

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



Date: 30 Nov.-1 Dec. 2023

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Important News Articles**GS II****1. India backs UN resolution against Israel for not leaving Syrian Golan -The Hindu**

Relevance: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate

News:

- India supports a UN General Assembly draft resolution expressing deep concern over **Israel's non-withdrawal from the Syrian Golan region, occupied since 1967.**
- The **resolution was introduced by Egypt under the agenda item** 'The situation in the Middle East.'

Prelims Takeaway

- Syrian Golan

Key Points

Voting Dynamics

- The 193-member UN General Assembly voted on the draft resolution, **with 91 in favour, eight against, and 62 abstentions.**
- **Countries in favour** included India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates.
- **Opposing votes** came from Australia, Canada, Israel, the UK, and the US.

Content of the Resolution

- **Expresses deep concern that Israel has not withdrawn** from the Syrian Golan, occupied since 1967, contrary to relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.
- Highlights **Israel's non-compliance with Security Council resolution** 497 (1981), declaring its decision to impose laws in the occupied Syrian Golan as null and void.
- Declares the Israeli decision of December 14, 1981, null and **void, urging Israel to rescind it.**
- **Emphasises the illegality of Israeli settlement** construction and activities in the Syrian Golan since 1967.
- **Demands Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan** to the June 4, 1967, line, considering it a stumbling block to achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

Concerns and Hopes

- Expresses grave concern over the **halted peace process on the Syrian track.**
- Hopes for the resumption of **peace talks from the point they had reached.**

2. Apex court allows six months' extension for Delhi Chief Secretary -The Hindu

Relevance: Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

News:

- The Supreme Court grants approval for the **Centre's plan to extend the tenure of Delhi Chief Secretary by six months**
- The Ministry of Home Affairs officially extends the **Chief Secretary's tenure following the court's nod.**

Prelims Takeaway

- All India Services (Death cum Retirement Benefit) Rules 1958,

Legal Basis and Constitutional Considerations

- A three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice, **reviews objections from the Delhi government against the extension.**
- The bench notes that the pending **Government of National Capital Territory (Amendment) Act, 2023**, is not stayed and expresses a "prima facie view" that the extension does not violate the law.
- The court underscores the **Chief Secretary's role in matters related to public order**, police, and land, which fall outside the legislative and executive powers of the Delhi government.

Constitutional Bench Judgement and Legislative Framework

- Referring to a 2023 constitutional bench judgement, the **court highlights the limited authority of the Delhi government** over certain executive functions.

- The 2023 legislation designates the Chief Secretary as appointed by the Central Government, **reinforcing the Centre's power**.
- **Rule 16 of the All-India Services (Death cum Retirement Benefit) Rules 1958**, allowing a six-month extension for Chief Secretaries, is cited.

Distinct Position of Delhi Chief Secretary

- The court emphasises **the distinct position of the Chief Secretary in Delhi**
 - performing functions both within and outside the executive and legislative competence of the Delhi government.
- It clarifies that **Rule 16, applicable to other Chief Secretaries**, does not strictly apply to the Chief Secretary of the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD).

Power to Appoint Chief Secretary

- The court upholds the **Centre's power to appoint the Chief Secretary of Delhi**, considering the Chief Secretary's functions over excluded subjects.
- The impracticality of dividing functions between **GNCTD and excluded subjects is acknowledged**.

3. Over 81 crore poor will get free grains for 5 more years - Indian Express

Relevance: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

News:

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** for five years, starting January.

Prelims Takeaway

- One Nation One Ration Card

Key Points

- Aimed at providing **free foodgrains to 81.35 crore people** under the National Food Security Act (NFSA)
 - the scheme will cost the government Rs 11.80 lakh in subsidies over the next five years.

Background and Significance

- **Launched in April 2020 in response to the Covid-19** outbreak, PMGKAY provided an additional 5 kg of free foodgrains on top of NFSA entitlement.
- **The scheme was merged with NFSA** in December last year, discontinuing the additional 5 kg provision.
- **The extended PMGKAY will run for five years from January 1, 2024**, providing free foodgrains to NFSA beneficiaries.
- **Estimated to cost Rs 11.80 lakh in subsidies**, the extension aims to strengthen food security and alleviate financial hardship for the poor.

Benefits and Nationwide Uniformity

- The scheme assures nationwide uniformity in **delivering free foodgrains to beneficiaries** across all States/UTs through a network of over 5 lakh Fair Price Shops.
- Aligns with the **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** initiative, allowing beneficiaries to lift free foodgrains from any fair price shop in the country.

Cost of Foodgrains and Monthly Savings

- **The economic cost of 35 kg rice for an Antyodaya family is Rs 1371**, and the cost of 35 kg wheat is Rs 946 under PMGKAY, entirely borne by the Government of India.

4. Govt. lists four J&K Bills, criminal law legislation - The Hindu

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

News:

- **The Union government has identified four crucial Bills related to Jammu & Kashmir** and three new criminal codes to be discussed in the winter session of Parliament

Prelims Takeaway

- Map Based question

Key Points**Bills Related to Jammu & Kashmir**

- **Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023**-Introduced in Lok Sabha on July 26.
- Details regarding amendments and discussion are not specified.
- **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023**:- Proposes to nominate two members from the "Kashmiri migrants" community as Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- It addresses representation for "Kashmiri migrants" and those displaced from "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir."
- **Objective:**
- It aims to ensure **representation for displaced individuals** from "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir."

5. Conspiracy under PMLA stands only if listed crime involved' -The Hindu

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

News:

- The Supreme Court clarified that a **person will be booked for criminal conspiracy** under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)
 - only if the intrigue was hatched to commit a crime specifically listed in the Schedule of the Act.

Prelims Takeaway

- Directorate of Enforcement

Key Points

- **The offence punishable under Section 120B** (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code will become a scheduled offence
 - only if the conspiracy alleged is of committing an offence which is specifically included in the Schedule
- The **court rejected** an argument made by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) that **Section 120B of the IPC** was included in Part A of the PMLA Schedule of Offences.
- So, even if the allegation was of making a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence which was not a part of the Schedule, **the offence would become a scheduled offence.**
- **Conspiracy to commit any offence under any penal law which is capable of generating proceeds**, can be converted into a scheduled offence
 - by applying Section 120B of the IPC, though the offence is not a part of the Schedule.
- The offence under **Section 120B of IPC included in Part A of the Schedule** will become a scheduled offence
 - only if the criminal conspiracy is to commit any offence already included in Parts A, B or C of the Schedule,

6. Cabinet approves Rs 24,000-crore scheme for vulnerable tribal groups - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Union Cabinet recently approved **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)**.
- The Finance Minister first mentioned the mission in the **Budget speech of 2023-24**.
- Announced by the Prime Minister on **tribal icon Birsa Munda's birth anniversary**.

Prelims Takeaway

- PM JANMAN
- PVTGs
- Birsa Munda

PM-JANMAN

- The extensive **Rs 24,104-crore tribal welfare scheme**, is one of the largest Central schemes and the **largest targeting the tribal community** in terms of outlay.
 - Centre's share: Rs 15,336 crore; state's share: Rs 8,768 crore.
- **Objective:** To provide several facilities to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
 - **Housing:** Provision for around 4.9 lakh pucca houses at Rs 2.39 lakh per house.
 - **Hostels:** 500 hostels at Rs 2.75 crore per unit.

- **Anganwadi Centres:** Establishment of 2,500 Anganwadi centres.
- **Connectivity:** Installation of mobile towers in 3,000 villages and 8,000 km of road connectivity.
- **Nine ministries will collaborate** for effective implementation.
- Rs 15,000 will be made available under the **Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes** to implement the mission over the next three years

Additional Interventions

- Ministry of Ayush to establish **wellness centres** in these areas.
- **Extension of Ayush facilities to PVTG habitations** through mobile medical units.
- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to **enable skill and vocational training in PVTG habitations.**

Target Population

- **75 tribal communities** in 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands categorized as PVTGs.
- **Backward** in social, economic, and education indicators.
- According to data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the 2011 Census, the **total PVTG population exceeds 40 lakh.**

Geographical Distribution of PVTGs

- **Odisha** has the **largest population of PVTGs** at 8.66 lakh.
- **Madhya Pradesh** follows with 6.09 lakh, and **Andhra Pradesh** (including Telangana at that time) at 5.39 lakh.

7. Govt. paves way for 16th finance panel-The Hindu/ Govt clears 16th FC terms, disaster management funds review on cards - Indian Express

Relevance: Polity

News:

- The Union Cabinet recently gave its **approval for the terms of reference (ToR)** for the **Sixteenth Finance Commission.**
- It will play a pivotal role in recommending the **revenue-sharing formula between the Centre and the States.**

Prelims Takeaway

- Finance Commission
- Terms of Reference (ToR)

Timeline and Deadline

- The recommendations of the Finance Commission are set to **cover a five-year period from April 1, 2026.**
- The panel is required to **submit its recommendations by October 31, 2025.**

The Formation

- An **Advance Cell in the Finance Ministry** was established in November 2022 for **preliminary work** before the formal constitution of the panel.
- A **Working Group**, led by the Finance Secretary and Secretary (Expenditure), was formed to **assist in formulating the ToRs.**
- Views and suggestions were sought from **State governments and Union Territories** through a consultative process.

Primary Recommendation

- The core focus is on the **distribution of net proceeds of taxes** between the Centre and States.
- **Allocation among States** of the respective share of such proceeds

Consolidated Fund Augmentation

- The panel will recommend **measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State.**
- This augmentation aims to **supplement resources for panchayats and local bodies** based on recommendations from State Finance Commissions.

Fresh formulation

The 16th Finance Commission will have time until Oct. 31 2025, to recommend the tax sharing math between Centre and States

■ Panel will also prescribe measures to augment Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement resources of panchayats, local bodies



■ An Advance Cell was set up in the Finance Ministry last November to oversee preliminary work

■ Panel may review existing arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives

Principles for Grants-in-Aid

- Recommend principles governing grants-in-aid of State revenues from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Determine sums to be paid to the States as grants-in-aid of their revenues.

Disaster Management Financing

- May review existing arrangements for financing Disaster Management initiatives.
- Make relevant recommendations for improvements.

GS III**8. Manipur's UNLF bids farewell to arms - Indian Express**

Relevance: Security challenges and their management in border areas – linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

News:

- In a historic development, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), a valley-based insurgent group from Manipur, has signed a Peace Agreement with the Government of India and the Government of Manipur.
- Union Home Minister announces the agreement, marking a significant milestone in conflict resolution.

Prelims Takeaway

- Meitei

Key Points**Background on UNLF**

- UNLF, formed in 1964, sought secession from India and is Manipur valley's oldest insurgent group.
- The group experienced splits over the years, leading to the emergence of the Pambei faction in 2021, which has been engaging in pro-talks.

Peace Agreement Details

- The agreement, primarily focused on Suspension of Operations (SoO), implies a cessation of hostilities between UNLF and security forces.
- Areas within the valley will be identified for UNLF camps, where cadres can stay with arms under Manipur government and armed forces supervision.
- Talks for a final peace accord will continue after implementing SoO arrangements.

Government's Perspective

- The Ministry of Home Affairs highlights that this marks the first instance of a valley-based insurgent group returning to mainstream by renouncing violence.
- A Peace Monitoring Committee will be formed to enforce agreed ground rules, not disclosed publicly.
- The development is seen as a crucial step toward restoring peace and normalcy in Manipur.

Concerns and Banned Status

- UNLF, categorized as a Meitei Extremist Organization, was among seven groups banned by the Union government.
- Ban extension in November cited their aim of Manipur's secession through armed struggle, engagement in activities prejudicial to India's sovereignty, and other illegal activities.

Ethnic Conflict and UNLF's Activities

- Amid the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur, UNLF's activities raised concerns, with estimates of 400-500 cadres and training recruits.
- Operating in valley areas and Kuki-Zomi hill districts, UNLF had camps in Myanmar but faced challenges with mounting attacks against Myanmar's military.

Tripartite Agreement and Recent Developments

- A 2008 tripartite Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement covered the Centre, Manipur, and Kuki-Zomi insurgent groups.
- The Manipur government withdrew from the agreement in March, citing the influence of insurgent groups on forest encroachers.

GS II

9. Navy gets ready for its biggest naval exercise amid ocean engagements - The Hindu

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

News

- **Exercise Milan** scheduled for **February 2024**.
- Over **50 countries** expected to **participate**, showcasing the Navy's expanded engagements.
- **Indian Navy** positioned as the **first responder** and Preferred Security Partner in the Indian Ocean Region (**IOR**).

Prelims Takeaway

- Combined Maritime Force
- IOR
- Exercise Milan

Naval Engagements and Multilateral Exercises

- **Presence** and **operational reach** enhanced through **Mission Based Deployments** and other engagements.
- **Conducts 17 multilateral** and **20 bilateral exercises** annually.
- Exercises crucial for honing operational capabilities, **fostering interoperability**, and enhancing **maritime security**.

Exercise Milan Background

- Biennial multilateral naval exercise **initiated** in **1995**.
- Grown to become **India's largest exercise**, with the last edition featuring over 40 participating countries.
- Reflects **India's commitment** to **strong defense ties** and a secure maritime environment.

Indian Navy's Role in Combined Maritime Force (CMF)

- **Joined** the **U.S.-led CMF based in Bahrain** since July 2022.
- Participates in CMF-led operations regularly.
- **India** announces its decision to become a **full member of the grouping**.

Navy Day Celebrations

- **Navy Day** on **December 4** to commemorate the **1971 India-Pakistan War's** daring attack on Karachi harbor under '**Operation Trident**.'
- **Celebrations** at Sindhudurg Fort, with 20 warships, 40 aircraft, and operational demonstrations.
- **First mega event** organized away from a major naval station.

Maritime Outreach and Capacity Building

- **Expanded assistance** in capacity building to regional countries.
- Offers platforms, regular **training**, and deploys **Mobile Training Teams (MTT)** for capacity development.
- MTT conducts **operational sea checks** and training for **friendly countries** in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Indian Navy has **trained** over **15,000 personnel** from **40 countries** in the IOR.

10. Governors acting as Chancellor not bound by advice of ministers, says Supreme Court - Indian Express

Relevance: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

News

- Supreme Court declares that Governors acting as University Chancellors are not bound by the aid and advice of the council of ministers.

Specific Case

- Quashes the reappointment of Gopinath Ravindran as Vice-Chancellor of Kannur University.

Judicial Interpretation

- Statute makes a clear-cut distinction between the Chancellor and the State Government.

- The Governor, as Chancellor, acts in a personal capacity, with no relation to duties as the state's Governor.

Abdication of Statutory Power

- Discusses whether Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan abdicated or surrendered statutory power under the Kannur University Act, 1996.
- Upholds the principle that if a statute expressly confers a statutory power on a body or authority, it must be exercised by that body alone.

Rule of Law and Statutory Duties

- Rule of law requires statutory powers to be exercised by the designated body or authority.
- Cannot rubber-stamp decisions from elsewhere or endorse actions without proper exercise of statutory duties.

Historical Precedent

- Refers to a 1981 judgment in *Hardwari Lal, Rohtak v. G.D. Tapase, Chandigarh*, stating the Governor, as ex officio Chancellor, is not bound to act under the advice of the council of ministers.

11. India's oil imports from Russia see a rebound -The Hindu

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

News:

- **India's oil imports from Russia** saw a significant **rebound** in November
- It is driven by the **resumption of operations in several plants post-maintenance** and increased fuel consumption during the Diwali festive season.

Prelims Takeaway

- United Nations Security Council

Key Data Points

- **Russian oil imports** witnessed a 9% and 5% **rise in November**, reaching 1.73 million barrels per day (bpd) and 1.68 million bpd, according to Kpler and Vortexa, respectively.

Background

- **India, the world's third-largest oil importer** and consumer, has strategically increased purchases of discounted Russian oil
 - It has faced resistance from some Western countries following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

Indo-Russia relation

- Russia has been vocal about **supporting India's seat at the United Nations Security Council**.
- Russia has shown interest in joining SAARC with observer status.
- **Trade between countries concentrated on various diversified segments** such as machinery, aerospace, Commercial shipping, chemicals, petroleum products, precious metals, and mineral products.
- **INDRA AND AVI-INDRA are joint military exercises** conducted by India and Russia.

GS III

12. Loss and Damage Fund cleared on Day One of COP-28 summit -The Hindu

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

News

- On the first day of **COP-28**, member countries **unanimously agreed** to operationalize a **Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund**.
- The Fund aims to **compensate countries** already experiencing the **impacts of climate change**.

Loss and Damage Fund

- The Fund will be **based at the World Bank** but managed by an **independent secretariat**.
- Received commitments worth nearly \$250 million from countries, but billions are still needed.
- **UAE and Germany** committed \$100 million each, the U.S. \$17 million, the U.K. \$50.6 million, and Japan \$10 million.
- The **European Union** committed \$145 million in addition to **Germany's contribution**.

Transition to Operationalization

- The Fund was announced at COP-27 in **Sharm El-Sheikh**, Egypt, last year.
- Five separate meetings through transitional committees were required to reach unanimous agreement on the Fund's operationalization.
- COP-28 President **Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber** passed the agreed-upon text.

Positive Start and Momentum

- Delegates view the agreement on the **first day** as a **positive start** and set a good **momentum** for future discussions.
- Nearly **160 countries'** representatives, including **heads of states**, confirmed attendance at the **World Climate Action Summit**.

Fund Hosting and Eligibility

- **World Bank** will be the **interim host** of the Fund for four years.
- All developing countries are **eligible to apply**, and every country is invited to **contribute voluntarily**.
- A **percentage** is set aside for **Least Developed Countries** and **Small Island Developing States**.

Loss and Damage Statistics

- **Loss and damage** from climate change **cost about \$1.5 trillion** in 2022, according to a University of Delaware study.
- **Developing countries** and some of the **poorest nations** lost an average of about **8.3% of GDP** due to climate change.

Concerns and Statements

- Some concerns about the **Fund's long-term sustainability** due to the **absence** of a defined **replenishment cycle**.
- **Environment Minister** thanked the **UN Presidency** for facilitating the **kick-starting** of the Fund and **highlighted India's contributions** during transitional committee meetings.

13. ₹2.23 lakh crore to buy 97 Tejas jets, 156 Prachand helicopters -The Hindu

Relevance: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

News

- Union government gives initial **approval** to **defence acquisition projects** valued at ₹2.23 lakh crore.
- Projects include the procurement of **97 Tejas light combat aircraft** and **156 Prachand combat helicopters**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Tejas
- HAL
- LCA
- DCA

Defence Acquisition Council's Decision

- The Defence Acquisition Council (**DAC**), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, grants **approval**.
- Occurs amid a prolonged military stand-off with China in eastern Ladakh.

Domestic Sourcing and Aatmanirbharta

- 98% of the total procurement to be sourced from domestic industries.
- Aims to boost self-reliance (atma nirbharta) in the Indian defence industry.

Specific Approvals and Upgrades

- **Su-30 Fighter Fleet Upgrade**
 - DAC approves the Indian Air Force's proposal to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.
- **Anti-Tank Munitions**
 - Initial approval for the procurement of area denial munition (ADM) Type-2 and -3.
- **Navy's Acquisition**
 - Clearance for acquisition and integration of ATT and DBC for T-90 tanks.
 - Approval for medium-range anti-ship missiles (MRAShM) for the Navy.

Light Combat Helicopter and Aircraft Procurement

- AoN for procurement of **Light Combat Helicopter** for Indian Air Force and Indian Army.
- AoN for **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-1A** for IAF from **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.
- Procurement includes 97 Tejas light combat aircraft (Mark 1A) and 156 **light combat helicopters (LCH)**.

Previous Tejas Deal

- In February 2021, the Defence Ministry sealed a **₹48,000-crore deal** with HAL for 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF.
- With the additional fleet, the **total** number of Tejas aircraft procured by the IAF will reach **180**.

14. Air quality in Delhi dives even as paddy harvesting season comes to an end -The Hindu

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

- Recently **Air pollution** in Delhi **surpassed WHO's permissible limit** by over 13 times.
- Despite recent improvement due to **rain** and **winds**, **air quality** worsened during the day.

Prelims Takeaway

- AQI
- Air Quality Readings

Minimal Contribution from Stubble Burning

- **Stubble burning's** contribution to pollution is minimal as the paddy harvesting season ends.
- The Commission for **Air Quality Management reports** a 27% and 37% reduction in farm fire incidents in Punjab and Haryana, respectively.

Reasons for Decline in Stubble Burning

- **District-specific action plans**, intensified **monitoring**, and machines for straw utilization contribute to the decline.
- The trend is expected to continue, but **economically viable alternatives** for farmers and industries are essential.

Overall Air Quality Trends

- Delhi's **daily average air quality** from **January to November** is the **best** in the **past six years**, except for the pandemic-affected year 2020.
- November, coinciding with **peak paddy harvesting** and **Diwali**, aggravates **air pollution** despite the **overall improvement**.

Concentration of Pollutants

- **PM2.5 concentration exceeded** WHO limits by over 13 times.
- Stubble burning's contribution to PM2.5 reduced to 2.1% from a peak of 35.4% earlier this month.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Status

- **AQI** slipped into the '**severe**' category from the 'very poor' category.
- Expected to **remain 'very poor' for the next two days**.
- 'Severe' category air affects both healthy individuals and those with existing diseases.

AQI Readings

- **Delhi's 24-hour average AQI increased** from 398 ('very poor') at 4 p.m. to 401 ('severe') by 10 p.m. on Thursday.
- AQI readings between 301-400 are 'very poor,' and 401-450 are 'severe.'

15. India set to launch X-ray Polarimeter Satellite, says ISRO -The Hindu

Relevance: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

News:

- India has **established space-based X-Ray astronomy** with a focus on imaging, time-domain studies, and spectroscopy, **XPoSat introduces a significant value addition**.

Prelims Takeaway

- X-Ray polarization

Key Points

- The mission aims to **explore a novel dimension in X-Ray astronomy**, generating excitement within the scientific community.

Orbit and Payloads

- **XPoSat will orbit in Low Earth Orbit** at approximately 650 km altitude with a low inclination of around six degrees.
- **Equipped with two scientific payloads**, the mission enables simultaneous studies of temporal, spectral, and polarization features of bright X-Ray sources.

Mission Objectives

- **Measurement of X-Ray polarization in the energy band of 8-30 keV** from X-Ray sources.
- **Long-term spectral and temporal studies of cosmic X-Ray sources** in the energy band of 0.8-15 keV.
- Anticipated mission life is around five years.

Observation during Eclipse:

- **The payloads will observe X-Ray sources during the spacecraft's transit** through the Earth's shadow, specifically during the eclipse period.

16. Core sector growth speeds to 12.1% -The Hindu

Relevance: Indian Economy

News

- Core sector growth increased to 12.1% in October, up from a revised 9.2% in September.
- All eight sectors experienced positive growth for the third time in 18 months.
- Base effects from October last year, when the Index of Core Industries grew only 0.7%, contributed to the uptick.

Prelims Takeaway

- IIP
- Core Sectors

Sequential Rise and Industrial Output

- Sequential rise of 2.84% in output from September 2023.
- Core sectors contribute over 40% to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- Improved headline growth bodes well for higher industrial output compared to September's 5.8%.

Sector-wise Performance

- 1. Electricity Generation (20.3%)
 - Led October's performance with a 20.3% rise.
- 2. Coal Output (18.4%)
 - Recorded an 18.4% increase.
- 3. Cement (17.1%)
 - Showed growth at 17.1%.
- 4. Steel (11%)
 - Achieved an 11% surge.
- 5. Natural Gas (9.9%)
 - Experienced a growth of 9.9%.
- 6. Fertilisers (5.3%)
 - Production grew at a five-month high pace.
- 7. Refinery Products (4.2%)
 - Rose by 4.2%, compared to a 3.1% contraction last October.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. How universities and industry can collaborate - The Hindu

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

Context:

- The Chairman of the University Grants Commission emphasizes the **need for collaborations between industry and academia** in Indian higher education institutions (HEIs).
- He highlights the untapped potential in **commercialising intellectual property (IP) and technology transfers** from academic research.

Challenges in Collaboration

1. Misaligned Goals

- HEIs focus on education and research, often creating theoretical knowledge.
- Industries pursue practical applications for profit.
- There is a need for shared goals through open dialogue and flexibility.

2. Cultural Differences

- HEI researchers seek academic rigour; industries prioritise practical outcomes.
- There is a need for a middle ground to bridge the cultural gap.

3. Communication Channels

- Lack of communication between HEIs and industry.
- Indian HEIs must establish good communication channels with the industry
- Training programmes could be implemented for mutual understanding of language and expectations.

4. Building Trust

- Indian HEIs and industries must focus on building trust.
- Both parties can work out a mutually agreeable IP arrangement to address concerns.
- Can sign non-disclosure agreements to protect sensitive information and define publication rights.

Types of Collaborations

1. Short-Term Collaborations

- Suitable for colleges or universities with minimal research facilities.
- Focus on resolving technical problems for local manufacturing companies.
- Provides tangible solutions benefiting both parties.

2. Long-Term Collaborations

- Ideal for universities with strong research facilities.
- Aims at developing cutting-edge technologies through extended partnerships.
- Offers students opportunities for internships, fostering practical skills.

Way Forward

- HEIs and industries should work on **developing a symbiotic relationship**.
- Industries in specific domains should be encouraged to **collaborate with research groups across universities**.
- Government funding agencies should **support research grants and joint project proposals**.
- There should also be **critical annual reviews by expert teams** for accountability in collaborations.

2. Understanding rat-hole mining - The Hindu

Relevance: Disaster and disaster management.

Context:

- The recent **rescue operation in the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand** brought attention to the **use of rat-hole mining**.
- This crude method had been **banned in 2014 by NGT** due to safety, environmental, and ethical concerns.

Rat-Hole Mining	Reasons for Ban
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It involves extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams using narrow pits dug into the ground. • These pits, resembling rat holes, are typically just large enough for a person to descend and extract coal. • Miners descend into these narrow pits using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach coal seams. • The coal is then manually extracted using primitive tools such as pickaxes, shovels, and baskets. • Rat-hole mining has two primary types namely side-cutting and box-cutting. ◦ In side-cutting, narrow tunnels are dug on hill slopes until the coal seam is found. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ In box-cutting, a rectangular opening is made, and a vertical pit is dug to reach the coal seam. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unregulated Mining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of government control in Meghalaya, where landowners own minerals. • The Coal Mines Nationalisation Act of 1973 does not apply. • Unregulated mining led to safety hazards and environmental degradation. • Acidic rivers, land degradation, and health issues prompted the ban. 2. Adverse Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asphyxiation because of poor ventilation, collapse of mines due to lack of structural support, and flooding. • Land degradation, deforestation, and water pollution with toxic elements. • High concentrations of sulphates, iron, and heavy metals in water. • These factors led to the NGT banning rat hole mining in Meghalaya in 2014
<p style="text-align: center;">The NGT Ban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned rat-hole mining in Meghalaya in April 2014. • Environmentalists and human rights activists flagged the hazards of rat hole mining. • Reports revealed human trafficking and child labour issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ About 70,000 children mostly from Bangladesh and Nepal were employed in these mines <p style="text-align: center;">Current Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal mining continues despite the ban, leading to tragedies. • Interim reports highlighted ongoing illegal activities and loss of lives. • The stakes for a section of locals have been so high that the State government is under pressure to resume mining legally. • Meghalaya Chief Minister said that the Coal Ministry approved mining leases for 4 of the 17 prospective licence applicants. • This would lead to the commencement of 'scientific' mining ensuring minimal environmental impact. 	

3. Making this Israeli-Palestinian war the last - The Hindu

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

Context

- The Israeli-Hamas war will end, and the timing and method are yet to be determined.
- Urgency emphasized due to 1.3 million displaced in Gaza and widespread damage.

Potential Outcomes of the War

- Israel likely to win militarily, but Hamas may gain increased support in the Arab world, especially in the West Bank.

Critique of Palestine Authority and the Peace Process

- Palestine Authority's unpopularity and corruption highlighted.
- President Abbas's failure to make progress in establishing a Palestinian state.
- Peace process declared dead.

'Right of Self-Defense' and UN's Reminder

- Hamas attack condemned, but Israel's right of self-defense acknowledged.
- Concerns raised about disproportionate force, especially civilian casualties.

Post-War Scenario and Gaza's Future Governance

- Suggestions for the Palestine Authority to administer Gaza after Hamas.
- Public reluctance to accept Abbas's rule; calls for fresh elections under international supervision.
- Proposal to lift Gaza blockade with UN peace-keeping contingent on the Israel-Gaza border.

Feasibility of Two-State Solution

- Two-state solution revisited; challenges in West Bank due to Israeli settlers.
- Need for a reality check on the feasibility of the two-state concept.
- Painful concessions, land swaps, and monitoring mechanism proposed.

Abraham Accords as a Foundation

- Demilitarization of the new Palestinian state for Israel's security.
- Engaging neighboring Arab states, citing the Abraham Accords as a foundation.
- Vision for Israel-Arab harmony and resolution to regional conflicts.

Lasting Solution: Israel's Withdrawal from the West Bank

- Advocacy for Israel to vacate the West Bank occupation for a viable Palestinian state.
- Ensuring stable peace and security in the Middle East.

Conclusion

- Israeli-Palestinian relations trapped in a cycle of death and destruction.
- Call for the war in Gaza to be the last, envisioning stable peace and security in the Middle East.

4. Broadcast regulation 3.0, commissions and omissions - The Hindu

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

Context

- Overview of past initiatives in regulating broadcasting since 1997.
- Introduction of the recent Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill in November by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).
- Reference to a pre-consultation paper on 'National Broadcasting Policy' by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

Positive Propositions in the Bill	Concerns and Apprehensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscriber Data and Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Obligation for broadcasting network operators to maintain subscriber data records and undergo external audits. • Audience Measurement and Transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stipulation of a methodology for audience measurement and the sale of ratings data. ◦ Aims to bring transparency to the cable and satellite television business. • Private Actors in Terrestrial Broadcasting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provision to permit private actors interrestrial broadcasting to encourage competition. ◦ Historical context of TRAI consultations on this matter in 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of OTT Content Suppliers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Bill's inclusion of Over-the-Top (OTT) content suppliers in the definition of broadcasting services. ◦ Overlapping jurisdiction concerns between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) and MIB. • Impact on News Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Expanded definition of broadcasting affecting journalists and news outlets not part of large television networks. ◦ Introduction of a 'Content Evaluation Committee' questioned for self-certification of news programming. • Silent Aspects: Ownership and Regulatory Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Silence on issues of media ownership, particularly cross-media and vertical ownership. ◦ Absence of a proposal for an independent broadcast regulator, contrary to TRAI's hints. ◦ Introduction of a 'Broadcast Advisory Council' raises concerns about autonomy and capacity. • Government Empowerment and Intrusive Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Empowerment of the government to inspect broadcasters without prior notice and impound equipment. ◦ Penalties for violations of the Programme Code and Advertisement Code, including content deletion and transmission cessation. ◦ Broad leeway granted to the government to curtail broadcasting in "public interest," an undefined term.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Emphasis on protecting press freedom and diversity.
- Call to address omissions, review intrusive measures, and refine potentially positive provisions in the Bill.

Quick Look

1. Unemployment Rate in Urban Areas

- According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), the urban unemployment rate in India decreased from 7.2% (July-September 2022) to 6.6% (July-September 2023).
- For individuals aged 15 and above, the overall unemployment rate was 6.6%, with a rate of 6% for males and 8.6% for females during the same quarter.
- The worker population ratio rose from 44.5% (July-September 2022) to 46% (July-September 2023) in urban areas.
- For males, it increased from 68.6% to 69.4%, while for females, it saw a notable rise from 19.7% to 21.9%.
- LFPR for individuals aged 15 and above rose from 47.9% (July-September 2022) to 49.3% (July-September 2023).
- Specifically, for females, LFPR increased from 21.7% to 24.0% during the same period.

2. Fattah 2

- Fattah, which means conqueror in Farsi, is a hypersonic ballistic missile developed by Iran.
- It is a new version of its first domestically made hypersonic ballistic missile named 'Fattah'.
- It is equipped with a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) warhead that can manoeuvre and glide at hypersonic speed.
- It uses a liquid-fuel rocket propellant.
- The precision-guided two-stage missile can hit targets within a range of 1500 kilometres with a velocity of Mach 15 (fifteen times the speed of sound i.e., 18522 km/hr).
- It can make quick turns to avoid defence systems.
- It is equipped with a warhead that has a spherical engine running on solid fuel and movable nozzles that allow it to change course when outside the atmosphere to accurately help it evade air-defence systems.

3. International Sugar Organisation (ISO)

- ISO is an inter-governmental body completely devoted to improving conditions in the world sugar market.
- Its 87 member states represent 87% of global production, 64% of consumption, 92% of sugar exports, and 34% of sugar imports.
- The ISO exists to administer the internationally negotiated 1992 International Sugar Agreement (ISA)
- Objectives
 - to ensure enhanced international cooperation in connection with world sugar matters and related issues.
 - to provide a forum for intergovernmental consultations on sugar and on ways to improve the world sugar economy.
 - to facilitate trade by collecting and providing information on the world sugar market and other sweeteners.
 - to encourage increased demand for sugar, particularly for non-traditional uses.
- To fulfil these objectives, the ISO undertakes many distinct activities, including workshops, seminars, statistical and analytical work.

4. Comet P12/Pons-Brooks

- Astronomers have photographed Comet P12/Pons-Brooks by using the Himalayan Chandra Telescope (HCT) from the Indian Astronomical Observatory in Hanle, Ladakh.

- It is a celestial object that has been playfully nicknamed the 'Devil Comet' or likened to the 'Millennium Falcon' for its distinctive appearance.
- This comet, first discovered in the year 1812, completes an orbit around the Sun every 71 years.
- Its recent activity has been particularly striking, with multiple outbursts of gas and dust that have dramatically increased its brightness.
- The comet's atmosphere, visible as a spherical halo, spans an impressive 3,50,000 kilometres in diameter

5. National Cadet Corps

- It is a Tri-Services organisation, comprising the Army, Navy and Air Force, engaged in grooming the youth into disciplined and patriotic citizens.
- It came into existence under the National Cadet Corps Act XXXI of 1948 under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- It is a voluntary organisation that recruits cadets from high schools, colleges, and universities all over India.
- The cadets are given basic military training in small arms and parades.
- They are given preference in military service over normal candidates during selections.
- It is headed by the Director General (DG), an Army officer of the rank of Lieutenant General.
- Headquarters: New Delhi.

6. Harikatha

- Harikatha is also known as Harikatha Kaalakshepam and is a form of Hindu traditional discourse in which the storyteller explores a traditional theme, usually the life of a saint or a story from an Indian epic.
- The person telling the story through songs, music and narration is called a Haridasa.
- Harikatha is a composite art form composed of storytelling, poetry, music, drama, dance, and philosophy most prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and ancient Tamil Nadu.

7. Namasankeerthana

- The namasankirtana is also called namajapa.
- It is the Hindu practice of congregational chanting of the names and other sacred expressions associated with a given deity.
- More commonly practised by members of the Vaishnava tradition, the namasankirtana is characterised by devotees chanting the names of God in a religious gathering, in an expression of bhakti (devotion) and in a bid to achieve devotional ecstasy.
- This practice is regarded to have become popularised by the traditions that centred around Chaitanya, Vallabha, and Vithoba.
- The practice is regarded to be a common form of bhajana.

8. Swayam Prabha

- SWAYAM Prabha is an initiative of the Ministry of Education to provide High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.
- Swayam Prabha is an effective tool of learning for those who do not have internet access at their home.
- It has curriculum-based course content covering diverse disciplines.
- This is primarily aimed at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where internet availability is still a challenge.
- The DTH channels are using the GSAT-15 satellite for programme telecasts.
- The DTH Channels covers the following:

9. Booker Prize

- Lynch is the fifth writer to have won the Prize, for his novel that explores a dystopian Ireland where democratic rights are under threat from a totalitarian regime.

- Before him, the Prize went to:
- British-Irish novelist Iris Murdoch in 1978 for her *The Sea, The Sea*,
- Roddy Doyle in 1993 for *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*,
- John Banville in 2005 for *The Sea*, and
- Anne Enright in 2007 for *The Gathering*.
- In 2018, British writer of Northern Ireland-origin, Anna Burns, won it for *Milkman*.
- In the 54 years since the Prize's inception, 37 Irish authors have made it to the longlist.
- In the last 15 years, at least one or more have featured in the longlists.

10. Angkor Wat

- It is the largest religious monument in the world.
- It was built by the Khmer King Suryavarman II in the first half of the 12th century.
- It was originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu before becoming a Buddhist temple by the end of the 12th century.
- In 1992, the temple complex was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Features:

- Sandstone blocks were used to build the structure.
- It is protected by a 15-foot-high wall and a wide moat.
- It covers an area of 200 acres.
- The temple has five major towers symbolising the peaks of Mount Meru, believed to be the abode of the gods in Hindu and Buddhist mythology.
- Thousands of bas-reliefs depicting important deities and figures in Hindu and Buddhist religions, as well as key events in their narrative traditions, adorn the temple walls.

11. Axolotl

- It is an aquatic salamander renowned for its ability to regenerate its spinal cord, heart, and limbs.
- These amphibians also readily make new neurons throughout their lives.
- Axolotls, like humans, contain two copies of every gene—one inherited from the father and the other from the mother.
- It is notable for its permanent retention of larval features, such as external gills.
- The species is found only in Lake Xochimilco, within Mexico City.
- The name axolotl is also applied to any full-grown larva of *Ambystoma tigrinum* (tiger salamander) that has not yet lost its external gills.
- They feast on a menu of molluscs, worms, insect larvae, crustaceans, and some fish.
- **Conservation status**
 - IUCN: Critically endangered.
 - Threats: Habitat degradation, pollution, fishing, nonnative predators, the pet trade.

12. Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN)

- The PM-JANMAN (comprising Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes) to focus on 11 critical interventions through nine ministries, including the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The scheme aims to provide crucial interventions such as permanent housing, road connectivity, piped water supply, mobile medical units, hostel construction, 'Anganwadi' facilities, skill development centres,
- Other than the 11 critical interventions, the following interventions of other Ministries will be part of Mission:
 - Ministry of Ayush will set up Ayush Wellness Centre as per existing norms, and Ayush facilities will be extended to PVTG habitations through Mobile Medical Units.
 - The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will facilitate skill and vocational training in PVTG habitations, multipurpose centres and hostels as per the suitable skills of these communities.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following three statements regarding the Syrian Golan region:

1. The United Nations General Assembly recently passed a resolution expressing deep concern over Israel's withdrawal from the Syrian Golan.
2. The UNLF (United National Liberation Front) recently signed a Peace Agreement with the Government of India related to the Syrian Golan.

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 three statements regarding the Delhi Chief Secretary:

1. The Delhi Chief Secretary's tenure was extended by the Ministry of Home Affairs without any legal basis.
2. The Chief Secretary's functions include areas related to public order, police, and land, which fall outside the legislative and executive power of the Delhi government.

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

Q3. Consider the following three statements regarding the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) initiative:

1. The initiative aims to provide a unique identification card for every citizen in India.
2. The initiative allows beneficiaries to access free food grains from any fair price shop in the country, promoting ease of living.
3. The economic cost of food grains provided under the initiative is borne by the beneficiaries.

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

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

D. None

Q4. Consider the following statements

1. Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is located to the west of the Line of Control (LoC) in the larger region of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. The Neelum River flows through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, running parallel to the Line of Control.

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 three statements regarding the Prevention of Money Laundering Act

1. The Financial Action Task Force is an international organization that sets standards for anti-money laundering efforts worldwide.
2. The enforcement and implementation of the Act in India are overseen by the Enforcement Directorate

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 three statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN):

1. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal ministry responsible for implementing the scheme
2. The scheme focuses on providing legal aid and support to tribal communities for addressing land rights and forest-related issues.

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

Q7. Consider the following statements with reference to Finance Commission of India

1. It is a constitutional body set up under Article 280 of the Constitution every three years.
2. It makes recommendations on the distribution of financial resources between the Union and the states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q8. Consider the following statements

1. UNLF was formed in 1964 with the demand for secession from India.
2. The UNLF operates in collaboration with the Myanmar military in various regions, including Sagaing, Chin State, and Rakhine State.

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

Q9. With reference to University Grants Commission (UGC), consider the following statements

1. UGC is a statutory body set up by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
2. It is charged with coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of higher education in 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

Q10. Consider the following statements with reference to National Green Tribunal (NGT)

1. India is the first country in the world to set up a specialised environmental tribunal.
2. An appeal against order/decision/award of the NGT lies to the High Court.

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

Prelims Track Answer

Ans. 1 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The UN General Assembly actually expressed deep concern over Israel not withdrawing from the Syrian Golan. The resolution highlighted Israel's continued occupation of the region since 1967. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The UNLF signed a Peace Agreement with the Government of India, but it is related to Manipur, not the Syrian Golan. This historic development marks the first known instance of a valley-based insurgent group in Manipur entering into a peace pact with the Indian government. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**

Ans. 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Supreme Court recently gave its nod for the extension of the Delhi Chief Secretary's tenure, affirming the Union government's move. The court found that, at the present stage, the decision to extend the Chief Secretary's services for six months could not be construed as violative of the law. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The Supreme Court acknowledged that the Chief Secretary performs functions related to public order, police, and land, which are excluded from the legislative and executive power of the Delhi government, as per the 2023 constitution bench judgement. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

Ans. 3 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The ONORC initiative focuses on providing a standardized platform for the distribution of food grains, allowing beneficiaries to lift free-of-cost food grains from any fair price shop in the country. It is not related to providing unique identification cards. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The ONORC initiative is designed to provide nationwide uniformity in the delivery of food grains free of cost. It enables beneficiaries to lift free food grains from any fair price shop in the country, contributing to ease of living. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The economic cost of food grains under the ONORC initiative, such as rice and wheat, is borne by the Government of India (GOI). Beneficiaries receive the food grains

completely free of cost, leading to significant monthly savings. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Ans. 4 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), also known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), is situated to the west of the Line of Control (LoC) that separates the territories administered by India and Pakistan in the region of Jammu and Kashmir. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Neelum River does flow through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, running roughly parallel to the Line of Control. It is an essential geographical feature in the region. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

Ans. 5 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organization founded to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. It establishes international standards and promotes effective implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational measures for combating money laundering and related threats. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is the primary agency responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in India. It investigates and prosecutes cases of money laundering. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

Ans. 6 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal ministry responsible for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN). The ministry works towards the welfare and development of tribal communities in India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) primarily aims to ensure justice for tribal communities by providing legal aid and support. It focuses on resolving land rights, forest-related disputes, and other legal issues faced by tribal populations. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

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

- The Finance Commission is a constitutional body set up under Article 280 of the Constitution every five years. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Objective: To make recommendations on the distribution of financial resources between the Union and the states. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Recommendations cover three main aspects:
 - Vertical Devolution: The share of states in the divisible pool of central taxes.
 - Horizontal Distribution: The allocation of resources among states based on a formula that reflects their fiscal needs, capacities and performance.
 - Grants-in-aid: The additional transfers to specific states or sectors that are in need of assistance or reform.

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

- The United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was established on November 24, 1964, in Manipur. Its primary demand has been the secession of Manipur from India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The UNLF has established camps and training bases in Myanmar's Sagaing Region, Chin State, and Rakhine State with the support of the Myanmar military. However, recent developments indicate challenges to its activities in Myanmar due to attacks against the junta by Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

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

- University Grants Commission (UGC) is a statutory body set up in accordance with the UGC Act 1956. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is charged with coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of higher education in India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognized universities and colleges.

Explanation

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a specialised body set up under the National Green Tribunal Act (2010) for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources. It is mandated to make disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing the same.
- With the establishment of the NGT, India became the third country in the world to set up a specialised environmental tribunal, only after Australia and New Zealand. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It is guided by the principles of 'natural justice'.
- An order/decision/award of Tribunal is executable as a decree of a civil court.
- An appeal against order/decision/ award of the NGT lies to the Supreme Court, generally within ninety days from the date of communication. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

Ans. 10 Option D is correct

Prelims Track Question

Q1. "Consider the following statements regarding Exercise Milan:

1. It is a joint naval exercise conducted annually by the Indian Navy.
2. The primary aim of Exercise is to enhance regional maritime cooperation and interoperability among navies.
3. It involves participation only from the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

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 Governors in India:

1. They are appointed by the President of India on the advice of the Prime Minister
2. The term of office is fixed, and they hold the position for a period of five years.
3. They can be removed from office by the President only on the recommendation of the Chief Minister of the respective state.

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 United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

1. The UNSC has 10 non-permanent members and 5 permanent members with all having veto power.
2. The veto power in the UNSC is exercised by the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.
3. The UNSC can authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

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

- A. Only one

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

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding COP-26:

1. COP-26 is a global summit on climate change organized annually by the United Nations.
2. The main objective of COP-26 is to negotiate binding emission reduction targets for all participating countries.

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

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC):

1. The DAC is a statutory body mandated to oversee all matters related to defense procurement.
2. The Defence Minister of India chairs the DAC meetings.
3. DAC has the authority to approve the procurement of defence equipment and platforms.

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

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

Q6. "Consider the following statements regarding the Air Quality Index (AQI):

1. The AQI is calculated based on concentrations of pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO).
2. AQI values below 50 indicate good air quality, while values above 100 indicate unhealthy air quality.

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

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding X-Ray Polarization:

1. It refers to the phenomenon where X-rays undergo changes in their amplitude.
2. Polarimetry in X-ray astronomy helps scientists study the magnetic fields in celestial objects.
3. It is primarily influenced by the gravitational fields of celestial bodies.

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 regarding the Core Sector:

1. It comprises industries such as coal, steel, cement, and electricity.
2. The performance of the Core Sector is indicative of the overall industrial performance in the country.
3. The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is used to monitor the growth and performance of the Core Sector in India.

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 regarding the Two-State Solution:

1. It refers to the establishment of two separate states, Israel and Palestine, coexisting peacefully.
2. The United Nations has officially endorsed the Two-State Solution

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q10 Consider the following statements regarding the National Broadcasting Policy:

1. The policy in India outlines guidelines and regulations for the functioning of television and radio broadcasting.
2. The formulation of the policy is the exclusive domain of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
3. The primary objective of the policy is to ensure government control over media content and programming.

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

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

Prelims Track Ans.

Ans. 1 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Exercise Milan is indeed a joint naval exercise conducted by the Indian Navy. It is usually held biennially and involves the participation of several navies. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The primary objective of Exercise Milan is to enhance regional maritime cooperation and interoperability among participating navies. It provides a platform for navies to share experiences and best practices in maritime security. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- While Milan does involve participation from Indian Ocean Rim countries, it is not limited to them. Navies from various regions, including Southeast Asia, participate in Exercise Milan, promoting a broader framework for maritime cooperation. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.

Ans. 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Governors are appointed by the President of India, and their appointment is done on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, in turn, consults the Chief Minister of the concerned state. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The term of office of a Governor is not fixed, and they do not hold the position for a fixed period of five years. Governors serve at the pleasure of the President, and their term can be terminated earlier if the President desires. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- A Governor can be removed from office by the President but not necessarily on the recommendation of the Chief Minister. The Governor can be removed at the discretion of the President without the need for the Chief Minister's recommendation. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.

Ans. 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The UNSC has 15 members in total, with 5 permanent members (P5) having veto power (United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom) and 10 non-permanent members elected for a two-year term. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.
- The veto power in the UNSC is indeed held by the five permanent members (P5). Each of the P5 members has the authority to veto any substantive resolution, making their agreement necessary for the passage of such resolutions. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The UNSC has the authority to authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. This power is crucial for addressing threats to peace and acts of aggression. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

Ans. 4 Option D is correct

Explanation

- COP-26 is a global summit on climate change, but it is not organized annually. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is organized annually, and each COP is numbered sequentially. COP-26 specifically took place in 2021. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.
- The main objective of COP-26 was to advance global efforts to tackle climate change, including negotiating and enhancing emission reduction commitments from participating countries. The goal was to strengthen international cooperation and work toward limiting global temperature increases. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

Ans. 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is not a statutory body. It is an executive body that is responsible for addressing defence procurement needs and formulating policies

related to the acquisition of defence equipment. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.

- The Defence Minister of India chairs the meetings of the Defence Acquisition Council. The DAC includes key decision-makers and plays a crucial role in shaping India's defence acquisition strategy. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The Defence Acquisition Council has the authority to approve capital acquisition proposals and other significant decisions related to defence procurement. It plays a pivotal role in streamlining the acquisition process and ensuring that the armed forces have the necessary equipment and capabilities. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

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

- The AQI is divided into different color-coded categories, and values below 50 are generally considered good, while values above 100 indicate increasing levels of health concern, with higher values representing worse air quality. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The AQI is calculated based on the concentrations of several pollutants, including particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), and carbon monoxide (CO). Each pollutant has its own sub-index, and the overall AQI is determined by the highest sub-index value. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

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

- X-Ray polarization refers to changes in the direction of oscillation of X-ray waves, not their amplitude. The phenomenon involves the alignment of X-ray waves in a specific direction. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.
- Polarimetry in X-ray astronomy is a technique used to study the polarization of X-rays coming from celestial objects. By

analyzing the polarization of X-rays, scientists can gain insights into the magnetic fields and other properties of distant astronomical objects. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- The polarization of X-rays can be influenced by various factors, including the gravitational fields of celestial bodies. Gravitational effects, along with other phenomena, can contribute to the observed polarization patterns in X-ray emissions. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

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

- The Core Sector in India consists of eight key industries, including coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers, steel, cement, and electricity. These industries are considered fundamental for the overall economic development. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The Core Sector plays a crucial role in the industrial development of the country. Its performance is often used as an indicator of the overall industrial performance and economic health of the nation. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is a monthly economic indicator that reflects the performance of the Core Sector. It includes data from the eight core industries mentioned in Statement 1 and is used to monitor and analyze trends in the Core Sector. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

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

- The Two-State Solution is a proposed resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, envisioning the establishment of two separate and independent states, Israel and Palestine, coexisting side by side. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The United Nations and various international bodies have supported the

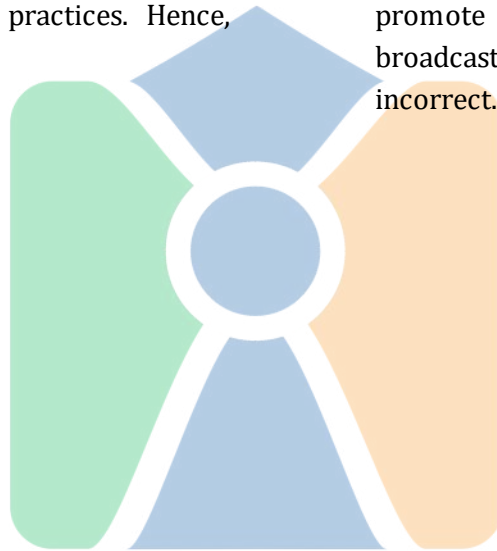
idea of a Two-State Solution as a means of achieving a peaceful resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Several UN resolutions and initiatives have called for the establishment of two states. Hence, statement 2 is correct

Ans. 10 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The National Broadcasting Policy provides guidelines, regulations, and principles for the functioning of television and radio broadcasting in India. It addresses various aspects, including content standards, licensing, and industry practices. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in India is responsible for formulating the National Broadcasting Policy. It plays a central role in shaping the policy framework that governs broadcasting activities in the country. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- While the National Broadcasting Policy does establish regulations to ensure compliance with certain standards, its primary objective is not to exercise government control over media content. The policy aims to balance the interests of various stakeholders, promote diversity, and ensure quality in broadcasting. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.



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+91 9999 057869
www.mentorshipindia.com

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

 @mentorship.india