leh district of Ladakh, India. It is located in the Durbuk tehsil, in the area known as "Chushul Valley.
- The King of Bhutan paid a visit to India in November 2023 during which he hinted at his plans for a Mindfulness City at Gelephu in southern Bhutan. Gelephu is in Bhutan.

• **Hence only one pair is correct**

**Answer 2 Option B is correct**

### Explanation

- The proposed IMEC will consist of Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks and Road transport routes extending across two corridors, that is,
  - The East Corridor – connecting India to the Arabian Gulf,
  - The Northern Corridor – connecting the Gulf to Europe.
- The IMEC corridor will also include an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- India, the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the European Union, Italy, France, and Germany ARE signatories **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- India has decided to join at least one of the four cooperative work programmes unveiled recently, under the 'clean energy pillar' of the U.S.-led Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)
- It is one of facilitating and promoting carbon-market activities.
- New Delhi is also considering two of the other co-operative work-programme initiatives, one on clean electricity
- the other on the use of sustainable aviation fuel but will take a call on whether to join or not after thorough analysis.

- India will join the cooperative working group on carbon markets through the Ministry of Power and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency will be the nodal body. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

**Answer 3 Option A is correct**

### Explanation

- Up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban populations are covered by NFSA through the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme and the priority households. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Priority homes are entitled to 5 kilograms of food per person per month.
- While AAY households represent the lowest of the poor or are entitled to 35 kilograms per family per month. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The former Planning Commission (now Niti Aayog) used the NSS household consumption survey data for 2011-2012
- to estimate the state-wise coverage under the NSSA.
- The task of identifying potential households within the scope under TPDS (Targeted Public Distribution System) established for each state is to be completed by states/UTs.
- The development of a basis for selecting priority households and their actual verification falls under the purview of the state government's duties. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Answer 4 Option D is correct**

### Explanation

- As per ILO The report titled "Profits and poverty:
- "Total annual illegal profits from forced labour are highest in Europe and Central Asia followed by Asia and the Pacific, the Americas, Africa and the Arab States," the report said.
- The Constitution of India prohibits forced labour under Article 23. **Hence both statements are incorrect**

**Answer 5 Option A is correct**
**Explanation**

- It 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 incorrect**

- The IPEF was launched in 2021 with a dozen initial partners who together represent 40% of the world GDP.
- 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”. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- Supply-chain resilience
- Clean energy, decarbonisation & infrastructure
- Taxation & anti-corruption
- Fair & resilient trade.
- Currently, India and 13 countries located in the Pacific Ocean are its members, **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Answer 6 Option B is correct.**
**Explanations**

- US forces fought to capture Okinawa, a strategically located island close to mainland Japan, from a determined Japanese defense. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Battle of the Atlantic **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Battle of the Atlantic, in World War II, a contest between the Western Allies and the Axis powers **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Korean War was fought between North Korea and South Korea **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Answer 7 Option D is correct**
**Explanation**

- This report by IQAir, an air quality tech company, examines air pollution levels globally.
- They rank countries and cities based on how clean or dirty their air is.
- PM2.5 (fine particulate matter) is their main indicator of air quality.

- Data comes from over 30,000 monitoring stations in 134 countries.
- They use info from both government agencies and their own sensors.
- WHO Air Quality Guidelines:
- The World Health Organization (WHO) sees air pollution as a major health threat.
- In 2021, they updated their air quality guidelines, recommending stricter limits for six pollutants.
- Key Findings (2023):
- Most of the world has unhealthy air. Only 7 countries met the WHO's PM2.5 guideline.
- The top five most polluted countries are in Asia and Africa.
- India was the third most polluted country, with 42 of its cities in the top 50 most polluted globally.
- Nine out of the ten most polluted cities are in India.
- Overall, the report paints a concerning picture of global air quality.
- **Hence, ALL statement ARE correct.**

**Answer 8 Option C is correct**
**Explanation**

- The Conference of the Parties (COP) is indeed an annual gathering organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It brings together countries to discuss and negotiate global agreements on climate change-related issues. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- COP28 is currently underway, and one of its primary focuses is on implementing the Global Stocktake (GST). The GST is a review mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement to assess collective progress and enhance climate actions globally. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- the host country, UAE, has successfully operationalized the Loss and Damage Fund during COP28. This fund is intended to assist developing countries in recovering from climate disasters. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

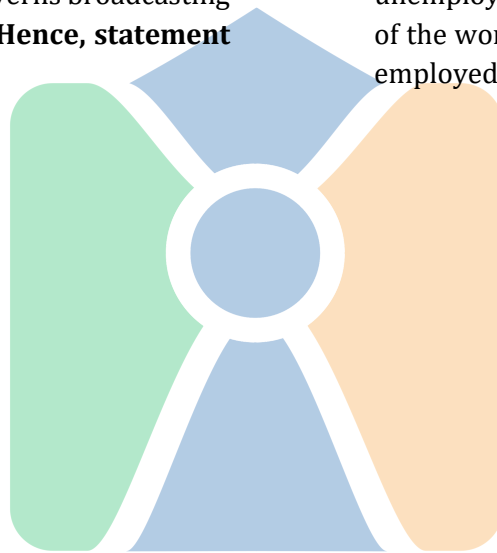
**Answer 9 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- The National Broadcasting Policy provides guidelines, regulations, and principles for the functioning of television and radio broadcasting in India. It addresses various aspects, including content standards, licensing, and industry practices. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in India is responsible for formulating the National Broadcasting Policy. It plays a central role in shaping the policy framework that governs broadcasting activities in the country. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- While the National Broadcasting Policy does establish regulations to ensure compliance with certain standards, its primary objective is not to exercise government control over media content. The policy aims to balance the interests of various stakeholders, promote diversity, and ensure quality in broadcasting. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Answer 10 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is a key indicator used to measure unemployment. It represents the percentage of the working-age population that is either employed or actively seeking employment.

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