

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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## **IMPORTANT NEWS ARTICLES**

1. China, Japan and S Korea agree to boost trilateral ties, ease tensions - Indian Express/ S. Korea, Japan and China to resume leaders' summit - The Hindu
2. India, US work on pact for quick return of stolen antiquities - Indian Express
3. Beijing, Washington trade charges over US vessel in South China Sea - Indian Express
4. Govt renames Ayushman PHCs as Arogya Mandirs - Indian Express/ Ayushman Bharat centres to be now called Ayushman Arogya Mandir - The Hindu
5. President Murmu calls for all-India judicial service - The Hindu
6. Urban Affairs Ministry aims to provide data on Indian cities via dedicated portal - The Hindu
7. Govt panel sets targets for blending sustainable aviation fuel with ATF from 2027 - Indian Express

## **EDITORIALS, GISTS AND EXPLAINERS**

1. Tighter intel grid, legal teeth to terror fight - Indian Express
2. Why is Bihar demanding the Special Category Status? - The Hindu
3. DAOs: how these decentralised entities are shaping the future of the digital world - The Hindu

## **QUICK LOOK**

1. Exercise Surya Kiran
2. Digital Twin
3. Amaterasu
4. Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (BWLS)
5. Lachit Borphukan

## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. China, Japan and S Korea agree to boost trilateral ties, ease tensions - Indian Express/ S. Korea, Japan and China to resume leaders' summit - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- **China, Japan and South Korea agreed to restart cooperation** and pave the way for a summit in the latest move to ease tensions between the Asian neighbours.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Map based question

**Areas of Cooperation**

- It was an Agreement to advance cooperation in six areas: **security, economy, technology, etc.**
- South Korean Foreign Minister **emphasizes the need to institutionalize trilateral cooperation.**
- Focus on developing a stable and sustainable system for **long-term collaboration.**

**Economic Cooperation and Free Trade Agreement**

- China urges the **restart of negotiations** on a trilateral free trade agreement.
- Emphasis on opposing **politicization of economic and technology issues.**
- China's **previous warning about U.S. efforts to strengthen ties** with Seoul and Tokyo.

#### 2. India, US work on pact for quick return of stolen antiquities - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- India is **close to signing an agreement with the United States** under which the process for the return of stolen antiquities will be hugely simplified,

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Cultural Property Agreement (CPA).

**Simplification of Repatriation Process**

- There is a **shift from India proving ownership to automatic return** under the Cultural Property Agreement (CPA).
- US Embassy's commitment to **preventing illegal trafficking of cultural property.**

**Bilateral Cooperation and Diplomatic Efforts**

- Ongoing collaboration **between India and the US for close to two years.**

**Anticipated Impact and Timelines**

- India's renewed focus on repatriation, **with over 400 antiquities returned since 2014.**
- **Expected timeframe for the agreement** to come into effect and simplify repatriation.

**Template Agreement and Global Initiatives**

- India's **plans to sign similar agreements with countries** where Indian art objects are believed to be smuggled.
- **Import restrictions imposed by the agreement** to prevent looted cultural property from entering the US.

**India's Pursuit of Similar Agreements**

- India's pursuit of **agreements for the return of antiquities through bilateral and multilateral channels.**
- **Optimism for other countries to adopt** a similar framework as the US.

#### 3. Beijing, Washington trade charges over US vessel in South China Sea - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- China's military **claims to have driven away a U.S. warship near the Paracel Islands.**
- U.S. Navy asserts the ship, the Hopper, **was on a routine freedom of navigation operation.**

**Prelims Takeaway**

- South China Sea

**Key Points****Disputed Claims in the South China Sea**

- China's **expansive claims covering most of the South China Sea.**
- **International dispute involving** the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.
- **2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration** dismissing China's claims as having no legal basis.

**Philippines-Australia Joint Patrols**

- **Commencement of joint sea and air patrols** by the Philippines and Australia in the South China Sea.
- **Chinese accusation against Manila** for enlisting foreign forces for patrols.

**China's Response to the Incident**

- China asserts the **U.S. is a "security risk creator" in the South China Sea.**
- Heightened tensions following **joint patrols by the Philippine and U.S. militaries.**

**U.S. Stance on Maritime Claims**

- **U.S. challenges excessive maritime claims** globally, emphasizing the threat to freedom of the seas.

**Recent U.S.-China Talks on Maritime Issues**

- **U.S. State Department highlights concerns** about "dangerous and unlawful" Chinese actions.

#### 4. Govt renames Ayushman PHCs as Arogya Mandirs - Indian Express/ Ayushman Bharat centres to be now called Ayushman Arogya Mandir - The Hindu

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

**News:**

- The government has decided to rename **the Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres as 'Ayushman Arogya Mandir'**
- the Union Health Ministry has sent a letter to the states and Union territories to **implement the rebranding exercise by end of this year**, according to official sources.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Ayushman Bharat Yojana

**Key Points**

- The ministry has asked states to **upload photographs of rebranded primary health facilities** on the Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWC) portal.
- It has **underlined that the National Health Mission (NHM) logo** is to be retained in the rebranded centres
- The rebranded AB-HWCs will also have a new tagline -- '**Arogyam Parmam Dhanam**'.
- The new name 'Ayushman Arogya Mandir' and the **tagline 'Arogyam Paraman Dhanam'** should replace the existing title 'Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centre' across all operationalised AB-HWCs, the letter said.
- After the centres complete the rebranding, **states are required to upload new photographs of primary health facilities** with the new name on the AB-HWC portal.
- Under the Government of India's flagship Ayushman Bharat Yojana, more than 1.6 lakhs **AB- HWCs have been successfully established across states and UTs**
- AB-HWC aims to provide comprehensive primary healthcare, including both maternal and child health services,
- Free essential drugs and diagnostic services close to people's homes through AB-HWCs.

#### 5. President Murmu calls for all-India judicial service - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

**News:**

- Recently, the President of India, emphasized the need for an **All-India Judicial Service** to enhance diversity in the judiciary.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- All-India Judicial Service
- Collegium System

**Call for All-India Judicial Service**

- She proposed the creation of an all-India judicial service **to recruit judges, aiming to increase representation from marginalized social groups.**
- She argued that a diverse bench would **better serve the cause of justice.**
- She suggested a **merit-based, competitive and transparent recruitment process** to nurture talent from lower to higher levels.

### Overcoming Barriers to Justice

- She **identified barriers to justice**, including cost and language comprehension, and stressed the **importance of making justice accessible to all**.
  - She highlighted the **role of varied representation** in achieving this goal.
- The President also called for "**clearing away**" vestiges of colonialism across all domains.
- This emphasises **India's commitment to deepening democracy, justice, and equality** since gaining independence.
- The President acknowledged **India's progress in gender and social representation**.

### All-India Judicial Service

- It is a reform push to **centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states**.
- It was first proposed by the **14th report of the Law Commission in 1958**.
- In 2006, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 15th Report backed the idea of a **pan-Indian judicial service**, and also prepared a draft Bill.

### Supreme Court's Stand

- In **1992**, the Supreme Court in **All India Judges' Association v. The Union of India** directed the Centre to **set up an AIJS**.
- In a **1993** review of the judgement, however, the court **left the Centre at liberty to take the initiative** on the issue.
- In **2017**, the SC took **suo motu cognizance of the issue** of appointment of district judges, and **mooted a Central Selection Mechanism**.

## 6. Urban Affairs Ministry aims to provide data on Indian cities via dedicated portal - The Hindu

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

### News:

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs recently launched the **Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive, and Future-Ready Urban India (Amplifi 2.0) portal**.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Amplifi 2.0 Portal
- Urban Outcomes Framework 2022

### Amplifi 2.0 Portal

- **Objective:** To provide a centralized platform for raw data from Indian cities.
- The goal is to **facilitate data-driven policy-making** by making urban data accessible to academics, researchers, and stakeholders.
- Currently, **225 urban local bodies (ULBs) have joined** the platform, with **data available for 150 cities**.
- It **offers diverse information for various cities**, covering aspects such as diesel consumption, water quality testing, healthcare expenditure, slum population, and road accident fatalities.

### Previous Ranking System

- Previously, the ministry ranked cities **based on four indices**
  - Ease of Living Index
  - Municipal Performance Index
  - Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework
  - Data Maturity Assessment Framework
- The government plans to release **reports on subsets of these indices**.

### Urbanization Trends

- India is undergoing rapid urbanization, with a **projected 60 crore (40%) of the population living in urban areas by 2030**.
- The **2011 Census** highlighted that **urban India contributed 63% to the country's GDP**, a figure expected to rise to **75% by 2030**.

### Urban Outcomes Framework 2022

- It is developed by the **National Institute of Urban Affairs and Ernst and Young**.

- It shifts the **focus from the indices to the data** with a comprehensive list of indicators.
- This initiative also opens avenues for **creating new frameworks based on open data**.
- **Data across 14 sectors**, including demography, economy, education, and safety, is streamlined to enhance focus on data collection.

## GS III

### 7. Govt panel sets targets for blending sustainable aviation fuel with ATF from 2027 - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**News:**

- The **National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC)** establishes initial indicative targets for SAF blending.
- A potential move towards **introducing compulsory blending mandates**.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Sustainable Aviation Fuel

**Key Points**

**Indicative Blending Percentages**

- NBCC approves **1% SAF blending target in 2027** (initially for international flights).
- Approval of a **2% SAF blending target in 2028** (initially for international flights).

**International Context: CORSIA Compliance**

- Alignment with the mandatory phase of the **International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) CORSIA**.
- **CORSIA aims to offset carbon dioxide emissions** growth beyond 2020 levels for international flights.
- **Role of Blended SAF in Emission Reduction**
- **Significance of using jet fuel blended with SAF** to maintain emissions within permissible levels.
- **India's non-participation in the voluntary phases of CORSIA** but required compliance starting 2027.

**The NBCC and Stakeholder Involvement**

- NBCC's role as an **inter-ministerial panel** overseeing the biofuels program.
- Stakeholders include the civil aviation ministry, oil marketing companies, and NITI Aayog.

**Characteristics of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)**

- **SAF produced from sustainable feedstocks**, with a lower carbon footprint than conventional ATF.

**Government Initiatives and Industry Collaboration**

- Collaboration between **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Praj Industries for SAF production**.
- **SAF units at Panipat refinery and Mangalore Refinery** and Petrochemicals using various technologies.

**Technology and Production Challenges**

- **Concerns about technology and production costs** for manufacturing SAF.
- **Uncertainty regarding government support** or incentives for airlines and SAF manufacturers.

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. Tighter intel grid, legal teeth to terror fight - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Defence

**Context:**

- The **26/11 attacks on Mumbai** prompted significant changes in **India's security approach**.
- It **exposed the vulnerabilities** in maritime security, internal security, and counter-terrorism infrastructure.

#### Post-26/11 Initiatives

##### 1. Maritime Security Revamp

- The Indian navy was given overall charge of maritime security.
- Indian Coast Guard became responsible for territorial waters and coordination with marine police stations.
- Mandatory installation of Automatic Identification System (AIS) on vessels longer than 20 metres.

##### 2. Intelligence Coordination

- Strengthening of Intelligence Bureau's Multi Agency Centre (MAC) for real-time intelligence exchange.
  - Primary job of MAC is to coordinate the exchange of intelligence between central agencies, the armed forces, and the state police.
- Daily meetings to discuss radicalization, terror ecosystems, and specific topics.
- MAC's charter was expanded for a comprehensive approach to information exchange.

##### 3. Legal Framework Enhancement

- Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was amended to broaden terrorism definition.
- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act was passed, creating a federal investigation agency.
- However, the National Counter Terrorism Centre, floated by the then government, could not take off as it violated the existing federal structure of policing.

##### 4. Modernization of Police Forces

- Increased funds were allocated by the MHA to state governments to
  - make their police stations state-of-the-art
  - equip them with modern technology
  - train their policemen to deal with challenges of modern-day policing that included terrorism
  - give them better weapons
- Focus on creating specialised commando teams within police forces.
- Establishment of four regional hubs of the National Security Guard (NSG).

##### 5. Cooperation from the West

- 26/11 attacks led to increased willingness of the West, especially the US, to cooperate with India on security matters.
- Real-time information and prosecutable evidence were provided by the US, aiding India's case against Pakistan's involvement.
- Global cooperation against Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), including unprecedented support from Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf countries, and China.
- International pressure on Pakistan, leading to its inclusion in the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) grey list.

#### Remaining Challenges

- Gaps persist in the security grid, with state police forces facing issues of inadequate equipment and political interference.
- On maritime security, there are limited options to track ships that do not transmit AIS signals.
- Also, many of India's smaller shipping vessels have no transponders.

### 2. Why is Bihar demanding the Special Category Status? - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

**Context:**

- Recently, **Bihar** passed a resolution urging the grant of **Special Category Status (SCS)** to the state.
- The move is prompted by the findings of the "**Bihar Caste-based Survey, 2022**," revealing **significant poverty levels among nearly one-third of the population**.

#### Special Category Status (SCS)

- SCS is a classification by the Centre to aid the development of states facing geographical or socio-economic disadvantages.
- The SCS was introduced in 1969 on the recommendation of the fifth Finance Commission (FC).
- It considers five factors such as
  - hilly and difficult terrain
  - low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population
  - strategic location along international borders
  - economic and infrastructural backwardness
  - non-viable nature of state finances

#### Special Category States

- In 1969, three States viz. Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland were granted the SCS.
- Subsequently, eight more States including Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand were given the SCS by the erstwhile National Development Council.

#### Benefits of SCS

- Historically, SCS states received grants based on the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula, allocating around 30% of central assistance.
- However, on recommendations of the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions (FC), SCS assistance is now part of increased devolution for all states.
- SCS states enjoy a more favourable Centre-State funding ratio (90:10) for centrally sponsored schemes
- There are several other incentives in the form of concession in customs and excise duties, income tax rates and corporate tax rates to attract inv

#### Bihar's Justification for SCS

- Bihar faces challenges like lack of natural resources, water supply for irrigation, floods in the north, droughts in the south and industrial shifts after bifurcation.
- With a per-capita GDP of around ₹54,000, Bihar is one of the poorest states, and the SCS is seen as a means to address poverty and fund welfare measures.

#### Other States' Demands

- Andhra Pradesh and Odisha have sought SCS, citing revenue loss and vulnerability to natural calamities.
- Central government, referring to the 14th FC report (that no State be accorded the SCS), has consistently denied these demands.

#### Bihar's Justification Evaluation

- Bihar meets most SCS criteria but lacks hilly terrain and geographically difficult areas.
- In 2013, the Raghuram Rajan Committee suggested a 'multi-dimensional index' for fund allocation, providing an alternative to SCS based on revisiting socio-economic backwardness.

### 3. DAOs: how these decentralised entities are shaping the future of the digital world - The Hindu

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

#### Context:

- **Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs)** stand at the forefront of innovation, **combining blockchain technology and governance.**
- Operating **without centralised control**, DAOs are **governed by smart contracts and member consensus**, offering transparency, democracy, and self-execution.
- This paradigm shift **impacts various industries, including finance, art, and governance.**
- They **challenge traditional structures** and **redefine trust and collaboration in the digital realm.**

#### Genesis of DAOs

- DAOs are **computer-programmed organisations on blockchain networks**, fostering self-sustaining, community-driven entities.
- **Smart contracts automatically execute predefined rules**, eliminating the need for intermediaries and ensuring trust through code.
- They enable **borderless cooperation with a decentralised decision-making process**, reducing the influence of any single entity.

#### Use Cases

- **Decentralised Finance (DeFi):** Platforms like Compound and MakerDAO provide lending and borrowing services, bypassing traditional banks.
- **Art World:** Artists tokenize creations, using DAOs for royalty management and intellectual property control.
- **Supply Chain Management:** DAOs offer transparency and traceability in global supply chains, ensuring product authenticity.
- **Governance of Online Communities:** DAOs like DAOstack facilitate decentralised governance structures for internet communities.

#### Implications for the Digital World



- **Decentralisation:** Shifts power from centralised authorities to collective decision-making, promoting a more democratic process.
- **Transparency and Trust:** Smart contracts ensure transparency and immutability, fostering trust among participants and disrupting traditional opacity.
- **Inclusivity:** DAOs democratise access to resources, transcending geographical and socio-economic barriers for global participation.
- **New Forms of Collaboration:** Facilitates global cooperation, fostering innovation as ideas flow freely without hierarchical structures.

#### Challenges and Controversies

- **Security Concerns:** The 2016 DAO hack exposed vulnerabilities, leading to a contentious hard fork in the Ethereum blockchain.
  - A hard fork refers to a change in a network's protocol that makes previously invalid blocks and transactions valid, or vice-versa
- **Legal and Regulatory Uncertainty:** Traditional legal systems are struggling to adapt to the decentralised nature of DAOs, leading to regulatory debates.
- **Taxation and Compliance Challenges:** DAO tokens' classification, legal liability, taxation, and compliance with regulations pose complex challenges.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Code-based solutions for dispute resolution present challenges in the absence of traditional legal mechanisms.

#### Addressing Challenges

- Stakeholders are actively working on **legal frameworks to balance innovation with compliance.**
- **Collaborative efforts** among DAO creators, participants, and regulators aim to **establish guidelines** that **accommodate the unique characteristics of DAOs** within existing regulatory structures.
- They aim to address concerns such as governance, intellectual property, cross-border operations, and transparent, fair token-based decision-making.

## Quick Look

### 1. Exercise Surya Kiran

- It is a joint military exercise between the Indian army and the Nepali army.
- It is an annual event and is conducted alternately in the two countries.
- The Indian Army contingent is being led by a battalion from the Kumaon Regiment and the Nepal Army contingent is represented by the Tara Dal Battalion.
- The aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief under the United Nations Charter on peacekeeping operations.
- The exercise will focus on the employment of drones and counter-drone measures, medical training, aviation aspects and environment conservation.
- The exercise will provide a platform for soldiers from India and Nepal to exchange ideas and experiences, share best practices, and foster a deeper understanding of each other's operational procedures.
- This exercise signifies the strong bonds of friendship, trust, and common cultural linkages that exist between India and Nepal.

### 2. Digital Twin

- Recently, the Survey of India (SoI) and Genesys International, a leading Indian mapping company, announced a strategic tie-up for a three-dimensional (3D) digital twin-mapping programme in India.
- Digital Twin is a virtual depiction of a real-world entity, be it a product, process, person or location, capable of comprehending and gauging its tangible counterparts.
- The twin digital copy will help policymakers understand how infrastructure will function in different situations, such as high-footprint events, an increase in population, or natural disasters.
- Objective: to create digital twins of major cities and towns, leveraging Genesys' all-India highly accurate navigable maps.
- The Genesys constellation of sensors and SOI's recently launched Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) network allow for real-time high-precision positioning data.

### 3. Amaterasu

- It is one of the highest-energy cosmic rays ever detected.
- It has been named Amaterasu after the Japanese sun goddess.
- It has an energy exceeding 240 exa-electron volts (EeV) which is millions of times more than particles produced in the Large Hadron Collider.
- It comes only second to the Oh-My-God particle, another ultra-high-energy cosmic ray that came in at 320 EeV, detected in 1991.
- Amaterasu appears to have emerged from the Local Void, an empty area of space bordering the Milky Way galaxy.

### 4. Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (BWLS)

- The Gujarat Forest Department recently presented its proposal to make Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (BWLS) the second home to lions
- Location: It is located in the state of Gujarat.
- It has a hilly landscape, and the sanctuary sprawls over an area of 192.31 square kilometres.
- There are two waterways, the Bileshvary River and the Joghri River, and two dams, Khambala and Fodara.
- Ethnic races such as Maldharis, Bharvads, Rabaris, and Gadhvis live in this region.

- To develop Barda as the second home for the Asiatic lion, the state government implemented the 'Gir-Barda Project' in 1979.
- It is characteristically abundant in floral diversity, which consists of a good number of medicinal plants.
- Fauna: Leopard, Hyena, Wild boar, wolf, Jackal, blue bull, rare and endangered spotted eagle, crested hawk eagle, etc.

## 5. Lachit Borphukan

- He has been revered in Assam as the warrior who defeated Mughal armies in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.
- He was commander of the Ahom armies during the battle of Saraighat and fought on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Guwahati.
- He was a brilliant military commander.
- He was chosen as one of the five Borphukans of the Ahom kingdom by King Charadhvaj Singha and given administrative, judicial, and military responsibilities.
- Borphukan preferred guerrilla tactics, which provided an edge to his smaller but fast-moving and capable forces.
- He died a year after the Battle of Saraighat from a long-festering illness.



**Mentorship**  
India

**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):**

1. FTAs aim to eliminate all trade barriers, including tariffs and quotas, between participating countries.
2. The primary objective of FTAs is to restrict international trade and protect domestic industries.
3. FTAs can lead to increased economic integration and cooperation among participating nations.

**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 Cultural Property Agreement:**

1. These are international agreements that aim to protect and preserve a country's cultural heritage.
2. These agreements typically involve restrictions on the export and import of cultural artifacts to prevent illegal trafficking.
3. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) oversees its implementation

**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 regarding the South China Sea:**

1. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 declared that China's claims in the South China Sea had no legal basis.
2. it is a region through which more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce passes.

**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 statements regarding Ayushman Bharat-Health:**

1. Ayushman Bharat-Health is a healthcare initiative launched by the Indian government.
2. it includes the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which aims to provide health insurance coverage to vulnerable populations.

**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

**Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to All-India Judicial Service**

1. It is a reform push to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states.
2. It was first proposed by the Supreme Court in All India Judges' Association v. The Union of India.

**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

**Q6. Consider the following statements with reference to Amplifi 2.0 Portal**

1. It aims to provide data on Indian cities which helps in data-driven policy making.
2. It offers diverse information for various cities, covering aspects such as diesel consumption, water quality testing, road accident fatalities etc..
3. It is launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

**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 the National Biofuel Coordination Committee (NBCC):**

1. NBCC is chaired by the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. It primarily focuses on policy formulation related to biofuels in India.
3. It plays a role in implementing and monitoring India's biofuels program.

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

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

**Q8. With reference to National Investigation Agency (NIA), consider the following statements**

1. It is the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India.
2. It was established in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in November 2008.
3. Its jurisdiction extends to the whole of India but doesn't apply to Indian citizens outside the country.

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

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

**Q9. With reference to Special Category Status, consider the following statements**

1. It is a classification by the Centre to aid the development of states facing geographical or socio-economic disadvantages.
2. SCS states enjoy a more favourable Centre-State funding ratio (90:10) for centrally sponsored schemes and several other incentives like tax concessions.
3. It was introduced on the recommendation of the fourteenth Finance Commission (FC).

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

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

**Q10. Consider the following statements on Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs)**

1. DAOs are computer-programmed organisations on blockchain networks, fostering self-sustaining, community-driven entities.
2. They enable borderless cooperation with a decentralised decision-making process.

**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

**Ans. 1 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- The primary goal of Free Trade Agreements is to promote liberalized trade by reducing or eliminating barriers to trade, such as tariffs, quotas, and other restrictions, among participating nations. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The primary objective of FTAs is exactly the opposite. FTAs are designed to promote international trade by fostering cooperation and reducing barriers, leading to increased economic opportunities and efficiency. **Hence, statement 2 is INcorrect.**
- FTAs are not only about reducing trade barriers but also about fostering economic integration and cooperation among participating countries. They encourage collaboration in various economic aspects, leading to a more interconnected and mutually beneficial trade environment. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**Ans. 2 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- Cultural Property Agreements are indeed international agreements designed to safeguard and preserve a nation's cultural heritage, preventing the illegal removal and trafficking of cultural artifacts. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Cultural Property Agreements often include provisions that impose restrictions on the export and import of cultural artifacts to combat the illegal trafficking of such items across borders. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The oversight of Cultural Property Agreements does not fall under the purview of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Instead, these agreements are typically managed and implemented by cultural and heritage organizations at the national and international levels. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect.**

**Ans. 3 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that China's extensive claims in the South China Sea had no legal basis, rejecting its historical rights over the region.
- The South China Sea is a crucial waterway through which a significant portion of global trade, exceeding \$3 trillion annually, is transported by ships.

**Ans. 4 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- Ayushman Bharat-Health is a significant healthcare initiative launched by the Indian government to address the healthcare needs of the population. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Ayushman Bharat-Health includes the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which is a health insurance scheme aiming to provide coverage to vulnerable and economically weaker sections of society. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**Ans. 5 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- The President of India, emphasized the need for an All-India Judicial Service to enhance diversity in the judiciary.
- All-India Judicial Service is a reform push to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It was first proposed by the 14th report of the Law Commission in 1958. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- In 1992, the Supreme Court in All India Judges' Association v. The Union of India directed the Centre to set up an AIJS.
- In a 1993 review of the judgement, however, the court left the Centre at liberty to take the initiative on the issue.
- In 2017, the SC took suo motu cognizance of the issue of appointment of district judges, and mooted a Central Selection Mechanism.

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

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Amplifi 2.0 Portal. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Objective: To provide a centralized platform for raw data from Indian cities.
- The goal is to facilitate data-driven policy-making by making urban data accessible to academics, researchers, and stakeholders. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Currently, 225 urban local bodies (ULBs) have joined the platform, with data available for 150 cities.
- It offers diverse information for various cities, covering aspects such as diesel consumption, water quality testing, healthcare expenditure, slum population, and road accident fatalities. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

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

- The NBCC is chaired by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, not the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- While the NBCC may contribute to discussions and recommendations related to biofuel policies, its primary focus is on coordination, implementation, and monitoring of the biofuels program, not policy formulation. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The NBCC is an inter-ministerial committee that coordinates the implementation of India's biofuels program. It oversees the progress, assesses impact, and monitors various biofuel-related initiatives. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

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

- The NIA is the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India mandated to investigate all the offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- It was constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008.
- It was established in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in November 2008. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The law under which the agency operates extends to the whole of India and also applies to Indian citizens outside the country. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
  - Persons in the service of the government wherever they are posted.
  - Persons on ships and aircraft registered in India wherever they may be.
  - Persons who commit a scheduled offence beyond India against the Indian citizen or affecting the interest of India.
- The schedule to the Act specifies a list of offences which are to be investigated and prosecuted by the NIA.
- The Central Government for the trial of Scheduled Offences constitutes one or more Special Courts under Section 11 and 22 of the NIA Act 2008.
- The agency is empowered to deal with the investigation of terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states under written proclamation from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

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

- Special Category Status (SCS) is a classification by the Centre to aid the development of states facing geographical or socio-economic disadvantages. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It was introduced in 1969 on the recommendation of the fifth Finance Commission (FC). **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- It considers five factors such as
  - hilly and difficult terrain
  - low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population
  - strategic location along international borders
  - economic and infrastructural backwardness
  - non-viable nature of state finances
- In 1969, three States viz. Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland were granted the SCS.

- Subsequently, eight more States including Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand were given the SCS by the erstwhile National Development Council.
- SCS states enjoy a more favourable Centre-State funding ratio (90:10) for centrally sponsored schemes
- There are several other incentives in the form of concession in customs and excise duties, income tax rates and corporate tax rates to attract investments to set up new industries etc. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**Ans. 10 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- DAOs are computer-programmed organisations on blockchain networks, fostering self-

sustaining, community-driven entities. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- Operating without centralised control, DAOs are governed by smart contracts and member consensus, offering transparency, democracy, and self-execution.
- Smart contracts automatically execute predefined rules, eliminating the need for intermediaries and ensuring trust through code.
- They enable borderless cooperation with a decentralised decision-making process, reducing the influence of any single entity. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- This paradigm shift impacts various industries, including finance, art, and governance.
- They challenge traditional structures and redefine trust and collaboration in the digital realm.



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+91 9999 057869  
www.mentorshipindia.com

A-92, Third Floor, Hari Nagar  
Delhi - 110064

 @mentorship.india