

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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### **Important News Articles**

1. IGNCAs 'language atlas' to shine a light on India's linguistic diversity - The Hindu
2. Why has Assam decided to repeal its Muslim Marriage Act? - Indian express/ Assam to repeal Muslim Marriage Act, Opposition terms it 'unconstitutional' - The Hindu
3. Kerala takes a pioneering step to curb antimicrobial resistance - The Hindu
4. 'Countries should be aware of degrees of terrorist financing' - The Hindu
5. India completely stops Ravi river water flow to Pakistan. Historical context and significance- The Economics times
6. WTO Meet India to push for permanent solution to public stock holding of grains - Indian Express
7. PM launches 'world's largest agri storage plan'; Rs 1.25 lakh cr outlay over 5 years - Indian Express
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## Important News Articles

### GSI

## 1. IGNCAs 'language atlas' to shine a light on India's linguistic diversity - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- India is working towards promoting **education in mother tongues**, especially at the primary level.
- However, there's a lack of clarity regarding the actual **number of "active" languages** in the country.
- To address this, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) has planned to conduct a **linguistic survey** across India.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA)
- Language Atlas of India

**Current Language Scenario**

- India officially recognizes **22 languages** listed in **Schedule 8** of the Constitution.
- According to Census data, **97% of the Indian population** speaks one of these languages.
- Additionally, there are **99 non-scheduled languages** included in the 2011 Census, with around **37.8 million people** identifying one of these as their mother tongue.
- However, the **native languages of around 1.2 million people remain unaccounted for**, particularly those spoken by tribal communities.
  - due to the exclusion of languages with less than 10,000 speakers in the Census since 1971.

**Historical Context**

- The first Linguistic Survey of India was conducted by **Sir George Abraham Grierson in 1928**.
- The Indian map was redrawn after Independence, and therefore, the LSI includes languages and dialects that **may not be a part of contemporary Indian States**.
- The most detailed linguistic data was recorded in the **1961 Census**, which included even **languages with a single speaker**.
- The book "Tribal and Indigenous Languages of India" documents that the 1961 Census of India recorded **1,554 languages** being spoken in the country.

**Proposed Linguistic Survey**

- The IGNCAs aims to conduct a comprehensive linguistic survey to create the **Language Atlas of India**.
- The survey would involve various ministries and stakeholders, including the Ministries of Culture, Education, Tribal Affairs, etc. apart from various language communities.
- Collaborators for the survey include institutes like the Central Institute of Indian Languages, National Museum, etc.
- The survey will focus on documenting the **number of languages, dialects, scripts, extinct or endangered languages**.
- It will be carried out in **two phases**, starting with state-wise data collection and then region-wise analysis.
- The survey also aims to **digitally archive audio recordings** of all languages spoken.

**Significance**

- Language preservation is crucial for **conserving local wisdom, knowledge, stories, and culture**, especially among tribal communities.
- The survey will serve as a **valuable database for future policy decisions** regarding language and education.

## GS II

### 2. Why has Assam decided to repeal its Muslim Marriage Act? - Indian express/ Assam to repeal Muslim Marriage Act, Opposition terms it 'unconstitutional' - The Hindu

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Muslim personal law
- Child marriage act

#### News:

- It was announced that the **Assam state Cabinet has decided to repeal the Assam Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act of 1935.**
- In the meeting, the Cabinet approved the 'Assam Repealing Ordinance 2024' which will repeal the 89-year-old Act.

#### Key Highlights

##### What is the Act meant for?

- Enacted in 1935, the **Act lays down the process for registration of Muslim marriages and divorces.**
- A 2010 amendment replaced the word 'voluntary' in the original Act with 'compulsory', **making registration of Muslim marriages and divorces compulsory in the state of Assam.**
- The Act authorises the state to grant licences to "any person, being a Muslim" to register marriages and divorces, with Muslim registrars deemed to be public servants.
- It lays down the process through which marriage and divorce applications can be made to the registrar, and the process for their registration.
- Crucially, the **Act is in line with the Muslim personal law.**

##### What is the Assam government's rationale behind repealing the Act?

- The Assam government said that the Act contains provisions allowing marriage registration even **if the bride and groom have not reached the legal marriageable age of 18 and 21, respectively.**
- Under Muslim personal law, the marriage of a bride who has attained puberty is considered valid. Puberty is presumed, in the absence of evidence, on turning 15 years old.

### 3. Kerala takes a pioneering step to curb antimicrobial resistance - The Hindu

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Operation AMRITH
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
- Schedule H1 Drug

#### News:



**Mandatory:** A prescription is required even for first-line antibiotics

## No prescription, no antibiotics

Kerala's Operation AMRITH prohibits over-the-counter (OTC) sales of antibiotics without a prescription

- Kerala has implemented the 2011 H1 rule that prohibits OTC sales of all classes of antibiotics
- Kerala's high doctor-patient ratio even in villages may help in enforcing the H1 rule
- Over 50-70% of antibiotic prescriptions by doctors are deemed unnecessary and irrational
- Reducing the incidence of hospital-acquired infections will sharply and quickly reduce the demand for antibiotics
- All hospitals should be made to report rates of hospital-acquired infections to the State government
- Rationalising antibiotic use in hospitals, and banning growth-promotional use of antibiotics in poultry and fish farms, and agriculture will have a big impact
- Curbing antimicrobial resistance requires a multipronged approach. Enforcing the OTC regulation alone will not be sufficient

## 4. 'Countries should be aware of degrees of terrorist financing' - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary** has concluded with discussions on key issues like money laundering, terrorism financing, and proliferation financing.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
- Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act

**Modification to Assessment Methodology**

- The FATF has modified its assessment methodology, emphasizing **risk-based measures** to safeguard vulnerable **Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs)** from terrorist financing abuse.
- These changes aim to **prevent unintended consequences** arising from the incorrect application of FATF requirements.

**Recommendation 8**

- In October 2023, changes to Recommendation 8 were agreed upon to enhance the protection of NPOs from terrorist financing abuse.
- Updates to best practices aim to assist countries, the non-profit sector, and financial institutions in implementing **effective risk-based measures without disrupting legitimate NPO activities.**

**Other Outcomes**

- The plenary also issued new **risk-based guidance** for implementing **Recommendation 25** on beneficial ownership and transparency of legal arrangements.
- **Identification of jurisdictions with significant virtual asset activity** was conducted to assist in implementing FATF requirements.

## 5. India completely stops Ravi river water flow to Pakistan. Historical context and significance- The Economics times

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

### Prelims Takeaway

- IWT
- Ravi river

**News:**

- The completion of the **Shahpur Kandi barrage has effectively ceased the flow of water from the Ravi river into Pakistan**, according to a report.

### Shahpur Kandi Dam Project

- It is located on the **Ravi River in Pathankot district, Punjab**, downstream from the existing Ranjit Sagar Dam.
- The water released by **Ranjit Sagar Dam is utilized for generating power from this project.**
- The main purpose behind the construction of this dam is power generation and irrigation in Punjab and J&K States.
- It is constructed by the irrigation department of the Government of Punjab.
- The project consists of a 55.5 m high concrete gravity dam, a 7.70 km long hydel channel, two head regulators, and two powerhouses.
- The total output **capacity of the project is 206 MW.**

### Indus Waters Treaty

- India and Pakistan signed the IWT in September, 1960 after nine years of negotiations, with the World Bank being a signatory to the pact.
- The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two sides on the use of the water of the Indus River and its five tributaries Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jhelum, and Chenab.

## GS III

## 6. WTO Meet India to push for permanent solution to public stock holding of grains - Indian Express

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

### Prelims Takeaway

- Joint Support Initiatives
- Public stock-holding

**News:**

- INDIA will strongly **oppose a China-led proposal for an investment facilitation pact**

### Key Highlights

- India is pressing for finding a **permanent solution to public stock holding of grains** for food security and protection of the interests of fishermen at the WTO ministerial meeting

### Food security issues

- The **public stock-holding (PSH)** programme is a **policy tool under which the government procures** crops like rice and wheat from farmers at MSP, and stores and distributes foodgrains to the poor.
- India stresses the need for PSH for its large, vulnerable population and **wants a permanent solution from the MC13.**
- MSP is normally higher than the prevailing market rates and sells these at a low price to ensure food security for over 800 million beneficiaries.
- However, the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture limits the ability of a government to purchase food at MSP.
- Under global trade norms, a **WTO member country's food subsidy bill should not breach the limit of 10 percent** of the value of production based on the reference price of 1986-88.
- As part of the solution, India has asked for measures like amendments in the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap.

- Developed nations are of the view that such programmes distort global trade prices of food grains.
- **Joint Support Initiatives (JSIs)** or plurilateral agreements **India opposes this move being pushed for certain nations.**

## 7. PM launches 'world's largest agri storage plan'; Rs 1.25 lakh cr outlay over 5 years - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Major crops-cropping patterns in various parts of the country, – different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Sahakar se Samridhhi
- largest grain storage plan

### News:

- The Prime Minister announced a **plan to set up the “world’s largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector.**

### Key Highlights

- Inaugurating a pilot project being undertaken in **11 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)** in 11 states under the largest grain storage plan
- This will enable farmers to store their produce and sell it at the right time according to their own needs.
- This will also help them to avail loans from banks.
- Further, he inaugurated a project for **computerisation in 18,000 PACS across the country**, aligning farming with cutting edge technology and shifting to fully digital payments.
- The vision of **Sahakar se Samridhhi (prosperity through cooperatives)** is to rejuvenate the cooperative sector and empower small and marginal farmers.
- His government had reduced minimum alternate tax on cooperative societies –
  - Bringing it at par with the corporate sector – and raised the slab for tax to be deducted at source to income above Rs 3 crore
- The new storage plan aims to add another 700 lakh tonnes capacity over the next five years through cooperatives, in effect, double the existing capacity.
- The creation of a full-fledged Ministry of Cooperation and routing of non-basmati rice and sugar exports on government account through the newly-registered National Cooperative Exports Ltd
  - Points to the importance the government is placing on cooperatives.

## 8. Centre discloses key consumption expenditure survey findings after 11-year gap - The Hindu/ Household Consumption Expenditure Survey: Indians spending more on milk, fruits and vegetables than foodgrains - Indian Express

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

### News:

- Recently, the government released findings of the **All India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey** conducted between August 2022 and July 2023.
- It will play a key role in **reviewing critical economic indicators**, including the GDP, poverty levels, and the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI).

### Prelims Takeaway

- Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)
- Engel Curve Hypothesis

### Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

- The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) is usually conducted by the **National Statistical Office (NSO) every five years.**
- It is designed to collect information on the **consumption spending patterns of households** across the country, both urban and rural.
- The data gathered in this exercise reveals the **average expenditure on goods** (food and non-food) **and services.**

- However, the **findings of the last Survey**, conducted in **2017-18** were **never released** due to cited **“data quality”** issues.

<p><b>Key Findings of the Survey</b></p> <p><b>1. Average MPCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) rose by 33.5% (to ₹3,510) in urban households and 40.42% (to ₹2,008) in rural India since 2011-12.</li> <li>• The MPCE numbers do not include the estimated values of things people get for free through social welfare programs.</li> <li>• It, however, included a few non-food items received through such schemes, including computers, mobile phones, bicycles, and clothing.</li> <li>• By adding the imputed cost of free items, the average monthly consumption expenditure stood at Rs 3,860 in rural areas and Rs 6,521 in urban areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Average MPCE between Rural and Urban Households</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The difference in average MPCE between rural and urban households has narrowed to 71.2 percent in 2022-23 compared with 83.9 percent in 2011-12.</li> <li>• This suggests rural consumption spending has risen more than urban consumption spending during the 11-year period.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Share of Expenditure on Food</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of spending on food has dropped to 46.4% for rural households from 52.9% in 2011-12.</li> <li>• The urban households spent just 39.2% of their overall monthly outgoes on food compared with 42.6% incurred 11 years earlier.</li> <li>• This reduction could translate into a lower weightage for food prices in the country's retail inflation calculations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Change in Food Composition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending on cereals and pulses has reduced while expenditure on milk, fruits, and vegetables has increased.</li> <li>• Rural and urban consumers are spending more on fruits and vegetables than on cereals for the first time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preference for Animal Proteins and Processed Foods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a growing preference for animal proteins like eggs, fish, and meat over plant proteins like pulses.</li> <li>• Consumers are allocating a larger portion of their expenditure to processed foods, beverages, and purchased cooked meals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engel Curve Hypothesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The observed trends align with the Engel Curve hypothesis.</li> <li>• It broadly states that as incomes grow, households spend a smaller proportion on food.</li> <li>• Even within food, they would buy more of “superior” and less of “inferior” items.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Consumption expenditure on non-food items</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumption expenditure on non-food items increased in both rural India (54%) and urban India (61%) in 2022-23 as against 2011-12.</li> <li>• A greater share of spending is also now being directed towards education, health and conveyance and on consumer durables and services.</li> <li>• As household incomes rise and expenditure on essential items falls, discretionary spending will rise further.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Income Disparity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bottom 5% of both rural and urban populations had significantly lower MPCE compared to the top 5%, showcasing income disparity.</li> <li>• The MPCE of the top 5 percent of rural population is 7.65 times more than its bottom 5 percent</li> <li>• The MPCE of the top 5 percent of urban population has an MPCE of over 10 times its bottom 5 percent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Comparison among States</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sikkim had the highest MPCE for both rural (₹7,731) and urban areas (₹12,105).</li> <li>• It is the lowest in Chhattisgarh, where it was ₹2,466 for rural households and ₹4,483 for urban household members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCES data indicates a need to focus on promoting the production of items like milk, fish, poultry products, fruits, and vegetables.</li> <li>• Sectors like fruits, vegetables, livestock, and fisheries have experienced significant growth, primarily market-led. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ This is in contrast with the slower growth in cereals and non-horticultural crops.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The demand for MSP is mainly from farmers of crops not covered under MSP, highlighting the importance of aligning policy with demand trends reflected in HCES data.</li> </ul>



## 9. RBI asks NPCI to consider Paytm's request for TPAP: What is it & how will it benefit customers? - Indian Express

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

### Prelims Takeaway

- TPAPs
- NPCI

### News:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked the National Payment Council of India (NPCI) to examine the request of One97 Communications' (OCL)
- OCL owns Paytm, and requested to become a **Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP)** for continued Unified Payments Interface operation of the Paytm application.

### Key Highlights

- A TPAP approval is mandatory to provide UPI-based payment transactions to customers.
- Currently, all UPI transactions on the Paytm app are being routed through Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL), an associate company of OCL, which is registered as TPAP.
- As the RBI has asked the PPBL to shut its operations by March 15, 2024, there will be no TPAP registration for the Paytm app to be able to provide UPI payment services.

### What is a TPAP?

- A **Third-Party Application Provider** is an entity that provides the UPI compliant app(s) to the end-user customers to facilitate UPI-based payment transactions.
- These applications could be **mobile wallets, merchant apps, or any other platform that utilises UPI for payments.**
- NPCI, the umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, owns and operates the UPI platform.
- TPAPs leverage the UPI infrastructure provided by NPCI and work with payment service providers (PSPs) and banks to facilitate transactions.
- They are responsible for ensuring that their applications adhere to security standards and compliance guidelines set by NPCI.

### What happens if OCL gets TPAP approval?

- For Paytm, TPAP approval from NPCI is a must to continue to provide UPI-based payment transactions facility to customers.
- OCL will not be allowed to add new users until all the existing users are migrated satisfactorily to a new handle, the regulator said.
- As per NPCI regulations, large TPAPs have to mandatorily participate in UPI through a multibank model only.

### How many TPAPs are there?

- Currently, there are 22 NPCI-approved 3rd party Unified Payments Interface (UPI) apps that can be used to send and receive money from other UPI users by using UPI IDs.
- They include Amazon Pay, Google Pay, Groww, Jupiter Money, Mobikwik, Phonepe, Samsung Pay, TataNeu and Whatsapp.

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

## 10. Is the Ukraine war changing world order? - The Hindu

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

### Context:

- **Russia's invasion of Ukraine**, initially anticipated as a swift military operation, has evolved into the largest land war in Europe since WWII.
- The conflict has reshaped geopolitical dynamics, with Russia turning to Asia and the Global South while the West supports Ukraine.
- A vast majority of countries, including India, remain neutral as the violence continues.

<p><b>Did Russia Miscalculate?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defence experts agree that Russia's decision to invade Ukraine with fewer troops than anticipated was a grave strategic miscalculation.</li> <li>Western military assistance, training and intervention hindered Russia's expectations of a quick victory.</li> <li>Since then, Russia's military campaign has shifted from offence to strengthening the lines of defence with limited offensive battles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Current Status of the War</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eight months after Ukraine's counteroffensive began, it's now evident that the campaign failed, leading to a plea for mass mobilization.</li> <li>They lost many of their West-supplied weapons and are waiting for fresh supplies, but aid from the US is stuck.</li> <li>On the other side, Russia has made advances, capturing strategic towns and applying pressure on Ukrainian forces in Donetsk and Kherson.</li> </ul> <p><b>West's Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The West supports Ukraine economically and militarily while imposing sanctions on Russia to weaken its economy and military capabilities.</li> <li>Sanctions have significantly impacted Russia's revenue and access to critical technologies, although Russia has found ways to circumvent them.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Russia has diversified its markets, strengthened ties with China, and increased domestic spending on defence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Transformation in Russia due to War</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Russia's influence in its neighbourhood has waned, with neighbouring countries, Sweden and Finland, joining NATO and tensions with Armenia.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armenia decided to freeze participation in the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Russia is also increasingly relying on China for certain aspects, while being mindful not to offend India's concerns.</li> <li>Internally, Russia is tightening control over dissent and sliding towards authoritarianism.</li> </ul> <p><b>Global Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Western strategy has not yielded desired results, highlighting the limits of Western power in a changing world.</li> <li>Amidst the turmoil, China emerges relatively unaffected and perceives the conflict as entangling both Western powers and Russia in Ukraine.</li> <li>This prompts China to shift focus towards Asia and thereby reshaping the global power dynamics.</li> </ul>
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## 11. CHANGES IN ELECTRICITY RULES: BOOST TO ROOFTOP SOLAR POWER

### - Indian Express

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

**Context:**

- Recently, the Ministry of Power announced amendments to the **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020**.
- Objective:** To expedite the installation of rooftop solar projects and enhance consumer empowerment in electricity matters.

<p><b>1. Simplifying Rooftop Solar Installation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earlier, DISCOMs were required to conduct a feasibility study for rooftop solar projects, causing delays.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A technical feasibility study determines whether a property is physically and financially suitable for the installation of solar panels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The amendments have now shortened the time frame for this study from 20 to 15 days.</li> <li>If the study isn't completed within this period, the proposal is presumed technically feasible.</li> <li>Now, solar PV systems up to a capacity of 10 kilowatts shall be deemed accepted without a feasibility study.</li> <li>Additionally, DISCOMs are mandated to bear costs for strengthening distribution infrastructure for rooftop solar projects up to 5 kilowatts capacity.</li> <li>Lastly, the timeline between the installation and the commissioning of rooftop solar projects has been reduced from 30 days to 15 days.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Consumer Empowerment in Residential Societies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents in residential societies can now opt for individual connections or a single-point connection through a transparent ballot to be held by the distribution licensee.</li> <li>If more than 50% of owners opt for individual connections, they will be provided individually, otherwise, a single-point connection is provided.</li> <li>DISCOMs are responsible for metering, billing, and collection in case of individual connections, while residential associations handle these tasks for single-point connections.</li> <li>Further, DISCOMs are required to install an additional meter in case a consumer complains of meter readings not reflecting actual consumption.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The additional meter, to be installed within five days of the complaint being received, shall be used to verify the complaint for a minimum period of three months.</li> <li>If the meter is found to be inaccurate, the excess or deficit charges shall be adjusted in the subsequent bills, as per existing rules.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>3. Expedited New Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timeframes for obtaining new electricity connections or modifying existing ones are significantly reduced from           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 to 3 days in metropolitan areas</li> <li>15 to 7 days in other municipal areas</li> <li>30 to 15 days in rural areas</li> </ul> </li> <li>In rural areas with hilly terrain, however, the period will continue to remain 30 days.</li> <li>Additionally, DISCOMs are required to provide a separate connection for an electric vehicle (EV) charging point, if requested by a consumer within the revised period.</li> </ul>
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## Quick Look

### 1. Sudarshan Setu

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated Sudarshan Setu, India's longest cable-stayed bridge, in the Gulf of Kutch.
- Also known as Signature Bridge, it will link mainland Gujarat with Bet Dwarka island off Okha coast in Devbhumi Dwarka.
- It provides all-weather road connectivity to Bet Dwarka, the second largest island off Gujarat coast.
- It is technically a sea-link with a total length of 4,772 metres and a 900-metre cable-stayed section.
- This four-lane bridge was constructed at a cost of Rs 978 crore funded by the Union government.
- The bridge features 32 piers supporting seven cable-stayed spans.
- It includes walkways adorned with verses from the Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna, with solar panels serving as walkway roofs.

### 2. Savera Program

- Recently, the Haryana Chief Minister inaugurated the Savera program in collaboration with the Medanta Foundation and the Health Department in Gurgaon.
- Aimed at early detection and prevention of breast cancer, the initiative utilizes visually impaired individuals for screening due to their heightened tactile sensitivity.
  - Breast cancer is highlighted as a prevalent cancer type among women in urban areas.
  - Approximately 90,000 women lose their lives to breast cancer daily in India.
- Visually impaired individuals can detect breast cancer lesions as small as half a centimetre, compared to one centimetre by a normal doctor.
- In its initial phase, the programme will be launched at Civil Hospital in Sector 10, the polyclinic in Sector 31, and PHC in Wazirabad.

### 3. Blanets

- In Christopher Nolan's 2014 film *Interstellar*, three planets featured, other than Earth - depicted as extreme worlds - are theoretically plausible.
- Technically, these planets are called blanets, as they orbit black holes instead of stars.
- In 2019, Japanese scientists proposed a theory suggesting that planets could form within massive dust and gas clouds near supermassive black holes.
  - However, these planets aren't expected to be anything like the earth.
- Similar to how planets form around young stars from swirling dust and gas, blanets could form within the discs surrounding supermassive black holes.
- These blanets are expected to be about 3,000-times as large as the earth.
- They would need to orbit the black hole at a considerable distance of about 100 trillion kilometers to avoid being torn apart by the black hole's immense gravitational forces.

### 4. Hanooman

- Recently the BharatGPT group, led by IIT Bombay, along with seven other elite Indian engineering institutes announced that it would launch its first ChatGPT-like service next month.
- Backed by Reliance Industries Ltd and the Department of Science and Technology, the group built the 'Hanooman' series of Indic language models in collaboration with Seetha Mahalaxmi Healthcare (SML).
- Hanooman is a series of large language models (LLMs) that can respond in 11 Indian languages like Hindi, Tamil, and Marathi.

- It has been designed to work in four fields, including health care, governance, financial services, and education.
- Notably, the series is not just a chatbot; it is a multimodal AI tool, which can generate text, speech, videos and more in multiple Indian languages.
- The size of these AI models ranges from 1.5 billion to a whopping 40 billion parameters.
- One of the first customised versions is VizzhyGPT which is an AI model fine-tuned for healthcare using reams of medical data.

## 5. PSiFI System

- Recently, scientists unveiled a pioneering technology, named personalized skin-integrated facial interface (PSiFI), capable of recognizing human emotions in real-time.
- The technology is based on the phenomenon of "friction charging," where objects separate into positive and negative charges upon friction.
- The system features a first-of-its-kind bidirectional triboelectric strain and vibration sensor that enables the simultaneous sensing and integration of verbal and non-verbal expression data.
- Coupled with a sophisticated data processing circuit, the system facilitates seamless wireless data transfer, enabling the instantaneous recognition of emotions.
- Empowered by machine learning algorithms, it showcases remarkable efficiency in recognizing human emotions, even in scenarios where individuals wear masks.
- The PSiFI system is self-powered, facile, stretchable, and transparent.



**Mentorship**  
India

**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1. With reference to the proposed 'Language Atlas of India', consider the following statements**

1. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) has proposed to create a Language Atlas of India.
2. The survey would focus on the number of languages, scripts and dialects in India.
3. The first Linguistic Survey of India (LSI) was carried out by Sir George Abraham Grierson in 1950.

**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 Muslim Personal Law in India**

1. "Talaq-e-Bid'ah" refers to the instant and irrevocable divorce pronounced in a single sitting.
2. Mehr" in Islamic law refers to the mandatory gift or financial settlement that a husband must give to his wife at the time of marriage.
3. Sharia courts in India have the authority to adjudicate on matters related to Muslim Personal Law.

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

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

**Q3. What does the Engel Curve, seen in the news recently, describe?**

- A. The relationship between income and savings & investments.
- B. The relationship between income and inflation rates.
- C. The relationship between income and employment levels.
- D. The relationship between income and consumer spending patterns

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the Shahpur Kandi Project**

1. The Shahpur Kandi Project is a joint venture between India and Pakistan

for the development of hydropower and irrigation infrastructure.

2. The project is located on the Chenab River and involves the construction of a dam to harness water resources for multiple purposes.
3. The implementation of the Shahpur Kandi Project has faced challenges related to inter-state disputes and environmental concerns.

**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 regarding public stock-holding and its implications in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)**

1. Public stock-holding refers to the government's accumulation and maintenance of stocks of agricultural commodities for various purposes, including food security.
2. WTO rules prohibit any form of public stock-holding by member countries as it is considered a distortion of international trade.
3. The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) under the WTO provides flexibility for developing countries to implement public stock-holding programs for food security purposes.
4. The Peace Clause, as negotiated in the WTO, protects developing countries from legal challenges regarding their public stock-holding programs for a specified period.

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

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

**Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector**

1. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has initiated the largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector to enhance food security in the country.

2. The largest grain storage plan involves the construction of modern silos equipped with advanced technologies for efficient grain storage.
3. The cooperative sector's largest grain storage plan aims to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure a fair distribution of food grains across various regions.

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

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

**Q7. Consider the following statements regarding Household Consumption Expenditure Survey**

1. It is conducted by the National Statistical Office usually every five years.
2. It helps to review critical economic indicators like Gross Domestic Product and poverty levels.

**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

**Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Third-Party Application Providers**

1. Third-Party Application Providers are entities that develop and offer software applications or services that can be used on platforms or devices created by other companies.
2. The role of Third-Party Application Providers is limited to creating applications for personal use and is not relevant in the context of business or enterprise solutions.
3. Mobile app stores, such as Google Play Store and Apple App Store, serve as platforms where Third-Party Application Providers can distribute their applications to users.

4. Security and privacy concerns are not significant when dealing with applications from Third-Party Application Providers, as they undergo rigorous scrutiny before being made available to users.

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

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

**Q9. Consider the following statements regarding the Collective Security Treaty Organisation**

1. It is an intergovernmental military alliance in Eurasia.
2. All the Asian countries are members of this organization.

**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

**Q10. Consider the following statements**

1. The Rooftop Solar Programme aims to achieve a cumulative installed capacity of 40 gigawatts (GW) rooftop solar capacity by 2022.
2. The PM-KUSUM scheme aims to support installation of off-grid solar pumps in rural areas and reduce dependence on grid, in grid-connected areas.

**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

## Prelims Track Answer

### Answer 1 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) has planned to conduct a linguistic survey across India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The survey will focus on documenting the number of languages, dialects, scripts, extinct or endangered languages. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It will be carried out in two phases, starting with state-wise data collection and then region-wise analysis.
- The first Linguistic Survey of India was conducted by Sir George Abraham Grierson in 1928. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The Indian map was redrawn after Independence, and therefore, the LSI includes languages and dialects that may not be a part of contemporary Indian States.
- The most detailed linguistic data was recorded in the 1961 Census, which included even languages with a single speaker.

### Answer 2 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- Talaq-e-Bid'ah, or triple talaq in one sitting, was a prevalent practice in Muslim Personal Law where a husband could divorce his wife by pronouncing talaq three times in a single session. However, in 2019, the Indian government enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, making this practice illegal and punishable. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Mehr is indeed a mandatory payment or gift that a husband must give to his wife at the time of marriage in Islamic law. It is meant to provide financial security to the wife, and its amount is agreed upon during the marriage contract. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Sharia courts in India, also known as Dar-ul-Qaza, do not have legal sanction, and their decisions are not binding. The Indian legal system, including family matters, is governed by Indian laws. However, individuals can approach religious authorities for dispute resolution, but the final legal authority lies with the Indian judiciary. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

### Answer 3 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- Engel's Law is an economic theory put forth in 1857 by Ernst Engel, a German statistician.
- It states that the percentage of income allocated for food purchases decreases as a household's income rises, while the percentage spent on other things (such as education and recreation) increases. **Hence, option D is correct.**

### Answer 4 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- The Shahpur Kandi Project is not a joint venture between India and Pakistan. It is a project between the Indian states of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The Shahpur Kandi Project is located on the Ravi River, a tributary of the Chenab River. The project involves the construction of a dam to harness water for irrigation and hydropower generation. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The implementation of the Shahpur Kandi Project has faced challenges, including inter-state disputes between Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, as well as environmental concerns related to the project's impact on the river ecosystem. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

### Answer 5 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- Public stock-holding is indeed the accumulation and maintenance of stocks of agricultural commodities by the government, often done to support farmers and ensure food security. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- WTO rules do not outright prohibit public stock-holding. However, there are regulations to ensure that such programs do not distort international trade. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) under the WTO provides flexibility for developing countries to implement public stock-holding programs for food security purposes, subject to certain conditions. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

- The Peace Clause, negotiated as part of the Bali Package in the WTO, protects developing countries from legal challenges regarding their public stock-holding programs for a specified period, as long as certain conditions are met. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

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

- The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been involved in initiatives to improve grain storage in the cooperative sector to enhance food security. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The largest grain storage plans often involve the construction of modern silos with advanced technologies to ensure efficient and safe storage of food grains, minimizing losses. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- One of the primary goals of such plans is to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure the equitable distribution of food grains to different regions, contributing to food security. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

**Answer 7 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- Recently, the government released findings of the All India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey conducted between August 2022 and July 2023.
- It will play a key role in reviewing critical economic indicators, including the GDP, poverty levels, and the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) is usually conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) every five years. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is designed to collect information on the consumption spending patterns of households across the country, both urban and rural.
- The data gathered in this exercise reveals the average expenditure on goods (food and non-food) and services.

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

- Third-Party Application Providers are indeed entities that create software applications or services for use on platforms or devices developed by others. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Third-Party Application Providers are relevant not only for personal use but also play a crucial role in providing business and enterprise solutions. **Hence, statement 2 is Incorrect**
- Mobile app stores, like Google Play Store and Apple App Store, act as platforms where Third-Party Application Providers can distribute their applications to a wide user base. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- Security and privacy concerns are significant when dealing with applications from Third-Party Application Providers. While app stores may have review processes, there is still a potential for security vulnerabilities or privacy issues. **Hence, statement 4 is Incorrect**

**Answer 9 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- Collective Security Treaty Organisation is an intergovernmental military alliance in Eurasia, which was established in 2002. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Members: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- On May 14, 2002, in Moscow, the Collective Security Council made a decision to grant the status of an international regional organization to the Collective Security Treaty.
- In 2004 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution granting the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) an observer status in the UN General Assembly.
- The statutory bodies of the Organization are: the Collective Security Council (CSC), the Council of Foreign Ministers (COM), the Council of Ministers of Defense (CIO), the Committee of Secretaries of Security Council (CSSC).
- Headquarter: Moscow, Russia



**Answer 10 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- The Solar Park Scheme plans to build a number of solar parks, each with a capacity of nearly 500 MW, across several states.
- In 2014, the government launched the Rooftop Solar Programme that aimed to achieve a cumulative installed capacity of 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2022. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- National Solar Mission is a major initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to promote ecologically sustainable growth while addressing India's energy security challenge.
- International Solar Alliance is an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies.
- The PM-KUSUM scheme was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to support installation of off-grid solar pumps in rural areas and reduce dependence on grid, in grid-connected areas. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

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