

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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## **Important News Articles**

1. Centre exempts CERT-In from purview of RTI Act - The Hindu/ Govt takes apex cyber security agency out of public's right to know - Indian Express
2. PM sets in motion process for Madiga sub-categorisation - The Hindu
3. Citing betting concerns, GoM set to tighten online gaming rules - Indian Express
4. 'Trust between India, Australia will help Indo-Pacific region' - The Hindu
5. India, EU sign pact to build semiconductor supply chain - The Hindu/ India, EU sign semiconductor pact - Indian Express
6. Prime Minister announces completion of Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository and creation of a Social Impact Fund to advance Digital Public Infrastructure in Global South - PIB
7. 'Falling recovery, delay in resolution dent IBC's success' - The Hindu

## **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

1. Need for climate-smart agriculture in India - The Hindu
2. Sickle Cell breakthrough - Indian Express
3. Why a NASA spacecraft fired a laser at Earth, and why it is a big deal - Indian Express

## **Quick Look**

1. Generic drugs for 4 rare diseases made available in India
2. Mythemna separata
3. 'AGNI' Initiative
4. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)
5. Kyasanur Forest Disease
6. H9N2

**Important News Articles****GS II****1. Centre exempts CERT-In from purview of RTI Act - The Hindu/ Govt takes apex cyber security agency out of public's right to know - Indian Express**

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

**News:**

- Recently, The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (**CERT-In**) **has been exempted from the Right to Information Act, 2005.**
- CERT-In is the **national nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats** like hacking and phishing,

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)
- RTI Act, 2005

**The Exemption**

- The Department of Personnel and Training, **through a notification, has excluded CERT-In** from the purview of the Right to Information Act.
- The exemption is enacted under **sub-section (2) of Section 24 of the RTI Act.**
- CERT-In is now listed at serial number 27 in the **Second Schedule of the RTI Act.**
- This places CERT-In among the **26 other intelligence and security organizations already exempted** from the Act.
  - The 26 organizations include Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, and others.

**RTI Act Provisions**

- Section 24 of the RTI Act **allows the government to exempt certain organizations from the law.**
- However, exemption under Section 24 does not apply to **information related to corruption and human rights violations.**
- Information related to human rights violations can only be **provided after the approval of the Central Information Commission.**
- The Central Government can **amend the Second Schedule** through notifications in the Official Gazette, **subject to parliamentary review.**

**2. PM sets in motion process for Madiga sub-categorisation - The Hindu**

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

**News:**

- Prime Minister set in motion the process of setting up a committee that will go into the **issue of sub-categorisation of the Madiga community** within the Scheduled Castes
- The Madiga community constitutes at **least 50% of the total Scheduled Castes in Telangana.**
- The 2011 census puts the **total SCs at a little over 15% of the population of the State.**
- The Madiga community had been struggling since **1994 for the sub-categorisation**, and the Prime Minister's announcement was considered an important step in that direction.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Constitution Order of 1950
- Madiga Community

**Constitution Order of 1950**

- It initially provided for recognising only Hindus (with exceptions) as SCs, to address the social disability arising out of the practice of untouchability.
- The Order was amended in 1956 to include Dalits who had converted to Sikhism** (in entirety) and once more in 1990 to include Dalits who had converted to Buddhism.
- Both amendments were aided by the reports of the Kaka Kalelkar Commission** in 1955 and the High-Powered Panel (HPP) on Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 1983 respectively.

### 3. Citing betting concerns, GoM set to tighten online gaming rules - Indian Express

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

**News:**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- AMID GROWING concerns, the **current rules lack legal teeth to effectively deal with the online gaming sector**
- The Centre has **initiated a process to review the regulations**, specifically to address apprehensions over offshore betting apps

- Online gaming platforms

**The Draft Rules for Online Gaming (as an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021)**

- Online gaming companies must **register with a self-regulatory body**.
- The body must have a **board of directors with five members from diverse fields, including online gaming, public policy, IT, psychology, and medicine**.
- Online gaming companies must undertake **additional due diligence**, including KYC of users, transparent withdrawal and refund of money, and a fair distribution of winnings.
- Gaming companies must **secure a Random Number Generation Certificate**, which is typically used by platforms that offer card games to ensure that game outputs are statistically random and unpredictable.
- Online gaming **companies will not be allowed to engage in betting on the outcome of games**.
- Online gaming platforms must **appoint a compliance officer, a nodal officer, and a grievance officer**.

### 4. 'Trust between India, Australia will help Indo-Pacific region' - The Hindu

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

**News:**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Recently, the Indian External Affairs Minister emphasised the **critical role of trust between like-minded partners**, citing India and Australia as examples.
- The trust, he argued, contributes to efforts in **securing a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region**, especially given the complex global landscape.

- Australia-India Leadership Dialogue
- Indo-Pacific Region

#### 2+2 Ministerial Meeting

- The 2+2 meetings signify the **participation of two high-level representatives**, Ministers holding **Foreign and Defence portfolios**, from each of the two countries.
- The Ministers aim to **enhance the scope of dialogue between them**.
- Having such a mechanism enables the partners to **better understand and appreciate each other's strategic concerns**

#### Indo-Pacific Region

- The Indo-Pacific region serves as a **focal point for the strategic partnership** between India and Australia.
- **Shared understanding and approach** to the geostrategic environment, amid **China's growing assertiveness**, drive the relationship.
- Both nations can make a **positive impact through practical, progressive, and sustainable cooperation**.
  - As strong democracies and dynamic economies in the Indo-Pacific

#### Defining Year for India-Australia Friendship

- **Highlights of the year** include
  - First Annual Leaders Summit
  - Multiple visits by Australia's Prime Minister to India,

- The Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- Various diplomatic, trade, and cultural milestones

#### **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**

- **Strong bipartisan support** in both countries ensures the success of the 21st-century partnership.
- The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership involves **diverse frameworks covering defence, security, trade, education, and innovation.**

#### **Australia-India Leadership Dialogue (AILD)'s Significance**

- The AILD is recognized as a **vital Track 1.5 engagement**, fostering collaboration and dialogue between India and Australia.
- The theme '**Skill for Success**' is highlighted, emphasizing the **potential for India's skilled workforce** to address Australia's needs and shortages.
- The **complementarities** between the two nations present significant opportunities for **economic integration, business collaboration, and the creation of new supply chains.**

## 5. India, EU sign pact to build semiconductor supply chain - The Hindu/ India, EU sign semiconductor pact - Indian Express

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

#### **News:**

- **India** and the **European Union (EU)** recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on **semiconductors.**
- **Objective:** To strengthen the semiconductor supply chain and promote innovation.
- The agreement was formalized during a meeting of the **EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC).**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- EU-India Trade and Technology Council
- Semiconductors

#### **The MoU on Semiconductores**

- The agreement involves **sharing experiences and best practices in semiconductors.**
- Also, **identifying collaborative opportunities** in research, development, and innovation across universities, research organizations, and businesses.
- Both India and the EU will share information on "**granted public subsidies**" related to **semiconductors.**
- The collaboration is anticipated to **foster skills, talent, and workforce development** within the semiconductor industry.

#### **Importance of Semiconductors**

- Semiconductors are materials which have a **conductivity between conductors** (generally metals) and **insulators** (such as most ceramics).
- They **can be pure elements**, such as silicon or germanium, or **compounds** such as gallium arsenide or cadmium selenide.
- Semiconductors are **recognized as a strategic commodity**, gaining significance in the post-COVID era.
- The agreement is expected to **align India with the EU and the US**, especially in the **Indo-Pacific region**
  - amid efforts to diversify supply chains away from China dominance.

**GS III****6. Prime Minister announces completion of Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository and creation of a Social Impact Fund to advance Digital Public Infrastructure in Global South - PIB**

**Relevance:** Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

**News:**

- Recently, the Prime Minister of India announced the launch of **two India-led initiatives** at the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit.
- These include the **Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository** and a **Social Impact Fund**.

**Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR)**

- Developed by **MeitY** to **bridge the knowledge gap** in DPI design, construction, deployment and governance.
- A **comprehensive resource hub**, pooling essential lessons and expertise from G20 members and guest nations.
- Currently, the GDPIR features **54 DPis from 16 countries**.
- The **DPis from India** incorporated in the GDPIR are
  - Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, Umang, eSanjeevani, API Setu, Co-WIN, Government e-marketplace, Diksha, E-Hospital, Poshan Tracker and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)

**Social Impact Fund (SIF)**

- Announced by the Indian Prime Minister to **advance DPI implementation in the global south**.
- Government-led, multistakeholder initiative offering **financial support for DPI systems** in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).
- It **offers a platform** for governments, international organizations, and philanthropic entities to **contribute and accelerate SDGs achievement** through DPis in LMICs.
- **India** pledges an initial **commitment of 25 million USD** to the SIF.

**DPI Deliverables**

- The Digital Economy Ministers' Meeting (DEMM) unanimously endorsed **three DPI deliverables**, which included
  - A Framework for building DPI
  - Mobilizing finances for DPI development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)
  - The creation of a **Global DPI Repository (GDPIR)** for information exchange and best practices.
- This landmark consensus was also affirmed as a part of the **G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (NDLD)**.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR)
- Digital Public Infrastructure
- Social Impact Fund (SIF)

**7. 'Falling recovery, delay in resolution dent IBC's success' - The Hindu**

**Relevance:** Economy

**News:**

- According to a report by CRISIL Rating, **recovery rates have fallen** from 43% to 32% between March 2019 and September 2023.
- Also, **average resolution time has increased** from 324 to 653 days, surpassing the stipulated 330 days.
- These have emerged as **impediments to the success of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**.

**Reasons Behind Challenges**

- **Limited judicial bench strength**
- Delays in **identifying and acknowledging defaults**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)
- SARFAESI Act
- Lok Adalats

- Significant **delays in the pre-IBC admission stage**, reaching 650 days in fiscal 2022 from about 450 days in fiscal 2019, has suppressed recovery rates.
  - Delays have led to a **reduction in asset values and sub-optimal recoveries**.

**Recent Amendments**

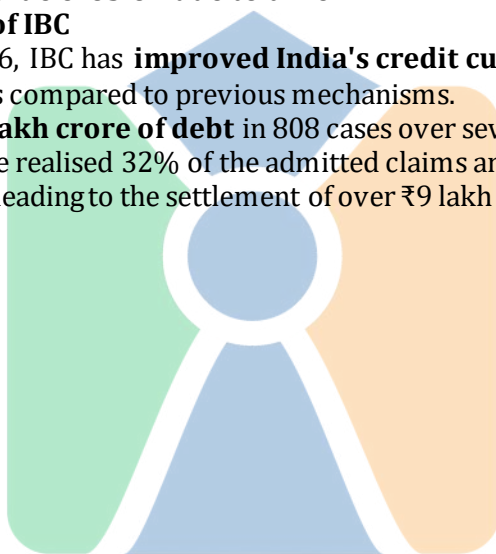
- To improve efficacy, **new amendments** in the past 12 months have been made to the IBC.
- **These include**
  - Approval for the sale of assets/resolution plans on a segregated basis.
  - Increase in the number of National Company Law Tribunal benches to 16
  - Extension of timelines for filing claims.
- Also, **sector-specific amendments**, provision for the **audit of corporate debtors**, and **modifications in Form-G2** aim to improve the resolution process.

**Recommendations for Improving IBC Effectiveness**

- As suggested by CRISIL Ratings, the IBC's effectiveness can be **increased using CDE approach**
  - Capacity augmentation, Digitalisation and Expansion of pre-pack resolutions to large corporates.
- **Infrastructure improvements**, such as expanding judge bench strength and digitising IBC platforms, can **prevent value erosion due to time**.

**Achievements and Impact of IBC**

- Since its inception in 2016, IBC has **improved India's credit culture** by resolving stressed assets with better recovery rates compared to previous mechanisms.
- IBC has **resolved ₹3.16 lakh crore of debt** in 808 cases over seven years.
- On average, creditors have realised 32% of the admitted claims and 169% of the liquidation value.
- **IBC acts as a deterrent**, leading to the settlement of over ₹9 lakh crore of filed debt before reaching IBC gates.

**Mentorship**  
India

**Editorials, Gists and Explainers****1. Need for climate-smart agriculture in India - The Hindu**

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

**Context:**

- The two **most important issues facing humanity** in the 21st century are **climate change** and **food insecurity**.

**Need for Reforms in Agriculture**

- Climate change, through factors like heat waves, floods, and droughts, is affecting global food production and farmers' livelihoods.
- The demand for food is increasing due to population growth and dietary changes, adding pressure on agricultural systems.
- As a result of climate change, traditional farming practices are becoming less productive.
- There is a need for a radical reform in the agriculture industry to sustainably increase production.

**Climate Smart Agriculture: A viable option**

- The Food and Agriculture Organization said in 2019
  - Climate-smart agriculture is an approach for transforming food and agriculture systems to support sustainable development and safeguard food security under climate change.
- Climate-smart agriculture focuses on three pillars viz.
  - Increasing agricultural productivity and incomes
  - Adapting and building resilience to climate change
  - Reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible
- CSA is more of a flexible concept with a wide range of potential applications.

**Climate Change Challenges**

- Climate change is affecting agricultural productivity, leading to a decline in crop yields.
- In India, crop yield decline due to climate change is estimated to be as high as 9% by 2039.

**Importance of Climate-smart agriculture**

- It provides a holistic approach to transform food and agriculture systems, addressing sustainability and food security under climate change.
- It includes practices such as water-smart, weather-smart, energy-smart and carbon-smart practices.
- They improve productivity, deal with land degradation, and improve soil health.
- CSA promotes crop diversification, water efficiency, and the integration of drought-resistant crops, reducing the disruptive effects of climate change.
- Also, CSA causes a dramatic change in farming communities' economic and social structure by distributing information and providing access to climate-resilient methods.

**Community-supported efforts**

- CSA is gaining recognition globally, with an increase in community-supported agriculture efforts.
- These efforts aim to create resilient and environmentally friendly agricultural systems, incorporating agroforestry, sustainable water management, and precision agriculture.

**Role in Biodiversity Conservation**

- CSA's ecosystem-based approach and diverse crop varieties contribute to biodiversity conservation by promoting coexistence between cropland and wild areas.
- It helps protect native plant species, maintain stable pollinator populations, and mitigate habitat degradation.

**Reducing GHG Emissions**

- The agricultural sector contributes significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
  - The sector's share in GHG's emissions in 2018 was 17%.
- CSA implementation is crucial for lowering GHG emissions and enhancing farmland carbon storage.
- It aligns with global goals, such as the Paris Agreement, to combat climate change.

**Unique Juncture for India**

- India, with a large population of small and marginal farmers, is at a unique juncture where CSA adoption is essential.
- CSA can play a significant role in helping them increase their profits.

**Government Initiatives**

- The National Action Plan on Climate Change emphasises the role of climate-resilient agriculture in India's adaptation measures.
- National Innovation on Climate Resilient Agriculture, Soil Health Mission, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Biotech-KISAN, and Climate Smart Village are a few examples of government initiatives in India focusing on CSA.
  - For e.g. Soil Health Card Scheme uses precision nutrient management to optimise agricultural methods.
- Various public and private sector entities such as farmer-producer organisations and NGOs are also working towards the adoption of CSA.

**Conclusion**

- CSA has the potential to **assure food security, empower farmers and protect our delicate ecosystems**.
- It merges innovation, resilience, and sustainability, **providing inspiration for a sustainable future in the face of climate change**.



## 2. Sickle Cell breakthrough - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

**Context:**

- Recently, the UK approved a **gene therapy called Casgevy** for the **cure of sickle cell disease and thalassaemia**.
- Casgevy is the **first licensed therapy** in the world based on the **Crispr-Cas9 gene editing technology**, awarded a Nobel Prize in 2020.

### Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassaemia

- Sickle cell disease causes red blood cells to assume a crescent shape, leading to blocked blood flow and severe symptoms.
- Thalassaemia results in low levels of haemoglobin, causing fatigue, shortness of breath, and irregular heartbeats, requiring lifelong blood transfusions.

#### How Casgevy Works

- Both the diseases are caused by errors in the gene for haemoglobin, a protein in the red blood cells that carry oxygen to organs and tissues.
- Casgevy edits the faulty gene responsible for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia using the patient's own blood stem cells.
- So far, the only permanent treatment has been a bone marrow transplant, for which a closely matched donor is needed.
- The therapy targets the BCL11A gene, promoting the production of foetal haemoglobin, which does not carry the same abnormalities as adult haemoglobin.

#### Trial Results

- In trials, Casgevy showed promising results
  - a significant reduction in severe pain crises for sickle cell disease patients
  - a 70% drop in the need for transfusions in thalassaemia patients

#### Treatment Process

- Casgevy is a one-time treatment that involves collecting blood stem cells from the bone marrow through apheresis.
- The edited cells are then transplanted back into the patient after undergoing a six-month editing and testing process.
- Side effects from the treatment are similar to those associated with autologous stem cell transplants, including nausea, fatigue, fever and increased risk of infection.

#### Challenges and Concerns

- The therapy's high cost, estimated to be as much as \$2 million per patient, poses a significant challenge.
- Also, absence of local manufacturing facilities means that the harvested blood stem cells have to be sent across countries.
- Pricing is a concern, especially for people in poorer countries where a high proportion of patients with these conditions reside.

**Conclusion**

- Despite the challenges, the approval of Chevy is seen as a **significant breakthrough in gene therapy**.
- Ongoing efforts to **develop local manufacturing facilities** and **collaborative research** may contribute to overcoming challenges in the future.

## 3. Why a NASA spacecraft fired a laser at Earth, and why it is a big deal - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

**Context:**

- Recently, **NASA's Psyche spacecraft**, en route to a **metal-rich asteroid** orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter, successfully **transmitted a laser signal to Earth**.
- The asteroid is believed to be the **nickel-iron core of an early planet**, providing **insights into Earth's iron core**.

**Challenges in Space Communication**

- **Communicating with distant spacecraft** poses challenges, particularly in **data rates**.
- **Current space communication** mainly relies on **radio waves** having the highest wave lengths but lowest frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum.
  - However, **data transmission at high bandwidths is desirable** for faster data transfer.

**NASA's Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC) Experiment**

- Utilises **near-infrared laser signals for communication**, providing data rates at least 10 times higher than current radio telecommunications systems.
- **Psyche spacecraft is the first to carry a DSOC transceiver**, testing high-bandwidth optical communications to Earth during its journey.
- The **technology relies on**
  - extremely precise pointing
  - isolation from spacecraft vibrations
  - compensation for changing positions
  - new signal-processing techniques

**Future Implications for Space Travel**

- DSOC's advancements pave the way for **high-bandwidth communications far beyond the Moon** and over 1,000 times farther than any previous optical communications test.
- Improved communication technology is crucial for future space exploration, including sending humans to Mars.

**Mentorship**  
India

## Quick Look

### 1. Generic drugs for 4 rare diseases made available in India

- Generic drugs can be defined as affordable versions of branded drugs which are brought into the market once the original drug manufacturer's patent expires.
- These medicines have the same potency, quality, and implications and work in an identical manner as the branded drug.
- The Union Health Ministry in India has made generic drugs available for four rare diseases.
- These include Tyrosinemia-Type 1, Gauchers Disease, Wilson's Disease, and the Dravet-Lennox Gastaut Syndrome.
- Objective: To significantly reduce the cost of these drugs, slashing it by 60 to 100 times of their current market value.
- Drugs for additional rare diseases, including Phenylketonuria and Hyperammonemia, are in the approval process and expected to be available in the coming months.
- A drug formulation for sickle cell disease in children will also be made available, addressing a specific healthcare need.
- In India, rare diseases collectively affect 6-8% of the population, potentially affecting 8.4 to 10 crore people.

### 2. Mythimna separata

- Continuous warm temperatures for prolonged periods may have led to the serious Mythimna separata pest infestation in Assam that damaged paddy crops in at least 15 districts.
- It is a typical long-distance migratory insect that is a major, polyphagous pest of grain crops in China and other Asian countries.
- The pest is known as the ear-head-cutting caterpillar, rice ear-cutting caterpillar, or armyworm.
- It feeds on leaves and can cut off panicles from the base of a crop plant.
- During an outbreak, the pest multiplies in large numbers and moves in swarms from field to field, to feed and attack the crops.
- An increase in temperatures with dryness creates a favourable condition for the pest population to increase.

### 3. 'AGNI' Initiative

- Recently, the Ministry of Ayush, launched the "Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative" (AGNI).
- To provide a platform for Ayurveda practitioners to
  - Report their innovative practices and experiences in various disease conditions
  - Promote the culture of evidence-based practices among Ayurveda practitioners.
- Objectives
  - To promote the culture of reporting evidence-based practices among Ayurveda practitioners.
  - To document the reported successful therapeutic regimens for various disease conditions involving single drug/ Formulation/ Procedures for the purpose of education and academics.
  - To identify interested Ayurveda practitioners for collaboration in the creation of a database through applications and capacity building through training in research methods and good clinical practices.
  - To undertake research for mainstreaming pragmatic practises through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal

### 4. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)

- It is the third generation launch vehicle of India.
- It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages.
- It is a four stage launch vehicle.
  - A large solid rocket motor forming the first stage

- An earth storable liquid stage as the second stage
- A high-performance solid rocket motor as third stage,
- A liquid stage with engines as the fourth stage
- After its first successful launch in October 1994, PSLV emerged as the reliable and versatile workhorse launch vehicle of India
- The vehicle successfully launched two spacecraft viz. Chandrayaan 1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013.

## 5. Kyasanur Forest Disease

- Recently, a study by the Indian Council for Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology has confirmed for the first time, the presence of the Kyasanur forest disease (KFD) virus in two more districts of Karnataka.
- Kyasanur Forest Disease is a zoonotic disease.
- It was first reported in Kyasanur Forest of Karnataka, in 1957, hence, known as Kyasanur Forest disease (KFD).
- It is also known as “monkey disease/ monkey fever” because of its association with monkey deaths.
- This virus has spread along the entire stretch of the Western Ghats region, which also includes Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa.
- Symptoms: Sudden onset of high-grade fever, prostration, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and occasionally neurological and haemorrhagic manifestations.
- Transmission: Through the bite of ticks and bonnets. Black-faced langur monkeys are highly susceptible to the infection.
  - They play a significant role in the spread of the virus in the human population.
- Treatment: No specific treatment is available; however, prompt symptomatic and supportive therapy decreases morbidity and mortality.

## 6. H9N2

- H9N2 is a subtype of the influenza A virus, which causes bird flu and human influenza.
- H9N2 viruses are found in wild birds worldwide and are endemic in poultry in many areas.
- H9N2 virus infections in humans are rare, but likely under-reported due to typically mild symptoms of the infections.
- The WHO's overall risk assessment indicates a low probability of human-to-human spread and low case fatality rate among human cases of H9N2.
- Cases of human infection have been observed in Hong Kong, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Egypt.
- Spread of infection
  - Humans are usually infected through close contact with infected birds, bodily fluid droplets, or other contaminated material.
  - Birds shed influenza viruses in their faeces, so contact with bird droppings is also a possible transmission route.

**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in)**

1. It is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur.
2. It is exempted from the Right to Information Act, 2005.

**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

**Q2. Consider the following statements on National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**

1. It is a statutory body that works to safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes (SC) in India.
2. It consists of a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson and three other members appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
3. It is also required to discharge functions with regard to the Anglo-Indian Community as it does with respect to the SCs.

**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**

1. Lotteries organised by the state come under the State List.
2. Betting and Gambling are a part of the Concurrent List.

**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

**Q4. Consider the following countries**

1. Sri Lanka
2. Germany
3. Mauritius
4. Indonesia

**How many of the countries mentioned above is/are NOT members of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)?**

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

**Q5. Consider the following statements on India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC)**

1. It aims to create a High-level coordination platform to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security.
2. Ministerial meetings of the TTC are held twice a year, ensuring regular high-level engagement between India and the EU.
3. India has similar councils with other developed countries including the US.

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

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

**Q6. With reference to the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, consider the following statements**

1. It is developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
2. It is a comprehensive resource hub in which essential lessons and expertise from G20 members are pooled.
3. Only Aadhaar and UPI are the DPIs incorporated in this repository from India.

**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 with reference to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**

1. IBC aims to consolidate all laws related to insolvency and bankruptcy.
2. When insolvency is triggered under the IBC, it only results in liquidation.
3. It covers all individuals, companies, Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) and partnership firms.
4. Under it, Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) is the adjudicating authority for companies and LLPs.

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

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

**Q8. Consider the following**

1. Increasing agricultural productivity and incomes
2. Adapting to climate change
3. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

**How many of the targets mentioned above fall within the scope of climate-smart agriculture?**

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

**Q9. The term "Casgevy" seen in the news recently is**

- A. A gene therapy for the cure of sickle cell disease and thalassaemia
- B. An asteroid monitoring mission by NASA
- C. A revolutionary deep-space communication technology
- D. A GM crop variant approved by UK

**Q10. What is the primary objective of NASA's Psyche mission, seen in the news recently?**

- A. Study the impact of solar radiation on celestial bodies
- B. Studying the composition of Martian soil
- C. Observing the behaviour of lunar craters
- D. Exploring the metal-rich core of an asteroid

**Prelims Track Answer****Ans. 1 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- CERT-In is a functional organisation of the Ministry of Information & Electronics Technology.
- It is the national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- CERT-In has been operational since January 2004.
- Recently, The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has been exempted from the Right to Information Act, 2005. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- CERT-In is now listed at serial number 27 in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act.
- This places CERT-In among the 26 other intelligence and security organizations already exempted from the Act.

**Ans. 2 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- NCSC is a constitutional body that works to safeguard the interests of the scheduled castes (SC) in India. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It consists of a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson and three other members appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Commission is also required to discharge functions with regard to the Anglo-Indian Community as it does with respect to the SCs. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Till 2018, the commission was also required to discharge similar functions with regard to the other backward classes (OBCs).

**Ans. 3 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- Gambling in India is largely a state subject i.e. states are expected to create their own laws to regulate gambling in their jurisdictions. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- 'Betting and gambling' is part of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 4 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an intergovernmental organisation established to promote economic cooperation and regional integration among countries bordering the Indian Ocean.
- It works on various initiatives related to trade, investment, and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).
- Membership is open to all sovereign states of the Indian Ocean Rim willing to subscribe to the principles and objectives of the Charter.
- Members: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France/Reunion, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. **Hence, option A is correct.**

**Ans. 5 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- The formation of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) was announced by the Indian Prime Minister and President of the European Commission in 2022.
- Objective: Creating a High-level coordination platform to tackle strategic challenges at the nexus of trade, trusted technology and security. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Ministerial meetings of the TTC will be held annually, ensuring regular high-level engagement between India and the EU. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The TTC consists of three Working Groups (WGs) that report on roadmaps for future cooperation
  - WG on Strategic Technologies, Digital Governance, and Digital Connectivity
  - WG on Green and Clean Energy Technologies
  - WG on Trade, Investment, and Resilient Value Chains.
- The EU-India Trade and Technology Council is the second bilateral forum for the EU and the first one established with any partner for India. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 6 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR) is developed by MeitY. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Objective: To bridge the knowledge gap in DPI design, construction, deployment and governance.
- A comprehensive resource hub, pooling essential lessons and expertise from G20 members and guest nations. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Currently, the GDPIR features 54 DPIs from 16 countries.
- The DPIs from India incorporated in the GDPIR are Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), DigiLocker, Umang, eSanjeevani, API Setu, Co-WIN, Government e-marketplace, Diksha, E-Hospital, Poshan Tracker and Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM). **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 7 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- The Government implemented the IBC, 2016 to consolidate all laws related to insolvency and bankruptcy and to tackle Non-Performing Assets (NPA). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The IBC Covers all individuals, companies, Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) and partnership firms. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Adjudicating Authority
  - National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for companies and LLPs.
  - Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) for individuals and partnership firms. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect.**
- When insolvency is triggered under the IBC, there can be two outcomes: resolution or liquidation. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has been appointed as a regulator and it can oversee these proceedings.
- IBBI has 10 members; from the Finance Ministry, Law Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India.

**Ans. 8 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- According to the World bank, Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an integrated approach to managing landscapes – cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries – that address the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change.
- CSA aims to achieve three goals simultaneously viz.
  - Increasing agricultural productivity and incomes
  - Adapting and building resilience to climate change
  - Reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible
- The National Action Plan on Climate Change emphasises the role of climate-resilient agriculture in India's adaptation measures.

**Ans. 9 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- Casgevy is the first licensed therapy in the world based on the Crispr-Cas9 gene editing technology, awarded a Nobel Prize in 2020.
- Recently, the UK approved Casgevy for the cure of sickle cell disease and thalassaemia. **Hence, option A is correct.**
- It edits the faulty gene responsible for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia using the patient's own blood stem cells.
- The therapy targets the BCL11A gene, promoting the production of foetal haemoglobin, which does not carry the same abnormalities as adult haemoglobin.

**Ans. 10 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- Recently, NASA's Psyche spacecraft successfully fired a laser signal at Earth.
- The spacecraft is on its way to a unique metal-rich asteroid, orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter.
- Scientists believe this asteroid is the nickel-iron core of an early planet and its studying could provide unique insights into the impenetrable iron core of our own planet. **Hence, option D is correct.**



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