

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



Date: 6 Oct. 2023

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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Shah calls for uniform anti-terrorism structure under NIA in all States - The Hindu

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

News:

- Recently, Union Home Minister proposed to set up a “**Model Anti-terrorism Structure**” under the purview of **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**,
- It is to be **followed by the States for better coordination** in the fight against terror.

Prelims Takeaway

- Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System
- National Crime Records Bureau

Key Points

- The government has prepared many database verticals in the last 5 years and both the Centre and State agencies should make **multidimensional and AI-based use of the data to successfully fight against terrorism**.
- The **database should be used by every police station and officers** for investigation, prosecution, prevention and action.
- **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** — CCTNS have been implemented in 99.93 per cent cases in 16,733 police stations.
- Similarly, as many as **22,000 courts have been connected to e-Court** and about 2 crore prisoner data is available through e-Prison, 1 crore through e-Prosecution.
- The **National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)** has more than 90 lakh fingerprint records.
- Under **Integrated Monitoring of Terrorism (i-MoT)**, **data of 22 thousand terrorist cases is available** for monitoring UAPA registered cases.
- Data of more than **5 lakh narco-offenders is available under NIDAN**, i.e. National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-Offenders.

Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System

- ICJS is a **national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system** used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country.
- It seeks **to integrate the five pillars of the system:**
 - Police (through Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems)
 - e-Forensics for Forensic Labs
 - e-Courts for Courts
 - e-Prosecution for Public Prosecutors
 - e-Prisons for Prisons
- The **ICJS system would be made available through a dedicated** and secure cloud-based infrastructure with high speed connectivity.
- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** will be responsible for **the implementation of the project in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- The project will be **implemented in collaboration with the States and Union Territories**.

2. Bangladesh gets its first batch of uranium - The Hindu/ Bangladesh receives first uranium consignment for Russia-built nuclear plant - Indian Express

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

News:

- **Bangladesh received the first uranium delivery for its Russia-backed nuclear plant**, a project aimed at bolstering its overstretched energy grid but complicated by sanctions on Moscow.

Prelims Takeaway

- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- Nuclear energy

Nuclear energy

- It is the **energy in the nucleus, or core, of an atom**.
- Nuclear energy can be **used to create electricity**, but it must first be released from the atom.
- In the **process of nuclear fission**, atoms are split to release that energy.
- A nuclear reactor, or **power plant**, is a series of machines that can control nuclear fission to produce electricity.
- The fuel that nuclear reactors use to produce nuclear fission is **pellets of the element uranium**.
- In a **nuclear reactor**, atoms of uranium are forced to break apart.
- As they split, the **atoms release tiny particles called fission products**.
- Fission products **cause other uranium atoms to split**, starting a chain reaction. The energy released from this chain reaction creates heat

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

- It is commonly known as the **Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT**, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology,
- **Objective:** to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament
- **Four UN member states have never accepted the NPT**
 - Three of which possess or are thought to possess nuclear weapons: India, Israel, and Pakistan.
- In addition, **South Sudan, founded in 2011, has not joined**.

GS III

3. India expanding censorship regime, creating uneven playing field: study - The Hindu

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

News:

- According to a new **report by Freedom House**, a Washington DC-based non-profit, **global Internet freedom has declined for the 13th consecutive year**.
- The **environment for human rights online has deteriorated** in 29 countries, with only 20 countries registering net gains.

Prelims Takeaway

- Article 19
- Artificial intelligence

Key Highlights

- The report by **Freedom House** titled '**Freedom on the Net 2023: The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence**
- It has **raised a red flag on the increasing use of artificial intelligence by governments** for censorship and spread of disinformation.
- As per the report, the **sharpest rise in digital repression was witnessed in Iran**, where authorities shut down Internet service, and increased surveillance in a bid to quell anti-government protests.
- **China, for the ninth straight year**, ranked as the **world's worst environment for Internet freedom**, with Myanmar the world's second most repressive for online freedom.
- The number of **countries where authorities carry out widespread arrests** and impose multi-year prison terms for online activity has risen sharply over the past decade, from 18 in 2014 to 31 in 2023.

- The report also **detailed how elections were a trigger for digital repression.**
- Ahead of election periods, “many incumbent leaders criminalised broad categories of speech and imposed other controls over the flow of information to sway balloting in their favor.

India and Freedom on the Net :

- Indian **Prime Ministers have incorporated censorship**, including the use of automated systems, into the country’s legal framework.
- The **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules require large social media platforms to use AI-based moderation** tools for broadly defined types of content
- **India** also figured among the list of countries that **blocked websites hosting political, social, or religious content.**
- Deliberately disrupted ICT networks, **used pro-government commentators to manipulate online discussions**, and conducted “technical attacks against government critics or human rights organisations”.
- **On a range of 1 to 100 where ‘100’ represented highest digital freedom and ‘1’ the worst repression**
- **India scored 50, while Iceland, with 94, emerged as the country with the best climate of Internet freedom.**

Internet freedom

The table lists scores on Internet freedom for select countries according to Freedom House’s “Freedom on the Net” report. Rankings are on a scale of 100 to 0 with 100 being most free

Country	Status	Total score
Iceland	Free	94
U.K.	Free	79
Germany	Free	77
U.S	Free	76
Brazil	Partly free	64
Sri Lanka	Partly free	52
India	Partly free	50
Pakistan	Not free	26



4. China to double space station size, floats an alternative to ISS - Indian Express

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

News:

- China **plans to expand its space station to six modules** from three in coming years
- **Offering astronauts from other nations an alternative platform** for near-Earth missions as the NASA-led International Space Station (ISS) nears the end of its lifespan.

Prelims Takeaway

- NASA
- International Space Station (ISS)

Key Points

- The **operational lifetime of the Chinese space station will be more than 15 years**
- China's **self-built space station, also known as Tiangong**, or Celestial Palace in Chinese, has been fully operational since late 2022
- It is **hosting a maximum of three astronauts** at an orbital altitude of up to 450 km (280 miles).

- At 180 metric tons after its expansion to six modules, **Tiangong is still just 40% of the mass of the ISS**, which can hold a crew of seven astronauts.
- **Russia, a participant in the ISS**, has similar space diplomacy plans
- **Moscow's partners in the BRICS group - Brazil, India, China and South Africa** - could construct a module for its space station.

International Space Station (ISS)

- The ISS is the most complex international scientific and engineering project in history and **the largest structure humans have ever put into space**.
- As a permanently occupied outpost in outer space, it serves as a **stepping stone for further space exploration**.
- The space station flies at **an average altitude of 400 kilometers above Earth**.
- It circles the **globe every 90 min. at a speed of about 28,000 kph**.
- In one day, the station travels about the **distance it would take to go from Earth to the moon and back**.
- The space station **can rival the brilliant planet Venus in brightness and appears as a bright moving light across the night sky**.
- Five different space agencies representing 15 countries built the USD 100-billion International Space Station and continue to operate it today.
- It consists of modules and connecting nodes that **contain living quarters and laboratories, as well as exterior trusses that provide structural support, and solar panels that provide power**.
- The **first module, Russia's Zarya module, launched in 1998**.
- The **space station reached its full six-person crew size in 2009** as new modules, laboratories and facilities were brought online.
- Current **plans call for the space station to be operated through at least 2020**.
- NASA has requested **an extension until 2024**.

5. NIIF unveils \$600 mn India-Japan Fund - The Hindu

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

News:

- The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund has entered into a collaboration with Japan Bank for **International Cooperation (JBIC) to unveil a \$600 million India-Japan Fund**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Alternative Investment Fund
- Securities and Exchange Board of India

Key points

- The fund will have **JBIC and Government of India as anchor investors**.
- It will **focus on investing in environmental sustainability** and low carbon emission strategies
- **Objective:** aims to play the role of being a 'partner of choice' to further enhance Japanese investments into India
- The announcement **marks NIIF's first bilateral fund, with GoI contributing 49%** of the target corpus and the remaining 51% contributed by JBIC.
- The fund **will be managed by NIIF Limited (NIIFL), and JBIC IG** (a subsidiary of JBIC) will support NIIFL in promoting Japanese investments in India.
- The setting up of the **India-Japan Fund represents a key milestone** in the strategic and economic partnership between the Japanese government and GoI.
- The **₹40,000-crore NIIF was set up in December 2015 as an institution for enhancing infrastructure** financing by investing in greenfield (new), brownfield (existing) and stalled projects.
- The fund was set up as **Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**.
- NIIF manages **three funds with distinct strategies** – Master Fund, Fund of Funds and Strategic Opportunities Fund.

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

- NIIF is an **investor-owned fund manager, anchored by the Government of India (GoI)** in collaboration with leading global and domestic institutional investors.

- The Indian government has a **49 % stake in NIIF with the rest held by marquee foreign and domestic investors.**
- NIIF was **set up as an alternative investment fund (AIF)** in 2015 with a planned corpus of ₹40,000 crore.
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai.
- **Objective:** To provide long-term capital to the country's infrastructure sector.
- **NIIF currently manages three funds** each with its distinctive investment mandate namely
 - Master fund,
 - Fund Of Funds and
 - Strategic Fund.
- The funds are registered as **Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)** with the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).**

6. Services PMI signals September boost - The Hindu/ Services activity at 13-yr high in Sept on strong demand - Indian Express

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

News:

- As per the **S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), India's services sector activity gained momentum** in September.
- With **new orders rising at the second fastest rate** since June 2010, it moved up to 61.
- Even though it is **slightly lower than the 13-year high** of 62.3 in July, it still **indicated one of the strongest upticks in output in 13 years.**

Prelims Takeaway

- Purchasing Managers Index
- Sovereign Credit Ratings
- S & P Global

Buoyant services

The Purchasing Managers' Index shows services activity added momentum last month with the PMI rising to 61 from 60.1



■ September's reading indicates one of the strongest upticks in 13 years

■ With input costs cooling, services firms raised prices at the slowest pace in 6 months

■ Growth in new international orders slowed to a three-month low

Purchasing Managers Index

- It is a **survey-based measure** that asks the respondents about **changes in their perception** about key business variables as compared with the previous month.
- **Purpose:** To provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.
- It is **calculated separately** for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a **composite index** is also constructed.

- It does not capture **informal sector activity**.
- The PMI is a number from **0 to 100**.
 - A print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.
 - A reading at 50 indicates no change.

Significance of PMI

- It is considered a **good leading indicator** of economic activity.
 - It is usually released at the start of every month.
- Central banks of many countries also use the index to **help make decisions on interest rates**.
- It also gives an **indication of corporate earnings** and is closely watched by investors as well as the bond markets.
- A good reading of index **enhances the attractiveness of an economy** vis-a-vis another competing economy.

7. Even platypuses aren't safe from bushfires - a new DNA study tracks their disappearance - Down to Earth

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- According to research, **platypuses are disappearing from waterways** after the **Black Summer bushfires** swept across eastern Australia in 2019–20.

Prelims Takeaway

- Platypus
- IUCN

Platypus

- It is a **duck-billed, beaver-tailed, otter-footed, egg-laying mammal**.
 - They are a **species of monotremes but lay eggs**.
 - They're **one of only five species of mammals that lay eggs** - the other four are echidnas.
- **Habitat:** In waterways throughout the **east coast of Australia**, from Cooktown in northern Queensland to Tasmania.
- They are **solitary animals** that, despite occupying overlapping home ranges, only **come together during the breeding season**.
- They are **carnivorous mammals** whose diet consists almost solely of **bottom-dwelling aquatic creatures**.
- They are **nocturnal hunters**.
- **IUCN Status:** Near Threatened

Appearance

- The platypus is an animal with a **small, streamlined body** that is covered in **short and dense waterproof fur**.
- They have **electroreceptors in their bills** to help them **find food in rivers and streams**.
- They have **webbed feet for swimming**.
- Male platypuses have a **spur on the inner side of each ankle** that is **connected to a venom gland** located over the thighs.

Impact of bushfire

- Research shows **aquatic invertebrates** (animals with no backbones) **and fish can be harmed by bushfire, especially when rain follows fire**.
- **Bushfires burn and kill the vegetation** that stabilizes the soil around rivers or streams.
- When rain follows fire, a **lot of ash, soil and other debris can be washed** into waterways.
- The **water chemistry might change** or there might be **big increases in sediment**.
- This makes the river or stream **inhospitable for invertebrates and fish**.
- As platypuses feed on **aquatic invertebrates** such as yabbies, these **flow on effects of fire could also impact them**.

8. Tarantula endemic to the Nilgiris could be under threat from habitat loss, climate change: Researchers - The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

News:

- Recently, researchers said that the **Haploclostus nilgirinus**, a species of tarantula, could be under threat by the **illegal trade in wildlife**.

Haploclostus nilgirinus

- It is an **elusive Nilgiri large burrowing spider** and a **venomous species of tarantula**, which is rarely seen.
- It is **endemic to the Nilgiris hills of Western Ghats**, it is highly sought-after in the pet trade.
- It shows **sexual dimorphism**, the males are much smaller than the females.
- It is threatened by the **illegal trade in wildlife, habitat loss and climate change**.

Tarantula

- They are a type of **large, hairy spider** belonging to the **family Theraphosidae**.
- There are over 900 species of tarantulas **found all over the world, except for Antarctica**.
- They **move slowly** on their eight hairy legs, but they are accomplished **nocturnal predators**.

Nilgiri Hills

- These hills are part of the **Western Ghat mountain range** and run across the **Southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala**.
- The **peaks** of the Nilgiri **rise abruptly from the surrounding plains** to an elevation of about 6,000–8,000 feet.
- The hills are **separated from the Karnataka Plateau (north) by the Noyar River** and from the **Annamalai and Palni hills (south) by the Palghat Gap**.
- They are **considerably cooler and wetter than the surrounding plains**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Haploclostus nilgirinus
- Tarantula
- Nilgiri Hills



Mentorship
India

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. The Value of Their Work - Indian Express

Relevance: Social

Context:

- It is disheartening that **India recorded one of the lowest female labour force participation rates (LFPR) in the world.**
- It was **even lower than other South Asian countries** except Afghanistan and Pakistan

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data on Status of Women

- As per data, for women in the working age group (15-59 years), LFPR is only 35.6 percent in India.
- The participation rate is 39.3 percent and 26.5 percent, respectively, in rural and urban areas in 2021-22.
- Notably, from 2017 to 2021, women's LFPR increased relative to men, particularly in rural areas.
 - This is because of the larger engagement of rural women in agriculture and allied activities.
- Education and age group-wise classification of LFPR reveals that the recent increase in rural women's LFPR is entirely explained by the increase in self-employment.
- Nearly three-fourth of rural working women were involved in agriculture and allied activities.
 - More than half worked as unpaid family helpers during 2021-22.
- Married women were more prone to taking on the role of unpaid family helpers or engaging in domestic chores.

The Wage Gap

- Rural women working as regular and casual wage workers faced a higher gender wage gap compared to urban women.
- Self-employed women received less than half of men's earnings, indicating a higher gender earning gap as compared to other categories of workers in rural areas.
- For the self-employed, this gap has further deteriorated from 2017 to 2021.

Unpaid work of Women

- A significant proportion of women are involved in unpaid yet essential activities and are not considered within the labour force in India.
- This proportion declined from 60 percent in 2017-18 to 46 percent in 2021-22 because of the decline in women's engagement in only domestic chores, in rural areas.
- However, one third of women remain engaged in unpaid domestic chores in 2021-22.
- The Time Use Survey (2019) reveals that on average women spend
 - over five hours everyday in unpaid domestic services
 - more than two hours in unpaid caregiving services in rural areas
 - over seven hours everyday growing crops for the market and household use in 2019

Rural Women in Agriculture

- Despite their crucial role in agriculture, the agriculture census (2015-16) reported that only 14.7 percent of the operational landholdings were owned by women.
- There is also a concentration of operational holdings (57 percent) by women in the marginal and small holding categories.
- Owning land can enable women to get access to different agricultural schemes, compensation and relief measures in case of crop loss to sustain their livelihood.
- The gender-wise beneficiary data highlights
 - Only 15 percent of women farmers received financial support from Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in 2023
 - Only 25 percent of women farmers received financial benefits under PM-KISAN.
- Since landowning is the major criterion for getting benefits of these two schemes, many women farmers end up excluded.

Conclusion

- The **unpaid, unaccounted and underpaid contribution of rural women**, not only in agriculture but the **overall rural economy, must be counted.**
- This should include the **inclusion of landless, marginal women farmers in government agricultural schemes to combat gender inequality** in rural India.

2. A bank for the future - Indian Express

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

Context:

- Today, in several parts of India, **ideas are being incubated** that are leading to the **production of novel public goods** for people all over the world.
- The **banking and financial sector has been at the forefront** of the transformative journey of the world's largest democracy.

India's banking Sector

- The past 25 years have seen high growth and stability, even in the face of numerous challenges.
 - Like the dotcom bubble, the September 11 attacks, the 2008 financial crisis, the European debt crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine War.
- India's banking and financial sector has not been untouched by these forces.
 - The Covid-19 pandemic caused widespread devastation of lives and livelihoods.
 - The war in Ukraine has compounded the situation.
- Over the last 75 years, banking in India has matured into a vibrant sector.
- The reforms over the past 30 years have been a critical enabler.
- The following have increased the diversity quotient of the financial sector and made it inclusive
 - Consolidation in the public sector banking space
 - The emergence of private banks, specialised non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)
 - The emerging fintech ecosystem
- Banks have left behind the legacy issues of non-performing assets (NPAs) and weathered most exogenous shocks.
- Internal accruals have become a source of growth capital.
- With credit costs bottoming out, it is expected that loan growth will be healthy in the coming years.

Banking sector and Technology

- Banks in India today are at the cutting edge of technology adoption.
- Universal coverage of banking through Jan Dhan and the widespread use of technology to deliver financial services through digital channels have transformed finance.
- Products like mobile banking applications, retail electronic fund transfers, UPI, Aadhaar e-KYC, Bharat Bill Payment System, scan and pay and digital pre-paid instruments have transformed traditional branch banking.
- The emergence of public financial platforms is going to give further impetus to banking services.
- The Indian banking system is currently moving towards a knowledge-based regime, enabled by AI and cognitive computing across all business functions and processes.
- The deployment of AI-enabled capabilities can help banks
 - to personalise customer engagement
 - to increase their ability to develop a deeper understanding of customers

Associated Challenges

- The fast pace of technological change and the structural transformation of the economy create regulatory blind spots and vulnerabilities.
- The digitalisation has also opened several concerns, from the mushrooming of unregulated digital lending apps to crypto-currencies and cyber-attacks.
- Ease of banking now comes with added responsibility of
 - ensuring the availability of critical support infrastructure for a secured payment settlement system, ATMs, internet/ mobile banking
 - dealing with cyber security risks
 - addressing customer grievances

Climate Change and Banking sector

- Climate change has emerged as a major challenge for banks.
- The associated "equal but differentiated responsibility" of every nation has given rise to many initiatives which will drive the decarbonisation efforts.
- This opens up new business opportunities in renewables, city gas distribution, green hydrogen and trade in green goods to meet the challenge of net-zero transition.
- Banks are expected to be major financiers in the fight against climate change.
- Risk management practices of banks have to account for this new risk, more so when methodological and data challenges are significant.

Human Resource and Financial Sector

- In addition to technology, the main differentiator for success in the coming years will be the quality of human resources.
- With a dynamic and rapidly changing environment, the skill gap is widening.
- To address this, banks and financial institutions have to attract, train and retain talent.
- There is today a greater need for employees to be flexible, agile, open to new technologies and proactively pick up new skills to remain useful.
- Consequently, upskilling and reskilling of human resources is a sine qua non to face the emerging challenges.
- This is where capacity building will play a major role in the financial sector.
- Apart from training, the financial services sector has to invest in research and be open to accepting and developing out-of-box ideas for
 - seamless service delivery
 - hyper-personalisation of products
- Banks and financial institutions will have to consider in-house data science labs or sandbox environments to test out innovative ideas.

Conclusion

- Recent policy initiatives of the government have **addressed market failures by creating institutions which provide stability to the banking sector** in the long run.
- Such initiatives include the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, the creation of NaBFID and NARCL** etc.
- Therefore, the banking sector is leading the journey towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat, for equitable and sustainable development benefiting all.

Quick Look

1. Dynamic Injunction

- An injunction is an official order given by a law court, usually to stop someone from doing something.
- However, in most cases, such injunctions are granted by the court only after the court identifies the work and determines the plaintiff's copyright in that work.
- To avoid this cumbersome process and grant protection to copyrighted works in a timely manner, courts sometimes rely on the concept of dynamic injunctions.
- A dynamic injunction is passed to protect copyrighted works even before they are publicly released, distributed, or created.
- It ensures that no irreparable loss is caused to its authors and owner, owing to the imminent possibility of such works being uploaded on rogue websites or their newer versions immediately after their creation or release, given the challenges posed by online piracy.

2. Chenab Bridge

- Located between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is the highest single-arch railway bridge in the world.
- It is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project.
- The bridge has been designed with a life span of 120 years.
- It has been designed to withstand high wind speeds of up to 266 Kmph.
- It is capable of withstanding the nation's maximum intensity zone-V earthquake forces.

3. Very Short-Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) Missile system

- It is a Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) specially designed to counter low-altitude aerial threats over short distances.
- These are short-range, lightweight, and portable surface-to-air missiles that can be fired by individuals or small groups.
- It has been designed and developed indigenously by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian industry partners.
- The use of VSHORAD missiles in India is primarily by the Indian Army.
- Features
 - It is designed to provide short-range air defense capabilities to protect ground forces and critical assets from aerial threats, including helicopters and low-flying aircraft.
 - The missile incorporates many novel technologies, including a Dual-band IIR Seeker, a miniaturized Reaction Control System, and integrated avionics.
 - It is propelled by a dual-thrust solid motor.
 - Its portability enables their quick deployment over difficult terrain.

4. Unlawful activities (Prevention) Act

- UAPA passed in 1967, aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
 - Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government.
- Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged.
- It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India.

- The 2004 amendment added "terrorist act" to the list of offences.
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 designated individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
- The Act empowers the Director General of National Investigation Agency (NIA) to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
- It empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in the state.

5. Enforcement Directorate (ED)

- Established in the year 1956 as an 'Enforcement Unit' under the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
- Renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate' in 1957.
- Under the administrative control of the Department of Revenue (Ministry of Finance) for operational purposes.
- Responsible for enforcement of the Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 (FEMA), and certain provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 (PMLA).



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System

1. ICJS is a national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country.
2. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will be responsible for the implementation of the project in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC).
3. The project will be implemented in collaboration with the States and Union Territories.

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 about the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

1. Its objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology
2. India, Israel, and Pakistan and North Korea have never accepted the treaty

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. A legislation which confers on the executive or administrative authority an unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power in the matter of the application of law violates which one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India?

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 28
- C. Article 32
- D. Article 44

Q4. Consider the following statements about International Space Station (ISS)

1. The space station flies at an average altitude of 400 kilometers above Earth.
2. It circles the globe every 90 min. at a speed of about 28,000 kph.
3. In one day, the station travels about the distance it would take to go from Earth to the moon and back.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

1. NIIF currently manages three funds Master fund, Fund Of Funds and Strategic Fund.
2. The funds are registered as Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

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. Which of the following describe the term "endemic species" ?

- A. Species that are found in multiple regions around the world.
- B. Species that are native and restricted to a specific geographic area or region.
- C. Species that have recently become extinct.
- D. Species that have been artificially created through genetic engineering.

Q7. Consider the following statements with reference to Platypus.

1. It is the only species of mammals that lay eggs.
2. It is indigenous to the eastern coast of Australia..

3. They have electroreceptors in their bills to help them find food in rivers and streams.
4. They are classified as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List.

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

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

Q8. Haploclastus nilgirinus, seen in the news recently, is endemic to which of the following regions?

- A. Western Ghats
- B. The Himalayas
- C. Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- D. Semi-arid areas of North-West India

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

1. It is formulated under the Ministry of Finance.
2. The scheme is mandatory for the loanee farmers.
3. It aims to provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the

notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases.

How many of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

Q10. Consider the following statements about Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC)

1. They can accept demand deposits.
2. They can issue cheques drawn on itself.
3. They can do activities like agricultural, industrial, sale & purchase and construction of immovable property.
4. Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is available to depositors of NBFCs.

How many of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

Prelims Track Answer**Ans. 1 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- ICJS is a national platform for enabling integration of the main IT system used for delivery of Criminal Justice in the country. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The ICJS system would be made available through a dedicated and secure cloud-based infrastructure with high speed connectivity.
- National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will be responsible for the implementation of the project in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The project will be implemented in collaboration with the States and Union Territories. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 2 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- It is commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Objective: to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament
- Four UN member states have never accepted the NPT
- Three of which possess or are thought to possess nuclear weapons: India, Israel, and Pakistan. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- In addition, South Sudan, founded in 2011, has not joined.

Ans. 3 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- Violation of Article 14
- When a legislation confers unguided and uncontrolled discretionary power on the executive or administrative authority in the application of the law, it violates Article 14 of the Constitution. **Hence, option A is correct.**

Ans. 4 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- The ISS is the most complex international scientific and engineering project in history and the largest structure humans have ever put into space.

- As a permanently occupied outpost in outer space, it serves as a stepping stone for further space exploration.
- The space station flies at an average altitude of 400 kilometers above Earth. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It circles the globe every 90 min. at a speed of about 28,000 kph. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In one day, the station travels about the distance it would take to go from Earth to the moon and back. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The space station can rival the brilliant planet Venus in brightness and appears as a bright moving light across the night sky.

Ans. 5 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- NIIF is an investor-owned fund manager, anchored by the Government of India (GoI) in collaboration with leading global and domestic institutional investors.
- The Indian government has a 49 % stake in NIIF with the rest held by marquee foreign and domestic investors.
- NIIF was set up as an alternative investment fund (AIF) in 2015 with a planned corpus of ₹40,000 crore.
- NIIF currently manages three funds each with its distinctive investment mandate namely Master fund, Fund Of Funds and Strategic Fund. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The funds are registered as Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

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

- An endemic species is a species which is restricted geographically to a particular area. **Hence, Option B is correct.**
- Endemism is not to be confused with indigenous, a term which refers to the origins of a species.

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

- Platypus is a duck-billed, beaver-tailed, otter-footed, egg-laying mammal.
- They're one of only five species of mammals that lay eggs - the other four are echidnas. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**

- Habitat: In waterways throughout the east coast of Australia, from Cooktown in northern Queensland to Tasmania. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- They are solitary animals that, despite occupying overlapping home ranges, only come together during the breeding season.
- They are nocturnal hunters.
- They have electroreceptors in their bills to help them find food in rivers and streams. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- IUCN Status: Near Threatened **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect.**

Ans. 8 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Haploclastus nilgirinus is an elusive Nilgiri large burrowing spider and a venomous species of tarantula, which is rarely seen.
- It is endemic to the Nilgiris hills of Western Ghats, it is highly sought-after in the pet trade. **Hence, Option A is correct**
- It shows sexual dimorphism, the males are much smaller than the females.
- It is threatened by the illegal trade in wildlife, habitat loss and climate change.

Ans. 9 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, launched in 2016, is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It replaced the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).
- Farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.
- It aims to provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event

of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

- The scheme was once mandatory for loanee farmers, but in 2020, the Centre changed it to make it optional for all farmers. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Centre decided in February 2020 to limit its premium subsidy to 30% for unirrigated areas and 25% for irrigated ones.
- Previously, the central subsidy had no upper limit.

Ans. 10 Option D is correct

Explanation

- NBFCs (Non-Banking Financial Companies) are a heterogeneous group of institutions (other than commercial and co-operative banks) performing financial intermediation in a variety of ways, like accepting deposits, making loans and advances, leasing, hire purchase, etc.
- They cannot have certain activities as their principal business like agricultural, industrial and sale, purchase or construction of immovable property. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- NBFC cannot accept demand deposits. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect.**

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