

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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## **Important News Articles**

1. Amid 'crises', Delhi, ASEAN to focus on food security, growth - Indian Express
2. China on mind, PM says laws apply to all in Indo-Pacific, flags territorial integrity - Indian Express
3. 'African Union to join G-20, as Sherpas reach a deal - The Hindu
4. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launches the Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme by University Grants Commission - PIB
5. Centre to stop sites from weaving 'dark patterns' to mislead buyers - The Hindu/ Govt looks to crack down on 'dark patterns', releases draft guidelines - Indian Express
6. SC hands over its green watchdog committee to Environment Ministry - Indian Express
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## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. Amid 'crises', Delhi, ASEAN to focus on food security, growth - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **The ASEAN-India Summit** decided to **strengthen cooperation on food security and nutrition** through promoting mutual trade and investment.
- Leaders agreed to **exchange information on rice and acknowledge the multiple benefits of millets.**
- The **two sides also agreed to:**
  - enhance cooperation on maritime safety and security through confidence-building measures
  - sharing best practices on emergency response
  - Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)
  - Search and Rescue (SAR) operations
  - early warning systems
  - countering piracy
  - armed robbery against ships
  - trafficking in persons and smuggling of arms and drugs
  - combating IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- ASEAN-India Summit

**The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN**

- It is a **regional grouping** that aims to **promote economic and security cooperation** among its ten members.
- **Members:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Establishment:** 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN.
- ASEAN countries have a combined **gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.2 trillion as of 2022.**
- **Decision Making:** It is done through consultation and consensus.

#### 2. China on mind, PM says laws apply to all in Indo-Pacific, flags territorial integrity - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **East Asia Summit (20th ASEAN-India Summit) in the Indonesian capital Jakarta**, Prime Minister reiterated that "today's era is not of war" and "dialogue and diplomacy" form "the only path to resolution".

#### Prelims Takeaway

- East Asia
- Mission LiFE

**Highlights**

- In addition to India and ASEAN leaders, **Timor-Leste participated in the Summit as Observer.**
- At the ASEAN-India Summit, Prime Minister presented a **12-point proposal for strengthening India-ASEAN cooperation.** These are:
  - Establishing multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor that links South-East Asia-India-West Asia-Europe
  - Offered to share India's Digital Public Infrastructure Stack with ASEAN partners
  - Announced ASEAN-India fund for Digital Future focusing on cooperation in digital transformation and financial connectivity
  - Announced renewal of support to Economic and Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to act as knowledge partner for enhancing our engagement.

- Called for collectively raising issues being faced by Global South in multilateral fora
- Invited ASEAN countries to join Global Centre for Traditional Medicine being established by WHO in India
- Called for working together on Mission LiFE
- Offered to share India's experience in providing affordable and quality medicines to people through Jan-Aushadhi Kendras
- Called for collective fight against terrorism, terror financing and cyber-disinformation
- Invited ASEAN countries to join Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
- Called for cooperation in disaster management
- Called for enhanced cooperation on maritime safety, security and domain awareness
- Two joint statements – on Maritime Cooperation and Food Security – were adopted

### East Asia Summit (EAS)

- It was **established in 2005** as a forum of **18 regional leaders** for strategic dialogue and **cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.**
- The **first summit was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia** on 14 December 2005.
- **EAS comprises the ten member states** of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam** – along with **8 members** Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.

## 3. 'African Union to join G-20, as Sherpas reach a deal - The Hindu

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

### News:

- The **African Union (AU) is set to join the G-20** as negotiators agreed on clearing its membership.
- The **55-member AU will join the European Union as the only two regional bodies in the G-20.**
- It is still unclear **whether the G-20 will be renamed as the "G-21"** after the induction of the AU.

### Prelims Takeaway

- The African Union (AU)
- G-20

### The African Union

- The African Union (AU) is a **continental body consisting of the 55 member states** that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- **Formation:**
- **In 1963, the Organization of African Unity was founded by the independent states of Africa.** The organization aimed to promote cooperation between African states.
- The 1980 **Lagos Plan of Action was adopted by the Organization of African Unity.**
- The plan suggested that **Africa should minimize reliance upon the West by promoting intra-African trade.**
- In 2002, the **Organization of African Unity was succeeded by the African Union**, which had as one of its goals to accelerate the "**economic integration of the continent**".

## 4. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launches the Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme by University Grants Commission - PIB

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

### News:

- Recently, the Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship launched the **Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme.**
- He also inaugurated the **Portal of the Programme** and released its **information brochure.**

### Prelims Takeaway

- Malaviya Mission
- University Grants Commission
- Madan Mohan Malaviya

**Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme.**

- It is organised by the **University Grants Commission**, in association with the **Ministry of Education**.
- **Objective:** To provide tailored training programmes for teachers.
- This programme will work for the **capacity building of faculty members in higher educational institutions (HEIs)**.
- It aims to **improve the quality of teachers' training, build leadership skills** in teachers and **help realise the goals of NEP**.
- It will ensure **continuous professional development** and **help in building capacities** of 15 lakh teachers of HEIs through 111 **Malaviya Mission centres** across India in a **time-bound manner**.
- The **capacity building** under the Mission will be **mapped to the credit framework** to ensure **career progression pathways** for educators.
- The **two-week online programme** shall focus on **various themes** identified for **course curriculum** for their capacity building.
- The **8 themes** include
  - Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education
  - Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)
  - Academic Leadership
  - Governance and Management
  - Higher Education and Society
  - Research and Development
  - Skill Development
  - Student Diversity
  - Inclusive Education
  - Information and Communication Technology.
- The UGC has also established a **dedicated portal** for faculty members to **register for the capacity-building programmes**.

## 5. Centre to stop sites from weaving 'dark patterns' to mislead buyers - The Hindu/ Govt looks to crack down on 'dark patterns', releases draft guidelines - 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 sought public comments on the **draft guidelines for prevention and regulation of "dark patterns,"** on the Internet, particularly in e-commerce platforms.
- The guidelines include ways to **prevent and regulate false urgency, basket sneaking, confirm shaming, forced action, subscription traps and more such "dark patterns"**.
- It would be made **applicable to all the persons and online platforms** including sellers and advertisers.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Dark Patterns
- e-commerce

**Dark Patterns**

- The **draft guidelines** has **defined dark patterns** as
  - "any practices or deceptive design patterns using user interface or user experience interactions on any platform; designed to mislead or trick users to do something they originally did not intend or want to do; by subverting or impairing the consumer autonomy, decision making or choice; amounting to misleading advertisement or unfair trade practice or violation of consumer rights."
- They are **unethical UI/UX** (user interface/user experience) interactions, designed to **mislead or trick users** to make them **do something** they don't want to do.
- In turn, they **benefit the company or platform** employing the designs.
- By using dark patterns, digital platforms take away a **user's right to full information** about the **services** they are using and their **control over their browsing experience**.

**Types of Dark Patterns**

- **False urgency:** Creates a sense of urgency or scarcity to pressure consumers into making a purchase or taking an action.
- **Basket sneaking:** inclusion of additional items at the time of checkout without the consent of the user.
- **Confirm shaming:** using a phrase, video, audio or any other means to create a sense of fear or shame or ridicule or guilt in the mind of the user.
- **Forced action:** Pushes consumers into taking an action they may not want to take, such as signing up for a service in order to access content.
- **Subscription traps:** Easy to sign up for a service but difficult to quit or cancel; option is hidden or requires multiple steps.
- **Bait & switch:** Advertising a certain product/ service but delivering another, often of lower quality.
- **Nagging:** Users face an overload of requests, information, options, or interruptions; unrelated to the intended purchase of goods or services, which disrupts the intended transaction.
- **Disguised ads:** Designed to look like content, such as news articles or user-generated content.
- **Interface interference:** The design element that manipulates the user interface
- **Drip pricing:** Practice where elements of prices are not revealed upfront

### GS III

## 6. SC hands over its green watchdog committee to Environment Ministry - Indian Express

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

- **The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) will now report to the Environment Ministry** which will nominate its members and have the final say on the merit of its recommendations.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- The Central Empowered Committee (CEC)
- Environment Ministry

#### The Central Empowered Committee (CEC)

- **It was set up by the Supreme Court** to flag cases of official non-compliance with its orders related to conservation
- **Set up in 2002, and reconstituted in 2008**
- The CEC has “**rendered yeoman services** to the cause of the environment.”
- It has filed thousands of reports on issues referred to it by the apex court that **have shaped the discourse around environment policy.**
  - These include **compensatory afforestation**, net present value of forests, Kudremukh mining, Aravali forests and Bellary mining.
  - In 2006, a CEC report resulted in a month’s simple imprisonment of a former Maharashtra minister.
  - serving the Forest Secretary for permitting wood mills to operate in violation of the SC’s order.
  - Most recently, the CEC’s recommendation to cancel the double-tracking of a railway line from Castle Rock in Karnataka to Kulem in Goa was accepted by the SC this May.
- In August, the SC permitted the ministry to proceed further with the constitution of the **CEC “as a permanent body** would be in the interest of all the stakeholders.” the ministry issued the notification.
- The **notification, diluted the CEC’s autonomy** on four key counts:
  - the committee will report to the ministry, instead of the SC
  - the ministry will pick all the members and the SC will have no role in the process
  - the ministry, and not the court, will fund the committee;
  - the provision of having two NGOs in the committee has been done away with.
- Now **anyone considered an “expert”** can be included as a member.
- The notification makes it clear that **“the Committee shall function under the administrative control of the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment”.**

- “In case any suggestion or recommendation of the **Central Empowered Committee is not acceptable to the State or Central Government.**
- The **Government shall give reasons in writing for not accepting the same** and such decision of the Central Government shall be final.”.
- It does seem that **the government has been successful in reducing the role and influence of the SC.**

## 7. Indore tops clean air survey among cities with mn-plus people - Indian Express

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

**News:**

- **The Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister recently announced awards under the Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan 2023 (clean air survey).**

### Prelims Takeaway

- Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment Cities.
- Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan

**Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan:**

- In September 2022, the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released guidelines on ‘Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan- Ranking of Cities’** under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- **Objective:**
  - Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan is to give ranking to 131 cities in the country for implementing City Action Plans
  - It was prepared as part of NCAP for reducing air pollution up to 40% by 2025-26.
- Cities are required to do **the self-assessment** as per the framework provided on **PRANA** online portal.
- **'PRANA' is the acronym for Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment Cities.**
- This Sarvekshan provides a **tool to cities to plan their actions** in order to improve the air quality.
- It is **not based on the measurement of the air quality** parameters to rank the cities.
- It is **based on the actions taken by the cities** to improve the air quality in different domains.
- Under the **1st category (more than 10 lakh population) Indore ranked first followed by Agra and Thane.**
- **Indore** received the highest score of **187 out of 200.**
- In the second category (between 3-10 lakhs population), **Amravati secured first rank followed by Moradabad and Guntur.**
- Similarly, for the **third category (less than 3 lakhs population) Parwanoo (Himachal Pradesh) secured first rank followed by Kala Amb (Himachal Pradesh) and Angul (Odisha).**
- **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

## 8. ‘Clear illegal constructions in ESZ, buffer zone of Bandipur’ - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation

**News:**

- The **Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) Vigilance** recently directed the Regional Commissioner of Mysuru to **clear illegal constructions in the Bandipur ESZ.**
- The APCCF directives followed a **complaint by activist Giridhar Kulkarni of construction in the notified ESZ and buffer zone** of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve.
- These areas are also part of the **elephant and tiger corridor.**

### Prelims Takeaway

- Bandipur Tiger Reserve
- Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZs)

**Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZs)**

- The **National Wildlife Action Plan** of MoEFCC stipulated that state governments should **declare land falling within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as ESZs** under the **Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986.**
- While the **10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, the extent of its application can vary.**

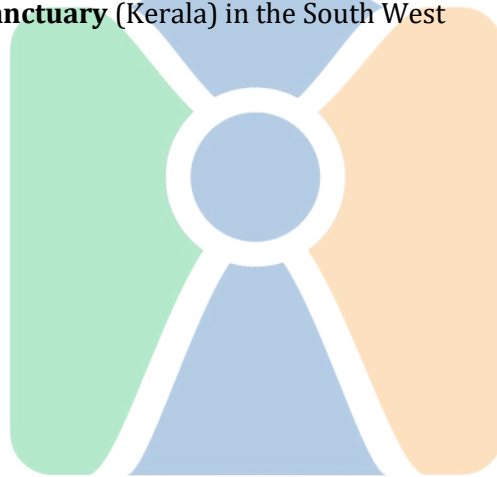
- **Areas beyond 10 km** can also be **notified by the Union government as ESZs**, if they hold **larger ecologically important “sensitive corridors”**.

#### Activities Around ESZs

- **Prohibited Activities:** Commercial mining, saw mills, industries causing pollution, establishment of major hydroelectric projects (HEP), commercial use of wood.
- **Regulated Activities:** Felling of trees, establishment of hotels and resorts, commercial use of natural water, erection of electrical cables, drastic change of agriculture system, widening of roads.
- **Permitted Activities:** Ongoing agricultural or horticultural practices, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, use of renewable energy sources, adoption of green technology for all activities.

#### Bandipur Tiger Reserve

- Established in the **1930s as a wildlife sanctuary**, which became a **tiger reserve in 1973 under Project tiger**.
- **Location:** The tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Situated in **two contiguous districts** viz. Mysore and Chamarajanagar of Karnataka.
- It is **surrounded by**
  - **Nagarahole Tiger Reserve** (Tamil Nadu) in the North West.
    - The Kabini Reservoir separates the two.
  - **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve** (Tamil Nadu) in the South
  - **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary** (Kerala) in the South West



**Mentorship**  
India



## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 1. Impact of RBI's lending guidelines - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued guidelines enabling a borrower to **transition** from a **floating interest rate-based loan** to one with a **fixed interest rate**.
- This was to **address borrowers' grievances pertaining to the elongation of loan tenure** and/or an **increase in the EMI amount** in the event of an **increase in the benchmark interest rate**.
- A **lack of proper communication** along with the **absence of consent** formed part of the concerns.
- The provisions would be **extended to existing as well as new loans** by the end of the current calendar year.

**RBI Instructions**

- The **option to switch over to a fixed (interest) rate mechanism** for their loans would be based on a **board-approved policy drafted by the lending entity**.
- The lender must also **transparently communicate** to the borrower **all relevant charges** alongside service charges or administrative costs associated with the transition.
- The **responsibility** would rest **with the lender to communicate clearly**, at the time of loan sanction, the **impact emanating from the change** in regime.
  - For instance the change in EMI and/or tenure of the loan or both.
- The policy should **specify the number of times such a switch would be allowed** during the tenure.
- The borrower would now also have the **option to choose between enhancement of the EMI or elongation of the tenure or both**.
- He might also **opt to prepay the loan**, either in part or full, at any point during the tenure.
  - This would, however, still invite foreclosure charges or pre-payment penalty.
- The **lending entities** should provide borrowers, through appropriate channels, a **statement at the end of each quarter** enumerating
  - The principal and interest recovered till date
  - The EMI amount, number of EMIs left
  - The annualised rate of interest/ Annual Percentage Rate (APR)
- The **instructions** would apply to all **equated installment-based loans** of different periodicities **albeit with certain changes** based on the nature of the loan.

**Difference between a fixed and floating interest rate**

Fixed Interest Rates	Floating Interest Rates
Those that do not change during the tenure of the loan.	Those subject to market dynamics and the base rate, therefore, the risk differentiation.
They are generally lower than fixed interest rates.	They are generally higher.
These loans do not draw any prepayment penalty.	These loans draw prepayment penalties.

**Benefits of Flexible and Floating Interest Rates**

- **Lender's preference** for the floating rate-based regime is to **better adjust their positions** as per the evolving market dynamics.
- The **advantages are transmitted** onto the borrower's savings pool.
- However, the **opposite also holds true** in a **rising benchmark rate regime**.
- The **fixed rate-based regime** endows a borrower with **greater certainty and security**.
- This also helps in **better planning and structuring of individual budgets**.
- Thus, prospective borrowers should note **broader evolving economic dynamics** and accordingly decide the tenure they seek.

### RBI's stance on Assessing Repayment Capacity

- RBI stated in the circular that **lending entities** are required to consider the **repayment capacity of the prospective borrower**.
- This is to **allow borrowers optimum margin** for elongation of tenure and/or increase in EMI.
- This would be necessary to **“avoid unduly long elongation** which sometime may going forward **camouflage the underlying stress** in a particular loan.”

## 2. What is heat index and why is it important to measure? - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Environment

**Context:**

- Earlier in August, Iran recorded a **scorching heat index of 70 °C in the coastal parts** of the country, **a metric at which survival of life is impossible to comprehend**.
- The country had **declared two public holidays** in August on account of **unprecedented heat**.

**Heat Index**

- Also known as **apparent temperature**, it is a **measure of how the temperature feels** to humans.
- **Relative humidity** is an **important factor that determines heat index**, along with **air temperature**.

#### Calculation of Heat Index

- A complex formula to calculate heat index was published by Dr. Robert Steadman, a professor.
- He published two papers titled The Assessment of Sultriness both describing his calculations of heat index.
  - Part I: A Temperature-Humidity Index Based on Human Physiology and Clothing Science
  - Part II: Effects of Wind, Extra Radiation and Barometric Pressure on Apparent Temperature
- His study considers a typical adult human of either sex, with a height of 1.7 metres and a weight of 67 kg.
- Dew point is an important factor in the calculation of heat index.
- It is the temperature at which gas is transformed into a

#### Significance of Heat Index

- Hot air can hold more moisture than the cold air.
- Therefore, when temperature rises, the air's capacity to hold moisture also increases, affecting the apparent temperature or heat index.
- Humidity is typically higher during heat waves.
- Therefore, the heat index at the time is usually higher than the temperature because humid air can feel hotter to humans.
  - liquid state.
  - It's the temperature at which air cannot hold any more water vapour, and droplets of water begin to form.
- He used 14 °C as the dew point in his calculations.
- Some countries have also developed their own corresponding indices to measure heat index.

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#### High humidity impacts on human body

- High humidity can lead to heat stress, i.e. the body is unable to get rid of excess heat.
- Humans usually maintain a core temperature in the range of 36.1 to 37.2 °C.
- When the body is unable to get rid of excess heat, the heart rate increases due to a rise in core temperature.
- This leads to heat-related exhaustion and rashes, among other symptoms.
- It can also be fatal if not addressed promptly.
- At high temperatures, the human body can lose excess heat through perspiration and cool itself.
- When humidity is high as well, it is difficult to sweat and then for that sweat to evaporate because the air around is already saturated with moisture.
- This makes it difficult for the body to lose heat.
- If the humidity is low, evaporation of sweat is easier, thus making the apparent temperature feel close to the actual air temperature.
- Therefore, a measure of heat index is more useful than just the temperature to gauge the impact of heat on humans.

### Conclusion

- A **heat index value of 67°C or above** can be **extremely dangerous for people and animals** who have direct and prolonged exposure.
- With **climate change**, it is likely that **we will continue to witness record-breaking heat index values** across the world.
- We need to prepare and adapt to such extreme conditions by investing in early warning, making changes to work timings and finding sustainable cooling solutions.

## Quick Look

### 1. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG)

- It was established in August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 as an independent Armed force of India.
- It is the maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency of India with jurisdiction over its territorial waters.
- It is a multi-mission organization, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.
- Despite being relatively small, it has a wide range of task capabilities for both surface and air operations.
- The Coast Guard works in close cooperation with the Indian Navy, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Revenue (Customs), and the Central and State police forces.

### 2. The Idukki Dam

- It is a double curvature Arch dam constructed across the Periyar River in a narrow gorge between two granite hills locally known as Kuravan and Kurathi in Mariyapuram village in Idukki District in Kerala.
- At 168.91 metres it is one of the highest arch dams in Asia.
- This dam was constructed along with two other dams at Cheruthoni and Kulamavu.
- Together, the three dams and Two saddle dams, Kulamavu Saddle Dam (Near Junction) and Kulamavu Saddle Dam (Right Bank) have created an artificial lake in the area.

### 3. Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002

- The PMLA was enacted in response to India's global commitment (Vienna Convention) to combat the menace of money laundering.
- These include
  - United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988
  - Basle Statement of Principles, 1989
  - Forty Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, 1990
  - Political Declaration and Global Program of Action adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990.
- It is a criminal law enacted to prevent money laundering and to provide for confiscation of property derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and related matters.
- The provisions of this act are applicable to all financial institutions, banks (Including RBI), mutual funds, insurance companies, and their financial intermediaries.

### 4. Horizon 2020

- It is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness.
- It is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever, with nearly €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020)
- It has the political backing of Europe's leaders and the Members of the European Parliament
- It is open to everyone, with a simple structure that reduces red tape and time so participants can focus on what is really important

## 5. Erg Chech 002

- These are the rocks containing distinctive greenish crystals that turned out to be from outer space, left over from the dawn of the Solar System.
- They were all pieces of a meteorite known as Erg Chech 002, which is the oldest volcanic rock ever found.
- It is known as an “ungrouped achondrite,” which means their parent bodies and family relationships are unknown.
  - Achondrites are rocks formed from melted planetesimals, which are what we call solid lumps in the cloud of gas and debris that formed the Solar System.
- Erg Chech 002 contains a high abundance of lead-206 and lead-207, as well as relatively large amounts of undecayed uranium-238 and uranium-235.
- Aluminium-26 was distributed quite unevenly throughout the cloud of dust and gas which formed the solar system.

## 6. Zero Draft Plastic Pollution Treaty

- It is an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment.
- The zero draft has 10 placeholders to discuss issues like the preamble, definitions, principles and scope, in addition to the institutional arrangements and the final provisions.
- Member states such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and China at INC-2 stressed the importance of defining the scope of the legally binding instrument.
- India had agreed with this proposal.

## 7. Fugitive Economic Offenders Act

- The purpose of the act is to take the assets of economic criminals who have left the country to escape prosecution or refuse to return to face charges.
- Statement of FEO: After hearing the application, a special court (created under the PMLA, 2002) may designate someone as a fugitive economic offender.
- It has the right to take any property, whether in India or abroad, including Benami assets and criminal gains.
- Upon confiscation, the central government will become the only owner and own all rights and titles to the property (such as any charges on the property).
- Prohibition Against Filing or Defending Civil Claims: The Act permits any civil court or tribunal to bar a designated fugitive economic offender from filing or defending any civil claim.

## 8. Extradition

- Extradition is the process by which one state, upon the request of another, affects the return of a person for trial for a crime punishable by the laws of the requesting state and committed outside the state of refuge.
- The Supreme Court defined extradition as the delivery on the part of one State to another of those whom it is desired to deal with for crimes of which they have been accused or convicted and are justifiable in the Courts of the other State.
- Extradition Law in India:
  - In India, the extradition of a fugitive criminal is governed under the Indian Extradition Act, 1962.
  - This is for both extraditing persons to India and from India to foreign countries.

- The basis of the extradition could be a treaty between India and another country.
- At present India has an Extradition treaty with more than 40 countries and Extradition agreement with 11 countries.

## 9. Japan's Moon Mission

- Japan's space Agency JAXA has recently launched the SLIM moon lander.
- SLIM – It is a small-scale exploration lander designed for pinpoint landings on the Moon's surface and investigate into the Moon's origins.
- The mission was dubbed as the Moon Sniper.
- It will also test technology fundamental to exploration in low-gravity environments, an important requirement for future scientific investigation of the solar system.
- Agency - Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- Launch vehicle - H-IIA rocket.
- This is the first Moon-landing attempt being made by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).
- If successful, Japan would be the 5th country to successfully soft land on the moon.
- SLIM would be the smallest and lightest spacecraft to land on the Moon.
- The chosen landing site for SLIM is near a small crater named Shioli in the equatorial region of the Moon.
- SLIM is set to touch down on the near side of the moon close to Mare Nectaris, a lunar sea that, viewed from Earth, appears as a dark spot.
- After landing, the craft aims to analyse the composition of olivine rocks near the sites in search of clues about the origin of the moon.
- Rover - No lunar rover is loaded on SLIM.

**Prelims Track Question**

**Q1 Consider the following statements:**

1. Look East Policy Focus is more on boosting economic co-operation, building infrastructure for greater connectivity, importantly strategic & security ties.
2. Act East Policy Focus more on boosting economic co-operation.

**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 about Mission LiFe:**

1. LIFE Global Movement was proposed at COP26 seeks ideas from around the world to foster climate-friendly behaviours in people, households, and communities.
2. By 2028, it is hoped that at least 80% of all villages and urban local bodies in India would be environmentally friendly.
3. Mission LiFe is led by NITI Aayog and implemented by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change.

**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 with reference to The African Union:**

1. The African Union was founded by the independent states of Africa. The organization aimed to promote cooperation between African states.
2. Lagos Plan of Action was adopted by the Organization to minimize reliance upon the West by promoting intra-African trade.

**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. The Malaviya Mission seen in the news recently is associated with**

- (a) Teachers training in higher educational institutions (HEIs).
- (b) Digital skilling of youths in rural areas
- (c) Capacity Building of Civil Servants
- (d) Promotion of traditional crafts among people

**Q5. Which of the following statements most aptly define the term "dark pattern" ?**

- (a) A design approach that prioritises user convenience and transparency.
- (b) A design strategy aimed at promoting ethical user behaviour.
- (c) A deceptive design technique intended to manipulate or trick users.
- (d) A design concept focused on improving accessibility for users with disabilities.

**Q6. Consider the following statements with reference to the Central Empowered Committee (CEC):**

1. It was set up by the Supreme Court to flag cases of official non-compliance with its orders related to conservation.
2. the Committee shall function under the administrative control of the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment.
3. CEC is a permanent body

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

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Q.7 Consider the following statements about Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan:**

1. Cities are required to do the self-assessment as per the framework provided on PRANA online portal.
2. This Sarvekshan provides a tool to cities to plan their actions in order to improve the air quality.

3. It is not based on the measurement of the air quality parameters to rank the cities.

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

- (a) Only one  
(b) Only two  
(c) All three  
(d) None

**Q8. Consider the following statements with reference to Eco Sensitive Zones (ESZs)**

1. The primary objective of ESZs is to provide a buffer zone for protected areas to minimise anthropogenic pressure and conserve biodiversity.
2. The establishment of ESZs is mandated by the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
3. The width of an ESZ varies depending on the specific ecological and wildlife conservation requirements of the area.

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

- (a) Only one  
(b) Only two  
(c) All three  
(d) None

**Q9. Consider the following statements**

1. Fixed interest rates are those that do not change during the tenure of the loan.
2. Fixed interest rates are generally lower than floating interest rates.
3. Loans with fixed interest rates do not draw any prepayment penalty.

**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 Heat Index, consider the following statements**

1. Heat Index is a measure of the actual temperature on Earth.
2. Air temperature is the only factor that determines heat index.

**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



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## Prelims Track Answer

**Ans. 1 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- Act East Policy- Act East Policy was launched in 2014
- It was launched by the Current Prime Minister of India – Narendra Modi
- India was in a very favorable position from the perspective of economic might when the Act East Policy was launched in 2014.
- Focus is more on boosting economic co-operation, building infrastructure for greater connectivity, and importantly strategic & security ties **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Look East Policy
- Look East Policy was launched in 1991
- It was launched by former Prime Minister of India – PV Narasimha Rao
- India had a very fragile economy when Look East Policy was launched, due to the 1991 Economic crisis. India was in a transition phase to a liberalised economy.
- Focus more on boosting economic co-operation. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

**Ans. 2 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- Mission LiFe
- The Prime Minister of India proposed the concept of LIFE at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.
- LIFE Global Movement seeks ideas from around the world to foster climate-friendly behaviours in people, households, and communities. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The term LiFe, which means 'Lifestyle For Environment'.
- Mission LiFe was inaugurated at Statue of Unity in Gujarat.
- The Mission aims to put LiFe's goal into measurable influence. It is intended to mobilise at least one billion Indians and other global citizens to take individual and collective action to safeguard and conserve the environment between 2022 and 2028.
- By 2028, it is hoped that at least 80% of all villages and urban local bodies in India would be environmentally friendly. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Mission LiFe is led by NITI Aayog and implemented by the Union Ministry of

Environment, Forests, and Climate Change.

**Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

- Mission LiFe will be carried out by making individual environmentally friendly behaviour a mainstream movement.
- It will crowdsource empirical and scalable ideas that can be implemented by a huge number of individuals.
- It will also draw on local climate-friendly social norms and beliefs throughout the world.

**Ans. 3 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- Formation:
- In 1963, the Organization of African Unity was founded by the independent states of Africa. The organization aimed to promote cooperation between African states. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The 1980 Lagos Plan of Action was adopted by the Organization of African Unity.
- The plan suggested that Africa should minimize reliance upon the West by promoting intra-African trade. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In 2002, the Organization of African Unity was succeeded by the African Union, which had as one of its goals to accelerate the "economic integration of the continent".

**Ans. 4 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- Malaviya Mission - Teachers Training Programme is organised by the University Grants Commission, in association with the Ministry of Education.
- Objective: To provide tailored training programmes for teachers. **Hence, Option A is correct**
- This programme will work for the capacity building of faculty members in higher educational institutions (HEIs).
- It aims to improve the quality of teachers' training, build leadership skills in teachers and help realise the goals of NEP.
- The capacity building under the Mission will be mapped to the credit framework to ensure career progression pathways for educators.



- The two-week online programme shall focus on various themes identified for course curriculum for their capacity building.

**Ans. 5 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- Dark Patterns are unethical UI/UX interactions, designed to mislead or trick users to make them do something they don't want to do. **Hence, Option C is correct**
- In turn, they benefit the company or platform employing the designs.
- By using dark patterns, digital platforms take away a user's right to full information about the services they are using and their control over their browsing experience.

**Ans. 6 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- It was set up by the Supreme Court to flag cases of official non-compliance with its orders related to conservation. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Set up in 2002, and reconstituted in 2008
- The CEC has "rendered yeoman services to the cause of the environment."
- It has filed thousands of reports on issues referred to it by the apex court that have shaped the discourse around environment policy.
  - These include compensatory afforestation, net present value of forests, Kudremukh mining, Aravali forests and Bellary mining.
  - In 2006, a CEC report resulted in a month's simple imprisonment of a former Maharashtra minister.
  - serving the Forest Secretary for permitting wood mills to operate in In August, the SC permitted the ministry to proceed further with the constitution of the **CEC "as a permanent body** would be in the interest of all the stakeholders." the ministry issued the notification.
- The notification, diluted the CEC's autonomy **Hence, statement 2 and 3 is incorrect**
- Now anyone considered an "expert" can be included as a member.
- The notification makes it clear that "the Committee shall function under the administrative control of the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment".
- "In case any suggestion or recommendation of the Central Empowered Committee is not

acceptable to the State or Central Government.

- The Government shall give reasons in writing for not accepting the same and such decision of the Central Government shall be final,".
- It does seem that the government has been successful in reducing the role and influence of the SC.

**Ans. 7 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- In September 2022, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released guidelines on 'Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan- Ranking of Cities' under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- Objective:
  - Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan is to give ranking to 131 cities in the country for implementing City Action Plans
  - It was prepared as part of NCAP for reducing air pollution up to 40% by 2025-26.
- Cities are required to do the self-assessment as per the framework provided on PRANA online portal. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- 'PRANA' is the acronym for Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment Cities.
- This Sarvekshan provides a tool to cities to plan their actions in order to improve the air quality. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It is not based on the measurement of the air quality parameters to rank the cities. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**Ans. 8 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- The National Wildlife Action Plan of MoEFCC stipulated that state governments should declare land falling within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as ESZs under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The primary objective of ESZs is to provide a buffer zone for protected areas to minimise anthropogenic pressure and conserve biodiversity. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- While the 10-km rule is implemented as a general principle, the extent of its application can vary. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

- Areas beyond 10 km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs, if they hold larger ecologically important “sensitive corridors”.

**Ans. 9 Option A is correct**

**Explanation**

- Fixed interest rates are those that do not change during the tenure of the loan. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- On the other hand, floating interest rates are subject to market dynamics and the base rate, therefore, the risk differentiation.
- Floating interest rates are generally lower than fixed interest rates. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- For example, if the floating interest rate for home loans is 10.5%, the fixed interest rate would be 12%.
- The floating interest rate loans do not draw any prepayment penalty unlike fixed rate loans. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**
- The fixed rate-based regime endows a borrower with greater certainty and security.

- This also helps in better planning and structuring of individual budgets.

**Ans. 10 Option D is correct**

**Explanation**

- Heat Index, also known as apparent temperature, is a measure of how the temperature feels to humans. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- Relative humidity is an important factor that determines heat index, along with air temperature. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- A complex formula to calculate heat index was published by Dr. Robert Steadman.
- His study considers a typical adult human of either sex, with a height of 1.7 metres and a weight of 67 kg.
- Dew point is an important factor in the calculation of heat index.
- Some countries have also developed their own corresponding indices to measure heat index.

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+91 9999 057869  
www.mentorshipindia.com

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

 @mentorship.india