

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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2. Govt to discuss transition timeline, consent mechanism with industry - Indian Express
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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. France and Germany back EU enlargement proposal - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- **France and Germany, the two largest economies in the European Union**, pushed new proposals for the enlargement of the 27-member bloc.
- The policy paper was presented along the fringes of a European ministerial meeting.
- The paper, commissioned in January this year, is in response to growing calls for expanding the EU, partly in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- The European Union
- EURO

#### The European Union

- It is a **group of 27 countries** that operate as a cohesive economic and political block.
- **19 of these countries use EURO as their official currency.**
- **8 EU members** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden) **do not use the euro.**
- The EU grew out of a desire to form a single European political entity to end centuries of warfare among European countries
  - It culminated with World War II and decimated much of the continent.
- The EU has **developed an internal single market through a standardised system** of laws
- It **applies in all member states in matters**, where members have agreed to act as one.

#### European Union and India

- The European Union **works closely with India to promote** peace, generate employment, **boost economic growth, and enhance sustainable development.**
- At the 2017 European Union-India Summit, **leaders reiterated their intention to strengthen cooperation** on implementing the **2030 Agenda for sustainable development**
- The European Union is the **largest trading partner**, accounting for 85 billion euros (95 billion USD) worth of trade in 2017, ahead of China and the USA.
- The EU's share of foreign investment inflows to India has more than doubled from 8% to 18% in the last decade, **making the EU the largest foreign investor in India.**
- Since 2007, there has **been a free trade agreement between the EU and India.**

#### 2. Govt to discuss transition timeline, consent mechanism with industry - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- Almost a month after the data protection Act was notified into law, **the Centre will kick start discussions**
  - The discussion is on contours of subsequent rules which are crucial for its operationalising.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Data Protection Board
- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

#### Key Highlights

- Officials from the **IT Ministry will meet representatives of top tech companies** such as Meta Google, Apple and Amazon.
- Meeting is to **discuss issues including the timeline for compliance, whether all entities will be given the same amount of time to adhere to the law.**
- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, even though notified as law, **depends heavily on subordinate legislation**
  - at least 25 rules have to be formulated to operationalise the Act

- The government **has also been empowered to enact rules for any provision that it deems fit.**
- The government will implement the law **first for big tech companies and offer a longer transition timeline for its own agencies and departments**, smaller entities, and start-ups.
- The law requires companies to **gather personal data of users through a consent-based mechanism.**
- It even **allows some relaxations to that end for certain “legitimate uses”.**
- The penalty **for not being able to take enough safeguards for preventing a data breach could go as high as Rs 250 crore.**
- The data protection Act **also allows significant concessions to small businesses and start-ups from some key provisions**
- The **law has retained the contents of the original version** of the legislation proposed last November.
- In its new avatar, the **proposed law has also accorded virtual censorship powers to the Centre.**
- It empowers the **Central government to block any platform that has violated its provisions** on at least two different instances.
- The Act **also allows the central government to exempt its instrumentalities** from adhering to any and all provisions of the law
- It will allow **centre to processing citizens’ personal data for reasons** including national security, and public order, among other things

#### Digital Personal Data Protection Act

- It will apply to the **processing of digital personal data within India where such data is collected online, or collected offline and is digitised.**
- It will also apply to **such processing outside India, if it is for offering goods or services in India.**
- Personal data may be **processed only for a lawful purpose upon consent of an individual.**
- **Data fiduciaries will be obligated to maintain the accuracy of data, keep data secure, and delete data once its purpose has been met.**
- The Bill grants **certain rights to individuals including the right to obtain information, seek correction and erasure, and grievance redressal.**
- The central government will establish the **Data Protection Board of India to adjudicate on non-compliance with the provisions of the act.**

### 3. WHO releases report on global impact of high BP - The Hindu/ WHO red flag: Only 37% Indians with high BP diagnosed, 30% get treatment - Indian Express

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

#### News:

- At least **4.6 million deaths in India can be prevented by 2040** if half its hypertensive population controls its blood pressure, **says a report**
  - the first-ever report released by WHO on the global impact of hypertension.
- It estimates that **31 per cent of the country’s population or 188.3 million people are living with the condition currently.**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Hypertension
- World Health Organisation (WHO)

#### Key Highlights

- High blood pressure (140/90 mmHg or higher) **leads to stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney damage and many other health problems** and is preventable.
- Only **37 percent of Indians with hypertension are diagnosed** and only 30 per cent get treated.
- At present, **only 15 percent of those with hypertension in the country have it under control**, the report says.

### What report mean to young population

- “Uncontrolled hypertension damages blood vessels and organs and this impact increases with **prolonged exposure to heart stress**.
- So **young people are at a high risk of future adverse** health events if their hypertension is undetected or uncontrolled.
- Given the high levels of diabetes (101 million) and pre-diabetes (137 million) in our population, **uncontrolled hypertension can ignite a wildfire of health complications**.
- However, **effective control, by changing our living habits and using medicines additionally when needed**, can greatly avert these risks.
- **Detection of hypertension also opens the door to investigation**, detection and management of other abnormalities.
- While India has decided to **put 75 million patients with hypertension or diabetes on standard care by 2025**
- Globally, hypertension **affects one in three adults or about 1.3 billion people**.

### The Primary Trigger

- **High salt intake, tobacco use, obesity, alcohol consumption** and lack of physical exercise can trigger hypertension.
- In fact, **the report flagged tobacco use (28 per cent) and physical inactivity (34 per cent)** as the two most potent triggers in India.

### Low awareness

- “**In rural India, a majority of the people still do not know much about the condition**.
- even **diagnosed people are reluctant to take these medicines** and follow dosage
- There are **no symptoms really until there are complications** — the heart gets damaged or the kidney fails.

### Prevention protocol in India- WHO

- The report takes a look at the **India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI)**
  - a government initiative to screen people and put them on hypertension treatment at their local health centres
- It has as of now **enrolled 5.8 million people with hypertension from 27 states**.
- It flags issues with **procuring the blood pressure medicine that the programme initially faced**.
- “**By 2020, the IHCI had ensured that more than 70 per cent of health care facilities** had ensured one month’s stock of the protocol medicines,
- With an **adequate and uninterrupted availability of drugs**, it was possible to decentralise the programme.
- The **program was decentralised to 18,000+ Ayushman Bharat health and wellness Centres** for improved access to care.

### Way forward

- **Continue medication** on diagnosis.
- **promotion of dietary approaches** that help people to reduce salt in food and increase consumption of fruit and vegetables (which contain blood pressure lowering potassium).
- **Alcohol consumption should be avoided** or greatly reduced, as it precipitates or perpetuates hypertension and makes effective control very difficult.
- **Physical activity, good sleeping habits, reduced exposure to air pollution** will help lower blood pressure, as will stress coping methods like yoga, meditation and music.
- **Technology enabled frontline health workers, like ASHAs and ANMs**, can be very effective in early detection and long-term management of hypertension.

## 4. SHREYAS scheme empowers thousands: over 2300 crore rupees allocated for education of SC and OBC students since 2014 - PIB

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

### News:

- A total of **1628.89 crore rupees** have been released to benefit **21326 beneficiaries** under the **umbrella scheme SHREYAS**, from 2014-15 until 2022-23.

### Prelims Takeaway

- SHREYAS Scheme
- University Grants Commission
- National Eligibility Test

### SHREYAS Scheme

- The **Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme** has **four central sector sub-schemes**.
  - Top Class Education for SCs
  - Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs
  - National Overseas Scheme for SCs
  - National Fellowship for SCs
- Since these sub-schemes are central sector schemes, **state-wise data is not maintained**.

### Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs

- **Objectives**
  - To **provide coaching of good quality** for economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) candidates.
  - To enable them to **appear in competitive and entrance examinations** for obtaining jobs as well as securing admission in reputed higher education institutions.
- The **ceiling of the total family income** under the scheme is **8 lakhs per annum**.
- The **ratio of SC:OBC students is 70:30**, and **30% of slots are reserved for females in each category**.
- In case of the **non-availability of an adequate number of candidates** in the SC category, the **Ministry can relax this ratio**.
- However, in no case, **less than 50% SC students shall be permitted**.

### Top Class Education for SCs

- **Objective:** To **recognise and promote quality education** amongst students belonging to SCs by **providing full financial support**.
- **Coverage:** SC students pursuing studies beyond the 12th class.
- The scholarship, once awarded, will **continue till the completion of the course**, subject to **satisfactory performance** of the student.
- The ceiling of the total family income under the scheme is **8 lakhs per annum**.
- Under the scheme, **full tuition fees, non-refundable charges and academic allowance and other expenses** are provided.

### National Overseas Scheme for SCs

- Provides **financial assistance for pursuing masters and Ph.D. level courses abroad** to the selected students from
  - Schedule Caste (SC)
  - De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes
  - Landless agricultural labourers
  - Traditional artisan categories
- **Eligibility Criteria**
  - Total family income, including the candidate less than 8 lakhs per annum
  - More than 60% marks in the qualifying examination
  - Below 35 years of age
  - Secured admission in top 500 QS ranking foreign Institutes/ Universities.
- Under the scheme, **total tuition fees, maintenance and contingency allowance, visa fees, to and fro air passage etc.** are provided to the awardees.

### National Fellowship for SC Students

- Provides **fellowship to SC students** for pursuing **higher education** leading to **M.Phil/PhD degrees in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences** in Indian Universities/Institutions/ Colleges recognised by the **University Grants Commission (UGC)**.
- Provides for **2000 new slots per year** who have qualified the **National Eligibility Test- Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF)** of UGC and **Junior Research Fellows for Science stream** qualifying UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) Joint Test.

## GS II

### 5. India denies any role in Nijjar's killing in Canada - The Hindu/ Trudeau claims Indian Govt link to Khalistan leader's killing; Delhi says absurd - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

#### News:

- Recently, a **DIPLOMATIC standoff erupted between India and Canada**
- The Canadian Prime Minister **alleged a "potential link" between the Indian government and the killing of a pro-Khalistan leader** in Canada earlier this year.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Operation Blue Star
- Anandpur Sahib Resolution (1973)

#### Khalistan movement

- It is a **Sikh separatist movement** seeking to create a homeland for Sikhs.
- Movement wanted to establish a **sovereign state called Khalistan** ('Land of the Khalsa'), in the Punjab region.

#### Background

- Its origins have been traced back to **India's independence and subsequent Partition along religious lines**.
- **The Punjab province**, which was divided between **India and Pakistan**, witnessed **communal violence** and generated millions of refugees.
- The historic Sikh Empire's capital, **Lahore**, as well as **sacred Sikh sites like Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, went to Pakistan**.
- The political struggle for greater autonomy began with the **Punjabi Suba Movement for the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state**.
- **The States Reorganisation Commission report (1955) rejected this demand**.
- The state of **Punjab was reorganised** (trifurcated into the Hindi-Hindu-majority HP and Haryana, and Punjabi-Sikh-majority Punjab) in 1966.
- The Punjabi Suba movement had **galvanised the Akali Dal**, which concluded the **Anandpur Sahib Resolution (1973) demanding autonomy** (not secession from India) for the state of Punjab.

#### The rise of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

- By the 1980s, the **appeal of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his followers** (mostly from the lower rungs of the social ladder) were getting increasingly violent.
- In 1982, with support from the Akali Dal's leadership, he **launched a civil disobedience movement called the Dharam Yudh Morcha**.
- He **took up residence inside the Golden Temple**, directing demonstrations and clashes with the police.

#### Government action

- The Khalistan movement **was crushed in India following Operation Blue Star**.
- the **Indian Army to flush out militants from the Golden Temple** and neutralise Bhindranwale in 1984

- The **operation gravely wounded (by the desecration of the Golden Temple)** the Sikh community around the world.

#### Afterward

- **PM Indira Gandhi was assassinated** (on October 31, 1984), triggering the worst communal violence since Partition.
- Punjab **became the hub of a long drawn-out insurgency** (allegedly supported by Pakistan) that lasted till 1995.

#### Today, the movement is fuelled by:

- vote bank politics
- social issues (unemployment, drug menace in Punjab)
- dissatisfaction among the Sikh diaspora
- support from non-state actors.

## 6. Centre floats new science awards - The Hindu

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

#### News:

- The **Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar** to have **three Vigyan Ratna, 25 Vigyan Shri, 25 Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar and three Vigyan Team awards.**
- the winners will be announced every year on **May 11, which is National Technology Day**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- National Research Foundation
- Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

#### Key Points

- Nearly a year after deciding to cut the number of prizes annually awarded by its Ministries, **the Union government is set to institute the Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar**
  - 56 prizes to felicitate scientists, technologists and innovators.
- Akin to the prestigious Padma awards, **these awards will not include any cash component**
- they will likely bestow a **certificate and a medallion on the awardee,**

#### Multidisciplinary prizes

- These prizes **will be awarded annually for:**
  - sciences, mathematics and computer science, medicine, agricultural science, technology and innovation
  - atomic energy, space science and technology, and a 13th category, simply called “others”.
- “It may be ensured that **each domain may be represented.**
- Adequate **representation of women** may also be ensured.
- The **56 proposed awards are a stark reduction from the almost 300 science prizes** that used to be given by Union Ministries.
- In their previous avatar, **the prizes also had a significant cash component.**
- The **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB)** awards now includes ₹5 lakh per winner, as well as a salary perk.
  - It is given by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) since 1958,
- In fact, the government announced the names of **12 winners of the SSB awards just last week, after a year's delay.**
- The **National Technology Awards**, given to teams **by the Technology Development Board (a DST entity)**, also include cash prizes worth ₹25 lakh.

#### Eligibility

- The new awards will also be **open to persons of Indian origin (PIOs)**
  - a maximum of one such may be awarded the Vigyan Ratna
  - three PIOs each can be selected for the Vigyan Shri and the VY-SSB.
- However, **PIOs will not be eligible for the Vigyan Team awards.**
- There are **no age limits for any prizes except the SSB**, for which recipients must be 45 years or younger.

#### The Vigyan Ratna awards

- The award shall be for **“lifetime contributions along with excellence made in any field of science.**



### the Vigyan Shri award

- The award is for “**distinguished contribution to any field.**”

### The SSB

- It is for “**exceptional contribution by young scientists**”.

### About Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

- The awards will be announced **annually on May 11, which is National Technology Day**
- It will be **awarded on National Space Day, August 23.**
- These are the days on which India successfully conducted its second **nuclear test in 1998, and then catapulted the Chandrayaan-3’s Vikram lander on the moon this year.**
- The RVP awards, **which will commence from 2024, will be given by the President or the Vice President.**
- A **committee will be constituted every year** comprising:
  - the Secretaries of six Science Ministries
  - up to four presidents of science and engineering academies
  - six distinguished scientists and technologists from various fields.
- The CSIR will coordinate the administration of the **awards process for two years**
- After which it will be taken over **by the proposed National Research Foundation.**

## 7. Govt may soon tweak PLI schemes for three sectors - Indian Express

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

### News:

- The government may **soon tweak the PLI scheme for pharmaceuticals, drones and textiles sectors.**
- This move **aims to encourage investment and boost manufacturing.**
- The changes include **extending some time for the pharma sector and adding some additional products** in some sectors.

### Prelims Takeaway

- PLI Scheme
- Make In India

### PLI Scheme

- The PLI scheme was conceived to **scale up domestic manufacturing capability**, accompanied by **higher import substitution and employment generation.**
- Launched in **March 2020**, the scheme initially targeted **three industries** namely
  - Mobile and allied Component Manufacturing
  - Electrical Component Manufacturing and
  - Medical Devices
- So far, the government has announced **PLI schemes for 14 sectors.**

### Objectives

- To **reduce India’s dependence** on China and other foreign countries.
- It **supports the labour-intensive sectors** and aims to **increase the employment ratio** in India.
- **Reduce the import bills and boost up domestic production.**
- However, PLI Yojana **invites foreign companies** to set up their units in India and **encourages domestic enterprises to expand** their production units.

### Incentives Under the Scheme

- The incentives, calculated on the basis of **incremental sales**, range from
  - **as low as 1%** for the **electronics and technology products**
  - **as high as 20%** for the **manufacturing of critical key starting drugs and certain drug intermediaries.**
- In some sectors such as advanced chemistry cell batteries, textile products and the drone industry, the incentive to be given will be **calculated on the basis of sales, performance and local value addition** done over the period of five years.

## 8. Aditya L1 spacecraft embarks on 110-day journey to L1 point - Indian Express

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

### News:

- Recently, **ISRO carried out the Trans-Lagrangian 1 Insertion (TL1I)** manoeuvre.
- **India's first space-based observatory to study the Sun, Aditya-L1,** is headed to the Lagrangian 1 (L1) point.
- **The TL1I manoeuvre marks the beginning of Aditya-L1's 110-day journey** towards the L1 point which lies between the Sun-Earth line.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Aditya-L1 Mission
- Lagrange Points
- ISRO

### Aditya-L1 Mission

- **Launched by ISRO to the L1 orbit which is about 1.5 million km** from the Earth.
- It is expected to **take more than 120 days** for the spacecraft to reach the L1.
- The **orbit allows Aditya-L1 to look at the Sun continuously** without any occultation/eclipses.

### Objective

- To study the **Sun's corona, Sun's photosphere, chromosphere, solar emissions, solar winds and flares and Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs).**
- To carry out **round-the-clock imaging of the Sun.**

### Launch Vehicle and Payloads

- **Aditya L1 will be launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**
- It also **launched the Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and the Mars Orbiter spacecraft in 2013.**
- The mission will **have 7 payloads (instruments) on board viz.**
  - VELC
  - Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT)
  - Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS)
  - Aditya Solar wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX)
  - High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HEL1OS)
  - Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya (PAPA)
  - Advanced Tri-axial High Resolution Digital Magnetometers

### What is L1?

- It refers to **Lagrangian/Lagrange Point 1, one of the five points in the orbital plane of the Earth-Sun system.**
- These are **positions in space where the combined gravitational pull** of two large masses roughly balance each other.
- These **can be used by spacecraft to reduce fuel consumption** needed to remain in position.

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. Road ahead on women's quota - Indian Express

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

**Context:**

- Recently, the government brought the **Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023**.
- The Bill aims to provide **33% reservation to women in Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies**.
- In **March 2010, Rajya Sabha passed The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008**, but the legislation was not taken up by Lok Sabha.

#### Key Provisions of the Bill

- As nearly as maybe, one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election to the House of People shall be reserved for women
- This will include the seats reserved for women belonging to the SCs and STs.
- It proposes a similar provision for Assemblies in the states and Delhi too.
- It proposes to introduce new articles viz. 330A and 332A in the Constitution.
- These new provisions will introduce the changes for Lok Sabha and Assemblies respectively.
- It also has a sunset clause, mandating that the reservation will be for a period of 15 years from the date of commencement of the Act.
- However, the Bill makes the implementation of women's reservation contingent upon the delimitation process.
- Therefore, women's reservation may not effectively be operationalised in Lok Sabha before the general elections of 2029.

#### Identification of reserved seats

- The Bill states that one-third of the seats in Parliament and state Assemblies will be reserved for women.
- However, it doesn't specify how these seats will be identified.
- This proposed amendment is enabling in nature, so, it will grant the government the power to enact a law for its implementation.
- Hence, it is expected that the determination of seats will be addressed by a separate law that the government will introduce.

#### Current Procedure for reserved seats for SCs and STs

- The Delimitation Act, 2002 lays down broad principles for reserving seats.
- The Delimitation Commission appointed under the Act is responsible for deciding the number of constituencies to be reserved based on the population.
- According to the Act, constituencies in which seats are reserved for the SC/ST shall be distributed in different parts of the State and located, as far as practicable, in those areas where the proportion of their population to the total is comparatively large.

#### Amendments needed to operationalise the scheme

- For delimitation, a precondition for the implementation of reservation, Articles 82 and 170(3) of the Constitution would have to be amended.
- Article 82 provides for the readjustment of constituencies of both Lok Sabha and state Assemblies after every Census.
- Article 170(3) deals with composition of the Legislative Assemblies.
- Reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions and Urban Local Bodies Article 243D of the Constitution provides for reservation of seats for SCs, STs, and women in Panchayats.
- It also says that nothing shall prevent the legislature of a state from making any provision for reservation of seats in any Panchayat or offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at any level in favour of the backward classes of citizens.
- Article 243D says not less than one-third of the total number of seats reserved for SCs and STs shall be reserved for women.

#### Government Data

- As on September 8, 2021, in at least 18 states, the percentage of women elected representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions was more than 50 percent.
- The highest proportion of women representatives was in Uttarakhand (56.02 percent) and the lowest was in Uttar Pradesh (33.34 percent).
- Overall, there were 45.61 per cent women representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions in the country.

### 2. Facilitating degrees within a degree - The Hindu

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

**Context**

- The movement to specify **frameworks for higher education qualifications** had gained momentum across the world **in the late 1990s**.
- However, **India remained without a National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF)** until recently.

- The idea was deliberated at the **60th meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education in 2012**, which assigned the **responsibility to the University Grants Commission (UGC)**.

### The Problem of Plenty

- Globally, higher education qualification frameworks include details of the definition and requirements of credits.
- The UGC has chosen to prescribe two separate frameworks viz. the NHEQF and the National Credit Framework.
- Higher educational institutions are separately required to implement the Academic Bank of Credits as a mandated modality.
- This is for recognising, accepting, and transferring credits across courses and institutions.
- Additionally, there are many other regulations that impinge on higher education qualifications which could have been integrated into the NHEQF.
- This defeats the purpose of prescribing a qualification framework.
- A qualification framework must minimise ambiguities in comprehending qualifications in a cross-cultural context.

### National Higher Education Qualification

- By definition, a national higher education qualification must encompass all disciplines.
- It must clearly provide for the eligibility conditions for the entry into and completion of all programmes of studies.
- The NHEQF does provide exit requirements but the eligibility conditions and pathways to enter a programme at a particular level are mentioned vaguely.
- Besides, higher education qualifications awarded by disciplines such as agriculture, law, medicine, and pharmacy are strikingly absent.
- They could have been included in the NHEQF through consensus across various regulatory bodies.

### Draws from Bologna Process

- This document draws copiously from the Bologna process that led to the European Qualifications Framework and the Dublin descriptors.
- The higher education system in India is far more diverse and complex than the European Higher Education Area.
- It warrants much wider and more intense consultations with the States.
- The process of formulating the NHEQF should have duly recognised
  - The sheer size of the higher education system and the variations in it
  - The federal structure
  - Constitutional provisions that put education on the Concurrent List
  - The fact that States spend a lot more on education than the Centre.

### Degrees within a Degree

- The document fails to recognise that learning and knowledge must go beyond earning a livelihood.
- The overall framework appears to facilitate 'degrees within a degree'.
- Those who hold four-year undergraduate degrees with a minimum CGPA of 7.5 are eligible for admission to PhD programmes.
- This will make the higher education system elitist.

### Difficulties in Implementation

- The document places all higher education qualifications on a continuum of 4.5 to 10.
- The framework equates postgraduate diplomas with four-year undergraduate programmes.
- This poses a problem in determining the level of such undergraduate degrees that are pursued after another undergraduate degree like B.Ed.
- Further, the idea that a B.Ed could be completed in one, two or four years is confusing.
- The credit framework document of the UGC mandates that each semester must have a minimum of 20 credits.
- Higher educational institutions with minimal infrastructure and meagre faculty resources may find this daunting.

## Quick Look

### 1. YES-TECH Manual

- It is a comprehensive guide developed after extensive testing and piloting in 100 districts of India.
- It facilitates the implementation of YES-TECH, a technology-driven yield estimation system (YES).
- The manual offers methodologies, best practices, and integration insights for accurate yield assessments.
- It helps in enhancing yield estimation and decision-making processes in the agricultural sector.

### 2. Samudrayaan Mission

- It is India's first manned mission to explore the deep ocean.
- It is designed to study the deep ocean resources and conduct biodiversity assessments as well.
- The mission will not disturb the ecosystem as the submersible is used solely for exploration purposes.
- The project is part of the larger Deep Ocean Mission, which supports the Central Government's Blue Economy policy.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is the nodal ministry to implement this multi-institutional ambitious mission.

### 3. Vibhav Anti-Tank Munition

- It is a self-neutralising anti-tank mine.
- Designed and developed completely indigenously in a joint venture with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in India, "Vibhav" is a point-attack anti-tank munition.
- It is designed to provide mobility kill against all enemy armoured vehicles.
- The anti-tank mine is made of new-age plastic, which gives it adequate strength and durability to withstand the requirements of storage, handling and operating in varying field conditions.
- The munition can be laid both mechanically or manually.
- A host of safety and actuation mechanisms have been incorporated in "Vibhav" to make it safe to handle, lethal against targets and reliable.
- The munition also incorporates an electronic anti-handling and anti-lift device (EAHALD) that stays active for 120 days once armed.
- It has mechanical timers, due to which, after 120 days, it will be self-neutralised.
- It has a storage life of 10 years with no special storage requirements.

### 4. Kisan Rin Portal

- The portal helps farmers avail subsidised loans under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC).
- It was developed in collaboration with multiple government departments.
- It offers a comprehensive view of farmer data, loan disbursement specifics, interest subvention claims and scheme utilisation progress.
- It fosters seamless integration with banks for more focused and efficient agriculture credit.

### 5. Nagorno-Karabakh Region

- Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous and heavily forested region lying south of Caucasus mountains.
- The region includes the north-eastern flank of the Karabakh Range of the Lesser Caucasus and extends from the crest line of the range to the margin of the Kura River lowland at its foot.
- Under international law, this region is recognised as part of Azerbaijan.
- However, ethnic Armenians who constitute the vast majority of the population there reject Azeri rule.
- In 1990s, Azerbaijan's troops were pushed out of the region following a war.
- Since then, these ethnic Armenians have been in administrative control of Nagorno-Karabakh, with support from Armenia.

## 6. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)

- IRDAI is a statutory body formed under an Act of Parliament, i.e., Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.
- It was established for overall supervision and development of the Insurance sector in India.
- IRDAI's duties include:
- Regulating the insurance business
- Promoting the orderly growth of the insurance business
- Protecting the interests of policyholders

## 7. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- It is an open-source identity platform that can be used to access a wide variety of government and private services.
- It builds applications and products on a set of application programming interfaces (APIs) like India Stack.
- It includes digital forms of ID and verification, civil registration, payment (digital transactions and money transfers), data exchange, and information systems.
- It is customisable, localisable, interoperable and leverage public data for open innovation models.

## 8. UFO

- A UFO is an unidentified flying object which is generally considered anomalies that are completely unidentifiable.
- UFO is an object in the sky that is not identifiable as any known object or even a natural phenomenon.
- The title of UFO was originally created in 1953 by the United States Air Force to record and review any instances where a flying object was logged in official reporting.

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. With reference to The European Union, consider the following statements**

1. It is a group of 27 countries that operate as a cohesive economic and political block.
2. All member countries use EURO as their official currency.
3. Together with the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament exercises the legislative function of the EU.

**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 about Digital Personal Data Protection Act**

1. It will apply to the processing of digital personal data within India where such data is collected online, or collected offline and is digitised.
2. Personal data may be processed only for a lawful purpose upon consent of an individual.
3. Data fiduciaries will be obligated to maintain the accuracy of data, keep data secure, and delete data once its purpose has been met.

**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 about Ayushman Bharat**

1. Launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
2. It provides cover of 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empaneled hospitals in India

**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

**Q4. Consider the following**

1. Top Class Education for SCs
2. Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and STs
3. National Overseas Scheme for SCs
4. National Fellowship for STs

**How many of the schemes mentioned above constitute the SHREYAS Scheme?**

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

**Q5. Which of the following event is related to khalistan movement**

1. Anandpur Sahib Resolution
2. Dharam Yudh Morcha
3. Operation Bluestar
4. Operation Black Thunder

**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 statements with reference to Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar**

1. The awards will be announced and awarded annually on National Technology Day and National Space Day respectively.
2. It will be given by the President or the Vice President.

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

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

**Q7. Consider the following sectors**

1. Automobile and auto components
2. Drones
3. Solar Modules
4. Pharmaceuticals

**How many of the sectors mentioned above is/are covered under the PLI Scheme?**

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

**Q8. Which of the following statements define the Lagrange points most aptly?**

- A. Points where two celestial bodies collide in the solar system.
- B. Points where the gravitational forces of two celestial bodies roughly balance each other.
- C. Points where asteroids are most likely to impact the Earth.
- D. Points where comets originate in the universe.

**Q9. With reference to Delimitation Commission consider the following statements**

1. It is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.
2. The Constitution provides a specialised tribunal for resolving the dispute arising out of the orders of the Commission.

**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

**Q10. Consider the following statements with reference to The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India**

1. It is a statutory body set up in accordance with the UGC Act, 1956 under the Ministry of Education.
2. It is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education.
3. It provides recognition to universities in India and disburses funds to such recognised universities and colleges.

**How many of the statements given above is/are not correct?**

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



## Prelims Track Answer

### Ans. 1 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- The European Union is a group of 27 countries that operate as a cohesive economic and political block. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- 19 of these countries use EURO as their official currency.
- 8 EU members (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden) do not use the euro. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The EU grew out of a desire to form a single European political entity to end centuries of warfare among European countries
- It culminated with World War II and decimated much of the continent.
- The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws
- It applies in all member states in matters, where members have agreed to act as one.
- European Parliament: It is the only parliamentary institution of the European Union (EU) that is directly elected by EU citizens aged 18 years or older.
- Together with the Council of the European Union (also known as the 'Council'), it exercises the legislative function of the EU. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

### Ans. 2 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- It will apply to the processing of digital personal data within India where such data is collected online, or collected offline and is digitised. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It will also apply to such processing outside India, if it is for offering goods or services in India.
- Personal data may be processed only for a lawful purpose upon consent of an individual. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Data fiduciaries will be obligated to maintain the accuracy of data, keep data secure, and delete data once its purpose has been met. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The Bill grants certain rights to individuals including the right to obtain information, seek correction and erasure, and grievance redressal.
- The central government will establish the Data Protection Board of India to adjudicate on non-compliance with the provisions of the act.

### Ans. 3 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- Launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It provides cover of 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empaneled hospitals in India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- This initiative has been designed on the lines as to meet SDG and its underlining commitment, which is "leave no one behind".
- The world's largest health insurance/ assurance scheme fully financed by the government.
- It provides cover of 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empaneled hospitals in India.
- Coverage: Over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable entitled families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) are eligible for these benefits.
- Provides cashless access to health care services for the beneficiary at the point of service.

### Ans. 4 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme has four central sector sub-schemes namely
  - o Top Class Education for SCs. **Hence, option 1 is correct.**
  - o Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs. **Hence, option 2 is incorrect.**
  - o National Overseas Scheme for SCs. **Hence, option 3 is correct.**
  - o National Fellowship for SCs. **Hence, option 4 is incorrect.**
- Since these sub-schemes are central sector schemes, state-wise data is not maintained.

### Ans. 5 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

#### Anandpur Sahib Resolution

- In 1973, Akali Dal, the major force in the new Sikh-majority Punjab, released a list of demands that would guide the political path among other things.

- The Anandpur Sahib Resolution demanded autonomy for the state of Punjab **Hence, option 1 is correct.**

**Dharam Yudh Morcha**

- In 1982, Bhindranwale, with support from the Akali Dal's leadership, launched a civil disobedience movement called the Dharam Yudh Morcha.
- He took up residence inside the Golden Temple, directing demonstrations and clashes with the police. **Hence, option 2 is correct.**

**Operation Blue Star (1984) and Operation Black Thunder**

- The movement was crushed in India following Operation Blue Star (1984) and Operation Black Thunder (1986 and 1988). **Hence, option 3 and 4 are correct.**
- but it continues to evoke sympathy and support among sections of the Sikh population.

**Ans. 6 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- The awards will be announced and awarded annually on National Technology Day and National Space Day respectively. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- These are the days on which India successfully conducted its second nuclear test in 1998, and then catapulted the Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander on the moon this year.
- The RVP awards, which will commence from 2024, will be given by the President or the Vice President. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- A committee will be constituted every year comprising:
  - o The Secretaries of six Science Ministries
  - o Up to four presidents of science and engineering academies
  - o Six distinguished scientists and technologists from various fields.
- The CSIR will coordinate the administration of the awards process for two years
- After which it will be taken over by the proposed National Research Foundation.

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

- The PLI scheme was conceived to scale up domestic manufacturing capability, accompanied by higher import substitution and employment generation.
- Launched in March 2020, the scheme initially targeted three industries namely Mobile and

allied Component Manufacturing, Electrical Component Manufacturing and Medical Devices

- So far, the government has announced PLI schemes for 14 sectors including automobile and auto components, electronics and IT hardware, telecom, pharmaceuticals, solar modules, metals and mining, textiles and apparel, white goods, drones, and advanced chemistry cell batteries. **Hence, Option D is correct.**

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

- Lagrange Points are positions in space where the combined gravitational pull of two large masses roughly balance each other. **Hence, Option B is correct.**
- These can be used by spacecraft to reduce fuel consumption needed to remain in position.
- There are five special points where a small mass can orbit in a constant pattern with two larger masses.
- Of the five Lagrange points, three are unstable and two are stable.
- The unstable Lagrange points are L1, L2 and L3 and the stable Lagrange points are L4 and L5.

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

- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Commission is a powerful and independent body whose orders cannot be challenged in any court of law. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Delimitation Commission is mandated to identify the seats to be reserved for SC and ST.

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

- The University Grants Commission of India is a statutory body set up by the Indian Union government in accordance with the UGC Act, 1956 under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- UGC also provides recognition to universities in India and disburses funds to such recognised universities and colleges. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

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