

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS I

1. India nominates 12 forts of Marathas for UNESCO World Heritage List - The Hindu

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

News:

- India has nominated the “**Maratha Military Landscapes**”, for inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage list for 2024-25**.
- It is a network of forts that showcase the strategic military powers of Maratha rule,

Key Highlights

- The 12 components of this nomination are:
 - the forts of Salher
 - Shivneri, Lohagad
 - Khanderi, Raigad
 - Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala, Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu.

Extraordinary fortification

- The “**Maratha Military Landscapes**”, which developed between the 17th and 19th centuries.
 - Represent an extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers.
- Eight of these are **protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**
 - while four are protected by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra.

From Shivaji’s times

- The inception of the **Maratha military ideology dates back to 17th century** during the reign of the Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj from 1670 CE
 - And continued through subsequent rules until the Peshwa rule till 1818 CE.
- The nomination is in the **category of cultural property**
- At present in India, there are 42 World Heritage sites out of which 34 are cultural sites, seven are natural sites and one is a mixed site.
- The “Maratha Military Landscapes” is the sixth cultural property nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List from Maharashtra
 - It had been earlier included in the Tentative List of World Heritage sites in 2021.

Prelims Takeaway

- Maratha
- World Heritage sites

GS II

2. Curbs on liquor sale do not extend to municipal areas: SC - The Hindu

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 Supreme Court** has asserted that its December 2016 **ban on the sale of liquor** within 500 metres of the outer edge of national and State highways **will not extend to municipal areas**.

Key Highlights

- The March 2023 order had set aside a Madras High Court decision confirming the permission granted by the Puducherry Excise Department to a liquor retailer

Ban on the sale of liquor within 500 metres

Prelims Takeaway

- Brasilia Declaration
- Article 47

- The court prohibited signages and advertising of availability of liquor on highways and ordered the existing ones to be removed forthwith from both national and State highways. It noted that the highway should be absolutely free from any distraction or attractions.
- Neither should they be directly accessible from the highways nor should they be situated within a distance of 500 metres from the outer edge of the highways or service lanes.
- One of the pleas noted that, India being a signatory to the **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety**
- It is imperative that policy guidelines are framed to control road accidents.
- The exercise policies of Indian states and Union territories should be amended to conform to the spirit of **Article 47 & Article 21 of the Constitution of India**.

3. Philippines, Vietnam sign agreement on cooperation in South China Sea - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- South China Sea
- Map based questions

News:

- **Philippines and Vietnam sign agreements** to prevent incidents in the South China Sea
- Growing alliance likely to **face disapproval from China**

Key Agreements and Cooperation

- Discussions on enhancing information-sharing and training exchanges
- Boosting trade and investment
- Signing a crucial deal on rice

Tensions in the South China Sea

- Background on tense confrontations with China
- Intensification of territorial faceoffs

Vietnamese Reaction and Agreement Details

- Specific details of agreements on preventing and managing incidents not released
- Importance of implementing the accord on maritime cooperation quickly

Joint Submission to UN Commission

- Interest in a joint submission with Vietnam to the UN commission on continental shelf limits
- Willingness to collaborate at the appropriate time

Rice Deal

- Vietnam to supply 1.5 to 2 million metric tons of rice annually to the Philippines Framework creation for stable rice supplies
- Vietnamese rice accounting for 85% of imported rice in the Philippines

4. Corruption perceptions index: India at 93 among 180 countries - Indian Express

Relevance: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

Prelims Takeaway

- Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

News:

- According to the **Transparency International Report**, India ranks **93** out of 180 countries in the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2023**.
- The overall score remains **largely unchanged**, dropping from 40 in 2022 to 39 in 2023.

Concerns for India

- India sees a further **narrowing of civic space** before elections.
- This included the passage of a telecommunication bill that raises concerns about fundamental rights.
- India exhibits **minor fluctuations** in scores, making it challenging to draw firm conclusions about **any substantial changes**.

Regional Stagnation

- The **Asia Pacific region** records **little to no meaningful progress** in curbing corruption.

- The **average CPI score** for the region **stagnates** at 45 for five consecutive years.
- Weak scores below the regional and global averages reflect a **lack of delivery on anti-corruption agendas**.
 - 71% of countries in Asia and the Pacific have CPI scores below the regional and global averages.

Global Leaders and Laggards

- **New Zealand** (3) and **Singapore** (5) maintain top positions globally in corruption control.
- **China** (76) noted for its aggressive anti-corruption crackdown relies heavily on **punishment**, raising doubts about long-term effectiveness.
- In **South Asia**, Pakistan (133) and Sri Lanka (115) face challenges with their respective debt burdens and political instability.
- The **bottom** of the index includes **fragile states with authoritarian regimes**, such as North Korea (172) and Myanmar (162).
- **Afghanistan** (162) is facing one of the **worst humanitarian crises** in history.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

- The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their **perceived levels of public sector corruption**, according to experts and business people.
- It uses a **scale of zero to 100**, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.
- It is published annually by the non-governmental organisation **Transparency International** since 1995.
- The CPI generally defines corruption as an **“abuse of entrusted power for private gain”**.

GS III

5. EPFO's new survey seeks details on women workers to boost their share in workforce - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (**EPFO**) and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (**WCD**) have launched a new survey on **“increasing women participation in the workforce”**.

Key Highlights

- The survey has also sought answers on whether there is **‘equal pay for equal work’ for male and female workers along with a query** on availability of flexible or remote working hours for women.
- The survey questionnaire has been shared by the EPFO with its nearly 30 crore subscribers across the country.
- The employer rating survey was launched at an event **“Women in the Workforce for Viksit Bharat” by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the WCD ministry**
- Data shows women's labour force participation rate (LFPR) has improved over the last few years but **much of this increase has been seen in the unpaid work category**.
- As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), **the female participation rate rose to 27.8 per cent in 2022-23 from 17.5 per cent in 2017-18**
- but a major **chunk of this is of the women reported as “helpers in household enterprises”**, who do not receive any regular salary for their work.
- According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, female LFPR reduced to 8.73 per cent in 2022-23 from 11.80 per cent in 2017-18.
- Female LFPR in rural areas slowed to 9.68 per cent in 2022-23 from 12.16 per cent in 2017-18
 - while that in urban areas moderated to 6.90 per cent in 2022-23 from 11.10 per cent in 2017-18.
- Globally, the **South Asia region had a female labour force participation rate of 26 per cent in 2022**
 - with India's neighbouring countries registering female LFPR as per World Bank of

Prelims Takeaway

- EPFO
- LFPR

- 33 per cent in Sri Lanka
- 25 per cent in Pakistan
- 29 per cent in Nepal
- 38 per cent in Bangladesh
- 61 per cent in China.

6. Setback for HUL, Nestle, Patanjali and others as HC upholds anti-profiteering provisions under GST - The Economic Times

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

News:

- The Delhi High Court on Monday **upheld the constitutional validity of the anti-profiteering provisions under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act**
- dealing a blow to more than 100 companies, including Hindustan Unilever, Nestle, Johnson & Johnson, Abbott, Patanjali and DLF

Key Highlights

- It had **challenged the provisions as well as the penalty** imposed by the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA).
- A bench of acting chief justice and Justice held that the **GST law is a “consumer-centric” beneficial** legislation that eliminates the levy of multiple taxes,
- Companies from diverse sectors such as hospitality, fast-moving consumer goods and real estate had challenged the NAA’s order imposing penalty
 - for failing to pass on the commensurate benefit of reduction in the rate of tax or input tax credit to their consumers with interest and the validity of various provisions under the GST law.
- There is no space for allowing the **unfair retention of advantages** resulting from a decrease in tax rates or the availability of input tax credit by the manufacturer, supplier, or distributor.
- The court clarified that the anti-profiteering provisions do not constitute a **“price-fixing mechanism”**.
 - There cannot be a predetermined or mathematical formula established to ascertain profiteering.

Prelims Takeaway

- Input Tax Credit
- Goods and Service Tax (GST)

7. Test tube rhinos: why rebuilding doomed species is a desperate race against time - Indian Express

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

News:

- In 2015, **BioRescue**, an international consortium of scientists, initiated an ambitious project to rebuild the northern white rhino through **in vitro fertilisation (IVF)**.
- Recently, the scientists announced the **first-ever rhino pregnancy** through a **lab-made embryo** transferred into a surrogate southern white rhino.

Northern White Rhino

- The **death of the last male northern white rhino in 2018** made its extinction inevitable.
- The northern white rhino was **officially declared extinct in the wild in 2008** due to organised hunting for horns.

Challenges in the Process

- **Surrogacy** is the only option due to the inability of the remaining females to reproduce.
- Preparing a surrogate southern white female involves **an elaborate process**, including isolation and protection against bacterial infections.
- Identifying the fertile window for embryo implantation, known as **oestrus**, poses a significant challenge.

Prelims Takeaway

- In vitro fertilization (IVF)
- Surrogacy

Genetic Viability Concerns

- **Limited genetic diversity** from eggs of two females and sperm from deceased zoo males poses challenges for a **viable northern white population**.
- Creating sperm and eggs from stem cells extracted from preserved tissue samples is a potential solution, but its success is uncertain in rhinos.

Behavioural Challenges in IVF Offspring

- While breakthroughs in IVF or stem cell technologies can produce northern white rhino calves, they **lack the genetic hardwiring** to behave as the species.
- The first IVF calves need to be raised by surviving northern white adults to **learn social and behavioural skills** critical for future generations.
- The urgency to produce IVF calves is emphasized by the **limited lifespan of the surviving females**.
- There are also concerns about **resource allocation** and whether the project addresses **threats to the natural habitat** of the species.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

8. A blurred mapping of internal female migration - The Hindu

Relevance: Social

Context:

- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** estimated **internal migration** to be **27%** from June 2020 to 2021.
- While normative literature often portrays **migration as male-dominated**, women, particularly of working age, make up a significant portion of migrants.
- This raises concerns about **employment barriers** due to post-migration conditions and **falling Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)**.

Challenges in Data Representation

- National surveys, like the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), present an inaccurate picture of female migration.
- For instance, surveys only ask the respondents regarding their primary reason for migration.
- Primary reasons for migration recorded include marriage (81%), family migration (10%), employment (2.42%), and education (0.48%).
- There is no provision to know the secondary reasons/motivations such as climate shocks and food insecurity.
- PLFS data during the COVID-19 pandemic showed low employment figures for migrant women, possibly due to underreporting and definitional issues.

Underreported Employment

- Definitional issues lead to underreporting, as women often choose informal employment to balance domestic duties and financial contributions.
 - According to national surveys, only those women with some form of verbal or written contract with their employer are considered part of the labour force.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests migrant women engage in casual employment (agriculture, construction, domestic help) not adequately reflected in the data.

Human and Social Capital Barriers

- One important factor restricting the entry into the labour force could be the need for more human and social capital.
- According to PLFS data, 85% of women possess less than 10 years of education, posing potential challenges in this context.
- Despite similar education levels between migrant and non-migrant women, migrants face proportional underemployment, exacerbated by a lack of social networks post-migration.

Post-Pandemic Challenges

- Women's labour activity showed a dismal recovery after the COVID-19 lockdown.
- 55% of women never returned to their places of employment and those who did earned only 56% of pre-pandemic income levels.

Political Neglect and Policy Implications

- Female migrants are not a considerable vote bank, leading to a lack of political attention and targeted policies.
- Current policies often overlook the specific needs, motivations, and conditions of female migrants, impacting their struggles and marginalization.

Recommendations for Change

- National surveys should collect more comprehensive socio-economic data post-migration, including access to social security benefits.
- Time-use data for migrants should become a norm to better understand the challenges faced by unemployed female migrants.
- On a broader scale, a change in narrative is required, starting with an increased collection of female-specific data.
- It will inform progressive policy making and address the unique needs of female migrant workers.

9. DELHI IN DAVOS - Indian Express

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

Context:

- Amidst global challenges, Davos 2024 presented an **opportunity for India to showcase its standout growth trajectory**.
- The **CII India Business Hub** witnessed significant activity as business visitors explored upcoming opportunities.
- As an integrated global economy, India emphasizes the importance of **securing trust, both commercially and geopolitically**.

AI and Digital Leadership

- With steady and proactive government reforms, India is positioned as a technology-driven governance solution provider at a mass scale.
- Discussions at Davos highlight the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its benefits while managing associated risks.
- India's digital leadership sets the stage for using AI intelligently, offering opportunities for Indian companies to lead in its application.

Socio-economic Contributions

- India actively participates in discussions on key global issues, particularly on socioeconomic aspects.
- Participants highlighted the involvement of Indian women in economic growth and advocated for financial investment in businesses owned by women.
 - Ninety million are currently self-employed with credit from financial institutions under the ambit of self-help groups.
 - Of the credit they take from financial institutions, their non-performing assets (NPAs) are below 2.5 percent.

Energy Transition Challenges

- Three key developmental challenges related to the transition in energy were highlighted - availability, affordability, and sustainability.
- Despite growing fossil fuel dependence, India looks to solutions like green hydrogen.
- For India, any transition needs to be carried out through non-disruptive processes, necessitating relevant policy strategies on pricing.

Equitable Growth Trends

- During numerous discussions, it was emphasised that India will continue to be among the fastest-growing economies in the world in 2024.
- India's growth is equitable evidenced by infrastructure development across regions, gender inclusivity, and social security measures for disadvantaged sections.

Global Recognition and Investment Opportunities

- Moody's recognizes India as a "pocket of resilience" amid global economic challenges.
- Today, India is recognised for its economic, social and political stability globally.
- As per the UNCTAD World Investment Report, India is one of the favoured destinations for global investments.
 - The Prime Minister has also highlighted the government's mission to propel India into developed status by 2047.
- Indian industry participation at Davos reinforces its position as a trusted global partner and resilient economy.

Commitment to a Sustainable Future

- India's thriving economy contributes to collaborative global advancement and reflects a commitment to a bright, sustainable future.
- The nation's credibility is seen as instrumental in building a more equitable and inclusive world.

10. Issues with EVs, and possible hybrid solution - Indian Express

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

Context:

- HSBC Research recommends that India should prioritize the **adoption of hybrid vehicles** over the next 5-10 years on the way to **full electrification**.

Why are Hybrid Vehicles Preferred?

- HSBC believes that hybrids are a practical solution for India's decarbonization drive due to their lower emissions and cost of ownership.
- Currently, total carbon emissions (WTW) from hybrids are 16% less than electric vehicles (EVs), making them a more environmentally friendly choice.
- The analysis considers not only tailpipe emissions (TTW) but also emissions from crude mining, refining, and power generation.

Duration of Hybrid Advantage

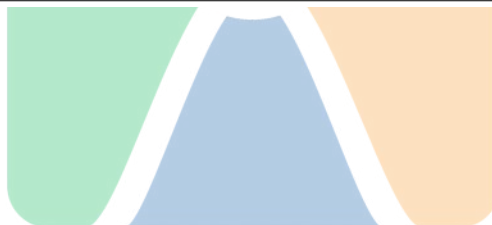
- HSBC estimates that it could take 7-10 years for emissions from EVs and hybrids to converge, assuming non-fossil power generation in India increases to 44%.
- By 2030, even if India's share of non-fossil fuels is 40%, hybrids will still release 8% less emissions than EVs.

Current State of India's Electric Mobility Plan

- India is largely focused on replacing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles with battery electric vehicles (BEVs), with Li-ion batteries considered the most viable option.

Challenges for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs)

- **Upfront Subsidy**
 - Global experiences suggest that state subsidies are crucial for EV adoption.
 - However, there's a concern that subsidies may disproportionately benefit the middle or upper-middle class.
- **Electricity Source**
 - Unlike some countries with renewable-heavy grids, India's electricity generation relies largely on coal-fired thermal plants.
 - This raises concerns about the overall environmental impact.
- **Charging Network:** Building charging infrastructure is crucial for EV adoption; however, India faces challenges due to its vehicle mix being dominated by two- and three-wheelers, each with different charging requirements.
- **Value Chain Dependency:** India's dependence on a small pool of countries for lithium-ion batteries raises concerns about the sustainability and viability of the EV supply chain.



Mentorship
India

Quick Look

1. Snow Leopard

- India has an estimated 718 snow leopards in the wild, according to a first-of-its kind, four-year long estimation exercise.
- The maximum number of cats were estimated to be in Ladakh (477), followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9).
- The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAII) began in 2019.
- It involves the World Wide Fund for Nature-India and the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, along with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- Snow Leopard is found in the mountainous regions of central and southern Asia.
- In India, it is seen in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Hemis National Park has a good presence of Snow Leopard.
- They play a key role as a top predator, an indicator of the health of their high-altitude habitat, and impacts of climate change on mountain environments.
- Threats: free ranging dogs, human wildlife conflicts and poaching.
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
 - CITES: Appendix I
 - Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I

2. Agasthyagama edge

- Recently, researchers discovered a new species of tiny lizards in the biodiverse forests of Western Ghats, describing them as a "diminutive dragon."
- The lizard, named Agasthyagama edge or the northern kangaroo lizard, belongs to the Agamidae family.
 - It is the second one of the Agasthyagama genus after *A. beddomii* or Indian kangaroo lizard that was previously reported from Sivagiri hills in Tamil Nadu.
- It is found in the southern Western Ghats at Kulamavu in Idukki.
- Characteristics
 - Maximum snout-vent length of 4.3 cm.
 - Poor climbers due to a reduced fifth toe, making them terrestrial
 - Feeds on small insects, runs fast, and hides within dry leaves to evade predators.
 - Found in areas with dense leaf litter cover.
 - Uniform dull olive-brown body with a slightly darker head.
 - White throat with a broad dark brown stripe on its dewlap and brick yellow scales on the outside.

3. Mitochondrial coxiella effector F (MceF)

- Recently, researchers discovered a previously unidentified protein named mitochondrial coxiella effector F (MceF) with antioxidant properties.
- It is a bacterial protein capable of keeping human cells healthy even when the cells have a heavy bacterial burden.
- It is produced by *Coxiella burnetii*, a Gram-negative intracellular bacterium.
- After invading host cells, *Coxiella burnetii* releases MceF into cells.

- MceF interacts with glutathione peroxidase 4 (GPX4) to improve mitochondrial function by promoting an anti-oxidizing effect that averts cell damage and death.
 - GPX4 is an antioxidant enzyme located in the mitochondria.

4. Exercise -Sada Tanseeq

- Recently, the militaries of India and Saudi Arabia are conducting their first Joint Military Exercise named as Sada Tanseeq at Mahajan, Rajasthan.
- Objective: To train troops of both sides for Joint Operations in Semi Desert terrain under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
- It will enable both sides to share their best practices in the tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting operations in sub-conventional domains.
- It will facilitate developing interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between troops from both sides.
- It will involve Establishment of Mobile Vehicle Check Post, Cordon & Search Operation, House Intervention Drill, Reflex Shooting, Slithering and Sniper Firing.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the UNESCO World Heritage List

1. The UNESCO World Heritage List aims to identify and protect cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value.
2. Inclusion in the World Heritage List implies financial assistance and funding from UNESCO for the preservation and conservation of listed sites.
3. As of now, there are more natural sites than cultural sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List.
4. A site must meet at least one of the ten criteria to be considered for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

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

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Brasilia Declaration

1. The Brasilia Declaration is a commitment made by Latin American countries to address environmental issues and promote sustainable development.
2. It was adopted during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Brasilia, Brazil, in 2012.
3. The declaration emphasizes the need for international cooperation to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development goals.

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

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

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the South China Sea

1. The South China Sea is a marginal sea that is part of the Pacific Ocean, encompassing

an area of strategic importance due to its shipping lanes and natural resources.

2. China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea based on the Nine-Dash Line, a demarcation line outlining its territorial claims.
3. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is widely recognized as the legal framework governing maritime rights and boundaries in the South China Sea.
4. Several countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, have competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, leading to regional tensions.

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

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

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2023

1. It ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople.
2. It is released annually by Transparency International.
3. The report showcases a huge improvement in India's rankings as compared to 2022.

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

1. PLFS is conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Employment to assess the employment and unemployment situation in India.
2. According to PLFS data, the female labor force participation rate (LFPR) in India increased from 17.5% in 2017-18 to 27.8% in 2022-23.
3. PLFS categorizes women reporting as "helpers in household enterprises"

within the unpaid work category, contributing to the observed rise in female LFPR.

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 anti-profiteering

1. Anti-profiteering measures aim to ensure that businesses pass on the benefits of reduced tax rates or input tax credits to consumers.
2. Anti-profiteering provisions are a part of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework in India.
3. The National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) is responsible for implementing anti-profiteering measures in India.

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

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

Q7. Consider the following statements on Species Recovery Programme

1. It is one of the three components of the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH).
2. The recovery programme for critically endangered species in India now includes 25 wildlife species.

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

Q8. With reference to One Stop Centres (OSCs), consider the following statements

1. The scheme aims to address the problem of violence against women.
2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme funded through Nirbhaya Fund.

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

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding World Economic Forum (WEF)

1. It is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.
2. It publishes the Energy Transition Index.
3. The theme of the annual World Economic Forum summit held in 2024 was "Cooperation in a Fragmented World".

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

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

Q10. With reference to Lithium-ion battery, consider the following statements

1. They have one of the highest energy densities among the currently available battery technologies.
2. They exhibit a relatively low self-discharge rate when compared to other rechargeable batteries.
3. They have a good memory effect.

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

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The UNESCO World Heritage List indeed aims to identify and safeguard cultural and natural sites around the world that possess outstanding universal value. These sites are considered important for humanity and future generations. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- While inclusion in the World Heritage List provides international recognition and support, it does not guarantee financial assistance from UNESCO. Countries are primarily responsible for the preservation and conservation of their listed sites, although international collaboration and assistance may occur. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- As of now, there are more cultural sites than natural sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The list includes a diverse range of places, including historic buildings, cities, natural landscapes, and cultural practices. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**
- For a site to be considered for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List, it must meet at least one of the ten criteria established by the World Heritage Committee. These criteria assess the site's cultural, natural, or mixed (both cultural and natural) significance. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

Answer 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Brasilia Declaration is indeed a commitment made by Latin American and Caribbean countries to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. It reflects the region's dedication to fostering environmental conservation and socio-economic development. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The Brasilia Declaration was not adopted during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Instead, it was adopted during the First Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Development of the

Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2014, held in Brasilia, Brazil. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**

- The Brasilia Declaration emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development goals. It underscores the need for collaborative efforts to address global environmental challenges. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 3 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The South China Sea is indeed a marginal sea in the Pacific Ocean, covering a significant area that holds strategic importance due to its vital shipping lanes, rich fisheries, and potential oil and gas reserves. The region is crucial for international trade and geopolitics. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- China asserts sovereignty over a large portion of the South China Sea through its controversial Nine-Dash Line, which overlaps with the territorial claims of neighboring countries. However, the legitimacy of China's claims is disputed by other nations and is not recognized under international law. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- While UNCLOS provides a legal framework for maritime rights and boundaries, its effectiveness in resolving disputes in the South China Sea is limited. Some countries, including China, have not fully complied with UNCLOS, leading to challenges in the application of the convention in this region. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- Several countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan, have conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea. These disputes have resulted in heightened regional tensions and triggered concerns about potential military confrontations. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

Answer 4 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It uses a scale of zero to 100, where zero is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.
- It is published annually by the non-governmental organisation Transparency International since 1995. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- According to the report, India ranks 93 out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2023.
- The overall score remains largely unchanged, dropping from 40 in 2022 to 39 in 2023. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 5 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- The PLFS is indeed conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), not the Ministry of Labour and Employment. It aims to assess the employment and unemployment situation in India, providing valuable insights into various aspects of the labor market. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- According to PLFS data, the female LFPR did increase from 17.5% in 2017-18 to 27.8% in 2022-23. However, it's crucial to note that a significant portion of this increase is attributed to women categorized as "helpers in household enterprises," who do not receive regular salaries for their work. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- PLFS indeed categorizes women reporting as "helpers in household enterprises" within the unpaid work category. This categorization contributes to the observed rise in female LFPR, emphasizing the need to distinguish between paid and unpaid work for a comprehensive understanding of women's economic participation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 6 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- Anti-profiteering measures are designed to prevent businesses from retaining excessive profits resulting from reductions in tax rates

or input tax credits. The objective is to ensure that the benefits of tax reductions are passed on to consumers in the form of lower prices. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**

- Anti-profiteering provisions are indeed a crucial component of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework in India. These provisions were introduced to maintain transparency and fairness in the tax system by preventing businesses from unfairly profiting from changes in the tax structure. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) is responsible for overseeing and implementing anti-profiteering measures in India. It was established under the GST law to investigate complaints of profiteering and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with anti-profiteering rules. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

Answer 7 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Species Recovery Programme of NBWL is one of the three components of the centrally funded scheme, Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is meant for providing support to protected areas, protection of wildlife outside protected areas and recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats.
- So far, the recovery programme for critically endangered species in India includes 22 wildlife species. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

Answer 8 Option D is correct**Explanation**

- One Stop Centres (OSCs) Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme for addressing the problem of violence against women. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is a subscheme of the umbrella scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of Women including Indira Gandhi Matritrav Sahyaog Yojana.
- One stop centre will be established across the country and at least one OSC in every mission around the world.

- To provide integrated support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence.
- It is funded through Nirbhaya Fund and the central government provides 100% financial assistance to the state governments /Union Territories administrations. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Audit will be done as per Comptroller & Auditor General of India norms and social audit will also be undertaken by civil society groups.

Answer 9 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- WEF is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Funding: Primarily supported by partnering corporations, typically with annual turnovers exceeding USD 5 billion.
- Major Reports: The Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Gender Gap Report, Energy Transition Index, Global Risk Report, Global Travel and Tourism Report. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The 53rd edition of the annual World Economic Forum summit was recently held in Davos, Switzerland.
- Theme: Cooperation in a Fragmented World. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 10 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- A lithium-ion battery is made up of an anode (a negative electrode), cathode (a positive electrode), separator, electrolyte, and two current collectors (positive and negative).
- It is widely used in portable electronic devices, electric vehicles, and various energy storage applications.
- They have one of the highest energy densities of any battery technology today. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- They also exhibit a relatively low self-discharge rate when compared to other rechargeable batteries, allowing them to hold their charge for extended periods. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Li-ion batteries have no memory effect, a detrimental process where repeated partial discharge/charge cycles can cause a battery to 'remember' a lower capacity. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- These batteries do not contain toxic cadmium, which makes them easier to dispose of than Ni-Cd batteries.
- Li-ion batteries have a tendency to overheat, and can be damaged at high voltages.
- Li-ion batteries require safety mechanisms to limit voltage and internal pressures, which can increase weight and limit performance in some cases.
- Li-ion batteries are also subject to aging, meaning that they can lose capacity and frequently fail after a number of years.

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