

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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4. Expulsion of Indians from Uganda by Idi Amin was a mistake: Museveni - The Hindu
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## Important News Articles

### GS I

#### 1. The Indian tectonic plate is breaking into two. It's happening beneath Tibet - India Today

**Relevance:** Salient features of world's physical geography.

**News:**

- In a **new discovery** that could reshape our understanding of the **forces shaping the Earth's highest mountains**
- Researchers have unveiled **new seismic data** indicating that the **Indian tectonic plate is splitting in two beneath the Tibetan plateau.**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Helium-3
- Tectonic plates

#### Key Highlight

- This revelation was presented at the American Geophysical Union conference in San Francisco and offers a fresh **perspective on the colossal Himalayan mountain range's formation.**
- For decades, geologists have known that the **Himalayas owe their towering presence to the collision of the Indian and Eurasian continental plates.**
- The process, which began around 60 million years ago
- It has been likened to the crumpling of a car's hood in a head-on collision, with the Indian plate being driven beneath its northern neighbor by the currents of molten rock within the Earth's mantle.
- Over time, this tectonic interaction has thrust the Eurasian landmass skyward, **creating the planet's highest elevations.**
- However, the **latest analysis challenges previous assumptions about the subduction** of the buoyant Indian plate.
- Rather than sinking smoothly into the mantle's depths, the seismic data suggests a more complex scenario where the plate is delaminating.
- The **dense base of the Indian plate is peeling away** and descending into the mantle, while its lighter top portion continues to scrape just beneath the Eurasian plate.
- The findings indicate that the **Indian slab** is neither gliding along nor crumpling uniformly but is **undergoing a dramatic structural separation.**
- Some sections of the plate appear relatively intact, while others are fragmenting approximately 100 kilometers below the surface, allowing the base to deform into the Earth's fiery core.
- This seismic investigation aligns with geological models **based on helium-3 enriched spring water** and patterns of fractures and earthquakes near the surface.
- Together, these pieces of evidence paint a picture of tectonic turmoil deep beneath the Himalayas.
- The implications of this study are profound, not only for our understanding of mountain formation but also for earthquake prediction methods.

### GS II

#### 2. India-Myanmar border to be fenced soon, says Home Minister Amit Shah - The Hindu/ India-Myanmar border to be fenced, says Shah - Indian Express

**Relevance:** India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**News:**

- The Union government will soon **fence the 1,643 km border between India and Myanmar**, and will consider ending its free movement regime (FMR) agreement with the neighbouring country

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Myanmar
- Free movement regime

**Key Highlights**

- The FMR, implemented in 2018 as part of India's Act East Policy
  - allowed residents of both countries living along the border to travel up to 16 km into each other's territory without a visa.
- Much of **India's 4,096 km border with Bangladesh** has been double-fenced to stop the unauthorised entry of people into India, a major concern for the northeastern States, especially Assam.

**No more free movement**

- The government is also reconsidering India's **FMR agreement with Myanmar and will soon end the free movement into India**
- **Manipur wants the Myanmar** border to be fenced, and the free entry of Myanmar nationals, accused of stoking the ongoing ethnic conflict, stopped.
- **Mizoram and Nagaland**, on the other hand, are against the dual move on the Myanmar front as the people on either side of the international border in those States belong to the same ethnic communities.
- Some 30,000 Chin people from civil war-torn Myanmar have also taken shelter in Mizoram since February 2021.

### 3. India to send industry delegation for copper mining opportunities in Zambia - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- The Mines Ministry of India has suggested sending a **joint industry delegation to Zambia** to discuss **potential copper exploration** and mining projects.
- Notable companies expressing interest include Vedanta, Hindustan Zinc, Ola Electric, and lithium-ion battery recycler LOHUM.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Coppers
- Map based questions

**Zambia's Copper Reserves and Importance**

- **Zambia holds approximately 6% of the world's copper reserves** and was the eighth-largest copper producer in 2022.
- Copper is vital in various industries, including construction, consumer durables, transportation, and clean energy technologies such as solar panels and electric vehicles.

**Joint Working Group (JWG) Meetings**

- The second meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG), established under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Ministries of Mines in India and Zambia, is set to take place in Zambia.
- The goal is to facilitate **collaboration in mineral resources between the two countries**.

**Recent Developments**

- In December 2023, met with the High Commissioner of India to Zambia to explore possibilities of expanding bilateral cooperation in the mining sector.
- KABIL has also signed an agreement with a state-owned company in Argentina for lithium exploration.

**Indian Presence in Zambia's Copper Mining**

- India currently has a **limited presence in Zambia's copper mining sector**.
- Vedanta, in control of Konkola Copper Mines (KCM), plans to invest over \$1.2 billion in Zambia to increase copper output.

- Other investors in Zambia's copper include Canada-based First Quantum Minerals and China's CNMC.

#### Growing Indian Demand for Copper

- Domestic copper demand in **India grew by 16% in FY2022-2023**, with a 32% increase in demand for copper in clean energy technologies.
- Limited domestic supply has led Indian mining companies to consider overseas acquisition of copper mining blocks.

## 4. Expulsion of Indians from Uganda by Idi Amin was a mistake: Museveni - The Hindu

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- India-Uganda Relations
- Map based questions

#### News:

- Nearly **52 years after the Ugandan dictator expelled the Indian community** of his country, the **President of Uganda** called that move a "**mistake**"

#### Key Highlights

- President comment which came at the **19th NAM summit held in capital Kampala** was a rare expression of regret about an event
  - That has long been considered one of the traumatic incidents that struck the Indian diaspora in the 20th century.
- The NAM countries also sometimes make mistakes like here in Uganda.
- **In August 1972**, Idi Amin **ordered the expulsion of Indians and other south Asians** who were an integral part of Ugandan life till that point.
- At the end, around **80,000 Indians and thousands of Pakistanis and Bangladesh citizens were expelled** from Uganda prompting them to seek refuge in other countries
  - Including the U.K., Canada, Kenya and India.
  - Many of those expelled Indians went on to carve a future for themselves in new locations.

#### India-Uganda Relations

- India established its diplomatic presence in 1965, even though the countries relationship dates back to the era
- Traders ferried goods in dhows across the Indian Ocean which eventually led to a number of Indians to settle in East Africa, and many made Uganda their home.
- **India's freedom struggle** inspired early Ugandan activists to fight colonialism and the country achieved freedom in 1962.
- In the 1970s under the dictatorship of Idi Amin, nearly **60000 Indians and PIOs were expelled from Uganda**.
- However, this policy was reversed in the 80s and currently, there are over 30000 Indians/PIOs in the country

## 5. WTO dispute settlement body revival faces delays over country differences: GTRI - Indian Express

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- World Trade Organisation
- WTO Dispute Settlement

#### News:

- According to the **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) report**, the reinstatement of a **fully functional WTO dispute settlement body** is facing delays.
- This is due to significant differences between **developed and developing countries**.

#### Protectionism and US Involvement

- The **absence of a functional dispute settlement body** has led to an **increase in protectionism**.

- Since 2017, the US has been **obstructing the appointment of new judges** to the WTO's appellate court, claiming that it is detrimental to its interests.
  - Over a quarter of all disputes involve challenges to US laws or measures

### India's Priority at MC13

- The GTRI, emphasizes that reforming the dispute settlement system is a **crucial priority for India** at the 13th ministerial conference (MC13).
- Without a reliable method for resolving conflicts, **WTO rules remain ineffective.**

### WTO Dispute Settlement

- A **dispute arises** when a member government believes another member government is **violating an agreement** that it has **made in the WTO.**
- There are **two main ways** to settle a dispute once a complaint has been filed in the WTO
  - The parties find a mutually agreed solution, particularly during the phase of bilateral consultations.
  - Through adjudication which are binding upon the parties once adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body.
- There are **three main stages to the WTO dispute settlement process**
  - Consultations between the parties.
  - Adjudication by panels and, if applicable, by the Appellate Body.
  - Implementation of the ruling
    - It includes the possibility of countermeasures in the event of failure by the losing party to implement the ruling.

### WTO's Appellate Body

- The Appellate Body, **set up in 1995**, is a **standing committee of seven members.**
- It **presides over appeals** against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- Countries can approach the Appellate Body if they feel the **report of the panel** set up to examine the issue **needs to be reviewed on points of law.**
- However, **existing evidence is not re-examined** but **legal interpretations are reviewed.**
- The Appellate Body can **uphold, modify, or reverse the legal findings of the panel** that heard the dispute.
- The appellate body at the WTO **stopped functioning from December 2019**, but the **panels are still working.**

## GS III

### 6. Wetland 'nature tourism' gets a fillip - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- The Central government has embarked on a mission **to boost tourism** at ecologically-sensitive wetlands, known as **Ramsar sites.**
- The goal is to shift from high-value tourism to **nature tourism** by supporting conservation efforts and **empowering local communities and economies.**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Amrit Dharohar Initiative
- Ramsar Sites

### Ramsar Sites

- Ramsar sites are **wetlands of international importance** designated under the **Ramsar Convention** signed in 1971.
- India has **75 Ramsar sites**, including Chilika Lake, Sundarbans and Bhitarkanika Mangroves.

### Amrit Dharohar Initiative

- Launched in June 2023, the scheme aims to **promote the conservation values of Ramsar sites, generate employment, and support local livelihoods.**
  - The initiative is a part of the 2023-24 budget announcement.
- It is part of the '**Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme' 2023**, launched by the **Union Tourism Ministry** and the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.**
- It is implemented in collaboration with various central government ministries, state wetland authorities, and formal and informal institutions.
- **Objectives**
  - Enhance livelihood opportunities for local communities through nature tourism at Ramsar sites.
  - Shift from high-volume tourism to high-value nature tourism by supporting conservation actions.

### Training Programs

- Facilitators, tourism service providers, and stakeholders are being **trained in collaboration with State Tourism Departments.**
- The focus is on **nature tourism activities** like birdwatching, photography, stargazing, camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and visiting parks.
- **Thirty participants from each site** undergo a 15-day training program.
  - This includes the Alternative Livelihood Programme (ALP) and Paryatan Navik Certificate (boatman certification for tourism).

### Pilot Projects

- **Sixteen Ramsar sites** have been identified, with **five selected as pilot projects for skill development.**
  - Pilot sites include Sultanpur National Park (Haryana), Bhitarkanika Mangroves (Odisha), Chilika Lake (Odisha), Sirpur (Madhya Pradesh), and Yashwant Sagar (Madhya Pradesh).

## 7. NISAR Mission on track for a launch soon: NASA official - The Hindu

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

### News:

- The **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission**, designed to observe natural processes and changes in earth's complex ecosystems

### Prelims Takeaway

- NASA
- L-Band

### Key Highlights

#### 'Enormous data'

- Designed as a **low earth orbit (LEO) observatory**, the NISAR mission is unique in several respects
  - Not least the enormous amount of reliable, high resolution data expected from it over a three-year mission life.
- The volume of data will be enormous, and it helps us **to have a reliable set of measurements over any spot on the earth**
  - Where we want to do science or monitoring applications, forest management, agriculture monitoring or even just looking at an approaching hurricane
- The mission will use a **synthetic aperture radar to scan earth's land** and ice-covered regions twice every 12 days in ascending and descending passes.
- **Capable of penetrating cloud cover** and operating day and night, NISAR is expected to revolutionise earth-observing capability.
- Among other things, it is also expected to be a reliable data source **for disaster monitoring and mitigation.**
- This single observatory solution is equipped with a **long wavelength band (L-Band) SAR payload system provided by NASA** and a short wavelength band (S-Band) ISRO payload.

- Operating together, they will supply, according to ISRO, “spatially and temporally consistent data
  - for understanding changes in earth’s ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, groundwater and natural hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.”
- For those disasters that evolve over slightly longer periods of time

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 8. A revival of the IMEC idea amid choppy geopolitics - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- The Yemen conflict has raised concerns about the **reliability of the Suez Canal** for east-west trade, leading to increased interest in alternative routes.
- The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** is seen as a potential alternative, **connecting Al Haditha in Saudi Arabia to Haifa in Israel.**

#### Challenges and Developments

##### • Yemen Conflict Impact

- The Yemen conflict has strengthened the case for alternatives to the Suez Canal, even if the conflict subsides.
- Shippers are considering longer routes around Africa.

##### • Gaza War Impact

- The Gaza war has posed challenges to IMEC, especially regarding trade links between Saudi Arabia and Israel.
- The conflict has delayed stakeholder meetings promised in a memorandum of understanding on IMEC.

#### Geopolitical Hurdles

- Critics argue that geopolitical factors, including the Arab Street’s resistance to trade links between Saudi Arabia and Israel, pose challenges.
- Turkey, excluded from IMEC, has expressed irritation and proposed an alternative route through Iraq for trade access to the Mediterranean.
- The potential political resurgence of Donald Trump raises concerns about US support for IMEC.

#### IMEC Components

- IMEC aims to facilitate trade, electricity, and digital cables, along with carrying hydrogen pipelines as the world moves towards decarbonization.
- Containerization through rail and road in IMEC is particularly appealing for India, offering quicker trade and reduced port costs.

#### Containerization and Rail Connectivity

- India’s National Logistics Policy aims to lower logistics costs by 2030, and IMEC’s containerization through rail and road supports this goal.
- The dedicated rail freight corridors linked to IMEC ports such as Mundra and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) align with IMEC’s objectives.

#### Debottlenecking and Capacity Expansion

- Challenges include Haifa’s current container traffic being less than Mundra or JNPT.
- Syncing Haifa with Mundra’s planning for capacity expansion is considered crucial.

#### Financial Support

- IMEC is expected to draw financing from the US, Europe, Saudi Arabia, and India.
- The United States International Development Finance Corporation’s funding for Adani Ports-owned Colombo container terminal could serve as a template for Haifa.

#### Conclusion

- IMEC faces geopolitical challenges, especially **post-Gaza war dynamics and potential shifts in US leadership.**
- However, its strategic importance for **trade, energy, and decarbonization initiatives** makes it a significant regional corridor with potential global implications.

### 9. Post Office Act, its unbridled powers of interception - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- Recently, the President of India gave assent to the **Post Office Bill, 2023** replacing the colonial-era Indian Post Office Act, 1898.



- The opposition expressed concerns, particularly about **unchecked powers of interception by post office authorities.**

#### Interception under Central Acts

- The Telecommunications Act, 2023, replacing the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933.
- The Act includes a provision (section 20(2)) on interception of messages, similar to the Telegraph Act 1885.
  - Section 7(2)(b) of the 1885 Act empowers the central government to notify rules for preventing improper interception or disclosure of messages.
  - It is now incorporated into section 20(2) of the Telecommunication Act.
- There are concerns about the lack of prescribed procedures and safeguards for interception.

#### Historical Context on Interception

- Section 69(1) of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, also provides for interception (through any computer source) but with a broader scope compared to other acts.
  - It does not mandate the occurrence of 'any public emergency' or any demand 'in the interest of public safety' as prerequisites for interception.
- **People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs Union of India (1996) case**
  - The Supreme Court emphasized that phone tapping infringes on the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution.
  - **Legal Basis:** Phone tapping is permissible only if it falls within the grounds of restrictions under Article 19(2).
  - **Right to Privacy:** The right to privacy, as part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21, cannot be curtailed except according to a just, fair, and reasonable procedure established by law.
  - **Procedural Safeguards:** In the absence of rules notified by the central government under section 7(2)(b) of the Telegraph Act, the Supreme Court laid down procedural safeguards.
- Procedural safeguards were later included in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009.

#### Amendments in Telegraph Rules

- The Central government's amendment of the Telegraph Rules in 2007 introduced Rule 419A, which replaced the Court's directives.
- Rule 419A allowed interception in 'emergent cases' in remote areas or for operational reasons, for a maximum of seven days, when obtaining prior directions for interception was not feasible.
- Powers of interception were further delegated to law enforcement agencies, with authority given to ranks not below the Inspector General of Police at the State level.

#### Parameters for Interception

- The Court elaborated on parameters to determine the occurrence of 'public emergency' and 'public safety.'
- Interception could only be resorted to if one of the conditions was met, irrespective of the perceived necessity or expediency for reasons such as sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, or prevention of incitement to the commission of an offence.

#### Concerns and Suggestions

- **Lack of Safeguards**
  - The new Post Office Act lacks procedural safeguards, raising concerns about potential misuse of interception powers.
  - The provisions regarding 'emergency' need clarification.
- **Right to Privacy**
  - Interception of confidential items like letters and postcards by the post office raises privacy concerns.
  - The right to privacy, upheld by courts, imposes a need for just, fair, and reasonable procedures.
- **Accountability**
  - The competent authority needs to be held accountable for any misuse of interception powers.
  - Existing legislation may not offer adequate remedies for individuals affected by privacy infringements.
- **Telegraph Act Amendments:** While Rule 419A addressed procedural safeguards under the Telegraph Act, concerns persist about potential misuse.

#### Way Forward

- The right to privacy must be respected, and a **balance** should be struck **between security measures and individual liberties.**

- **Clarifications on 'emergency' and procedural safeguards** are crucial.
- **Accountability measures for competent authorities**, without reliance on 'good faith' clauses, are necessary.

## 10. The growth of India-Bangladesh ties - The Hindu

**Relevance:** India and its neighbourhood- relations.

**Context:**

- Recently, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina secured a historic fourth straight term in Bangladesh.
- India considers **Bangladesh a critical ally** in the region, aligning with its '**Act East**' policy to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific and foster a stable neighborhood.

### Historical Foundation

- The relationship between India and Bangladesh is rooted in common history, heritage, and the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.
- India and Bangladesh's relationship began during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War when India supported Bangladesh's fight for independence.
- Ties soured in subsequent years due to various issues, but improved significantly when Sheikh Hasina came to power in 1996.

### Positive Trajectory in Bilateral Ties

- Bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, infrastructure, connectivity, defence, security, and science has strengthened over the past 15 years.
- Positive steps include the land boundary agreement (LBA) in 2015 and the resolution of a maritime dispute over territorial waters.

### Economic Cooperation

- Bilateral trade has steadily grown, with Bangladesh becoming India's largest trade partner in South Asia.
- Despite a dip in 2022-23 due to the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, trade reached \$18 billion in 2021-2022.
- Both nations concluded a joint feasibility study on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2022, aiming to enhance economic collaboration.

### Infrastructure Development and Connectivity

- India is a major development partner, funding infrastructure and connectivity projects in Bangladesh.
  - India has provided over \$7 billion in Lines of Credit since 2010.
- Notable projects include the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and energy cooperation, with Bangladesh importing nearly 2,000 megawatts of electricity from India.
- Focus on regional connectivity and infrastructure projects like the Matarbari Port and the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.

### Points of Tension

- The Teesta water-sharing dispute and the Rohingya issue remain unresolved and are likely to be key issues in the Hasina-led government's agenda.
- Cross-border terrorism, infiltration and human trafficking pose threats to internal security.

### Global Relations

- Concerns over strained relations between Bangladesh and the US, including sanctions and criticism, pose challenges for India.
- Growing ties between Bangladesh and China, marked by Chinese investments, raise concerns for India, but Bangladesh assures India's strategic importance.

## Quick Look

### 1. Central Consumer Protection Authority

- The Central Consumer Protection Authority issued notice to Amazon for sale of sweets under the misleading name of Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad.
- The Central Consumer Protection Authority as per the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- Objective: To promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- It has a Chief Commissioner as head, and only two other commissioners as members.
  - One will deal with matters relating to goods
  - The other will look into cases relating to services.
- Powers
  - Conduct investigations into violation of consumer rights and institute complaints/ prosecution
  - Order recall of unsafe goods and services
  - Order discontinuation of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements
  - Impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

### 2. Caddisflies

- Researchers recently discovered a novel species of Caddisfly, named *Rhyacophila masudi.*, in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Caddisflies are moth-like insects that are attracted to lights at night and live near lakes or rivers.
- They are found worldwide, usually in freshwater habitats and often in brackish and tidal waters too.
- Features
  - Adult caddisflies are commonly 3 to 15 millimetres in length.
  - Generally dull brownish, adult caddisflies resemble moths, with hairy wings and long antennae.
  - However, they do not have the long syphoning mouthparts that butterflies and moths have.
  - They hold their wings tent-like over their bodies when they are not flying.
- They feed primarily on plant juices and flower nectar, though a few are predaceous.
- Importance: They serve as a primary food source for various fish species, and also contribute to water purification by filtering algae and other potentially problematic organisms.

### 3. Indian Vulture

- The Indian vulture is an Old-World vulture native to Asia.
- They are also known as Indian long-billed vultures due to their comparatively longer beak.
- It is a medium-sized and bulky scavenger feeding mostly on the carcasses of dead animals.
  - Females of this species are smaller than males.
- These are native to India, Pakistan, and Nepal.
- They are usually found in savannas and other open habitats around villages, cities, and near cultivated areas.
- The Indian vulture has suffered a 99% population decrease due to poisoning caused by the veterinary drug diclofenac.
  - Diclofenac is given to working animals as it reduces joint pain and so keeps them working for longer.
- IUCN Status: Critically Endangered

#### 4. Global Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality

- India recently established "Global Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality" to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.
- It is a new alliance for global good, gender equity, and equality established by India on the sidelines of the 54th annual World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos.
- It will bring together worldwide best practices, knowledge sharing, and investment opportunities in women's education, health, and enterprise.
- It has garnered support from industry leaders through the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the alliance will be housed and anchored by the CII Centre for Women Leadership.
- The WEF has come on board as a 'Network Partner' and Invest India as an 'Institutional Partner'.

#### 5. Kanger Valley National Park

- Location: Jagdalpur, in the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh state.
- It is located on the banks of the Kholaba River (tributary of the Godavari River).
- The entire Park constitutes the core area and there is no buffer zone.
- It is noted for its highly heterogeneous land formations, ranging from low, flat, and gentle areas to steep slopes, plateaus, valleys, and stream courses.
- It is home to three exceptional caves, famous for their amazing geological structures viz. Kutumbasar, Kailash, and Dandak-Stalagmites and Stalactites.
- It is known for the presence of underground limestone caves with stalagmites and stalactite formations.
- Tirathgarh Waterfall is located in the park.
- Flora: Mixed humid deciduous type of forest in which the Sal, Saugaun, teak, and bamboo trees are available in abundance.
- Major wild animals include tigers, mouse deer, leopards, wildcat, sambar, chital, barking deer, langurs, jackals, rhesus macaque, flying squirrel, etc.
- The aerial fauna at the park consists of common hill myna, red jungle fowl, spotted owlet, racket-tailed drongos, parrots, etc.

#### 6. Madhika

- In the remote Kookanam colony near Karivellur grama panchayat, the Chakaliya community faces the imminent extinction of their unique language, Madhika.
- Madhika, without a script, resembles Kannada but contains influences from Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam.
- The Chakaliya community, once nomadic worshipers of Thiruvekatramana and Mariamma, migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka to northern Malabar centuries ago.
- Initially recognized as a Scheduled Tribe, they later became part of the Scheduled Caste category in Kerala.
- With no documentation, Madhika's survival is at risk as the language is solely passed down orally.
- Social activists attribute the neglect of Madhika to the historical social stigma associated with the Chakaliya community.
- Considered untouchables, they faced dehumanizing treatment, leading many to disassociate from their language and prefer Malayalam.

## 7. Mosquitofish

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) introduced mosquitofish in 1928 to combat malaria.
- The strategy was for these fish to prey on mosquito larvae, reducing mosquito populations. However, investigations reveal widespread distribution of mosquitofish in India, with detrimental effects on native fauna, leading to the extinction of native fish, amphibians, and various freshwater communities.
- Mosquitofish are considered among the hundred most detrimental invasive alien species.
- In the 1960s, the introduction of mosquitofish, such as *Gambusia affinis* and *Gambusia holbrooki*, gained popularity as an environmentally friendly alternative to pesticides.
- Despite the WHO stopping the recommendation of *Gambusia* for mosquito control in 1982 and designating them as invasive alien species in 2018, India continues to introduce these fish, causing harm to indigenous biodiversity.



**Mentorship**  
India

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Plate Tectonic Theory**

1. Earth's lithosphere is divided into several large and rigid plates that float on the semi-fluid asthenosphere.
2. The theory explains the movement of these plates, leading to phenomena such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the creation of mountain ranges.
3. Plate boundaries are static, with no relative movement between adjacent plates.

**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 Free Movement Regime between India and Myanmar**

1. The Free Movement Regime allows Indian and Myanmar citizens to travel freely within a specified border region without the need for visas or travel permits.
2. It covers a broad range of activities, including tourism, trade, and cultural exchanges within the designated border area.
3. The Free Movement Regime is applicable along the entire India-Myanmar border.

**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 Copper Industry**

1. Zambia has the largest copper reserves globally.
2. Limited domestic supply has led Indian mining companies to consider overseas acquisition of copper mining blocks.

**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

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding Uganda**

1. Uganda is a landlocked country located in East Africa.
2. The Nile River flows through Uganda.
3. Uganda gained independence from British colonial rule in 1962, and since then, it has never experienced political instability or civil conflicts.

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

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to the WTO Dispute Settlement Process**

1. There are three ways to settle a dispute once a complaint has been filed in the WTO.
2. The Appellate Body re-examines the existing evidence and reviews the legal interpretations.

**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

**Q6. With reference to Amrit Dharohar Initiative, consider the following statements**

1. It aims to promote the conservation values of Ramsar sites, generate employment, and support local livelihoods.
2. It is part of the 'Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme' 2023.

**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 regarding NISAR satellite**

1. NISAR is a joint satellite mission between NASA and ISRO.
2. It aims to study Earth's surface deformation, providing valuable data

for understanding natural hazards and climate change impacts.

3. NISAR will carry an advanced synthetic aperture radar that can operate in both L-band and S-band frequencies.

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

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

**Q8. Consider the following countries**

1. Egypt
2. USA
3. Oman
4. France

**How many of the countries mentioned above is/are a part of India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor?**

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

**Q9. Consider the following statements**

1. In the PUCL vs Union of India case, the Supreme Court emphasized that phone tapping infringes on the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution.
2. The Telegraph Rules in 2007 allowed interception in 'emergent cases' in remote areas or for operational reasons.

**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 India - Bangladesh relations**

1. India was the first country to recognise Bangladesh as a separate and independent state.
2. India and Bangladesh have been cooperating in developing cross-border infrastructure projects, such as the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and Maitri Setu.
3. Both India and Bangladesh are members of multilateral forums like BIMSTEC and SAARC.

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

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

## Prelims Track Answer

### Answer 1 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Earth's lithosphere is divided into several large and rigid plates, and these plates float on the semi-fluid asthenosphere, which is a layer of the Earth's mantle. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Plate Tectonic Theory explains the movement of tectonic plates, which can lead to various geological phenomena, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the formation of mountain ranges. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Plate boundaries are dynamic zones where the Earth's lithospheric plates interact. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- There are three main types of plate boundaries viz. divergent boundaries (plates move away from each other), convergent boundaries (plates move toward each other), and transform boundaries (plates slide past each other).
- These interactions at plate boundaries are responsible for the geological activities.

### Answer 2 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Free Movement Regime, also known as the 'Mizoram-Myanmar Border Area Agreement,' allows residents of specified areas in Mizoram and Myanmar to move within 16 km on either side of the international border without the requirement of a visa or travel permit. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Free Movement Regime includes tourism, trade, and cultural exchanges, fostering closer ties between the people of the designated border regions. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Free Movement Regime is specific to the Mizoram-Myanmar border and covers residents of the Chin and Naga ethnic communities on both sides of the border. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

- The Free Movement Regime is part of broader efforts to enhance economic and cultural cooperation between India and Myanmar, promoting increased interaction and understanding.

### Answer 3 Option A is correct

#### Explanation

- Zambia has significant copper reserves, contributing around 6% of the world's total copper reserves.
- Chile has the world's largest copper reserves of any country by far, with 190 million metric tons as of 2022. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Domestic copper demand in India grew by 16% in FY2022-2023, with a 32% increase in demand for copper in clean energy technologies.
- Limited domestic supply has led Indian mining companies to consider overseas acquisition of copper mining blocks. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

### Answer 4 Option A is correct

#### Explanation

- Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordered by Kenya to the east and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Nile River flows through Uganda, and Lake Victoria, which is one of the sources of the Nile, is located in Uganda. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- While Uganda gained independence in 1962, it has experienced periods of political instability and civil conflicts, including the rule of Idi Amin in the 1970s, which was marked by human rights abuses and political repression. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

### Answer 5 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- A dispute arises when a member government believes another member government is violating an agreement that it has made in the WTO.
- There are two main ways to settle a dispute once a complaint has been filed in the WTO. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
  - The parties find a mutually agreed solution, particularly during the phase of bilateral consultations.



- Through adjudication which are binding upon the parties once adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body.
- The Appellate Body, set up in 1995, presides over appeals against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- Countries can approach the Appellate Body if they feel the report of the panel set up to examine the issue needs to be reviewed on points of law.
- However, existing evidence is not re-examined but legal interpretations are reviewed. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Appellate Body can uphold, modify, or reverse the legal findings of the panel that heard the dispute.

**Answer 6 Option C is correct**
**Explanation**

- The Amrit Dharohar Initiative aims to promote the conservation values of Ramsar sites, generate employment, and support local livelihoods. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The initiative is a part of the 2023-24 budget announcement.
- It is part of the 'Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme' 2023, launched by the Union Tourism Ministry and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It is implemented in collaboration with various central government ministries, state wetland authorities, and formal and informal institutions.
- Sixteen Ramsar sites have been identified, with five selected as pilot projects for skill development.
- Thirty participants from each site undergo a 15-day training program.
- This includes the Alternative Livelihood Programme (ALP) and Paryatan Navik Certificate (boatman certification for tourism).

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

- NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) is a collaborative effort between NASA and ISRO. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The primary objective of NISAR is to observe and measure the Earth's surface deformation, including changes caused by

natural hazards such as earthquakes and landslides, as well as studying the impacts of climate change. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- NISAR will be equipped with a dual-frequency synthetic aperture radar that operates in both L-band and S-band, allowing for versatile observation capabilities. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**Answer 8 Option B is correct**
**Explanation**

- India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor project includes India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, France, Italy, Germany and the US. **Hence, Option B is correct.**
- The project will aim to enable greater trade among the involved countries, including energy products.
- It will include a railway and ship-rail transit network and road transport routes.
- The corridor will include a rail link as well as an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable.
- In the coming times, it will be a major medium of economic integration between India, West Asia and Europe.

**Answer 9 Option C is correct**
**Explanation**
**People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs Union of India (1996) Case**

- The Supreme Court emphasized that phone tapping infringes on the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 of the Constitution. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Phone tapping is permissible only if it falls within the grounds of restrictions under Article 19(2).
- The right to privacy, as part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21, cannot be curtailed except according to a just, fair, and reasonable procedure established by law.
- The Central government's amendment of the Telegraph Rules in 2007 introduced Rule 419A, which replaced the Court's directives.
- Rule 419A allowed interception in 'emergent cases' in remote areas or for operational reasons, for a maximum of seven days, when obtaining prior directions for interception was not feasible. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- Powers of interception were further delegated to law enforcement agencies, with authority given to ranks not below the Inspector General of Police at the State level.

**Answer 10 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- India's links with Bangladesh are civilisational, cultural, social and economic.
- India was the first country to recognise Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Bangladesh is India's biggest trading partner in the subcontinent.
- Bangladesh and India in July 2023 launched a trade transaction in rupees, a move aimed at reducing dependence on the US dollar and strengthening regional currency and trade.

- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border; the longest land boundary that India shares with any of its neighbours.
- The two also conduct Joint Exercises - Army (Exercise Sampriti) and Navy (Exercise Bongosagar)
- India and Bangladesh have been cooperating in developing cross-border infrastructure projects, such as the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and Maitri Setu. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India and Bangladesh are also engaged in regional cooperation through multilateral forums such as SAARC, BIMSTEC and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers, but only two treaties have been signed so far of Ganga Waters Treaty and The Kushiyara River Treaty.
- At present, Bangladesh is an active partner in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



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