

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GSI

1. India now eyes Africa for critical minerals - The Hindu

Relevance: Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).

Prelims Takeaway

- Cobalt
- lithium

News:

- India is looking at Africa for minerals, including cobalt, and other critical minerals
- The country is still engaging with Australia for lithium blocks

Critical minerals:

- **Identified:** India has identified 30 crucial minerals essential for various industries, including clean energy, defense, and fertilizers.
- **Significance:** These minerals are vital for achieving clean energy goals and national development. The growing demand for electric vehicles and renewable energy creates a massive need for these resources.
- **Global demand:** The global demand for critical minerals is expected to skyrocket due to climate change mitigation efforts, making strategic planning and resource security crucial for India.

Challenges and concerns:

- **Concentration:** Critical mineral reserves are heavily concentrated in a few countries, mainly China, creating vulnerabilities in global supply chains due to uneven distribution and processing capabilities.
- **Chinese dominance:** China's dominance in refining critical minerals and rare earths raises concerns about its potential to influence global supply chains and technological advancements through its monopoly.
- **Dependency risks:** India's ambitious clean energy goals rely heavily on critical minerals, particularly for battery manufacturing and renewable energy infrastructure.
- Despite efforts to secure resources through agreements with other countries, India remains heavily reliant on imports, posing challenges for domestic industries and technological advancements.

2. On Holi, a look at Jaipur's traditional celebrations with 'Gulaal Gota'- Indian Express

Relevance: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

News:

- In some parts of Rajasthan's Jaipur, an old tradition will play out where **colours will be thrown through a unique medium called the "Gulaal Gota"**, dating back around 400 years.

Prelims Takeaway

- Geographical Indication (GI) tag
- Jaipur

What is a Gulaal Gota?

- A Gulaal Gota is a small ball made of lac, filled with dry gulaal.
- Local artisans say that making Gulaal Gotas involves first boiling the lac in water to make it flexible.
- **Lac is a resinous substance that is secreted by certain insects.**

- It is also used to make bangles.

How did Gulaal Gotas become a tradition in Jaipur?

- Gulaal Gotas are made by **Muslim lac makers, called Manihaars**, only in Jaipur.

Jaipur

- The city of Jaipur was established in 1727.
- Its founder Sawai Jai Singh II, an admirer of art
- The erstwhile royal family is also known to order Gulaal Gota at its palace for the festival.

What does the future look like for this work?

- In a bid to save the tradition, some Gulaal Gota makers have **demand a Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- A GI tag can help boost the awareness of a product and highlight its location-specific exclusivity.
- It also helps original creators safeguard their products against imitation.

GS II

3. India to double assistance to Bhutan to ₹10,000 crore over five years, says Modi- The Hindu

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

News:

- **India has decided to double Bhutan's assistance over the next five years**, from ₹5,000 crore in 2019-2024 to ₹10,000 crore for the period till 2029, Prime Minister said in Thimphu

Prelims Takeaway

- Gelephu Mindfulness City
- Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project

Key Highlights

- The Indian Prime minister was awarded Bhutan's highest honour, the 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo', which was announced in 2021
 - to acknowledge India's role in ensuring "Bhutan's success in managing the COVID-19 pandemic".
- After meeting Bhutan's Prime Minister, India and Bhutan inked seven agreements on energy, food safety, sports, and research, as well as a space collaboration roadmap.
- Both will soon see our initiatives for a new airport for better connectivity, rail links between Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse
- waterways navigation on the Brahmaputra.
- To strengthen trade infrastructure, we will build integrated check posts,"

India Bhutan bilateral relation

- **Bhutan King recalled Operation All Clear** which was a military operation conducted by the Royal Bhutan Army in 2003 **against Assam separatist insurgent groups in the southern regions of Bhutan**.
- India and Bhutan have agreed to discuss new routes of regional connectivity, which includes the development of a cross-border rail link between Gelephu in Bhutan and Kokrajhar in Assam, spanning 58 km.
- Additionally, there is a **plan to explore a second rail link of approximately 18 km between Samtse in Bhutan and Banarhat** in the tea gardens area of West Bengal.
- Progress on the construction of the 1020 MW **Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project was noted with satisfaction**, with its early commissioning expected in 2024.

4. Can Arvind Kejriwal continue to be CM while in custody? - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- ED
- CM

News:

- Questions are being asked about whether the **Delhi Chief Minister can continue to occupy a public office** that demands a high degree of morality after being remanded in judicial custody.

Key highlights

- Earlier judgments in the Supreme Court and High Courts have concluded that constitutional morality, good governance, and constitutional trust are the basic norms for holding a public office.
- A recent judgment by the Madras High Court in **S. Ramachandran versus V. Senthilbalaji** referred to arguments made in court on
 - whether a Minister must forfeit his right to occupy a public office that demands a high degree of morality if he is accused of a “financial scandal”.
- a former Tamil Nadu Minister, was arrested by the ED on money-laundering charges last year.
- He continued to be a Minister without portfolio while he was in judicial custody.
- The arguments referred to a 2014 Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court in **Manoj Narula versus Union of India**
 - Which had held that the basic norm for holding a public office was constitutional morality, that is, to avoid acting in a manner contradictory to the rule of law.
- “Political compulsion cannot outweigh the public morality, requirements of good/clean governance and constitutional morality,” the High Court had observed.

5. HC says Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Act ‘unconstitutional’ - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Act, 2004

News:

- Terming the **Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Act, 2004 “unconstitutional”**, the Allahabad High Court said the Act violates principles of secularism.

Key Highlights

- The court maintained that the **State has no power to create a board for religious education** or to establish a board for school education only for a particular religion and philosophy associated with it.
- it is the duty of the state to provide education which is secular in nature.
- It cannot discriminate and provide different types of education to children belonging to different religions.
- Any such action on the part of the state would be violative of secularism, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- Such an action on the part of the state is not only unconstitutional but also highly divisive of the society on religious lines,” the court noted.

‘No equivalence’

- “The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised on modern education with modern subjects

- the court directed the government to take steps forthwith for accommodating these students in regular schools
 - Recognised under the Primary Education Board and schools recognised under the High School and Intermediate Education Board of Uttar Pradesh.

GS III

6. Cosmic cannibalism: Astronomers discover 'twin' stars that eat planets- Time of India

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Twin stars

News:

- The solar system housing Earth and its fellow planet has shown remarkable stability throughout its 4.5 billion-year

Stars Gone Wild: Devouring Planets in Their Prime

- Scientists studying twin stars, thought to be identical, **found a surprising number with lopsided chemical makeup.**
- This suggests one of the stars may have gobbled up planets or planetary building blocks!
- Normally, twin stars share the same chemical fingerprint because they form from the same cosmic dust cloud.
- But in roughly 8% of 91 pairs examined, one star showed higher levels of elements like iron, nickel, and titanium - hints of a devoured rocky world.
- These feasting stars were surprisingly young and healthy, not nearing the end of their lives like our future red giant Sun.
- The culprit behind this "cosmic cannibalism" could be a gravitational nudge from a larger planet or a passing star, throwing a hapless planet into its hungry star's path.
- This discovery suggests planetary systems are more chaotic than previously thought, with planets potentially getting tossed out or swallowed whole.
- With more homeless planets out there than expected, the hunt for these cosmic refugees might become a new frontier in astronomy!

7. Inequality dipped over the past decade' - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Household Consumption Expenditure Survey

News:

- The Finance Ministry asserted that India experienced "inclusive growth" over the past decade, citing "reassuring findings" of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey of 2022-23.

Key Highlights

- "The rural-urban divide in MPCE [monthly per capita consumption expenditure] has declined considerably," the Ministry said.
- "Within rural and urban areas, the consumption of the lowest 5% of the MPCE population grew at a faster rate than the top 5%,
 - pointing to a decline in inequality over the last decade."
- Juxtaposing the MPCE numbers with per capita gross national income, reveal an inclusive trend in economic growth, it held.

- “The MPCE/PCI ratio has increased for all consumption classes except the top 5% in rural India and the top 10% in urban India.

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

- It is conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** every 5 years.
- It is designed to collect information on the consumption of goods and services by households.
- The data collected in HCES is also utilized for deriving various other macroeconomic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty rates, and Consumer Price Inflation (CPI).
- NITI Aayog has stated that the latest **consumer expenditure survey indicated that poverty has come down to 5% in the country.**
- The findings of the last HCES, **conducted in 2017-18 were not released after the government cited “data quality” issues.**
- Information Generated: Provides information on the typical spending on both goods (including food and non-food items) and services.
- Additionally, assists in calculating estimates for household Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) and analyzing the distribution of households and individuals across different MPCE categories.

Highlights of the Recent Survey

- The estimates of average monthly per capita consumption expenditure were generated
 - Without imputing the value figures of the items received free by the households through various social welfare programmes
 - Such as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

8. Chinese coast guard tries to block Filipino vessels in South China Sea - The Hindu

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

News:

- Chinese coast guard ships backed by a military helicopter attempted unsuccessfully to **block two Philippine government vessels carrying scientists from reaching two sandbars in the disputed South China Sea,**

Key Highlights

- China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping territorial claims that have erupted from time to time into brief confrontations in the South China Sea.
- Hostilities between China and the Philippines, however, have worsened since last year,
 - resulting in minor collisions at sea and injuries to a few Filipino crewmen, sparking a war of words.
- Washington has no territorial claims in the strategic waterway but has questioned China’s claim to virtually the entire seaway.
- The United States has repeatedly warned that it’s obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack.
- During the Chinese coast guard’s maneuvers, one of its ships crossed the bow of the Philippine fisheries vessel BRP Datu Sanday at a distance of 100 meters (328 feet), Tarriela said.
- Two of the three small sandbars where the Filipino scientists carried out a survey are located between Philippine-occupied Thitu island and Subi
 - a disputed reef that China transformed into an island base with a military-grade runway, seaports and a number of buildings with communications facilities.
- In 2017, Chinese officials accused the Philippine military of attempting to build a structure on one of the sandbars, and deployed Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships to keep watch on Sandy Cay.

Prelims Takeaway

- South china sea
- Map based question

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Blowback: Pakistan is paying for its role in supporting Islamists in Afghanistan - The Hindu

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

News:

- When the Taliban returned to power in Kabul in August 2021, Imran Khan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, claimed that Afghanistan had broken the "shackles of slavery".

Key Highlights	Pakistan -taliban relation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two and a half years later, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is a source of friction between the two countries. • Pakistan carried out air strikes in the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost earlier this week, killing at least eight civilians. • Pakistan says it was targeting the Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which it blames for a surge in terror attacks on its territory. • In retaliation, the Taliban launched attacks on Pakistani military posts along the border. • Pakistan, which played a key role in the Taliban's rise in the 1990s, has backed the Sunni Islamist group for years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the late 1990s, when the Taliban were in power, Pakistan was one of only three countries to formally recognise the regime. • Islamabad turned against the Taliban under pressure from Washington after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ but it tactfully played a double game over two decades by remaining an American ally in its war on terror while backing the Taliban. • The entire Taliban leadership was based in Quetta, Balochistan, during this phase. • Pakistan cultivated the Taliban against the U.S.-and India-backed Afghan government. • When the Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani collapsed in 2021 in the midst of America's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to power, Pakistan expected to deepen its strategic presence in South Asia through a client regime in Kabul. • But the opposite happened. Historically, Afghan governments have not had very good relations with Pakistan, given their disputed border, the Durand Line. • When the Taliban were an insurgency, they needed Pakistan and Pakistan needed them as a counterweight to the government in Kabul. • But today, the Taliban are the government in Kabul. Besides, the return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan strengthened the TTP, also known as the Pakistani Taliban. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What the TTP wants to achieve in Pakistan is what the Afghan Taliban have already achieved in Afghanistan. • The Afghan Taliban have not severed their ties with the TTP despite Pakistan's calls and threats, which has put both countries on a collision course.

Conclusion

- Pakistan has no quick fixes. It has a history of supporting Islamist insurgency, which has come back to haunt the state in one way or the other. In Afghanistan, this policy is facing its latest blowback.

10. 9 takeaways from World Inequality Lab working paper- Indian Express

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

Context:

- A new working paper, titled "**Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj**", by World Inequality Lab was released recently.
- It has estimated that "**inequality declined post-independence** till the early 1980s, after which it began rising and has skyrocketed since the early 2000s".

Key Highlights**Growth in average incomes**

- According to the WIL paper, between 1960 and 2022, India's average income grew at 2.6% per year in real terms
- This period can be broadly divided into two halves: "Compared to a real growth rate of 1.6% per year between 1960 and 1990
 - average incomes grew by 3.6% per year between 1990 and 2022".
- It further states that the periods 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 saw the fastest growth at 4.3% and 4.9% per year respectively.

Emergence of very high net worth individuals

- The period between 1990 to 2022 witnessed a rise in national wealth and the emergence of very high net worth individuals

Rise in the percentage of income tax payers

- The paper finds that the share of adult population that filed an income tax return — which had remained under 1% till the 1990s — also grew significantly
 - with the economic reforms of 1991.

Extreme levels of inequality in India

- The paper finds that in 2022-23, 22.6% of India's national income went to just the top 1%, the highest level recorded in the data series since 1922
- The top 1% wealth share stood at 40.1% in 2022- 23 — also at its highest level since 1961 when the data series on wealth began.

Extreme wealth concentration at the very top

- The paper notes that a "key feature of the wealth accumulation process in India is the extreme concentration at the very top".
- Between 1961 and 2023, the top 1% wealth share increased threefold, from 13% to 39%.
- Most of these gains came post-1991 after which point top 1% shares have been on a steep upward trend right until 2022-23.

International comparison of income inequality

- If one looks at the income share of the top 10%, India stands second only second to South Africa
- If, however, one compares the income share of the top 1%, India ends up having the highest levels at 22.6%.
- As it happens, India's top 1% income share appears to be among the very highest in the world based on World Inequality Database data
 - behind only perhaps Peru, Yemen and a couple of other small countries," notes the paper.

Poor data leading to likely underestimation of inequality

- Notwithstanding such stark findings, the authors "emphasize that the quality of economic data in India is notably poor and has seen a decline recently.

Policy solution

- "Implementing a super tax on Indian billionaires and multimillionaires, along with restructuring the tax schedule to include both income and wealth
- so as to finance major investments in education, health and other public infrastructure, could be effective measures," to address the rising inequalities.

Quick Look

1. Vechur cow

- It is one of the rare dwarf cattle breeds of India, it is considered to be the smallest cattle breed in the world.
- It is known by the name of a place Vechur - a small place by the side of Vembanad lake near Vaikam in Kottayam district of South Kerala.
- These are light red, black or fawn and white in colour.
- The animals are well adapted to the hot and humid climate of the area. Milk production is relatively higher than any other dwarf cattle.
- It is docile, short, disease-resistant and easy to maintain with low food requirement as compared to other crossbred species.

2. Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02

- This landing experiment is the second of the series conducted at Aeronautical Test Range.
- After the RLV-LEX-01 mission was accomplished last year, RLV-LEX-02 demonstrated
 - the autonomous landing capability of reusable launch vehicle (RLV) from off-nominal initial conditions at release from helicopter.

3. Ebola

- Ebola virus disease (EVD, or Ebola) is a rare but severe illness in humans.
- It is caused by several species of viruses from the genus Ebolavirus, that are found primarily in sub-Saharan Africa.
- It gets its name from the Ebola River, which is near one of the villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the disease first appeared.
- Transmission:
- Ebola isn't as contagious as more common viruses like colds, influenza, or measles.
- It spreads to people by contact with the skin or bodily fluids of an infected animal, like a monkey, chimp, or fruit bat.

4. Tactical Nuclear Weapons

- Nuclear weapons, just like other weapons, can be categorised into two types: strategic and tactical.
- Strategic Nuclear Weapons: They refer to nuclear weapons that have bigger objectives, such as destroying cities or larger targets, with larger war-waging objectives in mind.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs)

- They are nuclear weapons used for specific tactical gains on the battlefield.
- They are intended to devastate enemy targets in a specific area without causing widespread destruction and radioactive fallout.
- These warheads can be delivered via a variety of missiles, torpedoes, and gravity bombs from naval, air, or ground forces.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. About three-fourths of world's cobalt, a metal required for the manufacture of batteries for electric motor vehicles, is produced by

- A. Argentina
- B. Botswana
- C. The Democratic Republic of the Congo
- D. Kazakhstan

Q2. Consider the following pairs :

**Area of conflict mentioned in news :
Country where it is located**

1. Donbas : Syria
2. Khost : Afghanistan
3. Tigray : North Yemen

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 Geographical Indications (GI) Tags in India:

1. A GI tag guarantees the highest quality of a product.
2. A product can be awarded a GI tag if it has a unique characteristic linked to its geographical origin.
3. Darjeeling Orange was the first product in India to receive a GI tag.

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

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

Q4. Consider the following statements about Gelephu Mindfulness City in Bhutan:

1. Gelephu Mindfulness City is the first of its kind global initiative.
2. The project aims to promote mental and emotional well-being through urban design and community programs.
3. Gelephu is the capital city of Bhutan.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Act, 2004:

1. The Act integrates the curriculum of madrasas with mainstream education.
2. The Act is applicable only to government-funded madrasas.
3. The Act makes teaching of science and mathematics compulsory in all madrasas.

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

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

Q6. Consider the following statements about a recent study on twin stars:

1. Twin stars, formed from the same cloud, are expected to have identical chemical compositions.
2. The study found evidence of one star in some twin pairs devouring planets or planetary material.
3. This phenomenon of "cosmic cannibalism" only occurs in stars nearing the end of their lifespan.

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

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

Q7. Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

1. It is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) every 5 years.
2. It is designed to collect information on the consumption of goods and services by households.

3. The data collected in HCES is also utilized for deriving various other macroeconomic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty rates, and Consumer Price Inflation (CPI).

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 about the South China Sea dispute:

1. The dispute involves territorial claims by several countries on islands and maritime features within the South China Sea.
2. The disputed territories are believed to be rich in natural resources like oil and gas.
3. Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is a major concern for several countries, including India.

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

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

Q9. Consider the following statements about the Taliban:

1. The Taliban is a political party that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.
2. The Taliban adheres to a strict interpretation of Islamic law.
3. The Taliban was removed from power by a US-led invasion in 2001 following the 9/11 attacks.

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 about a recent report on Income and Wealth Inequality in India:

1. The report found that income and wealth inequality in India have been declining since the early 1980s.
2. The top 1% of earners in India hold a smaller share of national income compared to the global average.
3. The report highlights the urgent need for policy interventions to address the growing wealth gap in India.

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 C is correct

Explanation

- Cobalt has emerged as a vital ingredient of the shift to a lower-carbon energy system, but reserves of the metal are concentrated heavily in just a single country.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is home to half of the world's known resources, and currently accounts for around 70% of global production. **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
- The metal's use in electronic goods – particularly the rechargeable batteries used in electric vehicles and other forms of energy storage – means interest in it is growing as the electrification of the global energy system continues to gather pace.

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Donbas is a historical, cultural, and economic region in eastern Ukraine. It has two heavily industrialised regions of Donetsk and Luhansk which were occupied by Russian forces last year. **Hence pair 1 is not correctly matched.**
- Pakistan carried out air strikes in the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost earlier this week, killing at least eight civilians.
- **Hence pair 2 is correctly matched.**
- Tigray is Ethiopia's northernmost region. The region is at the center of an ongoing civil conflict involving ethno-regional militias, the federal government, and the Eritrean military that has attracted the concern of humanitarian groups and external actors since November 2020. In October 2022, the first formal African Union-led peace talks between an Ethiopian government team and Tigray forces happened in South Africa. **Hence pair 3 is not correctly matched**
- Pakistan carried out air strikes in the Afghan provinces of Paktika and Khost earlier this week, killing at least eight civilians.
- Pakistan says it was targeting the Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which it blames for a surge in terror attacks on its territory.

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is Incorrect:** A GI tag does not necessarily guarantee the highest quality. It signifies that a product's specific characteristics are linked to its geographical origin. For example, Alphonso mangoes from Ratnagiri have a distinct taste due to the region's soil and climate.
- **Statement 2 (Correct):** This is a key feature of a GI tag. The product's qualities, reputation, or characteristics must be essentially attributable to its geographical origin.
- **Statement 3 (Correct):** Darjeeling tea was indeed the first product in India to receive a GI tag in 2003.
- profile picture

Answer 4 Option B is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 (Correct):** Gelephu Mindfulness City is a pioneering project aiming to integrate mindfulness principles into urban planning and development.
- **Statement 2 (Correct):** The city design will incorporate elements promoting well-being, while community programs will focus on mindfulness practices.
- **Statement 3 (Incorrect):** Bhutan's capital is Thimphu, not Gelephu. Gelephu is a Bhutanese border town.

Answer 5 Option A is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 (Correct):** The Act aims to bring the curriculum of madrasas at par with mainstream education by introducing subjects like science, mathematics, Hindi, English and social studies.
- **Statement 2 (Incorrect):** The Act applies to both government-funded and private madrasas in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Statement 3 (Correct):** The Act mandates the teaching of science and mathematics along with traditional Islamic subjects in madrasas.

Answer 6 Option B is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 (Correct):** Twin stars, also called co-natal stars, form from the same gas and dust cloud and are expected to have very similar chemical compositions.

- **Statement 2 (Correct):** The study surprisingly found that around 8% of the 91 twin pairs examined showed a difference in chemical makeup. One star had higher levels of elements like iron, nickel, and titanium, suggesting it might have consumed a rocky planet or planetary debris.
- **Statement 3 (Incorrect):** The study found evidence of "cosmic cannibalism" in stars that were young and healthy, not nearing the end of their lives like our future red giant Sun. The cause for this phenomenon is still under investigation, possibly involving gravitational disturbances from other celestial bodies.

Answer 7 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- It is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) every 5 years.
- It is designed to collect information on the consumption of goods and services by households.
- The data collected in HCES is also utilized for deriving various other macroeconomic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty rates, and Consumer Price Inflation (CPI).
- NITI Aayog has stated that the latest consumer expenditure survey indicated that poverty has come down to 5% in the country.
- The findings of the last HCES, conducted in 2017-18 were not released after the government cited "data quality" issues. **ALL statements are correct**

Answer 8 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 (Correct):** Several countries, including China, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan, have overlapping territorial claims on islands and maritime features within the South China Sea.
- **Statement 2 (Correct):** The disputed territories are believed to be rich in natural resources like oil and gas deposits, which adds to the strategic importance of the region.

- **Statement 3 (Correct):** Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is a major concern for many countries, including India. The South China Sea is a vital shipping lane for global trade, and any restrictions on movement could have a significant economic impact. Additionally, some countries are concerned about China's growing military presence in the region.

Answer 9 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 (Correct):** The Taliban is a militant Islamist group that ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. They imposed a harsh version of Islamic law on the country.
- **Statement 2 (Correct):** The Taliban follows a strict interpretation of Sunni Islam, known as Deobandi ideology. This interpretation emphasizes religious rituals and social restrictions.
- **Statement 3 (Correct):** Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan and removed the Taliban from power. The Taliban, however, continued an insurgency against the Afghan government for the following two decades.

Answer 10 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 (Incorrect):** Recent reports, including the World Inequality Lab report 2024, suggest income and wealth inequality in India have actually been rising, particularly since the early 2000s.
- **Statement 2 (Incorrect):** The report would likely indicate the opposite. Studies show the top 1% of earners in India hold a disproportionately large share of national income, much higher than the global average.
- **Statement 3 (Correct):** The report's findings on the widening wealth gap would likely emphasize the need for government policies to address this issue and promote a more equitable distribution of income and wealth. This could involve progressive taxation, social welfare programs, and policies to promote economic opportunities for all.

Mentorship India

Our mission is crystal clear – to provide the finest UPSC mentorship and guidance available in India. We recognize that the path to success in the UPSC examination is both demanding and multifaceted. This is precisely why we have developed a comprehensive approach that goes beyond conventional coaching. Our commitment lies in fostering excellence by equipping aspirants with the necessary tools, knowledge, and unwavering support to not only excel in the examination but also in life itself.

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