

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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2. Red Sea crisis: India turns to West Asia to replace crude supply from the US - Indian Express
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Important News Articles

GS I

1. Another 'atmospheric river' storm to hit California with potentially deadly floods - India Today

Relevance: Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone. etc.

News:

- A second, more potent **atmospheric river storm** is set to impact **Southern California**, bringing the risk of life-threatening floods and landslides.
- The upcoming storm follows heavy rains earlier in the week, both fueled by **atmospheric rivers** and **Pineapple Express** phenomena.

Prelims Takeaway

- Atmospheric Rivers
- Pineapple Express

Atmospheric Rivers

- They are **long, concentrated regions** in the atmosphere that **transport moist air** from the tropics to higher latitudes.
 - They are responsible for 90% of the movement of moisture from the tropics toward the poles.
- They are the **largest transport mechanisms of freshwater** on Earth.
- They form when large-scale weather patterns align to create narrow channels, or filaments, of intense moisture transport.
- A well-known and strong one is the **Pineapple Express**, with moisture transported from the **tropical Pacific around Hawaii to the US and Canadian West Coasts**.

Features

- Typically, 250 to 375 miles wide, atmospheric rivers can **stretch more than a thousand miles long**.
- They primarily occur **during the winter of the respective hemisphere**, when extratropical cyclones are most prevalent.
- An average atmospheric river carries an amount of water vapour roughly equivalent to the average flow of water at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Impacts of Atmospheric Rivers

- When atmospheric rivers run up against mountains or run into local atmospheric dynamics and are **forced to ascend**.
- The moisture they carry cools and condenses, leading to the potential for **heavy rainfall or snowfall**.
- They also pose risks such as **flash floods, mudslides, and landslides**, which can result in **loss of life and property damage**.
- As atmospheric rivers traverse land, they can **create conditions akin to hurricanes**, characterized by intense and swift precipitation, cyclonic winds, and increased wave heights.

GS II

2. Red Sea crisis: India turns to West Asia to replace crude supply from the US - Indian Express

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

News:

- India's crude oil imports from Iraq reached a **21-month peak** in January, 2024.
- It is driven by **disruptions in US oil supply** due to escalating freight rates amidst the Red Sea crisis.

Prelims Takeaway

- Oil supplying Countries bordering Red Sea
- Crude Oil Imports to India Country Wise

Shift in Import Patterns

- Indian refiners, unable to secure US crude, **turned to West Asia** for oil supply.

- US crude, a **significant supplier**, was absent in January, 2024 contrary to the average daily imports of 205,000 barrels in 2023.

Impact of Red Sea Crisis

- Disrupted freight routes prompted Indian refiners to seek closer **alternatives in West Asia**.
- Unlike US routes, West Asian oil cargoes **bypassed the Red Sea**, mitigating risks.

Increase in Imports

- India's crude imports from Iraq surged by a fourth to 1.19 million barrels per day in January, 2024 the highest since April 2022.
- UAE and Saudi Arabia also **experienced spikes** in oil exports to India.

Security Concerns

- **Attacks on vessels** in the Red Sea by Yemen's Houthi rebels heightened security risks.
- **Major shipping lines** opted for longer, safer routes, impacting global trade and energy supplies.

Stability of Russian Supplies

- Russian oil shipments remained **stable, unaffected** by Red Sea tensions.
- **Urals crude**, a staple in Indian imports, maintained consistent supply levels.
- **Payment issues** affected **Sokol (Russian Oil Firms) crude deliveries**, leading to increased reliance on Iraq and UAE oil.

Shift in Supplier Dynamics

- Russia emerged as India's primary oil supplier following discounts offered **post-Ukraine invasion**.
- Traditional suppliers like **Iraq and Saudi Arabia** faced displacement in India's import hierarchy.

3. CBSE urges schools to prepare for National Credit Framework roll-out - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is spearheading a shift towards a **credit-based system**, aligning with the **National Credit Framework**.

Sample Framework

- The board is set to notify a new set of credit framework for schools next year from **class nine to twelve**.
- The framework allocates **additional hours** for subjects like Physical Education, Health, Art Education, and a third language, alongside the compulsory subjects.

Expansion to Ten Subjects

- As per the existing regulations, a student has to **pass in 5 subjects** (two languages and three main subjects - maths, science and social science) to pass.
- Starting from the academic year 2024-2025, students in **classes Nine and Ten** will be required to **study ten subjects**.
- These include three languages (two native to India), one interdisciplinary subject, and others mandated by the new National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

Credit Management

- All credits accrued by students will be **stored digitally in academic lockers**, facilitating easy access and reconciliation, even for students pursuing education abroad.
- The integration of credits aims to **streamline assessment and equivalence** across different education levels.

Implementation and Assessment

- CBSE is encouraging schools to begin **implementing the credit system internally**, with emphasis on project work, peer-learning, and field trips.
- Credits will be reflected in **students' marks statements with predefined grades**, ensuring accountability and transparency.

Prelims Takeaway

- Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
- National Credit Framework

4. 7th session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs held at Kochi - PIB

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

News:

- Recently, the 7th session of the **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)** took place in Kochi.

Key Outcomes

- CCSCH7 concluded with finalizing **quality standards for five spices** viz. small cardamom, turmeric, juniper berry, allspice, and star anise.
- The committee finalized the **first group standard for 'spices derived from fruits and berries,'** covering juniper berry, allspice, and star anise.
 - For the first time, it successfully implemented a strategy of grouping spices.

Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs

- It was established as one of the **Commodity Committees under the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** in 2013.
- India has **hosted this Committee since the beginning.**
- Spices Board India** serves as the **secretariat organisation** which organises the Committee's sessions.

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- The CAC, jointly established by **FAO and WHO**, is tasked with **formulating internationally accepted food standards.**
- It is an international, intergovernmental body which is **based in Rome.**
- Membership of the Commission is open to **all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO** which are interested in international food standards.
- The Commission meets in regular sessions once a year, alternating between Geneva and Rome.
- Funding:** Through the regular budgets of WHO and FAO, with all work subject to the approval of the two governing bodies of the parent organisations.
- The Commission works in the **six official languages of the UN.**

Global Impact of CAC Standards

- CAC standards are **recognized by the WTO** as international reference points for resolving food safety and consumer protection disputes.
- These standards, including those developed by CCSCH, are **voluntary** and member countries of the CAC adopt and use them as **reference standards** to align their national standards.
- It contributes to **harmonising food standards globally, promoting fair trade, and enhancing food safety.**

5. Water pollution curbs: Bill allowing exemption to industrial units tabled - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Centre recently introduced a bill to amend the existing **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.**
- It would be applicable to **Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan**, and any other state that passes a resolution under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Prelims Takeaway

- Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)
- Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs

Prelims Takeaway

- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- State Pollution Control Board

Key Amendments Proposed

1. Nomination Norms for Chairpersons

- Currently, the Act mandates that the **State government nominates the chairman** of the **State Pollution Control Board**.
- However, the Bill introduces a provision for the **Central Government to prescribe the manner in which these chairpersons are nominated**.

2. Decriminalisation of Minor Offences

- The existing Act stipulates **imprisonment of up to three months** for certain offences. This includes
 - Not informing the State Board about abstraction of water from a stream or well in a substantial volume
 - Not providing information about construction, installation or operation of the disposal system.
- The Bill proposes to **replace this with fines** ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs15 lakh, effectively decriminalizing these offenses.

3. Other Provisions

- It empowers the Centre to **exempt certain categories of industrial plants** from restrictions on new outlets and discharges.
- It also **enables the Centre to "issue guidelines"** on matters relating to grant, establishment of any industry, etc.

6. Deadly Fungal Infection 'Candida Auris' Spreading In US Rapidly - NDTV

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

News:

- A deadly fungal infection, **Candida auris**, is rapidly spreading in the United States.
- Despite its rarity, medical experts warn of its high fatality rate, drug resistance, and ease of spread in healthcare settings.

Candida auris (C. auris)

- It is an **emerging multidrug-resistant yeast (fungus)** that represents a global health threat.
- Scientists first discovered C. auris **in Japan in 2009**, since then, it has spread quickly to other countries.
- It can **cause infections in various parts of the body**, including the bloodstream, open wounds, and ears.
- The infection poses significant risks, especially for those with **weakened immune systems or using medical devices** like feeding tubes, breathing tubes, or catheters.

Symptoms and Transmission

- The symptoms vary depending on the **site and severity of the infection**, and it can be challenging to distinguish from bacterial infections.
- Individuals may carry Candida auris **without showing symptoms**, a condition known as **colonization**.
- Colonized individuals **can still spread the fungus to others**, making infection control measures crucial in healthcare settings.
- It can also spread through **contact with contaminated surfaces or equipments**.

Preventive Measures and Treatment

- Infected or colonized patients should be **isolated**, and caregivers should adhere to **strict hygiene protocols**.
 - It includes wearing gloves and gowns, using disinfectants, and practicing hand hygiene.
- Most C. auris infections are treatable with **antifungal drugs**.
- However, some C. auris infections have been resistant to all three main classes of antifungal medications' often requiring the **use of combination therapies**.

Global Concern

- Candida auris cases have **surged worldwide**, with a significant increase reported in recent years.
 - In 2022, it infected 2,377 people, compared to 53 cases in 2016.

Prelims Takeaway

- Candida auris
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

- The rapid spread has led the CDC and WHO to designate it as a **growing threat to public health**, with 1,471 cases reported in 2021 alone.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

7. A critical view of the 'sanitation miracle' in rural India - The Hindu

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

Context:

- In the past decade, India has made significant strides in **improving sanitation coverage**, aligning with **Goal 6** of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- This progress is rooted in a **history of public sanitation programs**, notably the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) and the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G).

Data and Behavioural Patterns

- Government data reveals a remarkable increase in sanitation coverage from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019. Around 85% of villages in India have become ODF Plus.
- However, challenges remain in ensuring sustained usage of sanitation facilities due to various behavioural factors.
- Surveys indicate that construction alone does not guarantee usage, with reasons for non-usage ranging from infrastructure issues to social norms.

Household Size and Social Norms

- Along with economic conditions and education, toilet use depends on household size.
- The higher the household size, the greater the chances of not using the toilet.
- Overcrowding and social norms prevent all household members from using the same toilet.
- Moreover, access to water plays a crucial role, emphasizing the need for doorstep water access.
- However, Phase II of the SBM-G lacks criteria for multiple toilets in larger households and attached bathrooms, potentially hindering sustained usage.

Lack of Synergy

- While significant investments have been made in sanitation programs, coordination among various initiatives is lacking.
- The absence of synergy among programs addressing basic needs like sanitation, housing, and access to services undermines overall effectiveness and efficient resource utilization.

Conclusion

- India's sanitation journey reflects remarkable progress, yet challenges persist in ensuring sustained usage and coordination among initiatives.
- Addressing behavioural patterns, household dynamics, and enhancing program synergy are crucial for **advancing sanitation coverage** and **achieving lasting impact in public health and well-being**.

8. An Uttar Pradesh model to tackle malnutrition - The Hindu

Relevance: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Context:

- Uttar Pradesh is a remarkable example of the **impact of women's empowerment** on addressing **malnutrition** through **community-based micro enterprises** led by self-help groups.
- These enterprises produce **fortified foods** for pregnant/breastfeeding mothers and children under the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** programme.

Decentralized Production of Take Home Rations

- In 2020, the Department of Women and Child Development and Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission collaborated to establish decentralized production units for take home rations by women's enterprises.
- This involved a 20-member women's group utilising automated equipment with a capacity of five metric tonnes per day.
- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) piloted the model in Unnao and Fatehpur in 2021, leading to its expansion to 202 units across 43 districts within two years.

Impact and Reach

- The initiative has provided livelihood opportunities for 4,080 women, benefiting 12 million ICDS beneficiaries across the state.
- Engaging local women in running the production units has economically empowered over 4,000 women organised into 204 self-help group micro enterprises.
- They receive machinery and raw materials at subsidised rates to produce and distribute take home rations, contributing to the local economy.
- Once the rations are delivered to Anganwadi centres by the women's groups, the women are reimbursed according to ICDS cost norms.

Shift to Decentralized Model

- Previously, Uttar Pradesh followed a centralized model for producing and distributing rations.
- The shift to a decentralized model empowers women to prepare specific caloric value rations.
 - The aim is to generate an additional income of ₹8,000 a month for each woman.
- The Department of Women and Child Development reformulated take home rations to include high-quality ingredients like milk powder, oil, vitamins, and minerals.
- Different formulations cater to different groups, addressing monotony and ensuring nutritional diversity.

Strengthening Demand

- Collaboration with WFP focused on enhancing nutritional value and utilization of ICDS-supplied rations.
- Research, including production trials and acceptability studies, led to diverse products with informative packaging to promote consumption.
- An app-based solution and pilot projects are being developed to train women in producing nutritious products for local markets and track ration delivery using QR codes, enhancing the viability and sustainability of the initiative.

Conclusion

- The **success of micro-enterprises led by women** underscores the importance of women's empowerment in combating malnutrition.
- It highlights the **effectiveness of a multi-stakeholder approach** in implementing scalable solutions for long-term community nutrition improvement.

9. Myanmar's civil war and India's interests - The Hindu

Relevance: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

Context:

- The situation in **Myanmar's conflict-ridden regions, particularly Paletwa**, poses challenges and opportunities for various stakeholders.
- These include ethnic groups, neighbouring countries like India, and global players like China.

Conflict Dynamics in Paletwa

- The fall of Paletwa has intensified the historical tensions between the Chin and Arakan ethnic groups over territorial claims.
- Despite their shared struggle against the Myanmar military, the two groups must find a way to govern Paletwa jointly to maintain peace and order.
- Paletwa's strategic location and economic significance make it crucial for armed groups vying for control.
 - Paletwa's location on the western border makes it a good launchpad for the Arakan Army to conduct its operations against the military.
 - Given its location on the Kaladan River, Paletwa is a commercial hub where any armed group with a substantial presence would benefit from the economic activity in the region.



India's Interests and the Kaladan Project

- The developments in Paletwa will also impact the Indian government’s Kaladan Project in Myanmar, which has already faced significant delays.
- Delays in the project’s implementation are attributed to various factors, including security concerns and local ethnic dynamics.
- India’s Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to provide northeast India with access to the sea via Myanmar.
- The Arakan Army’s perceived opposition to the project has raised concerns in India, highlighted by incidents such as the kidnapping of Indian workers.

Table 1: The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project

Stretch	Mode	Distance
Kolkata to Sittwe port in Myanmar	Shipping	539 km
Sittwe to Paletwa (River Kaladan)	Inland Water Transport (IWT)	158 km
Paletwa to Indo-Myanmar Border (in Myanmar)	Road	110 km
Border to NH.54 (Lawngtlai) (in India)	Road	100 km

<p>China's Role and Economic Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> China's investments and strategic projects in Myanmar, including the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, indicate its growing economic presence in the region. The Arakan Army, along with other ethnic armed groups, allegedly receives support from China, potentially impacting India's projects and interests in Myanmar. 	<p>Implications and Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The completion of the Kaladan project requires careful consideration of ethnic dynamics, security challenges, and geopolitical interests. Coordinated efforts involving technical expertise and strategic coordination are necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To navigate the complexities of Myanmar's conflict zones and advance regional connectivity and development initiatives. India's engagement with Myanmar and its support for connectivity projects must align with efforts to address sectarian violence and promote development.
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10. What's in Bill to stop cheating in job exams - Indian Express

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

Context:

- The **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024** was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- Objective:** To ensure fairness, transparency, and credibility in public examinations by preventing the use of unfair means.

<p>Defining "Unfair Means" and "Public Examinations"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 of the Bill outlines at least 15 actions constituting unfair means in public examinations "for monetary or wrongful gain". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These include question paper leaks, tampering with answer sheets, directly or indirectly assisting the candidate etc. Under Section 2(k), a "public examination" is defined as any examination conducted by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A "public examination authority" listed in the Schedule of the Bill Any "such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government". <p>Punishments for Violations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 9 of the Bill states that all offences under the Bill are cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable. The penalties include imprisonment up to five years, fines up to Rs 10 lakh, and additional sanctions for failure to pay fines. A service provider who is engaged to provide "support of any computer resource or any material" for the conduct of the examination can be fined up to Rs 1 crore, along with other penalties. Organised paper leaks are subject to more severe penalties, with imprisonment ranging from five to ten years and fines starting from Rs 1 crore. 	<p>Reasons for the Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prevalence of question paper leaks in recruitment exams prompted the need for comprehensive legislation to address malpractices and ensure the integrity of public examinations. The objective of the Bill is to bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examination systems. It aims to deter individuals and groups exploiting vulnerabilities for wrongful gains. It clarifies that candidates will not be held liable under the Bill but remain subject to existing administrative provisions of examination authorities. Once enacted, the Bill will serve as a model for states to adopt, aiding in preventing criminal disruptions in state-level public examinations.
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Quick Look

1. Trichoglossum

- Recently, the researchers discovered a new fungus species in Kerala named Trichoglossum syamviswanathii.
- Trichoglossum is a genus of fungus classified within the family Geoglossaceae (Ascomycota), commonly known as “hairy earth tongues” fungus due to their numerous filaments resembling mushrooms.
- They are black, dark, or brown in colour.
- They exhibit saprotrophic behaviour but can also be found as endophytes in plant roots.
- They are globally distributed in tropical and temperate forests at least five out of seven continents of the world.
- They play a critical role in the decomposition of organic matter.

2. Grammy Awards

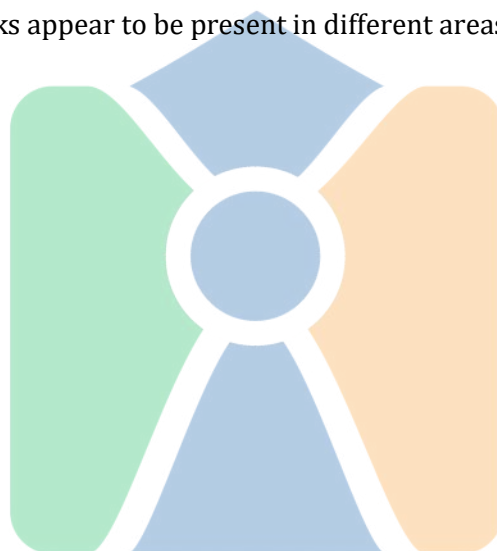
- Grammy Award, originally named Gramophone Award, is presented annually in the United States by the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences to honour artistes in the music industry for their exceptional work in a year.
- It was started in 1959 to respect the performers for the year 1958. Once it was made, the committee decided to call it Grammy as a tribute to Emile Berliner’s gramophone.
- The “General Field” are four awards that are not restricted by genre viz. Album of the Year, Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best New Artiste
- The honorees receive a golden statuette of a gramophone.
- Shakti, the Indo-jazz supergroup consisting of Ustad Zakir Hussain, John McLaughlin, V Selvaganesh, Ganesh Rajagopalan, and Shankar Mahadevan, wins the Grammy for Best Global Music Album for “This Moment.”
- The album, created during Covid, showcases a fusion of Eastern and Western sounds and North Indian classical with Carnatic classical music.

3. Gamma Ray Astronomy PeV Energies phase-3 (GRAPES-3) Experiment

- GRAPES-3 is designed to study cosmic rays with an array of air shower detectors and a large area muon detector.
- Located in Ooty, India, it is operated by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.
- It aims to probe the acceleration of cosmic rays in different astrophysical settings.
- Objectives: To study
 - The origin, acceleration and propagation of $>10^{14}$ eV cosmic rays in the galaxy and beyond.
 - The existence of “Knee” in the energy spectrum of cosmic rays.
 - The production and/or acceleration of the highest energy ($\sim 10^{20}$ eV) cosmic rays in the universe.
 - The astronomy of multi-TeV γ -rays from neutron stars and other compact objects.
- The GRAPES-3 experiment recently discovered a new feature in the cosmic-ray proton spectrum at about 166 tera-electron-volt (TeV) energy while measuring the spectrum spanning from 50 TeV to a little over 1 peta-electron-volt (PeV).

4. Obelisks

- Obelisks is a newly discovered class of virus-like entities present in the human body.
- It comprises a class of diverse RNAs that have colonized and gone unnoticed in human and global microbiomes.
- Named after the highly symmetrical, rod-like structures formed by their twisted lengths of RNA, the Obelisks' genetic sequences are only around 1,000 characters (nucleotides) in size.
- These mysterious bits of genetic material have no detectable sequences or even structural similarities known to any other biological agents.
- They're also significantly larger than other genetic molecules that coexist inside cells, from plants to bacteria, called plasmids, which are more commonly composed of DNA.
- Obelisks represent their own class of organism. They lie somewhere between viruses and viroids.
- Although the hosts of other obelisks remain unknown, there is a possibility that some of them may be found in bacteria.
- Different types of Obelisks appear to be present in different areas of our bodies.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. With reference to Atmospheric Rivers consider the following statements

1. They are long, concentrated regions in the atmosphere that transport moist air from the tropics to higher latitudes.
2. They are the largest transport mechanisms of freshwater on Earth.
3. Pineapple Express operates in the Atlantic Ocean.

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

1. The Suez Canal, situated in Israel, is a natural waterway that facilitates navigation between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.
2. Bab el Mandeb, a strait located at the southern end of the Red Sea, connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

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. With reference to the National Credit Framework (NCrF), consider the following statements

1. It seamlessly integrates the credits earned through general (school, higher education) and vocational and skill education.
2. It validates home-schooling students by giving them diplomas and certificates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q4. With reference to Codex Alimentarius Commission, consider the following statements

1. It was jointly established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme.

2. Its standards are recognized by the World Trade Organisation for the resolution of disputes.
3. It contributes to harmonisation of food standards across the globe.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements with respect to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

1. It is a statutory organisation constituted under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
2. It aims to improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country.

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding Candida auris (C. auris)

1. It is an emerging multidrug-resistant bacterium that represents a global health threat.
2. The symptoms vary depending on the site and severity of the infection.
3. It is primarily contracted in healthcare settings such as hospitals and nursing homes.

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

1. Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) was launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Rural Development.
2. An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.

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 services

- 1. Supplementary Nutrition
- 2. Pre-school non-formal education
- 3. Nutrition and health education
- 4. Immunization
- 5. Referral services

How many of the services mentioned above are offered under the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) Scheme?

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

Q9. Consider the following statements about Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

- 1. The Kaladan Project would link India and Myanmar via the Bay of Bengal linking Kolkata with the Sittwe seaport in Rakhine state in Myanmar
- 2. It is being constructed by India under the Grant in Aid Scheme.
- 3. It provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby reducing pressure on the Siliguri Corridor.

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 the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, consider the following statements

- 1. The Bill outlines at least 15 actions constituting unfair means in public examinations.
- 2. The bill contains the definition of Public Examinations.
- 3. All offences under the Bill are non-cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable.

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

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Atmospheric Rivers are long, concentrated regions in the atmosphere that transport moist air from the tropics to higher latitudes. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- They are responsible for 90% of the movement of moisture from the tropics toward the poles.
- They are the largest transport mechanisms of freshwater on Earth. **Hence, Statement 2 is correct.**
- They form when large-scale weather patterns align to create narrow channels, or filaments, of intense moisture transport.
- A well-known and strong one is the Pineapple Express, with moisture transported from the tropical Pacific around Hawaii to the US and Canadian West Coasts. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Red Sea is a crucial waterway that links the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean.
- It serves as a vital trade route for maritime commerce, connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia.
- The Suez Canal is a vital artificial canal in Egypt that connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It plays a pivotal role in global trade, providing a shortcut for ships travelling between Europe and Asia.
- Bab el Mandeb is a strategically important strait situated at the southern entrance of the Red Sea.
- It connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and ultimately to the Arabian Sea.
- This maritime passage is crucial for vessels navigating between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Answer 3 Option C is correct

Explanation

- NCrf is a set of guidelines that schools, colleges, and universities must adhere to when implementing the credit system.
- It will seamlessly integrate the credits earned through general (school, higher education) and vocational and skill education. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- It provides multiple entry and exit options to a student who wants to leave school or enrol in vocational learning.
- It will validate home-schooling students by giving them diplomas and certificates. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- NCrf divides the educational ecosystem into 8 levels from Class 5 to PhD level and assigns credit on the basis of learning hours.
- All the credits earned by a learner through all the forms, streams, and levels of learning would be stored (a digital repository) in the ABC (introduced just for higher education) to enable the transfer of credits across higher education institutions.

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) is jointly established by FAO and WHO, and is tasked with formulating internationally accepted food standards. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It is an international, intergovernmental body which is based in Rome.
- Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO which are interested in international food standards.
- The Commission meets in regular sessions once a year, alternating between Geneva and Rome.
- Funding: Through the regular budgets of WHO and FAO, with all work subject to the approval of the two governing bodies of the parent organisations.
- CAC standards are recognized by the WTO as international reference points for resolving food safety and consumer protection disputes. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- These standards, including those developed by CCSC, are voluntary and member countries of the CAC adopt and use them as reference standards to align their national standards.
- It contributes to harmonising food standards globally, promoting fair trade, and enhancing food safety. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 5 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- CPCB is a statutory organisation which was constituted in 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It serves as a field formation and also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Functions
 - To promote cleanliness of streams and wells in different areas of the States by prevention, control and abatement of water pollution.
 - To improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Answer 6 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Candida auris (C. auris) is an emerging multidrug-resistant yeast (fungus) that represents a global health threat. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Scientists first discovered C. auris in Japan in 2009, since then, it has spread quickly to other countries.
- It can cause infections in various parts of the body, including the bloodstream, open wounds, and ears.
- The symptoms vary depending on the site and severity of the infection, and it can be challenging to distinguish from bacterial infections. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Individuals may carry Candida auris without showing symptoms, a condition known as colonization.
- It is primarily contracted in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Most C. auris infections are treatable with antifungal drugs.
- However, some C. auris infections have been resistant to all three main classes of

antifungal medications' often requiring the use of combination therapies.

Answer 7 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) was launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The mission was implemented as a nationwide campaign/Janandolan which aimed at eliminating open defecation in rural areas.
- An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The ODF+ status is given if at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained.
- The ODF++ status is given if the area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge and sewage into the open drains, water bodies or areas.

Answer 8 Option D is correct**Explanation**

- Launched in 1975, the ICDS scheme is one of the world's largest programmes providing an integrated package of services for the holistic development of the child.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented by state governments and union territories.
- Beneficiaries: Children in the age group of 0-6 years; Pregnant women and; Lactating mothers.
- The ICDS Scheme offers a package of six services, viz. Supplementary Nutrition, Pre-school non-formal education, Nutrition & health education, Immunization, Health check-up and Referral services. **Hence, option D is correct.**

Answer 9 Option D is correct**Explanation**

- The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project aims to link India and Myanmar via the Bay of Bengal.
- It was jointly identified by India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal mode of transport for the shipment of cargo from the eastern ports of India to Myanmar as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.
- Once completed, it will link Kolkata with the Sittwe seaport in Rakhine state in Myanmar, primarily over the Bay of Bengal – covering over 500 km. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is being constructed by India under the Grant in Aid Scheme. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The project is expected to contribute to the economic development of the North-Eastern States of India.
- It also provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby reducing pressure on the

Siliguri Corridor. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 10 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- Objective: To ensure fairness, transparency, and credibility in public examinations by preventing the use of unfair means.
- Section 3 of the Bill outlines at least 15 actions constituting unfair means in public examinations “for monetary or wrongful gain”. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - These include question paper leaks, tampering with answer sheets, directly or indirectly assisting the candidate etc.
- Under Section 2(k), a “public examination” is defined as any examination conducted by a “public examination authority” listed in the Schedule of the Bill or any “such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government”. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Section 9 of the Bill states that all offences under the Bill are cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

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