

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

1. Why Centre won't 'protect' these 18 'lost' monuments -The Hindu
2. SC raises concern over the rich gagging media -The Hindu
3. NAAC'S accreditation system needs change to be creditable- Indian express
4. Employment scenario in India grim, says ILO report -The Hindu
5. Sensing China threat, India joins Sri Lanka in race for seabed mining; applies for exploration rights -The Hindu
6. ISRO to hold training sessions in educational institutions -The Hindu
7. How smart is the Centre's smart meter plan and why Kerala's move to opt out underscores some of the scheme's inadequacies- Indian express
8. ICC: Integrated farm data dashboard for customised solutions-Indian express

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. It is time for comprehensive reforms to municipal elections -The Hindu
10. The need to curb black carbon emissions -The Hindu

Quick Look

1. Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)
2. Magnetotactic bacteria
3. Meme coins
4. Border Roads Organisation
5. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

Important News Articles

GS I

1. Why Centre won't 'protect' these 18 'lost' monuments -The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- ASI
- AMASR Act

News:

- ASI has decided to **delist 18 protected monuments**
- ASI says the monuments have ceased to be of 'national importance'
- The 18 'lost' monuments include nine in Uttar Pradesh

The AMASR Act

- **Passed in 1958 and updated in 2010**, the AMASR Act is like a shield guarding India's most valuable historical sites and monuments.
- It allows the government to officially declare these places as being of "national importance."
- **Uttar Pradesh currently boasts the highest** number of these protected sites.
- After considering public input, the government can officially declare a monument worthy of this status through a public announcement.
- Once designated, the responsibility for care and upkeep falls to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under the Ministry of Culture.
- They act as the guardians of these historical treasures.

Safeguarding the monuments

- To safeguard these monuments, the AMASR Act creates special zones around them.
- A 100-meter radius surrounding the monument becomes a "prohibited area" where construction is entirely banned.
- Beyond that, an additional **100-meter zone is designated as a "regulated area"** with stricter building guidelines.
- If a monument is deemed to have lost its national significance, the ASI has the authority to remove it from the protected list.
- However, this also means the ASI is no longer responsible for its upkeep.

GS II

2. SC raises concern over the rich gagging media -The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- An interim injunction
- SLAPP

News:

- The Supreme Court has highlighted the problem of the **affluent getting pre-trial injunctions from courts against the media and civil society**, gagging free speech and the public's right to information about important affairs.

Key highlights

- "The constitutional mandate of protecting journalistic expression cannot be understated, and courts must tread cautiously while granting pre-trial interim injunctions," the top court said.
- The Bench drew the spotlight on the **phenomenon of 'SLAPP suits' or 'Strategic Litigation against Public Participation'** gaining attention across jurisdictions.
- It is an umbrella term used to **refer to litigation predominantly initiated by entities that wield immense economic power against members of the media or civil society**
 - to prevent the public from knowing about or participating in important affairs in the public interest," the court noted.
- With ex-parte injunction preventing a media outlet from publishing the article or material anytime soon or even in the distant future

- a case — which could include expensive allegations of libel by the cash-rich entity against the media or civil society — tends to drag on.
- It said courts should grant pre-trial injunctions only in exceptional cases.
- The importance of leaving free speech unfettered is a strong reason for dealing most cautiously and warily with the granting of interim injunctions, the court underscored.

An interim injunction

- It is provisional measure sought during legal proceedings, before trial.
- An injunction is an order of the court that requires a party either to do a specific act, or to refrain from doing a specific act.
- Interim injunctions are intended to prevent injustice pending trial.

GS III

3. NAAC'S accreditation system needs change to be creditable- Indian express

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

News:

- The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), in its executive council meeting on, decided to introduce a binary categorisation of “accredited” or “not accredited” for higher educational institutions

NAAC: Ensuring Quality in Indian Higher Education

- Established in 1994, the NAAC is an independent body under the Ministry of Education that acts as a quality check for colleges and universities in India.
- Like a reviewer for restaurants, the NAAC evaluates and rates these institutions based on seven key areas, including curriculum, teaching methods, research output, and student support.
- Institutions that meet NAAC's standards receive accreditation, valid for five years, which signifies their commitment to quality education.
- Ratings range from A++ (highest) to C, with D indicating the institution is not accredited.
- Universities and colleges that have been around for at least six years or have graduated two batches of students can apply for NAAC's evaluation process, which is currently voluntary.
- NAAC operates under a General Council and an Executive Committee, both packed with experts from India's higher education system.
- This ensures fair and informed decisions when evaluating institutions.

Prelims Takeaway

- NAAC
- UGC

4. Employment scenario in India grim, says ILO report -The Hindu

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

News:

- Recently, The India Employment Report 2024 was released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD).
- The share of those with secondary or higher education among the unemployed youth in India has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022,

Key Highlights

- The report says that youngsters account for almost 83% of the country's unemployed workforce.
- Employment and underemployment of the youth increased between 2000 and 2019 but declined during the pandemic years, the study, released by Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran, said
- The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Unemployment Rate (UR) showed a long-term deterioration between 2000 and 2018,
 - but witnessed an improvement after 2019, the study said.

The paradoxes

Prelims Takeaway

- LFPR
- Unemployment rate

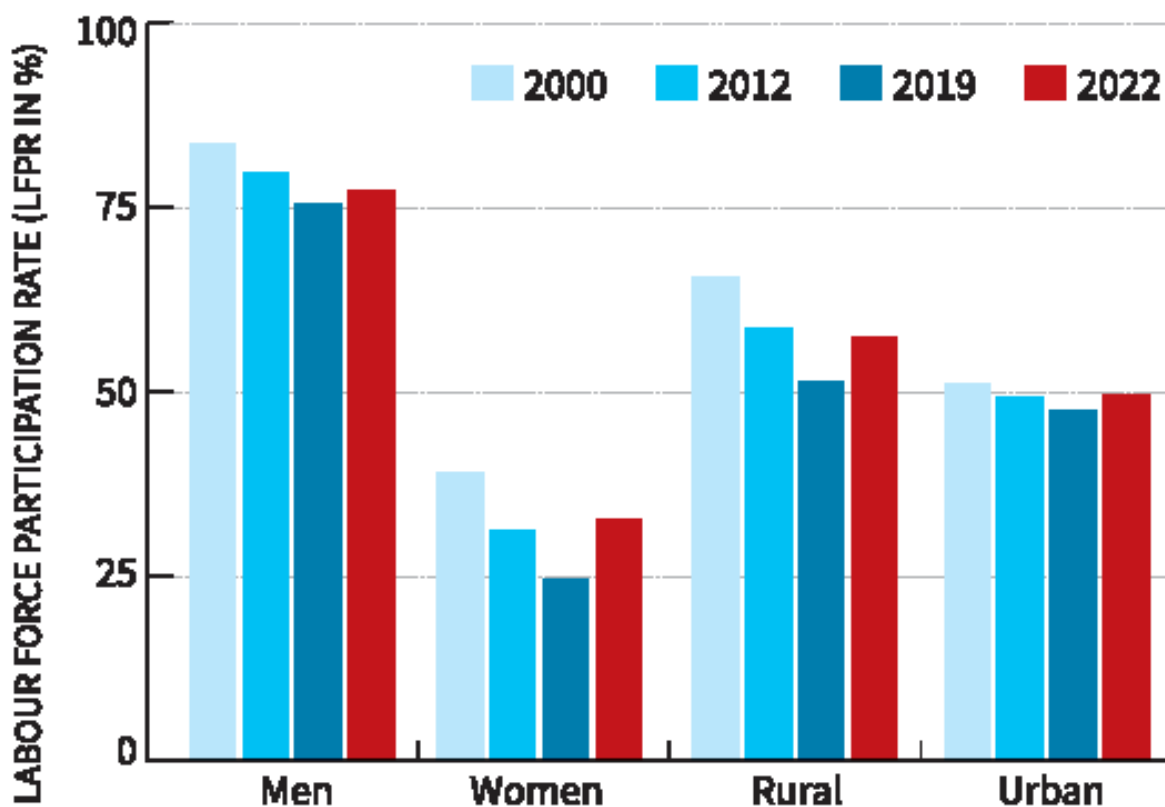
- non-farm employment grew at a higher rate than farm employment over the different periods prior to 2018
- Labour from agriculture was mainly absorbed by the construction and services sectors.
- Also, almost 90% of workers remain engaged in informal work, while the share of regular work, which steadily increased after 2000, declined after 2018.
- There are widespread livelihood insecurities, the report added, with only a small percentage being covered with social protection measures, precisely in the non-agriculture, organised sector.
- While India's large young workforce is a demographic dividend, the report noted that they don't appear to have the skills to deliver
 - With 75% of youth unable to send emails with attachments, 60% unable to copy and paste files, and 90% unable to put a mathematical formula into a spreadsheet.
- The country is also facing the challenge of a substantial gender gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation.

Social inequalities

- Despite affirmative action and targeted policies, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes still lag in terms of access to better jobs.
- "Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have greater participation in work due to economic necessity but engaged more in low-paid temporary casual wage work and informal employment
- Despite improvement in educational attainment among all groups, the hierarchy within social groups persists," the report added.

Employment blues

Labour participation for various sections increased slightly in 2022 (compared to 2019) but was still low vis-a-vis 2000



5. Sensing China threat, India joins Sri Lanka in race for seabed mining; applies for exploration rights -The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Sea bed
- EEZ

News:

- Earlier this month, **India applied to the International Seabed Authority (ISBA)**, Jamaica, for rights to explore two vast tracts in the Indian Ocean seabed that aren't part of its jurisdiction.
- The application to explore one of these regions, a **cobalt-rich crust long known as the Afanasy Nikitin Seamount (AN Seamount)**, is a gambit by India.

Key Highlights

- Rights to the region have already been claimed by Sri Lanka under a separate set of laws
 - But India's application is part-motivated by reports of Chinese vessels undertaking reconnaissance in the same region
- The AN Seamount is a structural feature in the Central Indian Basin, located about 3,000 km off India's coast.
- For any actual extraction to happen, interested explorers — in this case, countries — must apply first for an exploration licence to the ISBA
 - An autonomous international organisation established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Open ocean

- These rights are specific to areas that are part of the open ocean, meaning ocean — whose air, surface and sea-bed — where no countries can claim sovereignty.
- Around 60% of the world's seas are open ocean and though believed to be rich in a variety of mineral wealth, the costs and challenges of extraction are prohibitive.
 - Currently, no country has commercially extracted resources from open oceans.
- However, another UNCLOS-linked body, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, may impede India's exploration ambitions.
- Countries have exclusive rights up to 200 nautical miles, and its underlying sea-bed from their borders.
- Normally, claims to the continental shelf do not extend beyond 350 nautical miles from their coast.
- "However, there is a provision under which countries along the Bay of Bengal can apply a different set of criteria to make claims on the extent of their continental shelf.
- Using this, Sri Lanka has claimed up to 500 nautical miles.

6. ISRO to hold training sessions in educational institutions -The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- ISRO
- START programm

News:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) will conduct the **Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START) 2024** programme during April and May.

Key Highlights

- In this connection, ISRO solicits Expression of Interest (EoI) to host START-2024 **in educational institutes, universities, colleges within India**
 - who are offering UG and PG courses in physical sciences and technology.
- The main objective of the training programme is **to attract the youngsters to the fields of space science and technology.**
- The training modules will comprise introductory level topics on various verticals of space science and technology.

- In addition to these, there will be sessions on Indian space exploration programmes and research opportunities.

Eligibility:

- Post-graduate students and final year undergraduate students of physical sciences (physics and chemistry) and technology -studying in educational institutes, universities and colleges within India

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- It is the space agency of India, responsible for the planning and execution of space-related activities in the country.
- ISRO is one of the most prominent and successful space agencies in the world, known for its cost-effective and efficient space missions.
- ISRO operates under the Department of Space, which reports directly to the Prime Minister of India.
- The department primarily executes the Indian Space Programme through various ISRO Centres

7. How smart is the Centre's smart meter plan and why Kerala's move to opt out underscores some of the scheme's inadequacies- Indian express

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

News:

- **Kerala's move towards an alternate model** for the rollout of smart electricity meters, effectively jettisoning the Centre's Rs 3 lakh crore smart meters project
- It comes as a spanner in the works for the Union Government scheme that aims to **replace 250 million conventional meters** with smart meters across all households by March 2025

Smart Meters: A Power Upgrade for India

- a meter that not only tracks your electricity use but also keeps an eye on voltage levels and sends updates to the power company.
- The Indian government is pushing a big initiative to replace traditional meters with these high-tech devices.
- This "**Smart Meter National Programme**" (SMNP) aims to install 250 million smart meters across the country.

The benefit

- For consumers, smart meters offer a window into their electricity usage, allowing them to track consumption and potentially save money by adjusting their habits.
- For power companies, smart meters are a game-changer.
- They can improve billing accuracy, reduce meter reading costs, and even help manage overall power demand.
- Plus, these meters connect to a central system, helping to cut down on losses and boost revenue for power companies.
- Overall, the smart meter rollout is a step towards a more efficient and reliable power sector in India.

Prelims Takeaway

- Smart Meter National Programme
- Electricity grid

8. ICCC: Integrated farm data dashboard for customised solutions-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.

News:

- Earlier this month, Agriculture Minister inaugurated a **Krishi Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) set up at Krishi Bhavan** in New Delhi
- Officials described the ICCC as a "significant leap forward" in **leveraging technology for the advancement of agricultural practices.**

The Krishi ICCC**Prelims Takeaway**

- AI
- The Krishi ICCC

- It is a digital hub that uses advanced technology to empower farmers.
- It acts like a central nervous system for agriculture, bringing together a wealth of information from various sources like weather stations, land records, and past crop data.
- **Using artificial intelligence**, the Krishi ICCC analyzes this vast amount of detail to provide farmers with personalized advice in their local language.
- Imagine a giant dashboard displaying real-time information about crop yields, rainfall patterns, and even potential droughts.
- This is exactly what the Krishi ICCC offers, **giving farmers a comprehensive view of the agricultural landscape**.
- By bringing all this information under one roof, the Krishi ICCC aims to revolutionize farming by enabling better decision-making and ultimately improving agricultural outcomes.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. It is time for comprehensive reforms to municipal elections -The Hindu

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

News:

- The **Supreme Court judgment on the Chandigarh mayoral election** gives us a good occasion to think more broadly about elections to municipalities.

| Key Highlights | Suresh Mahajan v. State of Madhya Pradesh |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies are impressive democratic exercises in terms of timeliness of elections the manner in which they are convened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ And the clockwork nature in which power is transferred from one government to another. • The first issue with respect to municipal elections is that they are not being held on time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This is in violation of the Constitution. • As per Janaagraha's Annual Survey of India's City-Systems 2023 study, over 1,400 municipalities did not have elected councils in place, as of September 2021 • The CAG's audit reports of 17 States on the implementation of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act (74th CAA) observes that over 1,500 municipalities did not have elected councils in place during the audit period of 2015-2021 across States • Among larger cities, the Greater Chennai Corporation had elections in 2022 after a gap of nearly six years • the Municipal Corporation of Delhi had elections after a delay of seven months • Second, where elections to urban local governments were held, in certain cases, councils were not constituted, and elections of mayors, deputy mayors and standing committees were delayed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first challenge of holding timely elections requires determined enforcement with the Supreme Court's intervention. • Article 243U of the 74th CAA stipulates that the duration of urban local governments is five years and that an election to constitute an urban local government should be completed "before the expiry of its duration" • Further, in case of dissolution of the elected council by the State, the election should be held before the expiration of a period of six months from the date of its dissolution. • Despite the Supreme Court stating in Suresh Mahajan v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2022) that this constitutional mandate is inviolable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ State governments do not hold timely elections to urban local governments. • It appears to be an area that deserves greater policy attention in at least the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ discretion of government officials in scheduling elections on time ◦ possibility of the State government exercising undue influence on officials to delay elections ◦ discretion of officials in identifying the presiding officer ◦ possibility of conflict of interest as the presiding officer may not be independent; and the manual ballot paper-based process. • In India, 17% of cities including five of the eight largest ones have mayoral terms less than five years. • We need a standardisation of mayoral terms of five years. • To deal with these challenges, State Election Commissions (SECs) need to play a far more significant role. • Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution state that the superintendence, direction, and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to panchayats and urban local governments shall be vested in SECs. • The Court has emphasised that in the domain of elections to panchayats and urban local governments under Part IX and Part IXA of the Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SECs enjoy the same status as the Election Commission of India. |

Conclusion

- Perhaps it is time to also evaluate a potential role for the SECs in the elections of mayors, deputy mayors and standing committees, given what happened in Chandigarh.

10. The need to curb black carbon emissions -The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

News:

- At the COP26 climate talks in Glasgow in November 2021, India pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, positioning itself as a frontrunner in the race to carbon neutrality.
- According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India had installed a renewable energy capacity of over 180 GW by 2023 and is expected to meet its target of 500 GW by 2030.
- While carbon dioxide mitigation strategies will yield benefits in the long term, they need to go hand-in-hand with efforts that provide short-term relief.

Why is black carbon relevant?

- Black carbon is the dark, sooty material emitted alongside other pollutants when biomass and fossil fuels are not fully combusted.
- It contributes to global warming and poses severe risks.
- Studies have found a direct link between exposure to black carbon and a higher risk of heart disease, birth complications, and premature death.
- According to a 2016 study, the residential sector contributes 47% of India's total black carbon emissions.
- Industries contribute a further 22%, diesel vehicles 17%, open burning 12%, and other sources 2%.
- Decarbonisation efforts in the industry and transport sectors in the past decade have yielded reductions in black carbon emissions, but the residential sector remains a challenge.

Has PMUY helped?

- In May 2016, the Government of India said the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) would provide free liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections to households below the poverty line.
- The primary objective was to make clean cooking fuel available to rural and poor households and reduce their dependence on traditional cooking fuels.
- The PMUY has established infrastructure to go with LPG connections, including free gas stoves, deposits for LPG cylinders, and a distribution network.
- The programme has thus, been able to play a vital role in reducing black carbon emissions, as it offers a cleaner alternative to traditional fuel consumption.
- However, in 2022-2023, 25% of all PMUY beneficiaries — 2.69 crore people — availed either zero LPG refill or only one LPG refill, according to RTI data, meaning they still relied entirely on traditional biomass for cooking.

What is the government's role?

- The key to enhancing the quality of life in these areas lies primarily in securing access to clean cooking fuels.
- While the future holds the promise of meeting energy needs in rural areas through renewable sources, the immediate benefits for rural communities are poised to come from using LPG.
- Another big hurdle to the PMUY's success is the lack of last-mile connectivity in the LPG distribution network, resulting in remote rural areas depending mostly on biomass.
- One potential solution to this issue is the local production of coal-bed methane (CBM) gas by composting biomass.
- CBM is a much cleaner fuel with lower black-carbon emissions and investment.
- Panchayats can take the initiative to produce CBM gas locally at the village level, ensuring every rural household can access clean cooking fuel.

Conclusion

- As India navigates its responsibilities on the global stage towards long-term decarbonisation, there is an urgent need to act.
- Recent estimates have indicated that mitigating residential emissions will avoid more than 6.1 lakh deaths per year from indoor exposure to air pollution.

Quick Look

1. Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)

- It is a law enacted by the Parliament in 1958 which gives the armed forces special powers and immunity to maintain public order in “disturbed areas”.
- It can be applied only after an area has been declared “disturbed” under section 2 of the Act.
- An area can be considered to be disturbed due to differences or disputes among different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory, can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.
- It can be invoked in places where “the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary”.

2. Magnetotactic bacteria

- These are mostly prokaryotic organisms that arrange themselves along the earth’s magnetic field.
- These organisms were believed to follow the magnetic field to reach places that had optimal oxygen concentration.
- These bacteria contained “novel structured particles, rich in iron” in small sacs that essentially worked as a compass.
- These magnetotactic bacteria create tiny crystals made of the iron-rich minerals magnetite or greigite.

3. Meme coins

- These are a unique category of cryptocurrencies, have gained significant popularity in the digital currency space.
- These trace their origin to the growth of meme culture on the internet.
- These are also known as ‘memetic tokens’ or ‘community coins’, meme coins are digital currencies created as a form of satire or humorous tribute to the internet culture.
- They often feature names, logos and branding that reference popular memes, jokes or internet phenomena.

4. Border Roads Organisation

- It is a road construction executive force in India that provides support to Indian Armed Forces.
- It was formed in 1960 to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas of the north and north-east states of the country.
- In order to ensure coordination and expeditious execution of projects, the Government of India set up the Border Roads Development Board (BRDB) with the Prime Minister as Chairman of the Board and Defence Minister as Deputy Chairman.
- It develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and friendly neighboring countries.
- This includes infrastructure operations in 19 States and three Union Territories (including Andaman and Nicobar Islands) and neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka.

5. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- It was established in the year 1861 by Alexander Cunningham.
- After independence, it was established as a statutory body under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).
- ASI is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural monuments in the country.
- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It comes under the Ministry of Culture.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements

Statement I: Under the act state government has authority to declare or cease a monument as a national importance monument

Statement II: A 100-meter radius surrounding the monument becomes a "prohibited area" where construction is entirely banned.

Which one of the following statements is correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements about Ex-parte Injunction:

1. It is a court order that is issued without hearing from the other party involved in the case. It is also known as a temporary restraining order.
2. Injunctions are a constitutional remedy and the court will consider various factors before deciding whether to grant
3. This type of injunction is only granted in emergency situations where there is a risk of irreparable harm if immediate action is not taken.

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

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

Q3. Consider the following statements about NAAC?

Statement I: It's an autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC), that assesses and certifies secondary and tertiary Education Institution's (HEIs) with gradings as part of accreditation.

Statement II: Only higher education institutions that are at least six years old, or from where at least two batches of students have graduated, can apply.

Which one of the following statements is correct?

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

Q4. Consider the following statements about The India Employment Report 2024

1. Unemployed youth with higher education has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022
2. The country is also facing the challenge of a substantial gender and skill gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation.
3. There are widespread livelihood insecurities, the report added, with only a small percentage being covered with social protection measures, precisely in the non-agriculture, organised sector.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about the International Seabed Authority (ISA):

1. It was established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
2. Its primary function is to regulate the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in international waters.
3. India is not a member of the ISA.

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

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

Q6. Consider the following statements about the Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START) 2024 programme:

1. The programme is designed to train the next generation of astronauts.
2. It is a joint initiative of ISRO and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
3. The programme covers various domains of Space Science, including Astronomy and Astrophysics.

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 about Smart Meters:

1. Smart meters only measure electricity consumption and do not provide information on voltage levels.
2. Unlike traditional meters, smart meters transmit consumption data to utility companies hourly.
3. The rollout of smart meters in India is being funded entirely by the state governments.

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

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

Q8. Consider the following statements about the Krishi Integrated Command and Control Centre (KICCC):

1. It is a mobile application designed to provide farmers with personalized agricultural advisories.
2. The KICCC is housed under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW).

3. Real-time data on weather, crop yields, and market prices are displayed on large screens at the KICCC.

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

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

Q9. Consider the following statements about the 74th Constitution Amendment Act:

1. It grants constitutional status to Panchayats (village level institutions) but not to Municipalities (urban local bodies).
2. The Act mandates reservation of one-third of all seats in urban local bodies for women.
3. The 74th Amendment Act does not apply to Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas.

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

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

Q10. Consider the following statements about Black Carbon:

1. Black Carbon is the strongest absorber of sunlight, contributing significantly to global warming.
2. Black carbon particles remain suspended in the air for extended periods, impacting air quality.
3. Project Surya is a national initiative aimed at reducing black carbon emissions in India.

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

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

Prelims Track Answer**Answer 1 Option B is correct****Explanation**

- AMASR Act says that "If the Central Government is of opinion that any ancient and historical monument or archaeological site and remains declared to be of national importance...has ceased to be of national importance, **Hence statement 1 is incorrect**
- A 100-meter radius surrounding the monument becomes a "prohibited area" where construction is entirely banned.
- Beyond that, an additional 100-meter zone is designated as a "regulated area" with stricter building guidelines. **Hence statement 2 is correct**

Answer 2 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- Ex-parte Injunction:
- It is a court order that is issued without hearing from the other party involved in the case. It is also known as a temporary restraining order.
- This type of injunction is only granted in emergency situations where there is a risk of irreparable harm if immediate action is not taken.
- injunctions are a discretionary remedy and the court will consider various factors before deciding whether to grant an injunction. **Hence statement 2 is incorrect**
- In India, an injunction is a legal remedy available to parties who wish to prevent the other party from carrying out a certain action or behavior.
- Injunctions can be granted in a variety of situations, such as in cases of intellectual property infringement, breach of contract, or defamation. **Hence statement 1 and 3 are correct**

Answer 3 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- It's an autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC), that assesses and certifies Higher Education Institution's (HEIs) with gradings as part of accreditation. **Hence statement 1 is incorrect**

- Through a multi-layered process, a higher education institution learns whether it meets the standards of quality set by the evaluator in terms of curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research, and other parameters.
- Only higher education institutions that are at least six years old, or from where at least two batches of students have graduated, can apply. **Hence statement 2 is correct**

Answer 4 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- The share of those with secondary or higher education among the unemployed youth in India has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022,
- Labour from agriculture was mainly absorbed by the construction and services sectors.
- Also, almost 90% of workers remain engaged in informal work, while the share of regular work, which steadily increased after 2000, declined after 2018.
- There are widespread livelihood insecurities, the report added, with only a small percentage being covered with social protection measures, precisely in the non-agriculture, organised sector.
- While India's large young workforce is a demographic dividend, the report noted that they don't appear to have the skills to deliver — with 75% of youth unable to send emails with attachments, 60% unable to copy and paste files, and 90% unable to put a mathematical formula into a spreadsheet.
- The country is also facing the challenge of a substantial gender gap in the labour market, with low rates of female labour force participation. **HENCE ALL THE STATEMENTS are correct**

Answer 5 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The International Seabed Authority (ISA) was established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982. UNCLOS is an international treaty that sets out the legal framework for all matters relating to the seas and oceans.

- **Statement 2 is correct.** The ISA is the intergovernmental organization responsible for regulating the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, which is the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. This includes resources like polymetallic nodules, cobalt crusts, and sulfides.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** India is a member of the International Seabed Authority. In fact, India was the first country to receive the status of a "Pioneer Investor" in 1987, granting it exclusive rights to explore a specific area of the seabed in the Central Indian Ocean Basin for the development of polymetallic nodules.

Answer 6 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The START programme is not designed to train astronauts. ISRO has a separate selection and training process for astronauts.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The START programme is solely run by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is not a joint initiative with the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The START programme aims to provide introductory-level training in Space Science and Technology to a wider audience. This includes various domains like Astronomy, Astrophysics, Rocketry, Satellite Technology, and Space Applications.

Answer 7 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** Smart meters not only measure electricity consumption but also provide data on voltage levels. This information is crucial for utilities to monitor power quality and identify potential issues in the grid.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** Unlike traditional meters, which require manual reading, smart meters transmit electricity consumption data to utility companies at regular intervals, typically every 15 minutes or hourly. This allows for real-time monitoring and improved billing accuracy.

- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The rollout of smart meters in India is being overseen by the Smart Meter National Programme (SMNP) under the Ministry of Power. EESL, a joint venture of public sector enterprises, undertakes the installation with a "Build-Own-Operate-Transfer" (BOOT) model. This means EESL finances the upfront costs and recovers them through monetization of energy savings achieved by the program.

Answer 8 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Krishi Integrated Command and Control Centre (KICCC) is a physical center, not a mobile application. While it can provide farmers with advisories, it does so through various means, not just a mobile app.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The KICCC is indeed housed under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), which is responsible for formulating and implementing agricultural policies in India.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The KICCC features large display screens that showcase real-time data on various agricultural parameters. This includes weather patterns, crop yields across regions, and current market prices for agricultural commodities.

Answer 9 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The 74th Amendment Act of 1992, also known as the Panchayati Raj Act, provides a constitutional framework for the decentralization of power and authority to Panchayats at the village level. It does not directly address Municipalities, which are governed under different provisions.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** While promoting gender equality in local governance, the 74th Amendment Act mandates reservation of one-third of all seats (including those for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) for women in Panchayats, not Municipalities. Urban local bodies have their own reservation policies based on state legislation.

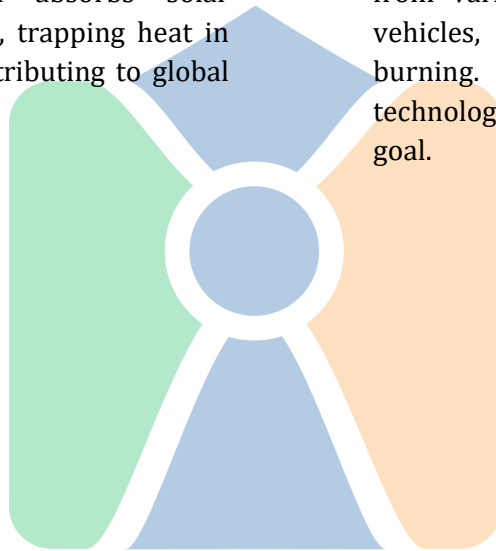
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The 74th Amendment Act does not automatically apply to Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas, which have special provisions under the Constitution. However, the Parliament can extend the Act to these areas with specific modifications.

Answer 10 Option C is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Black carbon is a major climate pollutant. It is a solid particle or aerosol formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biomass, and biofuels. Black carbon absorbs solar radiation very efficiently, trapping heat in the atmosphere and contributing to global warming.

- **Statement 2 is correct.** Black carbon particles are relatively short-lived compared to other greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. They typically stay airborne for several days to weeks. However, this short lifespan allows them to concentrate in the lower atmosphere, where they directly impact air quality and human health.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** Project Surya is a joint initiative of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched in 2018. It aims to reduce black carbon emissions from various sources in India, including vehicles, brick kilns, and crop residue burning. The project promotes cleaner technologies and practices to achieve this goal.



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+91 9999 057869
www.mentorshipindia.com

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

 @mentorship.india