

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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### **Important News Articles**

1. Maldives rules out research by Chinese vessel in its waters - The Hindu/ Amid row with India, Maldives allows Chinese vessel to dock - Indian Express
2. French marching contingent at Republic Day parade has members from India and Nepal - The Hindu
3. T.N. Cabinet approves new policy aimed at 'holistic development of women' - The Hindu
4. Centre's sovereign AI push: Compute mission may get over ₹10,000 crore - Indian Express
5. Indian bourses now fourth-largest with combined stock value of \$ 4.33 trillion, surpasses Hong Kong - Indian Express
6. Limits and borders - The Hindu

### **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

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4. Gender equity in education: the need to focus on early childhood education - The Hindu

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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. Maldives rules out research by Chinese vessel in its waters - The Hindu/ Amid row with India, Maldives allows Chinese vessel to dock - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- Chinese research vessel Xiang Yang Hong 03 **will not be carrying out research in Maldivian waters**, but will arrive for a port call, the Government of Maldives has said.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Asian Development Bank
- Trincomalee Port

#### Key Highlights

- Reports of the Chinese vessel heading to the Maldives have drawn considerable attention in India
  - Especially in the wake of **Sri Lanka announcing a one-year moratorium on foreign research vessels** calling at the island's ports, after India voiced concern over visits by a Chinese vessel.
- The vessel would not be conducting any research while in the Maldivian waters," the Ministry said
- The Ministry said the Maldives **"has always been a welcoming destination for vessels of friendly countries"**
  - And continues to host both civilian and military vessels making port calls for peaceful purposes.
- Such port calls not only enhance bilateral ties between the Maldives and its partner countries, but also demonstrate the centuries old tradition of the Maldivian people
- The vessel had earlier called at Sri Lankan ports**, but did not obtain clearance for a visit early this year
- The visit of the Chinese vessel to the Maldives** is the latest source of tension for New Delhi, during a challenging phase of its ties with Male.

#### Trincomalee Port

- Trincomalee harbour is on the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka.
- It is situated on a **peninsula in Trincomalee Bay**—formerly called Koddiyar Bay.
- Trincomalee is the nearest port to Chennai, India.
- Geopolitical and Strategic Significance: The location of this port in the Indian ocean has strategic significance, **it has been of interest to several countries, including India, Japan and the US.**
- Japan commissioned the 2020 ADB** (Asian Development Bank) study on the development of Trincomalee port.

#### 2. French marching contingent at Republic Day parade has members from India and Nepal - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- Six Indians and six Nepalis will be part of the 95-member French Foreign Legion contingent** that will march on the Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Republic Day.
- French President Emmanuel Macron is the chief guest** at the parade this year.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- The National Day of France
- Rafale fighter

#### Key Highlights

- The French marching contingent will be accompanied by a 33-member French military band.
- **Two Rafale fighter jets and one Airbus-a330 multi-role** tanker transport aircraft of the French Air and Space Force **will be part of the flypast.**

#### For the First Time

- An advanced radio frequency monitoring system, drone jammers, and medium-range surface-to-air missile will be on display for the first time at the parade
- An all-woman tri-services contingent will also take part in the parade for the first time,
- On July 14, 2023, **Indian Prime Minister was the chief guest at the French Bastille Day** parade
  - Which saw a 242-member Indian tri-service contingent marching on Champs-Élysées. Rafale jets of the Indian Air Force also took part in the flypast.

#### French Bastille Day

- **The National Day of France**, also known as Bastille Day, is celebrated on July 14 every year.
- **Known as La Fete Nationale or Le 14 Juillet in French**, the day is celebrated with fireworks and a parade.
- One of the most important days in the history of France, it marks the fall of the Bastille, a military fortress and political prison, then considered a symbol of the monarchy and armoury.

### 3. T.N. Cabinet approves new policy aimed at 'holistic development of women' - 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:

- **Tamil Nadu** Cabinet approved the **State's New Policy for Women**, the draft of which was released in December 2021.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- National Policy for Women 2016
- State's New Policy for Women

#### Key Highlights

- A State-level committee headed by **Chief Secretaries and district-level committees** headed by Collectors
  - will be constituted to monitor the implementation of the policy and to address any issues of discrimination.
- **The Social Welfare and Women Empowerment department** will also monitor the implementation.
- She pointed out the State has formulated a new policy 23 years after the **national-level policy was released in 2001.**
- When asked about the delay in the formation of gender budgeting cells in all departments as announced by the government last year, the Minister said the process was underway.

#### National Policy for Women 2016

- In 2016, **the union government of India** unveiled the Draft National Policy for Women
- It aimed at "re-scripting" women's empowerment by following a "**socially inclusive rights-based approach**".
- It was **released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD).**



- The policy is roughly based on the **Pam Rajput Committee report** set up by the MWCD in 2012
  - Which submitted its recommendations in 2016, including a suggested national policy for women and an action plan to end violence against women.
- **Maternal and prenatal mortality will remain a priority area**
  - Focusing on a coordinated referral transport system for safe deliveries
  - Emergency obstetric care to be made available in difficult, remote and isolated areas.
- It focuses on prioritising the nutrition of women of all ages and strengthening geriatric services to address women aged above 60, who form 8.4% of the population.

#### 4. Centre's sovereign AI push: Compute mission may get over ₹10,000 crore - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- Recently, the Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT revealed that the **Indian government's AI Mission** is set to seek Cabinet approval with a proposed budget exceeding Rs 10,000 crore.

**Objectives of the AI Mission**

- To **develop 'sovereign AI'**, enhance computational capacity domestically, and provide compute-as-a-service to Indian startups.
- To **harness AI for economic growth**, focusing on sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and education.

**Computing Capacity and Partnerships**

- The government plans to **build compute capacity** through a **public-private partnership (PPP)** model, targeting **10,000 to 30,000 GPUs**.
- An additional 1,000-2,000 GPUs are to be developed through the PSU Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).

**Incentive Structures**

- Various incentive structures are being explored to **encourage private companies to establish computing centres** in India.
- **Incentive models include** capital expenditure subsidies, operational expense-based incentives, and a "usage" fee.
- The government envisions creating a **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** from the GPU assembly to **offer startups cost-effective access to computational capacity**.

**Data Initiatives**

- Alongside computing capacity, the government is actively working on **building datasets** and making them available to Indian startups.
- A **National Data Governance Framework Policy** proposes the creation of an **India Datasets platform** containing **non-personal and anonymized datasets** accessible to startups and researchers.
- The government is considering **directives for major tech companies** like Facebook, Google, and Amazon to **share anonymized personal data** with the India Datasets platform.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Indian government's AI Mission
- Artificial Intelligence
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)
- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)

## GS III

### 5. Indian bourses now fourth-largest with combined stock value of \$ 4.33 trillion, surpasses Hong Kong - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **India's stock market has overtaken Hong Kong's** for the first time in another feat for the South Asian nation

#### Prelims Takeaway

- National Stock Exchange
- SEBI

#### Key Highlights

- Its growth prospects and policy reforms have made it an investor darling.
- The **combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges** reached \$4.33 trillion versus \$4.29 trillion for Hong Kong
  - According to data compiled by Bloomberg. That makes India the fourth-biggest equity market globally.
- Equities in India have been booming due to a growing retail investors base and corporate earnings.
- The world's most populous country has become a **global place for global investors**.
- The growing rally in the Indian stock market has coincided with a historic slump in Hong Kong.

#### Stock Market

- Stock markets are venues **where buyers and sellers meet to exchange equity shares of public corporations**.
- Stock markets are components of a Free-Market economy because they enable democratized access to investor trading and exchange of capital.
- A free-market economy is an economic system in which the prices of goods and services are determined by supply and demand, without interference from government regulation.
- India has two stock exchanges – **the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE)**.
- **SEBI is the regulator** of the securities market in India. They set the legal framework and regulate all entities interested in operating in the market.

### 6. Limits and borders - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Defence

**News:**

- **Litigation arises from inadequate consultation between central and state governments** on BSF jurisdiction in Punjab.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- BSF
- Article 131

#### Background

- **Punjab files suit under Article 131** challenging the Union government's decision to extend BSF's operational range from 15 km to 50 km.

#### Similar Concerns in Other States

- West Bengal shares Punjab's concerns, passing resolutions against BSF expansion.
- **Both states perceive it as a violation of federal principles** and an infringement on state police's law and order powers.

#### Central Government's Notification

- October 2021 notification under BSF Act standardizes operational jurisdiction.

- **Punjab, West Bengal, and Assam see an increase from 15 km to 50 km;** Gujarat decreases from 80 km to 50 km, and Rajasthan remains at 50 km.

#### Concerns Raised

- Despite valid reasons, the Union government must avoid encroaching on state governments' constitutional responsibilities for public order and police powers.

#### BSF's Role and Limitations

- **BSF focuses on preventing trans-border crimes** but lacks the power to investigate or prosecute.
- **It collaborates with local police,** and jurisdictional clashes should be avoided.

#### Key Questions Before the Supreme Court

- Does the Centre's notification encroach upon the State government's domain?
- What factors should be considered when determining the "local limits of areas adjoining the borders of India"?

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 7. The larger message to New Delhi from the Red Sea - The Hindu

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

#### Context:

- Recent **Houthi terror attacks on commercial vessels,** including Indian-owned ones, highlight growing challenges and potential conflicts in the **maritime domain.**
- The Houthi attacks and the **fragility of order and stability in the Indo-Pacific** serve as a reminder of the **challenges India faces in its maritime space.**
- While this challenge may subside, it prompts a broader question whether **India possesses a comprehensive maritime grand strategy.**

#### Shifting Strategic Focus: Continental to Maritime Theater

- India has undergone a significant and positive transformation in its grand strategy, shifting from a continental focus to a maritime perspective.
- This marks India's embrace of global engagement, especially as its land borders become more contentious, limiting trade and transit options.

#### India's New Two-Front Challenge

- The traditional two-front challenge for India has shifted from the Pakistan-China scenario to a combination of continental and maritime challenges.
- While India focused on the Line of Control with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control with China, China quietly expanded its influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

#### China's Maritime Expansion

- China, with an aggressive stance, is expanding its navy, projected to have over 435 ships by 2030.
- Its naval presence in the IOR aims to contain India in the Indo-Pacific. These include
  - bases in Djibouti
  - growing activities in Gwadar and Hambantota
  - strategic investments in Myanmar, Maldives, Seychelles and Cambodia.
- This challenges India's historical influence in the region.

#### China's Strategic Moves

- China's strategy extends beyond South Asia, targeting regions historically linked to India.
- From the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Sea and beyond, China's actions amount to a comprehensive containment strategy against India in both the continental and maritime domains.

#### India's Response

- To counter this challenge, India should leverage the growing global attention on the Indo-Pacific, forming coalitions with like-minded countries.
- The Indo-Pacific is crucial not only for India's regional security but also for the commercial and security interests of the United States and its allies.
- The Quad and Malabar initiatives, while useful, are seen as modest responses to the rapidly unfolding grand challenge.
- India should invest in a cohesive Indo-Pacific strategy that goes beyond intentions and declarations.



### Conclusion

- While India's decision not to join the US led '**Operation Prosperity Guardian**' may be prudent for now, a **collective effort is crucial** in the longer run to effectively counter the **challenge posed by China on both fronts** - continental and maritime.
- The Red Sea situation may fade, but **India's new two-front challenge** is likely to become more apparent in the years to come.

## 8. The need to overhaul a semiconductor scheme - The Hindu

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

### Context:

- The **Semiconductor Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) scheme** in India has **fallen short of its target**, approving only seven start-ups.
- A mid-term appraisal is impending, providing an opportunity for policymakers to reassess the scheme.

### Goals of India's Semiconductor Strategy

- To **reduce dependence on semiconductor imports**, particularly from China
  - Especially in strategic and emerging sectors, ranging from defence applications to AI development.
- To **build supply chain resilience** by integrating into the semiconductor global value chain (GVC).
- To **leverage its comparative advantage in chip design**

#### Issues with the DLI Scheme

- **Lackluster Uptake**
  - While the DLI scheme focuses on design infrastructure and financial subsidies, its uptake has been low.
  - Foundry and assembly stages received quick revisions in PLI schemes, highlighting a lack of scrutiny on the DLI scheme.
- **Barriers to Entry**
  - The DLI scheme mandates domestic status for start-ups poses a significant barrier.
    - Beneficiary start-ups must maintain their domestic status for at least three years after receiving incentives
    - They cannot raise more than 50% of their requisite capital via foreign direct investment
  - High costs and long-term payoff in semiconductor R&D deter domestic investors, affecting the risk appetite for start-ups.
- **Modest Incentives**
  - The relatively modest incentives capped at ₹15 Crore for Product DLI and ₹30 Crore for Deployment Linked Incentive may not be a worthwhile trade-off for start-ups.

#### Proposed Solutions and Policy Shifts

- **Delinking Ownership from Development**
  - Delinking ownership from semiconductor design and adopting more start-up-friendly investment guidelines to attract foreign funds.
- **Broader Focus on Design Capabilities**
  - Revising the DLI scheme to focus on cultivating semiconductor design capabilities in India, supporting a wide array of chip designs within the country.
- **Financial Outlay Enhancement**
  - Substantially enhancing the financial outlay of the scheme to support the broader objective of facilitating design capabilities.
- **Nodal Agency Reconsideration**
  - Relook of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing as the nodal agency due to potential conflicts of interest.
  - Proposes the Karnataka government's Semiconductor Fabless Accelerator Lab as a blueprint for a new implementing agency.
- **Expanded Focus and Support for Start-ups**
  - Expanded focus for a revamped DLI scheme, attracting a broader range of semiconductor design start-ups
  - Helping startups overcome initial hurdles through mentorship, industry connections, and financial incentives.



## 9. Analysing the rising gap in incomes - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Economy

**Context:**

- According to a recent report by the State Bank of India (SBI), India has witnessed a **significant fall in inequality** over the last decade.
- It claims that the **Gini coefficient fell** from 0.472 in 2014-15 to **0.402 in 2022-23**.

### Analyzing Taxpayer Data

- The SBI report relies on taxpayer data, showcasing a 15% reduction in the Gini coefficient.
- However, a significant portion of income-earners fall outside the tax net.
- According to 2022-23 PLFS data, nearly 80% of income-earners earn less than the minimum taxable amount of ₹2.5 lakh per annum.

### Income Inequality by Employment Nature

- Utilizing data from the PLFS for 2017-18 and 2022-23, the analysis differentiates income inequality among all income earners in India.
  - This includes self-employed, regular wage, and casual wage workers.
- The Gini coefficient falls for regular and casual wage workers but rises for the self-employed, indicating a complex scenario.

### Polarization in Incomes

- While the Gini coefficient decreases overall, there's a noticeable polarization in incomes.
- The top 10% experiences faster income growth than the bottom 30%, with self-employed workers contributing significantly to this trend.
  - The income of the top 10% of self-employed individuals was 8.3 times that of the bottom 10% in 2022-23.
- The rise in women's labour force participation, particularly in low-paid, part-time self-employed work, may explain the increase in income polarization.

## 10. Gender equity in education: the need to focus on early childhood education - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Social

**Context:**

- The latest **Annual Status of Education Report** shows that while girls and boys from rural India equally aspire to choose Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) courses, it is **boys who take up STEM courses more than girls**.

### Learning Outcomes Parity

- Analysis of the National Achievement Survey (2017) reveals gender equity in learning outcomes.
- Girls and boys exhibit similar test scores in mathematics and language across elementary and secondary classes.
- However, this analysis overlooks underlying gender discrimination in education.

### Worsening Educational Attainment Gap

- Despite girls being more educated than ever, the gender gap in mean years of schooling has widened.
- Over the past two decades, the mean years of schooling for girls tripled from 1.7 years in 1990 to 4.7 in 2018.
- However, the gender gap (difference between male and female attainment) has increased from 2.4 to 3.5 years.
- This contrasts with global trends where many countries have shown equal improvements for both genders.

### Widening Gap with Progressive Education Levels

- Gender gap increases with higher education levels due to greater barriers faced by girls, influenced by social norms and stereotypes.
- The dropout rate for boys in Class 1 is marginally higher at 6.88 (6.38 for girls).
- However, this trend radically reverses by Class 8, when almost twice the number of girls are dropping out of the schooling system.

### Roots of Discrimination in Early Education

- The Annual Status of Education Report "Early Years" highlights early childhood education (ECE) as the foundation of gender gap roots.
- More boys are enrolled in private institutions, reflecting societal biases in exercising school choice.
  - The preferred choice for girls' enrolment is the free government school.
- Even at the age of four, there exists a five percentage point gender difference in total enrolment.
- Cultures valuing male education lead to higher chances of girls being withdrawn from school.

### Call to Focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- There is an urgent need to shift focus to ECE to address gender gap roots and eliminate stereotypes.
- Lack of regulatory framework, inadequate funding, poor quality and no legislation for universal access to early childhood education pose challenges.
- Investing in ECE yields significant returns, making it crucial to establish a strong foundation for right education.
- The Prime Minister's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative and the Draft National Education Policy could be pivotal in promoting universal early childhood education.

## Quick Look

### 1. Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness for Innovation (CEPI)

- It is a global partnership launched in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.
- It was founded in Davos (Switzerland) by the governments of Norway and India, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust and the World Economic Forum.
- Goal: Vaccines should be ready for initial authorisation and manufacturing at scale within 100 days of recognition of a pandemic pathogen, when appropriate.
- The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, and Government of India has been implementing the IndCEPI mission 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development'.
- The objectives of this mission are aligned with that of CEPI and aims to strengthen the development of vaccines and associated competencies/technologies for the diseases of epidemic potential in India.

### 2. Exercise Cyclone

- The Indian Army contingent recently reached Egypt to take part in the India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise CYCLONE.
- It is the 2nd edition of the Exercise Cyclone which will be conducted at Anshas, Egypt.
  - The first edition of the exercise was conducted last year in India.
- Objective: To acquaint both sides with each other's operating procedures in the backdrop of Special Operations in desert/ semi desert terrain under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter.
- It is designed to develop bilateral military cooperation and strengthen bond between two armies through conduct of discussions and rehearsal of tactical military drills.
- It will involve planning and execution of special operations in sub conventional domains and conducted in three phases.
- The Indian contingent is being represented by troops from the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and an Egyptian contingent is being represented by Egyptian Commando Squadron and Egyptian Airborne Platoon.

### 3. FAO's Committee on Fisheries

- India has been elected as the First Vice Chair of the Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management.
- It is a subsidiary body of the Food and Agriculture Organization, established by the FAO Conference in 1965.
- Functions
  - Addressing international fishing and aquaculture issues, offering policy guidance on fisheries management, acknowledging global challenges, and advocating for collaborative solutions to ensure the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of the fishing industry.
  - Provides recommendations to the FAO Council or its Director-General and serves as a platform for negotiating global agreements and non-binding instruments.
  - It also reviews specific matters related to fisheries and aquaculture referred to it by the Council.
- Notably, a new sub-group, the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management, was established under the COFI in 2022, during the 35th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in Rome.
- This sub-committee is set to collaborate closely with the existing Sub-Committee on Aquaculture and the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade.

#### 4. FiloBot

- Recently, a new innovative plant-inspired robot named FiloBot has been developed that climbs up structures just like climbing vines.
- It is different from conventional climbing robots as it doesn't depend on pre-programmed movements.
- It instead absorbs 3D printing filament through its head and extends its length over time, just like a creeper.
- The team utilised a combination of plant behaviours like phototropism, negative phototropism and gravitropism and utilises these naturally occurring behaviours in high-tech robots.

#### 5. Scrub Typhus

- According to a new study conducted in Tamil Nadu's Vellore, every millimetre increase in rainfall could lead to a 0.5 to 0.7 per cent rise in monthly scrub typhus
- Scrub Typhus is an infectious disease caused by bacteria called *Orientia tsutsugamushi*.
- It is transmitted through infected mites and does not spread from person to person.
- The symptoms typically include fever, headache, body ache and sometimes a rash.
- In severe cases, the infection can lead to respiratory distress, brain and lung inflammation, kidney failure and multi-organ failure, ultimately resulting in death.
- Several factors like vector abundance, climatic factors, exposures like farming and owning domestic animals, outdoor activities and sanitation, affect its prevalence.
- This disease is more prevalent in cooler months.
- Treatment: Antibiotic doxycycline. Doxycycline can be used in persons of any age.
- There is no vaccine available for this disease.

#### 6. Karpoori Thakur

- The Centre recently announced that it would award the Bharat Ratna posthumously to Karpoori Thakur, former chief minister of Bihar
- He was popularly known as "Jan Nayak".
- Served as the Chief Minister of Bihar from December 1970 to June 1971 (Socialist Party/Bharatiya Kranti Dal), and from December 1977 to April 1979 (Janata Party).
- left his graduate college to join the Quit India Movement.
- He spent 26 months in prison.
- leading P & T employees during the general strike of the Central Government employees in 1960.
- In 1970, he undertook a fast unto death for 28 days to promote the cause of Telco labourers.



## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to the recently announced one-year moratorium on foreign research vessels by Sri Lanka**

1. The moratorium is a response to environmental concerns, aiming to protect Sri Lanka's marine ecosystem.
2. During the moratorium, Sri Lanka plans to conduct its research to better understand and manage its marine resources.
3. This decision has sparked international criticism, especially from neighbouring countries, questioning its impact on collaborative research efforts in the region.

**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**

1. The French president is the chief guest in the republic day parade.
2. His presence as the chief guest underscores the growing strategic partnership between France and the hosting country.
3. The chief guest at the parade is traditionally chosen based on the country's diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with the host nation.

**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 with reference to the national-level policy on women released in 2001**

1. The policy aimed to address gender-based disparities in education and promote equal opportunities for women in academic and professional spheres.
2. It introduced measures to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes at various levels, emphasizing political representation.

3. The policy focused on healthcare initiatives specifically tailored to address women's health issues and maternal well-being.
4. This policy marked a significant step towards aligning national efforts with international commitments for the empowerment and rights of women.

**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 about the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**

**Statement I:** C-DAC was set up to build Supercomputers in the context of denial of import of Supercomputers by the USA.

**Statement II:** C-DAC built India's first indigenously built supercomputer Param 8000 in 1991.

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

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements regarding India's stock market**

1. The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) are the two major stock exchanges in India.
2. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulates and oversees the functioning of India's stock markets.
3. The benchmark index of the NSE is called Nifty 50, while the BSE's benchmark index is Sensex.

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

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

D. None

**Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the Border Security Force (BSF) in India**

1. The primary focus of the BSF is to investigate and prosecute offenders involved in trans-border crimes.
2. BSF has the authority to maintain public order and exercise police powers within the border areas it operates in.
3. In October 2021, the Indian government increased the operational jurisdiction of BSF from 15 km to 50 km in Punjab, West Bengal, and Assam.
4. BSF's primary duty is to prevent unauthorized entry into or exit from Indian territory, with a focus on border patrol.

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

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

**Q7. Consider the following countries**

1. Egypt
2. Sudan
3. Somalia
4. Jordan
5. Eritrea

**How many of the countries mentioned above border the Red Sea?**

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

**Q8. Consider the following statements with reference to Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme**

1. The primary objective of the scheme is to provide financial and infrastructural support to companies setting up fabs or semiconductor making plants in India.

2. Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) serves as the nodal agency for the implementation of the DLI scheme.

**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

**Q9. With reference to Gini Coefficient, consider the following statements**

1. It is derived from the Lorenz Curve.
2. It measures the degree of unemployment in a population.

**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 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**

1. It surveys children aged 6 to 18 to track trends in school enrolment, attendance and reading and arithmetic abilities.
2. It is released by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with NITI Aayog.
3. The ASER 2023 report reveals that girls and boys exhibit similar test scores in mathematics and language across elementary and secondary classes.

**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 moratorium is indeed linked to environmental concerns. Sri Lanka is taking this step to assess and address potential risks posed by foreign research vessels to its marine ecosystem. This reflects a proactive measure to safeguard its environmental interests. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Sri Lanka's decision to impose a moratorium involves a plan to conduct its research during this period. This aims to enhance the country's understanding of its marine resources, which aligns with the goal of sustainable management and conservation. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- there is no indication of international criticism or concerns from neighboring countries. However, the global scientific community often values collaboration in research efforts. Future developments may shed light on international reactions to this decision. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**

### Answer 2 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- The French president is the chief guest in the republic day parade. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Emphasizing the growing strategic partnership between France and the hosting country is a common reason for selecting a chief guest. Macron's presence may indeed symbolize the strengthening ties between the two nations. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The selection of the chief guest is generally based on diplomatic, economic, and cultural considerations. Countries with strong ties in these aspects are more likely to be chosen as chief guests. This statement aligns with the typical criteria for selecting a chief guest. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

### Answer 3 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- the policy indeed aimed to address gender-based disparities in education and promote equal opportunities for women, **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- the policy introduced measures to enhance women's participation in decision-making processes, especially in political representation, **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- the policy focused on healthcare initiatives tailored to address women's health issues and maternal well-being, **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- the policy marked a significant step towards aligning national efforts with international commitments for the empowerment and rights of women, **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

### Answer 4 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is the apex research and development wing of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Established in 1988, its main purpose was to carry out research and development in Electronics, IT and other associated areas.
- It was set up to build Supercomputers in the context of denial of import of Supercomputers by the USA. **Hence, statement II is correct.**
- C-DAC built India's first indigenously built supercomputer Param 8000 in 1991. **Hence, statement I is correct.**

### Answer 5 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) are indeed the two major stock exchanges in India. Both play a crucial role in facilitating the trading of stocks. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is the regulatory body that oversees



and regulates the functioning of India's securities and commodity markets. This includes the stock exchanges like NSE and BSE. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

- The benchmark index of the NSE is called Nifty 50, and the BSE's benchmark index is Sensex. These indices represent the performance of the stock market by tracking the prices of selected stocks. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Answer 6 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- The primary focus of the BSF is not to investigate and prosecute offenders involved in trans-border crimes. Instead, its main responsibility is to prevent such crimes and assist in border patrol. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- BSF does not have the authority to maintain public order and exercise police powers within the border areas. These powers lie with the respective state police forces. **Therefore, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- In October 2021, the Indian government did issue a notification under the provisions of the BSF Act, standardizing the operational jurisdiction. The distance was increased from 15 km to 50 km in Punjab, West Bengal, and Assam. **Therefore, Statement 3 is correct.**
- BSF's primary duty is to prevent unauthorized entry into or exit from Indian territory, with a focus on border patrol. This statement aligns with the main responsibilities of the BSF. **Therefore, Statement 4 is correct.**

**Answer 7 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- The Red Sea is an inlet of the Indian Ocean between Africa and Asia.
- It is one of the most saline bodies of water in the world.
- It occupies a part of Great Rift Valley (Afro-Arabian Rift Valley).

- It is connected to the Indian ocean in the south through the Bab el Mandeb strait and the Gulf of Aden.
- In the north are the Sinai Peninsula, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Gulf of Suez (leading to the Suez Canal).
- Bordering Countries: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti. **Hence, option B is correct.**

**Answer 8 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- The DLI scheme aims to provide financial and infrastructural support to companies setting up fabs or semiconductor making plants in India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is a part of the MeitY's comprehensive Program for the Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystems in the country.
- It has three components viz. Chip Design infrastructure support, Product Design Linked Incentive and Deployment Linked Incentive.
- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) will serve as the nodal agency for the implementation of the DLI scheme. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - It is a scientific society operating under MeitY.
- It aims to attract existing and global players as it will support their expenditures related to design software, IP rights, development, testing, and deployment.
- The approved applicants are mandated to retain their domestic status (i.e. more than 50% of the capital in it is beneficially owned by resident Indian citizens and/ or Indian companies, which are ultimately owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens) for a period of three years after claiming incentives under the scheme.

**Answer 9 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- The Gini Coefficient, which is derived from the Lorenz Curve, can be used as an indicator of economic development in a country. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - The distribution of income in an economy is represented by the Lorenz Curve.
- It measures the degree of income equality in a population. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- A Gini Coefficient of zero means that everyone has the same income, while a Coefficient of 1 represents a single individual receiving all the income.

**Answer 10 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for 2023, titled 'Beyond Basics,' was recently released by NGO Pratham. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- It has been surveying children aged 6 to 14 since 2005 to track trends in school

enrolment, attendance and reading and arithmetic abilities. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**

- The report revealed a positive trend in enrollment, with 86.8% of 14-18-year-olds enrolled in educational institutions.
- Only 5.6% of surveyed youth are currently undergoing vocational training, primarily at the college level.
- Girls and boys exhibit similar test scores in mathematics and language across elementary and secondary classes. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Girls express a greater desire for higher education, with 7.4% enrolled in undergraduate courses compared to 6.8% of males.
- 38% of males use smartphones for online services compared to 19% of females.
- Males are twice as likely to use smartphones for practical tasks like reservations and bill payments.


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