

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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1. SC asks Centre to give details of inflow of 'illegal' migrants - The Hindu
2. Russia, Saudi urge OPEC+ powers to join oil cuts after Putin-MbS meet - Indian Express
3. EU tells China 'differences' must be addressed; Italy pulls out of BRI pact - The Hindu/ Only major Western nation to join, Italy leaves China's Belt and Road Initiative - Indian Express
4. Reservation policy need not be followed, merit must be sole criterion for appointment of law officers: HC - The Hindu
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7. COP28 enters 2nd week, but all complex issues unresolved - Indian Express

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Important News Articles

GS II

1. SC asks Centre to give details of inflow of 'illegal' migrants - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Supreme Court, expressed concerns over the perceived impact of an **"unlimited influx" of illegal migrants** from Bangladesh on India's demographics and resources.

Prelims Takeaway

- 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees

Key Points

Details of Section 6A

- Section 6A categorises immigration** from Bangladesh into three periods.
 - Those entering before January 1, 1966, were deemed Indian citizens.
 - Those between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971, could be registered under conditions.
 - Those entering after March 25, 1971, were considered illegal and subject to deportation.

Illegal Migrants Vs Refugee

Illegal Migrants

- The **foreign nationals** who enter the country **without valid travel documents** are treated as illegal migrants.

Refugee

- The word refugee pertains to any person who is **outside their country of origin** and unable or unwilling to return owing to a well-founded fear of persecution

Reason

- Fear of persecution for reasons of **race, religion, nationality**, membership of a particular **social group or political opinion**.
- It is defined under the **1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees** and the subsequent 1967 Protocol
- India is not a signatory** to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon.
- Stateless persons** may also be refugees in this sense, where country of origin (citizenship) is understood as 'country of former habitual residence'.

2. Russia, Saudi urge OPEC+ powers to join oil cuts after Putin-MbS meet - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Russian President and the Saudi Crown met in Riyadh** to discuss various issues, including energy cooperation.
- The joint statement released after their talks emphasised **the successful efforts of OPEC+** in stabilising global oil markets.

Prelims Takeaway

- OPEC+

Key Points

Call for OPEC+ Unity

- The leaders called for all **OPEC+ members to join/agree/adhere to the recent agreement** on voluntary oil output cuts.
- Messaging to OPEC+ Members:
 - The explicit **call to "join" the cuts is seen as a message to OPEC+** members, particularly those who have not cut or not cut enough.

Iran's Exclusion

- Iran, not part of the cuts, is **looking to boost oil production** despite U.S. sanctions.

- OPEC+ Discord and Market Impact:
- The **OPEC+ meeting faced delays and disagreements**, leading to concerns within the oil market.
- The joint efforts by **Russia and Saudi Arabia aim to address these concerns**, ensuring stability and preventing further drops in oil prices.

3. EU tells China 'differences' must be addressed; Italy pulls out of BRI pact - The Hindu/ Only major Western nation to join, Italy leaves China's Belt and Road Initiative - Indian Express

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

News:

- **Italy** has officially communicated to China its **decision to withdraw from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

Prelims Takeaway

- Belt and Road Initiative

Key Points

Italy's BRI Participation

- In 2019, **Italy became the first major Western nation to join the BRI**,
 - Despite concerns from the United States about China gaining control over sensitive technologies and vital infrastructure.

Expiration of 2019 Accord

- The **2019 agreement** between Italy and China under the BRI is **set to expire in March 2024**.

G7 Presidency in 2024

- Italy, despite leaving the BRI, is set to **assume the presidency of the G7** in 2024.
- This adds a diplomatic dimension to **Italy's relations with China and other G7 nations**.

4. Reservation policy need not be followed, merit must be sole criterion for appointment of law officers: HC - The Hindu

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

News:

- The Madras High Court, in a recent verdict, emphasized that **the rule of reservation need not be applied** in the appointment of law officers.

Prelims Takeaway

- 16(4) of the Constitution

Key Points

- The court asserted that **merit should be the primary criterion** for such appointments
 - Because of the professional nature of the relationship between the government and law officers.

Legal Background

- Law officers engaged by the government **do not hold civil posts**, Article **16(4) of the Constitution**, relating to reservations, is not applicable.

Court's Ruling

- The court emphasised that the **government's duty to protect public interest** mandates the engagement of the most competent and meritorious lawyers.
- Therefore, **the appointment process should prioritise merit**, and reservations need not be applied.

Transparency in Selection

- The court stressed that the **methodology for selecting law officers should be transparent**.

5. UGC nod soon for short-term courses - The Hindu

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

News:

- **Higher education institutions (HEIs)** will soon have the freedom to introduce **short-term, credit-linked skill development certificate courses** of three to six months.
- Recently, the **University Grants Commission (UGC)** approved the **guidelines** for the HEIs to start such courses.

Prelims Takeaway

- University Grants Commission (UGC)

Eligibility and Offerings

- Open to individuals who have cleared the senior secondary exam (10+2) and are **eligible for admission to any undergraduate program** offered by the institution.
- A **total of 29 courses are included** in the approval, and institutions can offer them if they possess the **necessary infrastructure and training capacity**.

Course Structure and Credits

- Each short-term course, spanning any stream, must consist of a **minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 30 credits**, with a strong emphasis on **practical learning**.
- The curriculum development is encouraged in **collaboration with relevant sector skill councils**, accredited bodies, institutions, and industry partners.

Limitations and Participation

- Candidates are allowed to enroll in a **maximum of two courses** during their degree/diploma programs.
- While institutions may determine how they conduct theory classes, **hands-on training** is mandated to occur in an **industry setting or workshop**.

Assessments and Certification

- HEIs will be responsible for conducting assessments for these courses.
- **Joint certification** is also possible when the course is offered with an **industry partner, council or professional body**.

6. 6% of cough syrup samples fail export quality test - The Hindu

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

News:

- Recent data from the CDSCO, shows that **at least 6% of cough syrup samples** from 54 Indian manufacturers **failed a mandatory quality test for export** until October this year.
- The CDSCO has **made testing before export mandatory**.
- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) **oversees pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and medical devices**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)
- Generic Medicines

Global Pharmaceutical Hub

- According to the Union Health Minister, **India is the 'pharmacy of the world'**.
- India is a global **leader in generic medicines** and **commands a 20% share in global supply by volume**.
- India supplies **100 countries with vaccines** and **150 countries with medicines of various kinds**.
- India's pharmaceutical sector **contributes 1.72% to GDP**, with an **industry worth \$50 billion**, over half from exports.

Export Quality Screening

- **Screening of medicines** bound for the export market **began earlier this year** after **quality concerns** were raised about cough syrups exported from India.
- Gambia, Uzbekistan, Cameroon and the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** raised alarms after **reported deaths in children** who had consumed these drugs.
- The government responded by issuing a **list of labs for mandatory pre-export testing**.

Contamination Issues

- Indian manufactured syrups were reported to be contaminated with **glycol and ethylene glycol**.
 - These are toxic substances that can sometimes be fatal, especially for children.
- Government data shows **failures in quality tests**, with 51 out of 385 samples in Gujarat and 29 out of 502 samples in Ghaziabad not meeting standards.

Government Warning

- The Health Minister warned against compromising quality and **advocated for a zero-tolerance policy**.
- He urged the pharma industry to **establish a self-regulatory body** to monitor product quality.

GS III

7. COP28 enters 2nd week, but all complex issues unresolved - Indian Express

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

News:

- The Conference of the Parties (COP28) climate meeting** has entered its second week of negotiations with crucial issues still pending resolution.
- The primary focus is on the Global Stocktake (GST)**, a review mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement to enhance climate actions.

Prelims Takeaway

- Green Climate Fund

Key Points

Global Stocktake (GST)

- The GST, the most critical agenda, **aims to determine enhanced climate actions** in response to previous inadequacies.
- Contentious topics like **fossil fuel phase-out, renewable energy targets**, and methane emissions reductions are under discussion, with divergent country positions.

UAE's Contributions

- In the first week, **UAE facilitated the operationalization** and initial capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund
 - Aiding developing countries in recovering from climate disasters.
- Notable achievements** include nine voluntary pledges on various issues, though their impact on climate action acceleration remains uncertain.

Financial Commitments

- UAE secured promises of at least US\$ 83 billion, including a private investment vehicle of US\$ 30 billion for a "**new climate economy**," **aiming for US\$ 250 billion in investments by 2030**.
- US\$ 3.5 billion announced for **the Green Climate Fund at COP28**, reaching a total capitalization of US\$ 12.8 billion for green projects over the next four years.

Challenges and Future Goals

- Despite financial commitments, **the sum falls short of the trillions** needed annually for comprehensive climate actions.
- Developed countries**, claiming to have met the US\$ 100 billion per year target last year, **must agree on a new climate** finance goal exceeding US\$ 100 billion annually, to be delivered from 2025 onwards.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

1. Regulating deepfakes and AI in India - The Hindu

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

Context:

- The recent **rise of deepfake technology** has ignited concerns in India and **prompted regulatory measures**.
- Deepfakes are digital media, video, audio, and images, **edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.
- Since they incorporate **hyper-realistic digital falsification**, they pose threats to privacy, trust and democratic institutions.

Evolution of Deepfake Tech

- Deepfakes, crafted with AI and machine learning, blur the lines between reality and fiction.
- Despite applications in education, criminal forensics and film production, they raise concerns about exploitation, sabotage elections and misinformation.
- The technology's origins trace back to a Reddit user in 2017.
 - He had used publicly available AI-driven software to create pornographic content by imposing the faces of celebrities onto the bodies of ordinary people.
- Now, deepfakes can easily be generated by semi-skilled and unskilled individuals by morphing audio-visual clips and images.
- As it becomes more accessible, challenges in detection increase.
- A 2019 study conducted by AI firm Deeprace found that a staggering 96% of deepfakes were pornographic, and 99% of them involved women.

Legal Response in India

- India lacks specific laws addressing deepfakes and AI-related crimes, relying on existing legislation like the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Indian Penal Code.
- These laws offer civil and criminal relief, but there is a call for more comprehensive regulation.
- Section 66E of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act)
 - It is applicable in cases of deepfake crimes that involve the capture, publication, or transmission of a person's images in mass media thereby violating their privacy.
- Sections 67, 67A, and 67B of the IT Act
 - It can be used to prosecute individuals for publishing or transmitting deepfakes that are obscene or contain sexually explicit acts.
- The IT Rules also prohibit hosting 'any content that impersonates another person'.
 - It requires social media platforms to quickly take down 'artificially morphed images' of individuals when alerted.
- Provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) can also be resorted to for cybercrimes associated with deepfakes like Sections 509, 499 and 153 (a) and (b) among others.

Government Response

- The Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology stated he acknowledges that "a new crisis is emerging due to deepfakes".
- He also announced plans to introduce draft regulations soon for public consultation to address the issue.
- However, there is debate about the adequacy of existing laws, with concerns about enforcement and victim burden.
- The Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) maintained that the existing laws are adequate to deal with deepfakes if enforced strictly.
- He said that a special officer will be appointed to closely monitor any violations.
- An online platform will also be set up to assist aggrieved users and citizens in filing FIRs for deepfake crimes.
- The government's advisory is viewed as a responsive move but is criticised for potential limitations.

Global Approaches

- The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) created a Detect Fakes website to help people identify deepfakes by focusing on small intricate details.
- The US President signed an executive order on AI to manage its risks, ranging from national security to privacy.
- The DEEP FAKES Accountability Bill proposes criminal sanctions on online platforms for not labelling malicious deepfakes.
- The EU has strengthened its Code of Practice on Disinformation to ensure that social media giants start flagging deepfake content or potentially face fines.
- Further, under the proposed EU AI Act, deepfake providers would be subject to transparency and disclosure requirements.

The Road Ahead for India

- Experts emphasize the need for a **comprehensive AI governance framework in India**, balancing safety and innovation.
- They argue against a replication of foreign laws, calling for **context-specific regulation** that fosters innovation and addresses emerging challenges.

2. ARTICLE 99 OF UN CHARTER - Indian Express

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

Context:

- Amid the **ongoing military attacks in the Gaza Strip**, the United Nations Secretary-General has **invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter to establish a ceasefire**.
- The move aims **to address the severerisk of a humanitarian crisis in Gaza**, urging the UN Security Council to take action.

Article 99 of the UN Charter

- The UN Charter is the **founding document of the United Nations**.
- It is considered an **international treaty**, meaning UN Member States are **“bound by it”**.
- **Article 99** allows the **Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council** any matter that may **threaten international peace and security**.
- It is a **discretionary power, rarely invoked**, requiring the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity.
- The invocation **prompts the Security Council President to convene a meeting** as stated under Article 99.

Past Instances of Article 99 Invocation

- Historically, Article 99 has been **used sparingly**.
- Examples include the **upheaval in the Republic of the Congo in 1960** and a **complaint by Tunisia in 1961** against France's military actions.

Impact on the Conflict

- The invocation of Article 99 may **lead to diplomatic efforts for a humanitarian ceasefire**.
- The **UAE presented a draft resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to the UNSC**, based on the UN Secretary-General's Letter.
- However, **achieving unanimous support**, especially from permanent members with conflicting positions, **remains challenging**.

3. Mining for critical minerals: what is the auction process, why is it important? - Indian Express

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

Context:

- India recently initiated **auctions for 20 critical mineral blocks**, including lithium for commercial mining by the private sector.
- This is the first time that **rights related to the mining of lithium ore are being auctioned to private parties**.
- Other minerals in the blocks include **nickel, copper, molybdenum and rare earth elements (REEs)**.
- **Objective:** To reduce dependence on imports and promote self-reliance in key sectors like batteries, electric vehicles, and industrial processes.

Location and Types of Blocks

- The 20 blocks are spread across eight states viz. Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- Four blocks are auctioned for Mining Licences (ML), allowing immediate mining operations.
- The remaining 16 are auctioned for Composite Licences (CL), enabling geological exploration before conversion to ML.

Clearances and Approvals

- The auctioned blocks, covering a total area of 7,197 hectares, include forest land, requiring approvals such as forest clearance, environmental clearance and Gram Sabha consent.
- Successful bidders must obtain 15 clearances before commencing operations, emphasising adherence to regulatory standards.

Estimated Reserves of Key Minerals

- **Lithium:** Two blocks in Jammu & Kashmir and Chhattisgarh with inferred reserves. The J&K block contains 5.9 million tonnes of bauxite column with over 3,400 tonnes of lithium metal content.
- **Nickel:** Reserves found in Bihar, Gujarat, and Odisha. The Odisha block, also containing copper, has inferred nickel reserves of 2.05 million tonnes.
- **Copper:** The Odisha block has 6.09 million tonnes of copper ore and 28,884 tonnes of copper metal content.

India's Imports

- India currently imports 100% of its lithium and nickel demand, and 93% of copper demand.
- In FY23, imports included 2,145 tonnes of lithium carbonate and lithium oxide, 32,000 tonnes of unwrought nickel and 1.2 million tonnes of copper ore.

Post-Auction Plans

- After the ongoing auction, the government plans to initiate a second tranche of critical mineral block auctions.
- The Geological Survey of India has undertaken 125 projects in the current fiscal year to explore critical mineral reserves.
- Recommendations include establishing a Centre of Excellence for Critical Minerals to frame policies and incentives.

Quick Look

1. Kesavananda Bharati Judgement

- The Supreme Court overruled its judgment in the Golak Nath case.
- It upheld the validity of the 24th Amendment Act and stated that Parliament is empowered to abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights.
- At the same time, it laid down a new doctrine of the 'basic structure' (or 'basic features') of the Constitution.
- It ruled that the constituent power of Parliament under Article 368 does not enable it to alter the 'basic structure' of the Constitution.
- This means that the Parliament cannot abridge or take away a Fundamental Right that forms a part of the 'basic structure' of the Constitution.

2. Multiple Sclerosis

- It is a long-lasting (chronic) disease of the central nervous system.
- In people with MS, the immune system attacks cells in the myelin, the protective sheath that surrounds nerves in the brain and spinal cord.
- Damage to the myelin sheath interrupts nerve signals from your brain to other parts of your body. The damage can lead to symptoms affecting your brain, spinal cord, and eyes.
- Eventually, the disease can cause permanent damage or deterioration of the nerve fibres.
- MS affects women more than men. The disorder is most commonly diagnosed between ages 20 to 40, but it can be seen at any age.

3. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

- The Union Finance Minister recently reported that approximately 13.5 crore people have escaped "multidimensional" poverty in the last five years, referencing the Niti Aayog's 2022 report on poverty.
- The index is a key international resource that measures acute multidimensional poverty across more than 100 developing countries.
- It was first launched in 2010 by the OPHI and the Human Development Report Office of the UNDP.
- The MPI monitors deprivations in 10 indicators spanning health, education and standard of living and includes both incidence as well as intensity of poverty.
- A person is multidimensionally poor if she/he is deprived in one third or more (means 33% or more) of the weighted indicators (out of the ten indicators).
- Those who are deprived in one half or more of the weighted indicators are considered living in extreme multidimensional poverty.

4. Chandrayaan 3's Propulsion Module

- Scientists have brought the Propulsion Module (PM) of the Chandrayaan 3 mission back into Earth orbit.
- The propulsion module is a box-shaped component of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft powered by solar panels.
- Objective: To ferry the Lander module to the final lunar polar circular orbit and separate the Lander.
- Outcomes from the return manoeuvres carried out on PM related to future missions
 - Planning and execution of trajectory and manoeuvres to return from Moon to Earth.
 - Development of a software module to plan such a manoeuvre and its preliminary validation.
 - Planning and execution of a gravity assisted flyby across a planet/celestial body.
 - Avoiding uncontrolled crashing of the PM on the Moon's surface at the end of life of PM, thus, meeting the requirements of no debris creation.

5. Pulsars

- Pulsars are rotating neutron stars observed to have pulses of radiation at regular intervals that typically range from milliseconds to seconds.
- Pulsars have very strong magnetic fields, which funnel jets of particles out along the two magnetic poles.
- These accelerated particles produce very powerful beams of light.
- Pulsar masses range between 1.18 and 1.97 times that of the Sun, but most pulsars have a mass 1.35 times that of the Sun.
- Often, the magnetic field is not aligned with the spin axis, so those beams of particles and light are swept around as the star rotates.
- When the beam crosses our line of sight, we see a pulse i.e, we see pulsars turn on and off as the beam sweeps over Earth.

6. Kopili Fault Zone

- Recently, researchers identified seismogenic liquefaction features in the active Kopili Fault (KF) zone.
- It is a 300 km long and 50 km wide lineament situated in the northeastern region of India.
- It extends from the western part of Manipur to the tri-junction of Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam.
- It is closer to Himalayan Frontal Thrust.
- This is a seismically active area falling in the highest Seismic Hazard Zone V.
- It is associated with collisional tectonics because of the Indian Plate subducting beneath the Eurasian Plate.
- The fault itself is a transpressional fracture that generates lower crustal dextral strike-slip earthquakes.
- It is a tectonic depression filled up by the alluvium of the Kopili river and its tributaries.
- It has witnessed many seismic activities in the past including the 1869 earthquake (7.8 magnitude) and the 1943 earthquake (7.3 magnitude).

7. Group of Companies' Doctrine

- The "group of companies" doctrine states that a company that is a non-signatory to an arbitration agreement would be bound by the agreement
 - If such a company is a member of the same group of companies that signed the agreement.
- The doctrine deems that the parties to the arbitration agreement mutually intended for such a non-signatory to be bound by it.
- Arbitration is a mechanism to resolve disputes between parties without going to court.
- A neutral person is appointed to adjudicate the dispute, and the judgement of an arbitrator is legally enforceable.
- The "group of companies" concept, unlike other non-signatory theories that are based on domestic law principles, is based on international arbitration jurisprudence.
- The doctrine was first recognised by the Indian Supreme Court in Chloro Controls India Private Limited v. Severn Trent Water Purification Inc. (2013).
- Since then, Indian courts have applied the doctrine to bind group companies of signatories to arbitration agreements.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements about Refugee

1. It is defined under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol
2. India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):

1. OPEC is a cartel of oil-producing countries that aims to coordinate and unify petroleum policies to ensure stable oil markets.
2. The headquarters of OPEC is located in Vienna, Austria.
3. Iran is not a member of OPEC.

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 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):

1. BRI is a global infrastructure development strategy initiated by China along with the European Union to boost connectivity and trade.
2. The BRI aims to revive ancient trade routes by building infrastructure projects in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

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. Consider the following statements regarding Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India:

1. It provides for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in public employment.
2. The provisions of Article apply only to civil posts under the Union government.
3. The article allows the state to make provisions for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of backward classes.

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

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

Q5. With reference to University Grants Commission (UGC), consider the following statements

1. The University Grants Commission is a statutory organisation established by an Act of Parliament in 1956.
2. It is charged with coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of higher education in India.
3. It confers recognition to Indian universities.

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

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)

1. It is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940.
2. It is responsible for laying down the standards for Drugs among others.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the Conference of the Parties (COP) in the context of climate change:

1. COP is an annual gathering organized by the United Nations to address international climate-related issues and negotiate global agreements.
2. COP28 is currently focused on implementing the Global Stocktake (GST), a review mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement to enhance climate actions.
3. The host country, UAE, has successfully operationalized the Loss and Damage Fund during COP28.

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

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

Q8. With reference to deepfake technology, consider the following statements

1. Deepfakes are digital media, video, audio, and images, edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI).
2. The deepfakes are generated by highly skilled individuals and they require a large amount of data of the source and the target person.
3. India lacks specific laws addressing deepfakes and AI-related crimes, relying on existing legislation like the Information Technology Act, 2000.

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

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

Q9. With reference to the Article 99 of the UN Charter, consider the following statements

1. It allows the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may threaten international peace and security.
2. It is a discretionary power, rarely invoked, requiring the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity.
3. In the past, the Article 99 of the UN charter has been used only once during the upheaval in the Republic of the Congo in 1960.

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

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

Q10. Consider the following statements on Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)

1. It is a US-led collaboration that aims to catalyse public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally.
2. India is not a member of the Mineral Security Partnership.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Prelims Track Answer

Ans. 1 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The word refugee pertains to any person who is outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- It is defined under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereon. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Stateless persons may also be refugees in this sense, where country of origin (citizenship) is understood as 'country of former habitual residence'

Ans. 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- OPEC, established in 1960, is indeed a cartel of oil-producing countries. Its primary objective is to coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries to ensure the stabilization of oil markets. This includes regulating production levels to control oil prices and maintain a steady income for member countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The headquarters of OPEC is situated in Vienna, Austria. The organization conducts its official meetings and operations from this location. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Iran is a founding member of OPEC and has been an active participant since the organization's establishment in 1960. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Ans.3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is not initiated by the European Union. It is a major global infrastructure development project launched by China in 2013. The initiative

focuses on enhancing connectivity and trade by building infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**

- The BRI does aim to revive ancient trade routes, particularly the Silk Road, by creating modern infrastructure networks. The initiative spans multiple continents, including Asia, Europe, and Africa, with the goal of fostering economic cooperation and development. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**

Ans. 4 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Article 16(4) of the Constitution empowers the state to make reservations in matters of public employment in favor of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). This provision aims to ensure adequate representation of these communities in government jobs. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The provisions of Article 16(4) are not limited to civil posts under the Union government. They apply to public employment across all levels, including state governments and other public authorities. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- Article 16(4) specifically allows the state to make provisions for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of backward classes, which includes SCs, STs, and other socially and educationally backward classes. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 5 Option C is correct

Explanation

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

- It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognized universities and colleges. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Its headquarter is in New Delhi, with regional offices in Bangalore, Bhopal, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Pune.
- Composition: A Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and 10 other members appointed by the Central Government.

Ans. 6 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It works under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India.
- Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, CDSCO is responsible for
 - Approval of Drugs
 - Conduct Clinical Trials
 - Laying down the standards for Drugs
 - Control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country
 - Coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Further CDSCO along with state regulators, is jointly responsible for the grant of licences to certain specialised categories of critical Drugs such as vaccines etc.

Ans. 7 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Conference of the Parties (COP) is indeed an annual gathering organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It brings together countries to discuss and negotiate global agreements on climate change-related issues. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- COP28 is currently underway, and one of its primary focuses is on implementing the Global Stocktake (GST). The GST is a review

mandated by the 2015 Paris Agreement to assess collective progress and enhance climate actions globally. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- the host country, UAE, has successfully operationalized the Loss and Damage Fund during COP28. This fund is intended to assist developing countries in recovering from climate disasters. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 8 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Deepfakes are digital media, video, audio, and images, edited and manipulated using Artificial Intelligence (AI). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- They are created using a technique called generative adversarial networks (GANs), which involve two competing neural networks: a generator and a discriminator.
- They require a large amount of data of the source and the target person, which are often collected from the internet or social media without their consent.
- Despite applications in education, criminal forensics and film production, they raise concerns about exploitation, sabotage elections and misinformation.
- Now, deepfakes can easily be generated by semi-skilled and unskilled individuals by morphing audio-visual clips and images. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- India lacks specific laws addressing deepfakes and AI-related crimes, relying on existing legislation like the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Indian Penal Code. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Ans. 9 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Article 99 of the UN Charter allows the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may threaten international peace and security. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The invocation prompts the Security Council President to convene a meeting as stated under Article 99.

- It is a discretionary power, rarely invoked, requiring the highest qualities of political judgement, tact and integrity. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Historically, Article 99 has been used sparingly.
- Examples include the upheaval in the Republic of the Congo in 1960 and a complaint by Tunisia in 1961 against France's military actions. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

Ans. 10 Option A is correct

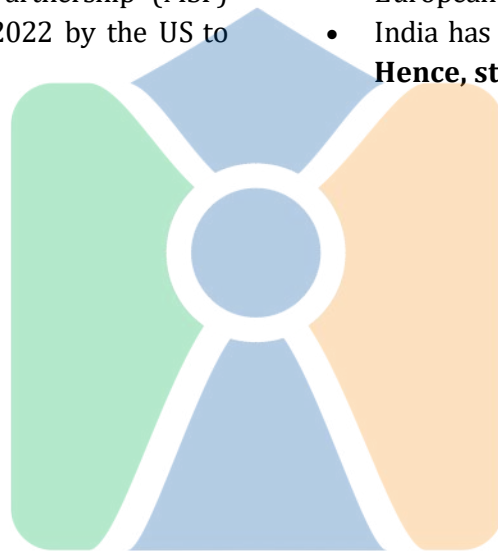
Explanation

- The Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) was announced in June 2022 by the US to

strengthen critical mineral supply chains.

Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- Specifically, the MSP focuses on critical minerals that are inputs for electric vehicles and advanced batteries.
- Participating countries pursue investment in mining, processing, and recycling development that maintains high environmental and social governance standards.
- Members: Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.
- India has recently been inducted into MSP. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**



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