

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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2. 'Doklam remains a challenge... influx from Myanmar in north Manipur new trend' - Indian Express
3. China bans export of rare earth technologies - The Hindu
4. Center exploring one-stop health sector regulator - The Hindu
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7. Sebi issues paper on instant settlement of trades, seeks views - Indian Express
8. Sea turning red in Puducherry | NGT panel inspects beach, to submit report in 15 days - Indian Express

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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Government aims to set up 17,000 creches across India - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Union Women and Child Development Ministry aims to establish 17,000 creches in Anganwadi centers across the country out of which 5,222 have been approved to date.

Prelims Takeaway

- National Creche Scheme
- Anganwadi

Key Points

- These initiatives are being taken under the 'Palna' scheme.

Objective

- To address the urgent need for quality day-care facilities/creches for the children of working women
- by providing a safe and secure environment for the nutritional, health and cognitive development of the children
- It will help enable more women to take up gainful employment amongst all socio-economic groups both in the organized and unorganized sector, irrespective of their employment status.
- According to government data, participation of women in the workforce has increased to 37% in 2022.
- As of March 31, 2021, 13.87 lakh Anganwadi and mini-Anganwadi centers are operational across the country.

The National Crèche Scheme

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The scheme was earlier named as Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme.
- It aims to provide day care facilities to children (age group of 6 months to 6 years) of working mothers.

The salient features of the National Creche Scheme are as follows

- Daycare Facilities including Sleeping Facilities.
- Early Stimulation for children below 3 years and pre-school Education for 3 to 6 years old children.
- Supplementary Nutrition (to be locally sourced)
- Growth Monitoring
- Health Check-up and Immunization

2. 'Doklam remains a challenge... influx from Myanmar in north Manipur new trend' - 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:

- Influx of migrants from Myanmar poses a new challenge.
- Recent intensification of fighting by the Three Brotherhood Alliance prompts increased migration.

Prelims Takeaway

- Line of Actual Control (LAC)

Key Points

- Migration expands from Mizoram to the northern part of Manipur.
- Attacks on Myanmar Army camps result in soldiers crossing the border.
- Unregulated movement of migrants poses security challenges, including smuggling.
- Ethnic violence resurgence grants insurgent groups renewed relevance.

Doklam Situation

- Doklam remains a persistent **challenge since 2017**.

Biggest Challenge

- Completing planned **infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)** remains a major challenge.

Focused Approach

- India focuses on improving infrastructure with long-term plans and streamlined procedures.

Current Projects

- **Construction of roads, helipads, tunnels, and priority development of border villages** underway.

Chinese Infrastructure Development

- The Chinese are heavily **investing in strengthening LAC infrastructure**.
- China creates **model villages for both civilian and military use**.

3. China bans export of rare earth technologies - The Hindu

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

News:

- China, the world's top processor of rare earths, **banned the export of technology to extract and separate the strategic metals**, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to national security.

Prelims Takeaway

- Rare earth metal
- Magnetism

Key Highlights

- It also banned the **export of production technology for rare earth metals** and alloy materials as well as technology to prepare some rare earth magnets.
- The decision is made amid efforts by Europe and the United States to reduce their dependence on rare earths supplied by China.
 - China currently dominates 90% of the world's refined output.

Rare earth metal

- Rare earths are a group of **17 metals used to make magnets** for use in electric vehicles, wind turbines and other electronics.'
- These include the **fifteen lanthanides on the periodic table** in addition to scandium and yttrium that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
- The 17 Rare Earths are cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd), praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).
- These minerals have unique **magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties**
- They are used in many **modern technologies**, including consumer electronics, computers and networks, communications, national defense etc.
- Even **futuristic technologies** need these REEs.
- China has **mastered the solvent extraction process** to refine the strategic minerals,
- **Western rare earth companies have struggled** to deploy due to technical complexities and pollution concerns.

4. Center exploring one-stop health sector regulator - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Central government is exploring setting up a **health sector regulator that will bring private and government health insurance schemes** under its purview

Prelims Takeaway

- Bima Trinity
- 'Insurance for All by 2047'

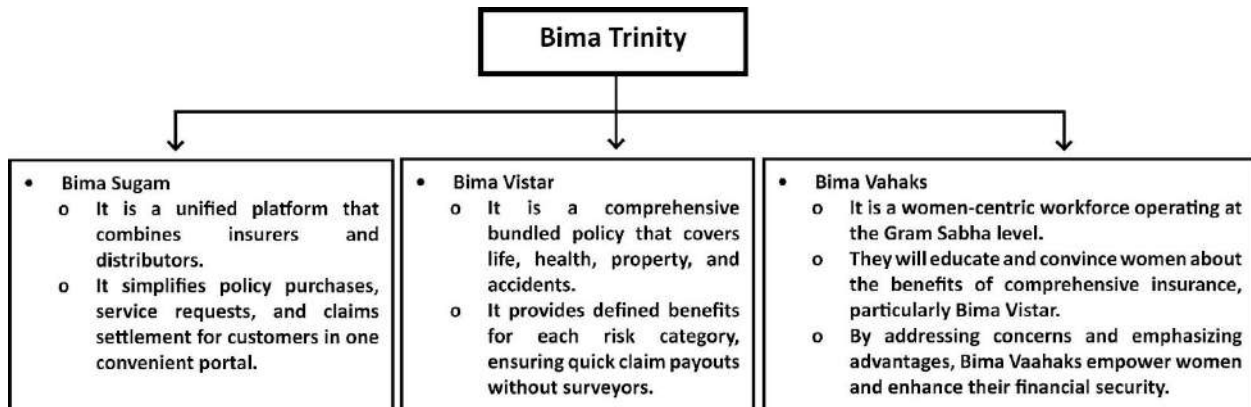
Objective

- **Penetration of private insurance is increasing** at a fast rate and along with government-run insurance, India should soon be covering 70% of the population".

- Doctors' bodies have urged that **private and government insurance be brought under a single regulator.**

'Insurance for All by 2047'

- Under the IRDAI Vision 2047, **the government aims to provide 'Insurance for All by 2047',**
 - Every citizen has appropriate life, health, and property insurance coverage and **every enterprise is supported by appropriate insurance solutions.**
- There is demand to have an **independent agency that can restructure** these schemes including fixing reimbursement rates for various medical procedures on a scientific basis.
- Without this, most hospitals are not coming forward to empanel under these schemes, **depriving extending tertiary care to beneficiaries.**



5. Ministry of Textiles launches "Paat-Mitro" application to facilitate jute farmers - PIB

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

News:

- To provide important information about MSP and agronomy to jute farmers, **the Ministry of Textiles launched "Paat-Mitro"** - a mobile application

Prelims Takeaway

- Jute
- Jute-ICARE

Key Points

- In addition to, the **latest agronomic practices like :**
 - Minimum Support Prices (MSP)
 - Jute Gradation Parameters
 - Farmer-centric schemes like 'Jute-ICARE',
 - JCI's Purchase Centers' locations, Procurement Policies are also made available in the app.
- Farmers will also be able to **track the status of their payments for the raw jute sold to JCI** under MSP Operation.
- The 'Jute Symposium' was organized to create awareness and popularize Jute based technical textiles with special emphasis on Jute Geotextiles.

Jute

- Temperature:** Between 25-35°C
- Rainfall:** Around 150-250 cm
- Soil Type:** Well drained alluvial soil.
- India** is the largest producer of jute followed by **Bangladesh and China.**
- However, in terms of acreage and trade, Bangladesh takes the lead accounting for **three-fourth of the global jute exports in comparison to India's 7%.**

- Major jute producing states include **West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.**

6. Ministry holds meet with CMs of northeast States over lag in DevINE scheme - The Hindu

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

News:

- The **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)** recently convened a meeting with Chief Ministers of Northeastern States.
- **Objective:** To discuss the implementation of projects under the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE).
- The meeting was prompted by a review from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) that highlighted the **slow progress of the scheme** despite sufficient funds.

Prelims Takeaway

- PM-DevINE
- GatiShakti

PM-DevINE Scheme

- Announced in the **2022-23 Union Budget**, the scheme aims at the **rapid and holistic development** of the **northeast region**.
- It focuses on **funding infrastructure and social development projects** based on the felt needs of the states, without substituting existing Central and State Schemes.
- It has been granted **100% Central funding**, ensuring that resources are directly allocated to the development initiatives.
- It will be implemented by the **Ministry of Development of North-East Region**.

Objectives of PM-DevINE

- To **fund infrastructure projects** in a cohesive manner in line with the spirit of PM GatiShakti, ensuring seamless connectivity and accessibility across the NER.
- To **support social development projects** that address critical issues and improve the overall quality of life for the region's inhabitants.
- To **create livelihood opportunities** specifically targeting the youth and women of the NER, enabling them to participate actively in the region's development and progress.

GS III

7. Sebi issues paper on instant settlement of trades, seeks views - Indian Express

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

News:

- The SEBI recently proposed a shift towards a **same-day settlement cycle (T+0)** in two phases as an initial step towards **instantaneous settlement** in the equity cash segment.

Prelims Takeaway

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- T+0 settlement

The Phases

- **Phase 1**
 - In the first phase, SEBI envisions an **optional T+0 settlement cycle for trades** until 1:30 pm.
 - Settlement of funds and securities would be **completed on the same day** by 4:30 pm.
- **Phase 2**
 - The second phase proposes an **optional immediate trade-by-trade settlement** (funds and securities), with trading extending until 3:30 pm.

Scope and Implementation

- SEBI had **previously shortened settlement cycles** to T+3 in 2002, T+2 in 2003, and introduced T+1 settlement in 2021, fully implemented from January 2023.

- To initiate T+0 settlement, SEBI suggests making it available **initially for the top 500 listed equity shares** in three tranches based on **market capitalization**.
- The exchanges shall coordinate to publish a **common list of securities and calendar** for migration under T+0 settlement.

Surveillance Measures

- Surveillance measures applicable to T+1 settlement cycles would **extend to T+0**.
- Securities under **trade-for-trade settlement** and those trading in **periodic call auction** sessions would not be eligible for T+0.
- It is observed that a high percentage of retail investors **bring upfront funds and securities** before placing the order, emphasizing the **readiness for an instant settlement mechanism**.

Significance

- Implementing T+0 settlement aims to provide **instant receipt of funds and securities**, reducing the risk of settlement shortages.
- It strengthens **investor protection**, enhances **control over securities and funds**, and **reduces risk exposure for Clearing Corporations**.

8. Sea turning red in Puducherry | NGT panel inspects beach, to submit report in 15 days - Indian Express

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- Recently, the principal Bench of the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has formed a committee to analyse the **cause of the Promenade beach turning red** in Puducherry.

Prelims Takeaway

- National Green Tribunal (NGT)
- Red Tide

Possible Causes

- The report suggests that the red color may be **due to algal bloom** and reddish tinge was observed at various patches along the coastline.
- Concerns were raised about **industrial pollution** or 'Red Tide' as potential factors behind the phenomenon.

Red Tide

- It is a common term used for a **harmful algal bloom**.
- Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs, occur when colonies of algae **grow out of control** and **produce toxic or harmful effects**
- The name "red tide" comes from the fact that **overgrowth of algae** can **cause the colour of the water to turn red**.

Causes

- **Chemicals** from farming, factories, sewage treatment plants and other sources can **become dissolved in water** on the land.
- This water, called runoff, eventually **flows into the ocean** and can cause algae to **grow faster**, leading to red tides.

Impacts

- Some of the algae that cause a red tide **produce powerful toxins**, which are harmful chemicals that can kill fish, shellfish, mammals and birds.
- If people eat fish or shellfish that have been in the water with toxic algae, they will also ingest the toxins, which can make them sick.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Israel is fighting in the dark in Gaza - The Hindu

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

Context:

- Israel is considered a **buffer of Western countries** in Asia.
- The Jewish State is considered the **protection against barbarism**.
- The ongoing war **between Israel and Hamas** needs to be seen in this context.
- The death of more than 20000 people in Palestine including women and children have raised various questions on the **credibility of International Institutions**.

Israel's Objectives

- Israel had two declared objectives when it launched the attack on Gaza.
- The stated objectives were to free hostages taken by Hamas and to "dismantle" Hamas.
- Additionally, there was an undeclared objective to rebuild Israel's deterrence.
- However, despite Israel's military capabilities, the goal of dismantling Hamas has not been achieved so far.

Asymmetric Wars

- Israel has not fought a conventional war in 50 years.
- In 1982, when it invaded Lebanon to push the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) out of the country,
- The previous war made Hezbollah strong in Lebanon.
- Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005.
- October 7, 2023 attack is the deadliest cross-border attack since 1948.
- In the current war, Israel's main narrative is that Hamas is like the Islamic State (IS).
- Just as the physical structures of the IS was destroyed, Israel wants Hamas to be destroyed as well.

What did Hamas achieve from the attack on Israel?

- The fundamental contradiction is Israel's continuing occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- Hamas might be a terrorist outfit for Israel and its western allies, but for a vast majority of other regional actors, it is fighting Israel's violent occupation.
- Hamas has a social and political cause - the liberation of Palestine - and is deeply entrenched in Palestinian society.
- This makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to dismantle Hamas through military means.

Hamas's Goals

- This time, Hamas appears to be more prepared and planned for a long resistance against the Israelis.
- Hamas aims to deny Israel a quick military victory, believing it would be politically advantageous.
- The extended conflict puts stress on Israel's economy, exposes its weaknesses, and garners global condemnation for its actions in Gaza.

Conclusion

- If Israel's objective is to kill Palestinians and render Gaza uninhabitable, it is on track.
- However, if the goal is to eradicate Hamas, free hostages, and enhance deterrence, Israel is far from achieving those objectives.

2. Grand gesture, small details - Indian Express

Relevance: World Affairs

Context:

- As the government nears the end of its current electoral term, a **comprehensive assessment of India's foreign policy** is crucial.
- **Objective:** To delve into India's efforts in promoting the interests of the Global South, unexpected defeats in international elections, extradition challenges, and the Italian Marines case.

Global South Affinities

- India has emphasized its alignment with the Global South, prioritizing developing countries' interests in multilateral forums.
- For this purpose, it held a "Voice of the Global South" summit in January and again its iteration virtually in November.
- Despite efforts to amplify the Global South's voice, recent events question the effectiveness of these endeavours.

Surprising UNESCO Election Outcome

- Despite India's efforts to secure support from the Global South, it faced a surprising defeat in the UNESCO Executive Board's election for the Vice President's position.
- Despite Pakistan's challenges, it secured 38 votes compared to India's 18, prompting reflection on India's efficacy in garnering support from the Global South.

Extradition Challenges with Denmark

- India's attempts to extradite Kim Davy from Denmark, linked to the Purulia arms drop case, have faced challenges.
- Despite public acknowledgment of Davy's involvement in breaking Indian laws, there has been limited progress in securing his extradition, prompting questions about India's approach.

Italian Marines Case

- In the Italian Marines case, where two Indians were killed, India accepted the International Tribunal's Award which mandated their trial in Italy.
- However, concerns were raised about whether the Indian Mission in Rome actively followed the proceedings, indicating the seriousness with which India views such cases.

Conclusion

- The **scrutiny of India's foreign policy** beyond publicized achievements is essential for a comprehensive assessment.
- While acknowledging diplomatic successes, **evaluating less visible issues** is crucial to understand the **full scope of India's foreign policy** record.

3. Credit ratings: the Govt view - Indian Express

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

Context:

- The Finance Ministry recently released a document titled **Re-examining Narratives: A Collection of Essays**.
- **Objective:** To present alternative perspectives on key economic policy areas with long-term implications for India's growth and development.

The Document

- The first essay within the collection critiques the "**opaque methodologies**" used by global credit rating agencies in **determining sovereign ratings**.
- The Finance Ministry highlighted **issues in the methodologies** of major agencies, emphasizing their **adverse impact on India**.

Importance of Sovereign Ratings	Government's Criticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sovereign ratings assess a government's creditworthiness, influencing global investors' decisions on lending money to a country. • Lower ratings result in higher borrowing costs for governments and businesses alike, hindering economic development in developing countries like India. <p style="text-align: center;">Main Rating Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sovereign credit ratings predate the Bretton Woods institutions, i.e. the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. • There three main globally recognised credit rating agencies are Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch. • The Finance Ministry's critique primarily focuses on Fitch, raising concerns about its assessment methodology. <p style="text-align: center;">Effect of Global Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the US and European countries have enjoyed a good record, ratings have been affected by global events. • For instance, according to an IMF research paper, sovereign defaults spiked during the 1930s Depression, and most ratings were downgraded. • By 1939, all European sovereigns, barring the UK, were in the speculative grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance Ministry identifies three main concerns with the rating agencies' methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Opacity and Bias <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The agencies' methodologies are deemed opaque and biased against developing economies. ▪ There is a particular concern about their assessment of public sector-dominated banking sectors. o Lack of Transparency in Expert Selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The process of selecting experts for rating assessments lacks transparency, adding complexity to an already intricate methodology. o Unclear Weight Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The agencies fail to clearly communicate the assigned weights for each parameter considered in their assessments. ▪ This further contributes to the lack of transparency. • Critiques of Fitch's methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Concerns related to the application of the composite governance indicator and the qualitative overlay, which introduces subjective elements.

Conclusion

- The Finance Ministry argues that the influence of **subjective indicators** and perceived institutional strength plays a **disproportionate role** in determining **credit rating upgrades** for developing economies.
- These assessments rely excessively on arbitrary indicators, and are often criticized for being based on perception-driven surveys.

Quick Look

1. R21/Matrix-M Malaria Vaccine

- The World Health Organization (WHO) added the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine to its list of prequalified vaccines.
- The R21 Vaccine It is developed by the Oxford University and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India,
- It is the second malaria vaccine prequalified by WHO, following the RTS,S/AS01 vaccine which had obtained prequalification status in July 2022.
- Prequalification means larger access to vaccines as a key tool to prevent malaria in children.
- As part of the prequalification process, WHO applies international standards to comprehensively evaluate and determine whether vaccines are safe, effective, and manufactured to international standards.
- WHO also ensures the continued safety and efficacy of prequalified vaccines through, for example, regular re-evaluation, site inspection, and targeted testing.

2. Wildlife Trust of India

- Experts from the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD) are planning to establish feeding stations for birds at the Ennore creek.
- It is a non-profit conservation organisation, committed to urgent action that works towards the protection of India's wildlife.
- It was formed in November 1998, in response to the rapidly deteriorating condition of the country's wildlife.
- The principal concerns of WTI include crisis management and provision of quick, efficient aid to individuals, species or habitats that require it the most.

3. PM-AJAY Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM- AJAY) is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- It is a merged scheme of three Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely
 - Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana(PMAGY)
 - Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP)
 - Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)
- Objectives
 - To increase the income of the target population by way of various income generating schemes, skill development and infrastructure development.
 - To reduce the poverty among the target population and bring them above the poverty lines.
- Eligibility Criteria
 - The Scheduled Castes persons living below the poverty lines are eligible for getting benefits under this scheme.
 - In case of Infrastructure Development, the villages having 50% or more SC population are eligible for grants under the Scheme.

4. Light Combat Aircraft Programme

- The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme began in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters.
- It later became part of the general fleet modernisation programme.
- In 2003, the LCA was officially named "Tejas".
- It is India's first self-made fighter jet and received the final operational clearance for induction into the air force as a fully-weaponized fighter jet in February 2019.
- It is the second supersonic fighter jet that has been developed by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (the first one being HAL HF-24 Marut).

5. Light Combat Helicopter Programme

- It was proposed to meet IAF's requirement of a dedicated light helicopter for combat operations.
- It was during the 1999 Kargil war that the need was first felt for a homegrown lightweight assault helicopter that could hold precision strikes in all Indian battlefield scenarios.
- The government sanctioned the LCH project in 2006 and HAL was tasked to develop it.
- The HAL Prachand is an Indian multi-role light attack helicopter designed and manufactured by the HAL under Project LCH.
- The LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters with a considerable load of weapons and fuel.

6. Ennore Creek

- It is a backwater located in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu.
- It is an arm of the Kosathalaiyar River.
- The Creek meets the Bay of Bengal at Mugathwara Kuppam, while the northern channel of the creek connects to the Pulicat Lake, the second largest brackish water lake in the country.
- The Ennore Creek, along with the Buckingham Canal and the rest of the Pulicat water system has vast importance for the local fisher folk.
- It nurtures a healthy aquatic ecosystem which was once famous for its rich biodiversity.

7. Winter Solstice

- The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year.
- The Earth is tilted 23.4 degrees on its axis, so if the Earth's pole is pointing towards or away from the Sun during the day, the arc the Sun travels through will rise and fall during the year.
- Winter Solstice happens when one of the Earth's poles is far away from the Sun.
- It falls on December 21 or 22 in the Northern Hemisphere and June 20 or 21 in the Southern Hemisphere.
- The word solstice is derived from the Latin word solstitium, where 'sol' means Sun and 'stitium' means to stop.
- During the winter solstice, the days are the shortest. The duration of daylight will vary across countries.
- The winter solstice is significant in many cultures since it marks the symbolic death and rebirth of the Sun. Ancient monuments like Stonehenge are aligned with the sunrise or sunset on the winter solstice.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the "Palna" scheme

1. The "Palna" scheme is a government initiative aimed at promoting education and healthcare for children in rural areas.
2. It provides financial assistance to families with newborns to support the upbringing and welfare of the child.
3. The "Palna" scheme is exclusively implemented in the state of Gujarat to address child welfare issues.

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 Doklam

1. Doklam is a region located at the tri-junction of India, Bhutan, and China.
2. The Doklam standoff in 2017 involved a territorial dispute between India and China.
3. The area remains a potential hotspot, and India has observed continuous Chinese construction activities in Doklam since 2017.

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 about Rare earth metal

1. These include the fifteen lanthanides on the periodic table in addition to scandium and yttrium that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
2. These minerals have unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties
3. They are used in many modern technologies, including consumer

electronics, computers and networks, communications, national defense etc.

4. China has mastered the solvent extraction process to refine the strategic minerals,

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

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

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding "Insurance for All by 2047":

1. "Insurance for All by 2047" is a government initiative aimed at achieving universal insurance coverage for all Indian citizens by the year 2047.
2. The initiative primarily focuses on providing life insurance coverage to economically vulnerable sections of the population.
3. The target year 2047 holds significance as it marks the centenary of India's independence.
4. The initiative aims to enhance financial inclusion by making insurance products accessible and affordable, especially in rural areas.
5. Various public and private insurance companies collaborate under this initiative to offer a diverse range of insurance products.

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

- A. Only two
- B. Only three
- C. Only five
- D. None

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding Jute-ICARE

1. Jute-ICARE is a government initiative aimed at promoting the cultivation of jute and ensuring the welfare of jute farmers.

2. It focuses on increasing the productivity of jute farming through the adoption of modern agricultural practices and technologies.
3. Jute-ICARE is primarily implemented in the northeastern states of India to boost jute production in the region.

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

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

Q6. With reference to the PM-DevINE Scheme, consider the following statements

1. The scheme aims at the rapid and holistic development of the northeast region.
2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

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

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

Q7. With reference to T+0 settlement cycle, consider the following statements

1. SEBI introduced T+0 settlement in 2022, fully implemented from January 2023.
2. Surveillance measures applicable to T+1 settlement cycles do not extend to T+0.
3. It enhances control over securities and funds and reduces risk exposure for Clearing Corporations.

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

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

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Red Tide

1. It occurs commonly due to overgrowth of algae which turns the water red.
2. All red tides causing algae are helpful for mammals and birds.
3. India has never witnessed any Red Tide event so far.

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

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

Q9. Consider the following statements with reference to Global South

1. The Global South is purely a geographical concept.
2. The Brandt Line is a visual representation of the division between the Global North and the Global South based on economic disparities.
3. The expansion of BRICS to 11 members emphasized increased engagement with the Global South.

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

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

Q10. Consider the following statements on Sovereign Credit Ratings Agencies

1. Sovereign credit ratings predate the Bretton Woods institutions.
2. There three main globally recognised credit rating agencies are Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch.
3. Lower ratings result in higher borrowing costs for governments and businesses alike.

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

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

Prelims Track Answer

Ans. 1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The "Palna" scheme is not primarily focused on education and healthcare. It is a childcare initiative that provides support to orphaned and abandoned children. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect
- The "Palna" scheme indeed provides financial assistance to families with newborns to support the upbringing and welfare of the child. However, it is important to note that the primary focus is on orphaned and abandoned children, rather than all families with newborns. Hence, statement 2 is correct
- While the "Palna" scheme is a nationwide initiative, it is not exclusively implemented in Gujarat. It operates in various states across India. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect

Ans. 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Doklam is indeed a region situated at the tri-junction of India, Bhutan, and China.
- Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The Doklam standoff occurred in 2017 and involved a territorial dispute between Indian and Chinese troops. The dispute arose when China attempted to extend a road in the Doklam region, which Bhutan claimed as its territory. India intervened to support Bhutan's position, leading to a tense standoff. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- As of the given information, India has not observed continuous Chinese construction activities in Doklam since 2017. The situation has remained relatively stable, with both countries disengaging their troops following diplomatic discussions. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.

Ans. 3 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Rare earths are a group of 17 metals used to make magnets for use in electric vehicles, wind turbines and other electronics.'
- These include the fifteen lanthanides on the periodic table in addition to scandium and yttrium that show similar physical and chemical properties to the lanthanides.
- The 17 Rare Earths are cerium (Ce), dysprosium (Dy), erbium (Er), europium (Eu), gadolinium (Gd), holmium (Ho), lanthanum (La), lutetium (Lu), neodymium (Nd),

praseodymium (Pr), promethium (Pm), samarium (Sm), scandium (Sc), terbium (Tb), thulium (Tm), ytterbium (Yb), and yttrium (Y).

- These minerals have unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties
- They are used in many modern technologies, including consumer electronics, computers and networks, communications, national defense etc.
- Even futuristic technologies need these REEs.
- China has mastered the solvent extraction process to refine the strategic minerals. Hence all statements are correct

Ans. 4 Option D is correct

Explanation

- "Insurance for All by 2047" is a hypothetical initiative for the purpose of this question, and the statement is accurate as described. Hence, statement 1 is correct
- While the initiative is aimed at universal insurance coverage, it is not limited to life insurance alone. It encompasses various types of insurance, including health, property, and other forms of coverage. Hence, statement 2 is correct
- The statement is correct. The target year 2047 holds significance as it marks the centenary of India's independence. Hence, statement 3 is correct
- One of the primary goals of such an initiative would be to enhance financial inclusion by making insurance products accessible and affordable, particularly in rural areas where insurance penetration may be lower. Hence, statement 4 is correct
- In a real-world scenario, various public and private insurance companies might collaborate under a government-led initiative to offer a diverse range of insurance products to cater to different need. Hence, statement 5 is correct

Ans. 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Jute-ICARE stands for "Jute Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise." It is indeed a government initiative aimed at promoting jute cultivation and ensuring the welfare of jute farmers. The program aims to enhance the income of jute farmers and improve the quality of raw jute through the

promotion of efficient farming practices. Hence, statement 1 is correct

- Jute-ICARE focuses on increasing the productivity of jute farming through the adoption of modern agricultural practices and technologies. This includes the use of high-yielding jute seeds, better retting practices, and training farmers in the latest cultivation techniques. Hence, statement 2 is correct
- While Jute-ICARE is a nationwide initiative, it is not limited to the northeastern states alone. It is implemented across jute-growing states in India to benefit jute farmers and boost jute production nationally. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect

Ans. 6 Option A is correct

Explanation

- PM-DevINE Scheme, announced in the 2022-23 Union Budget, aims at the rapid and holistic development of the northeast region. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- It focuses on funding infrastructure and social development projects based on the felt needs of the states, without substituting existing Central and State Schemes.
- It has been granted 100% Central funding, ensuring that resources are directly allocated to the development initiatives. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Development of North-East Region. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.
- Objectives of PM-DevINE
 - o To fund infrastructure projects in a cohesive manner in line with the spirit of PM GatiShakti, ensuring seamless connectivity and accessibility across the NER.
 - o To support social development projects that address critical issues and improve the overall quality of life for the region's inhabitants.
 - o To create livelihood opportunities specifically targeting the youth and women of the NER, enabling them to participate actively in the region's development and progress.

Ans. 7 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The SEBI recently proposed a shift towards a same-day settlement cycle (T+0) in two phases as an initial step towards instantaneous settlement in the equity cash segment.

- SEBI had previously shortened settlement cycles to T+3 in 2002, T+2 in 2003, and introduced T+1 settlement in 2021, fully implemented from January 2023. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.
- To initiate T+0 settlement, SEBI suggests making it available initially for the top 500 listed equity shares in three tranches based on market capitalization.
- The exchanges shall coordinate to publish a common list of securities and calendar for migration under T+0 settlement.
- Surveillance measures applicable to T+1 settlement cycles would extend to T+0. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- Securities under trade-for-trade settlement and those trading in periodic call auction sessions would not be eligible for T+0.
- Implementing T+0 settlement aims to provide instant receipt of funds and securities, reducing the risk of settlement shortages.
- It strengthens investor protection, enhances control over securities and funds, and reduces risk exposure for Clearing Corporations. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

Ans. 8 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has formed a committee to analyze the cause of the Promenade beach turning red in Puducherry. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.
- Concerns were raised about industrial pollution or 'Red Tide' as potential factors behind the phenomenon.
- Red Tide is a common term used for a harmful algal bloom.
- Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs, occur when colonies of algae grow out of control and produce toxic or harmful effects. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Some of the algae that cause a red tide produce powerful toxins, which are harmful chemicals that can kill fish, shellfish, mammals and birds. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- If people eat fish or shellfish that have been in the water with toxic algae, they will also ingest the toxins, which can make them sick.

Ans. 9 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Global South, often misconceived as a purely geographical concept, encompasses diverse countries, drawing upon geopolitical,

historical, and developmental factors. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.

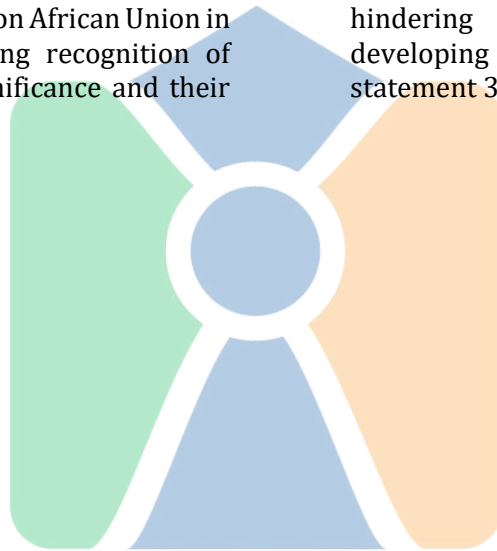
- While it is not solely defined by location, it broadly represents nations facing developmental challenges.
- The Brandt Line is a visual representation of the division between the Global North and the Global South based on economic disparities. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The establishment of the 'Loss and Damage Fund' during COP27 in Egypt highlighted the disproportionate burden faced by the Global South.
- The expansion of BRICS to 11 members emphasized increased engagement with the Global South. Hence, statement 3 is correct.
- The inclusion of the 55-nation African Union in the G20 signifies a growing recognition of African nations' global significance and their

valuable contributions to shaping the global order.

Ans. 10 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Sovereign credit ratings predate the Bretton Woods institutions, i.e. the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- There three main globally recognised credit rating agencies are Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- Sovereign ratings assess a government's creditworthiness, influencing global investors' decisions on lending money to a country.
- Lower ratings result in higher borrowing costs for governments and businesses alike, hindering economic development in developing countries like India. Hence, statement 3 is correct.



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