

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



Date: 9 Feb. 2024

Important News Articles

1. Will scrap Free Movement Regime on Myanmar border, says Amit Shah - The Hindu/ Free movement along border with Myanmar being suspended: Shah - Indian Express
2. Union Cabinet approves new fisheries scheme - The Hindu/ Cabinet approves Rs 6,000-crore fishery scheme - Indian Express
3. Lok Sabha clears Bills to make additions to ST lists of Odisha, A.P. - The Hindu/ House passes Bills to amend SC, ST lists in Andhra, Odisha - Indian Express
4. Women head only 5% of Information Commissions: report - The Hindu
5. Low Budget outlay hurting MGNREGS, says House panel - The Hindu/ Govt allocated 22% less funds for MGNREGA in RE for FY24: House panel - Indian Express
6. Self-reporting of mental disorders in India 'lower than burden' - The Hindu
7. MPC holds rates; sees FY25 inflation easing to 4.5%, growth at 7% - The Hindu/ RBI leaves repo rate unchanged, food inflation uncertainty persists - Indian Express
8. Kyasanur Forest Disease: the assault of the tick - The Hindu

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Charting a path for the population committee - The Hindu
10. Court reserves verdict: debate around sub categorisation within SC quota - Indian Express

Quick Look

1. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project
2. Open Network Digital Commerce
3. Kilkari programme
4. MXenes
5. Ultracold Atoms

Important News Articles

GS II

1. Will scrap Free Movement Regime on Myanmar border, says Amit Shah - The Hindu/ Free movement along border with Myanmar being suspended: Shah - Indian Express

Relevance: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

News:

- Recently, the Union Home Minister announced the decision to **scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR)** between India and Myanmar.
- Purpose:** To enhance internal security and preserve the demographic structure of North-East States bordering Myanmar.

Prelims Takeaway

- Free Movement Regime (FMR)
- Act East Policy

Border States' Response

- The Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh governments **supported the decision**.
- Mizoram and Nagaland had **differing views** due to the social, economic, and cultural ties between their populations and those across the border.

Free Movement Regime (FMR)

- The FMR, initiated as part of the **Act East policy in 2018**, aimed to **strengthen Indo-Myanmar ties**.
 - The border, drawn by the British in 1826, divided people of the same ethnicity without their consent.
- It was a mutually agreed arrangement that **allowed tribes** living along the border to **travel 16 km into each other's territory without a visa**.
- It facilitated **people-to-people contact**, **boosted local trade**, and addressed **historical border demarcation issues**.
- Despite benefiting local communities, the FMR faced criticism for **unintentionally aiding illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and gun running**.

2. Union Cabinet approves new fisheries scheme - The Hindu/ Cabinet approves Rs 6,000-crore fishery scheme - Indian Express

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

News:

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)**.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)

- It is a central sector sub-scheme under **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada** aimed at **formalizing the fisheries sector** and **supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises**.
- Over Rs 6,000 crore investment will be made **over the next four years (2023-24 to 2026-27)** in all States/Union Territories under PM-MKSSY.
- A **National Fisheries Digital Platform** will be established to provide **work-based identities** to 40 lakh small and micro-enterprises in the fisheries sector.
- The Cabinet approved the **extension of FIDF for another three years until 2025-26**.
 - within the approved fund size of Rs 7,522.48 crore and budgetary support of Rs 939.48 crore.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- PMMSY was launched in September 2020 with an aim to **double the income of fish farmers and fishers** in the country.
- It focuses on **sustainable development of India's fisheries sector** and is a part of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme**.

Prelims Takeaway

- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- In order to facilitate access to institutional credit, fishermen are provided with **insurance coverage, financial assistance** and a facility of **Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** as well.

Objectives

- **Harness the potential of the fisheries sector** in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner
- **Enhance fish production and productivity** through expansion, intensification, diversification and productive utilisation of land and water
- **Modernise and strengthen the value chain** including post-harvest management and quality improvement
- **Double fishers' and fish farmers' incomes** and generate meaningful employment
- Enhance the contribution of the fisheries sector to **agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA) and exports**
- Ensure **social, physical and economic security** for fishers and fish farmers
- Build a robust **fisheries management and regulatory framework**

Implementation Strategy

- It is implemented as an **umbrella scheme** with two separate components namely
 - **Central Sector Scheme:** The project cost will be borne by the Central government.
 - **Centrally Sponsored Scheme:** All the sub-components/activities will be implemented by the States/UTs, and the cost will be shared between the Centre and State.

3. Lok Sabha clears Bills to make additions to ST lists of Odisha, A.P. - The Hindu/ House passes Bills to amend SC, ST lists in Andhra, Odisha - Indian Express

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

News:

- Recently, two Bills which seek to **modify the list of SCs and STs in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha** were passed by the Lok Sabha.
- The Bills had already been cleared by the Rajya Sabha.

Expansion of the List

- In Odisha, it will add four Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the list.
- The new communities added include **Pauri Bhuyan, Paudi Bhuyan, Chuktia Bhunjia, Bondo and Mankidia**.
- In Andhra Pradesh, three PVTGs viz. **Bondo Porja, Khond Porja and Parangiperja** are being added to the list of STs.

Process of Inclusion in the ST List

- The process begins with the **recommendation from the respective State governments**.
- These recommendations are then sent to the **Tribal Affairs Ministry**, which reviews and sends them to the **Registrar General of India** for approval.
- This is followed by the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes' approval** before the list is sent to the **Cabinet for a final decision**.

Benefits in the Inclusion in the ST List

- It will enable members of the communities to **derive benefits meant for STs** under the existing schemes of the government.
 - These include post-matric scholarship, overseas scholarship and the national fellowship, besides education, concessional loans from the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, and hostels for students.
- In addition, they will also be entitled to **benefits of reservation** in services and admission to educational institutions as per the government policy.

Prelims Takeaway

- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
- Process and Benefits of Inclusion in the ST List
- Reservation Policy

4. Women head only 5% of Information Commissions: report - The Hindu

Relevance: Polity

News:

- A report compiled by the 'Satark Nagrik Sangathan' (SNS) highlighted a **lack of diversity in the leadership of Information Commissions**, particularly the minimal representation of women.

Prelims Takeaway

- Right to Information
- Information Commissions

Gender Disparity

- Since the passage of the Right to Information Act in 2005, merely **9% of all information commissioners** across the country **have been women**.
- **Only 5%** of Information Commissions have been **headed by women**.
- Currently, **no Information Commission** is led by a woman.
- **12 Information Commissions**, constituting around 41%, have **never had a woman commissioner** since their establishment.

Composition Overview

- Of the approximately 465 commissioners for whom background information was available
 - The majority, 58%, were retired government officials.
 - Lawyers or former judges accounted for 14%, including 11% advocates or from the judicial service and 3% retired judges.
 - 11% had a background in journalism
 - 5% were academics, and 4% were social activists or workers.

Performance Issues

- Several Information Commissions are observed to return a significant number of cases **without issuing any orders**.
- Many commissions exhibit a notably **low rate of case disposal per commissioner**.
- The report also emphasizes the **issue of delays in making timely appointments** to Information Commissions.

5. Low Budget outlay hurting MGNREGS, says House panel - The Hindu/ Govt allocated 22% less funds for MGNREGA in RE for FY24: House panel - Indian Express

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

News:

- According to a Parliamentary committee report, the Finance Ministry has allocated **22% less funds for MGNREGA** in the revised estimates for the financial year 2023-24.

Prelims Takeaway

- MGNREGA
- Interim Budget

Revised Estimates

- The Rural Development Ministry had initially sought Rs 1.1 lakh crore, but the Finance Ministry revised it downward to Rs 86,000 crore.
- The Ministry of Rural Development proposed the increased amount based on the **demand-driven nature of MGNREGA**.
- The committee observed that **daily wages under MGNREGA are inadequate and vary across states**, with the lowest wages in states like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
- The parliamentary committee also acknowledged the demand for **raising the guaranteed number of workdays from 100 to 150** and recommended a practical study on the matter.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

- It is one of the largest **work guarantee programmes** in the world launched in **2005** by the **Ministry of Rural development**.
- **Objective:** To guarantee **100 days of employment** in every financial year to **adult members of any rural household** willing to do **unskilled manual work**.

- Some households, particularly Scheduled Tribe households in forest areas, are entitled to 150 days of work.
- Additional work can be provided in areas affected by drought or natural calamities.
- The act aims at addressing the **causes of chronic poverty** through a **rights-based framework**.
- If any rural adult fails to get work within **15 days** of demanding it, an **'unemployment allowance'** is given.
- The act mandates **Gram sabhas** to recommend the works that are to be undertaken and **at least 50%** of the works must be executed by them.
- At least **one-third** of beneficiaries need to be **women**.
- The **Centre** bears **60% of the cost of the materials used for MGNREGS work** and the **remaining 40%** is provided by the **State governments**.
- **Data:**
 - As of 2022-23, there are **15.4 crore active workers** under the MGNREGA.

6. Self-reporting of mental disorders in India 'lower than burden' - The Hindu

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

News:

- Access to healthcare and financial protection for individuals with **mental disorders** in India are **influenced by social determinants**.
- This is affecting the country's progress towards **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.

Low Self-Reporting Rates

- A study by researchers from IIT Jodhpur highlights **low self-reporting rates for mental health issues in India**.
- Based on the 75th Round National Sample Survey (NSS) 2017-2018, self-reporting of mental illness was **less than 1%**.
- NSS data collected from over 5,55,000 individuals, indicating a significant gap in recognizing mental health concerns.

Out-of-Pocket Expenses

- The study emphasizes **substantial out-of-pocket expenses** associated with seeking mental health services.
- **Reliance on the private sector** leads to higher expenses, particularly impacting individuals with lower incomes.
- Individuals with higher incomes were **1.73 times more inclined to report health problems** compared to those with lower incomes, uncovering a socioeconomic divide.

Economic Burden

- **Middle-aged individuals** are particularly affected, with mental illness **affecting productivity and economic impact** on the country.
- Families spend a considerable amount monthly on **treatment and travel expenses**, exacerbating the economic burden.
 - Families had to spend nearly Rs 1,000 – Rs 1,500 a month mainly for treatment and travel to access care.
- The private sector plays a major role in providing mental health services, but only a small percentage of individuals have **health insurance coverage**.
 - A mere 23% of individuals hospitalised for mental disorders had health insurance coverage at the national level.

Link Between Education, Income, and Mental Disorders

- Low levels of education and income are closely associated with mental disorders, contributing to impoverishment.
- Individuals with **lower income, poor education, and limited employment opportunities** are **more vulnerable** to mental disorders due to adverse social and economic determinants of health.

Prelims Takeaway

- Mental Health
- National Mental Health Programme (NMHP)

Associated Stigma

- **Stigma in society** acts as a significant barrier to reporting mental health issues and seeking treatment.
 - NMHS findings revealed that nearly 80% of persons suffering from mental disorders, had not received any treatment despite the presence of illness for more than 12 months.
- Stigma associated with mental disorders prevents **access to treatment, education, work, and marriage opportunities**, affecting both individuals and their families.

GS III

7. MPC holds rates; sees FY25 inflation easing to 4.5%, growth at 7% - The Hindu/ RBI leaves repo rate unchanged, food inflation uncertainty persists - Indian Express

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

News:

- The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** kept interest rates unchanged, emphasizing its commitment to **achieving 4% inflation** sustainably.
- Inflation is projected to **moderate to 4.5% in FY25**, with **real GDP growth forecasted at 7%** for the fiscal year starting April 1.
- Geopolitical events, supply chain disruptions, and volatility in international markets pose upside risks to inflation.

Prelims Takeaway

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| • Monetary Committee | Policy |
| • Inflation Targeting | |
| • Inflation | |

Inflation

- A **long-term increase** in the **general price level** of goods and services in a given economy.
- It considers the **pricing of most everyday or standard products and services**.
 - These include food, clothes, housing, recreation, transportation, consumer staples, etc.
- It is **positive** when it helps **improve consumer demand and consumption**, and **operate economic growth**.
- Even inflation is meant to keep **deflation in check** and is a **drag on the economy**.

Inflation Targeting

- It is a **central banking policy** that focuses on **altering monetary policy to attain a set annual inflation rate**.
- **Assumption: Preserving price stability**, which is achieved by managing inflation, is the greatest way to **generate long-term economic growth**.
- Under the RBI Act, 1934, the **Central Government, in consultation with the RBI**, determines the **inflation target** in terms of the **Consumer Price Index (CPI), once in five years**.
- It provides for the constitution of a **six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** to determine the **policy rate required to achieve the inflation target**.
- Currently, the RBI aims to **keep inflation at 4%** but will tolerate inflation between the **range of 2% to 6%**.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- Under **Section 45ZB of RBI Act, 1934**, the central government is empowered to constitute a **six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)**.
- **Objective:** To determine the Policy Rate required to achieve the inflation target
- The decision of the Monetary Policy Committee shall be **binding on the Bank**.
- **Composition:** The MPC shall consist of **6 members** viz.
 - RBI Governor as its ex-officio chairperson
 - Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy
 - An officer of the Bank to be nominated by the Central Board
 - Three persons to be appointed by the Central Government

- They must be persons of ability, integrity and standing, having knowledge and experience in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy.

8. Kyasanur Forest Disease: the assault of the tick - The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)

News:

- Since the start of the year, two deaths have occurred in Karnataka due to **Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)**.
- The total death toll from the disease exceeds 560 since its discovery.

Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)

- Also known as **monkey fever**, KFD is a **viral infection** first noticed in **1956** in the forests of **Shivamogga district**.
- **Monkeys serve as indicators** of an outbreak, as they also get infected.
- The disease is believed to have become **active due to ecological changes**.

Transmission and Symptoms

- **Transmission:** Through contact with infective ticks, particularly among individuals visiting forest areas for various purposes.
- **Symptoms**
 - They typically appear three to eight days after a tick bite and include fever, headache, body pain, redness of the eyes, and gastrointestinal symptoms.
 - Severe cases may involve nosebleeds.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- Diagnosis is through **blood tests**.
- There is **no specific treatment** for KFD; doctors manage symptoms and monitor patients closely.
- Previous attempts to develop a vaccine were deemed ineffective, but the ICMR is reportedly collaborating with Indian Immunologicals for vaccine development.

Preventive Measures

- To prevent infection, the forest department is distributing **tick repellent oil (DEPA oil)** to families entering forested areas.
 - The oil must be applied to exposed skin.
- The government has also committed to **providing free treatment to patients**.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Charting a path for the population committee - The Hindu

Relevance: population and associated issues

Context:

- Recently, the interim Budget announced a high-powered committee to address challenges from **rapid population growth and demographic changes**.
- The committee aims to make recommendations aligning with the **goal of 'Viksit Bharat'**.
- This will mean addressing issues such as **family planning, maternal and child health, education, employment, and socio-economic development**.

Interdisciplinary Approach

- The committee must adopt an interdisciplinary approach, drawing expertise from various fields like demography, public health, economics, sociology, and governance.
- The committee should identify emerging issues and evaluate the effectiveness of existing interventions.
 - through rigorous research, data analysis, and monitoring of demographic trends.
- Collaboration with stakeholders is crucial for effective policy formulation and implementation.
 - These include non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, academia, and the private sector.
- The population committee should also facilitate international collaboration and the exchange of best practices in population management.
- In addition, the committee should lay emphasis on public awareness and education campaigns.

Past, Present, and Future Demographic Trends

- India's demographic landscape has shifted significantly, with declining fertility rates and an increasing working-age population.
 - The TFR is projected to touch 1.73 in 2031-35 from 2.5 in 2009-11, in India.
- Despite a slowdown in population growth, India's population is projected to reach 1.46 billion by 2030 (according to the latest projections by the United Nations).
- The demographic dividend presents economic growth opportunities but requires investments in health, education, and skill development.

Health, Education, Employment Challenges

- Access to quality healthcare and education remains a challenge, with low public spending on health.
 - Public spending on health has remained around 1% of GDP.
- Investments in education and skill development are crucial, especially considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - According to UNICEF, nearly 47% of Indian youth may lack the necessary education and skills for employment by 2030.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

- A critical challenge for evidence-based policy is the availability of accurate and timely data.
- India faces significant challenges regarding the non-availability of current and reliable data on its population, which hampers evidence-based policymaking.
- Improving data infrastructure, modernizing data collection methods and ensuring data security are essential.
- Collaboration with international organizations can provide technical expertise and funding opportunities.

Conclusion

- India can achieve **inclusive and sustainable development** by adopting a **holistic approach to population management**.
- In addition, India should **prioritise investments** in health, education, employment, and statistical systems, and **promote gender equality and social inclusion**.
- **Strategic planning, effective implementation, and international collaboration** are crucial for navigating India's demographic transition.

10. Court reserves verdict: debate around sub categorisation within SC quota - Indian Express

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context:

- Recently, a seven-judge Constitution Bench, led by the Chief Justice of India, reserved judgement in a case concerning **sub-classification among Scheduled Castes (SCs)**.
- This arises from states' arguments that, despite reservation, **some castes are grossly underrepresented and need separate quotas**.

E.V. Chinnaiah v State of Andhra Pradesh Case, 2004

- The five-judge Constitution Bench ruled that only the President could determine which communities could receive reservation benefits under Article 341, barring states from altering this list.
- The states contested the Chinnaiah decision, asserting their authority to ensure fair distribution of reservation benefits.

The Beginning

- The Punjab government's attempt to sub-classify SCs, favouring certain communities, was struck down by the courts.
- The court held that the sub-classification would violate the right to equality by treating communities within the category differently.
- The SC list must be treated as a single, homogenous group, since the Constitution classifies certain castes in a Schedule as they historically faced discrimination due to untouchability.

Appeal and Reevaluation

- In October 2006, the Punjab government attempted to bring back the law by passing the Punjab Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act, 2006.
- In 2010, the High Court once again struck down this provision, and the Punjab government then moved the Supreme Court.
- The case was referred to a five-judge Constitution Bench in 2014 ('Davinder Singh v State of Punjab'), questioning the Chinnaiah ruling.
- In 2020, this Bench held that the decision required reconsideration due to evolving interpretations of equality and the recognition of 'creamy layer' within SCs.

Arguments and Implications

- States argued that sub-classification aligns with the 'creamy layer' concept, ensuring benefits reach the most disadvantaged.
 - In the landmark 2018 ruling in 'Jarnail Singh v Lachhmi Narain Gupta', the Supreme Court upheld the concept of "creamy layer" within SCs too.
- However, opponents assert that all SCs face historical discrimination and should be treated equally.
- The Bench, acknowledging the need to prevent political influence on reservation policies, is set to lay down criteria for fair allocation of reservations.

Quick Look

1. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

- Kaladan Project would link India and Myanmar via the Bay of Bengal.
 - It was jointly identified by India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal mode of transport for the shipment of cargo from the eastern ports of India to Myanmar as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.
 - It will link Kolkata with the Sittwe seaport in Rakhine state in Myanmar, primarily over the Bay of Bengal - covering over 500 km.
 - It is being constructed by India under the Grant in Aid Scheme.
 - The project envisaged four important stages viz.
 - Kolkata to Sittwe waterway
 - Sittwe to Paletwa inland (River Kaladan) waterway
 - Paletwa to India-Myanmar border post in Myanmar
 - Linking the road to Lawngtlai in Mizoram
 - The project is expected to contribute to the economic development of the North-Eastern States of India.
- It also provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby reducing pressure on the Siliguri Corridor.

2. Open Network Digital Commerce

- It is an open-source network set up to enable buyers and sellers to transact with each other irrespective of the e-commerce platform.
- It will enable local commerce across segments to be discovered and engaged by any network-enabled application.
- It is an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Objectives
 - To promote open networks for all aspects of the exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks.
 - To create new opportunities, curb digital monopolies and support micro, small and medium enterprises and small traders and help them get on online platforms.
 - To democratise digital or electronic commerce, moving it from a platform-centric model to an open-network.
- It is expected to digitise the entire value chain, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics and enhance value for consumers.

3. Kilkari programme

- Recently the Union Ministers of State for Health and Family Welfare virtually launched the Kilkari programme, a Mobile Health (m-health) initiative for beneficiaries in local content in Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- It delivers free, weekly, time-appropriate 72 audio messages about pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare directly to families' mobile phones from the second trimester of pregnancy until the child is one year old.
- Women who are registered in the Reproductive Child Health (RCH) portal receive a weekly call with pre-recorded audio content directly to the mobile phones.

- Kilkari audio messages are present in the form of the voice of a fictitious doctor character called Dr. Anita.
- It is centrally hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) for all the States/UTs.
- No further investment in the technology, telephony infrastructure or operational costs is required to be borne by States/UTs.
- The programme is integrated with the centralised Reproductive Child Health (RCH) portal of MoHFW and is the single source of information for this mHealth service.

4. MXenes

- Researchers recently reported on the potential of using MXene coatings that can guide microwaves in space and lighten satellite payloads.
- MXenes, first discovered in 2011, are ceramics that comprise one of the largest families of two-dimensional (2D) materials.
- Unlike most 2D ceramics, MXenes have inherently good conductivity and excellent volumetric capacitance.
 - They are molecular sheets made from the carbides and nitrides of transition metals like titanium.
- Among various types of MXenes, titanium carbide (Ti_3C_2Tx) is the most widely used.
- Some potential applications of MXenes include energy storage (such as lithium-ion batteries and supercapacitors) due to their high conductivity and large surface area, electromagnetic interference shielding, catalysis, sensors, and water purification, among others.

5. Ultracold Atoms

- The Indian scientists at the Raman Research Institute (RRI) recently designed a new image-correction algorithm that significantly enhances the study of ultracold atoms.
- The atoms whose temperatures are near absolute zero (zero Kelvin) are known as ultracold atoms.
- At low temperatures near absolute zero, atoms behave according to the principles of quantum mechanics rather than classical physics.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. The Free movement Regime (FMR), seen in the news recently, aims to strengthen the ties between which of the following countries?

- A. India and Maldives
- B. India and Sri Lanka
- C. India and Nepal
- D. India and Myanmar

Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)

1. It is a central sector sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).
2. It aims to formalise the fisheries sector and support micro and small enterprises.
3. A National Fisheries Digital Platform will also be established under the scheme.

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 criterias

1. Technological backwardness
2. Low literacy levels
3. Subsistence economy
4. Declining population growth

How many of the criterias mentioned above are used to classify the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)?

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

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to Central Information Commission (CIC)

1. It is a statutory body constituted under section 12 of the Right to Information Act, 2005.
2. It consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than three Information Commissioners.
3. They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime

Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and Chief Justice of India.

4. The members shall hold office for a term of five years.

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

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

Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to MGNREGA

1. MGNREGA is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world launched in 2005 by the Ministry of Rural development.
2. It aims to guarantee 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.
3. At least half of the beneficiaries need to be women.

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

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

Q6. What is the objective of the Kiran Helpline?

- A. Offering support and counseling to individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts
- B. Providing legal advice to individuals with low income.
- C. Assisting high school students with career counselling
- D. Providing information on government schemes

Q7. With reference to Monetary Policy Committee in India, consider the following statements

1. The Committee will have members from both the Government of India and RBI.
2. The quorum for a meeting of the committee shall be three Members.
3. In case of a tie, the Finance Minister will have the second or casting vote.

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 Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), consider the following statements

- 1. It is a viral infection first noticed in the forests of Shivamogga district.
- 2. Its transmission primarily occurs through contact with infectious ticks.
- 3. There is no specific treatment for KFD.

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

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

Q9. With respect to National Population Policy, consider the following statements

- 1. The policy aimed at stabilisation of population by 2045.

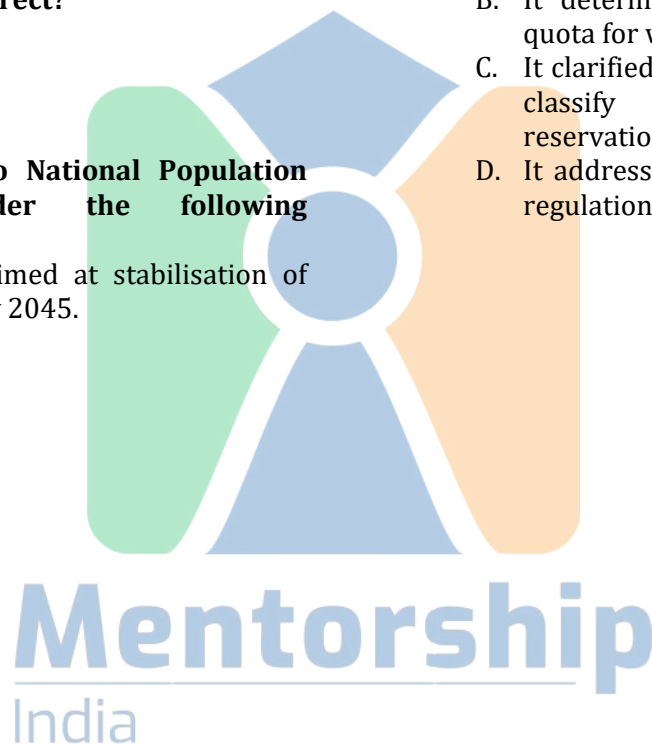
- 2. The medium-term objective of the policy was to reduce the Total Fertility Rate to replacement levels i.e. 2.1 by 2010.

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

Q10. The E.V. Chinniah case 2004, seen in the news recently, is associated with which of the following?

- A. It established the right to education for underprivileged children.
- B. It determined the 33% reservation quota for women in government jobs.
- C. It clarified the power of states to sub-classify Scheduled Castes for reservation benefits.
- D. It addressed environmental pollution regulations in urban areas.



Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the Union Home Minister announced the decision to scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between India and Myanmar.
- Purpose: To enhance internal security and preserve the demographic structure of North-East States bordering Myanmar.
- The FMR, initiated as part of the Act East policy in 2018, aimed to strengthen Indo-Myanmar ties. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- It was a mutually agreed arrangement that allowed tribes living along the border to travel 16 km into each other's territory without a visa.
- It facilitated people-to-people contact, boosted local trade, and addressed historical border demarcation issues.

Answer 2 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY).
- It is a central sector sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada aimed at formalizing the fisheries sector and supporting fisheries micro and small enterprises. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- Over Rs 6,000 crore investment will be made over the next four years (2023-24 to 2026-27) in all States/Union Territories under PM-MKSSY.
- A National Fisheries Digital Platform will be established to provide work-based identities to 40 lakh small and micro-enterprises in the fisheries sector. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 3 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has identified 75 PVGTs in 18 states and one Union Territory.
- In 1973, the Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.
- PVTGs are identified based on criteria such as technological backwardness, stagnant or

declining population growth, low literacy levels, subsistence economy, and challenging living conditions. **Hence, option D is correct.**

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Central Information Commission is a statutory body constituted under section 12 of the Right to Information Act, 2005. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- CIC consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The members shall be persons of eminence in public life with wide knowledge and experience in law, science and technology, social service, management, journalism, mass media, or administration and governance.
- The members shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect.**
- The salary, allowances, and other service conditions of the members shall be as prescribed by the Central Government (RTI Amendment Act, 2019).

Answer 5 Option B is correct

Explanation

- MGNREGA is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world launched in 2005 by the Ministry of Rural development. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims to guarantee 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Some households, particularly Scheduled Tribe households in forest areas, are entitled to 150 days of work.

- The act aims at addressing the causes of chronic poverty through a rights-based framework.
- If any rural adult fails to get work within 15 days of demanding it, an 'unemployment allowance' is given.
- The act mandates Gram sabhas to recommend the works that are to be undertaken and at least 50% of the works must be executed by them.
- At least one-third of beneficiaries need to be women. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- The Centre bears 60% of the cost of the materials used for MGNREGS work and the remaining 40% is provided by the State governments.

Answer 6 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the 24/7 toll-free helpline 'Kiran'.
- Purpose: To provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns. **Hence, option A is correct.**
- Available in 13 languages and has 660 clinical/rehabilitation psychologists and 668 psychiatrists as volunteers.

Answer 7 Option A is correct

Explanation

- MPC will have six members - the RBI Governor (Chairperson), the RBI Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one official nominated by the RBI Board, and the remaining three members would represent the Government of India. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The external members hold office for a period of four years.
- The quorum for a meeting shall be four Members, at least one of whom shall be the Governor and, in his absence, the Deputy Governor, who is the Member of the MPC. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The MPC takes decisions based on a majority vote. In case of a tie, the RBI governor will

have the second or casting vote. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

- The decision of the MPC would be binding on the RBI.

Answer 8 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Since the start of the year, two deaths have occurred in Karnataka due to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).
- Also known as monkey fever, KFD is a viral infection first noticed in 1956 in the forests of Shivamogga district. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Monkeys serve as indicators of an outbreak, as they also get infected.
- The disease is believed to have become active due to ecological changes.
- Transmission: Through contact with infective ticks, particularly among individuals visiting forest areas for various purposes. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Symptoms typically appear three to eight days after a tick bite and include fever, headache, body pain, redness of the eyes, and gastrointestinal symptoms.
- There is no specific treatment for KFD; doctors manage symptoms and monitor patients closely. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 9 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The National Population Policy aimed at stabilisation of population by 2045. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It includes unmet needs for contraception, health care infrastructure, and personnel and provides integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care.
- The medium-term objective of the NPP 2000 was to reduce the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to replacement levels i.e. 2.1 by 2010. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- Decreasing the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to under 30 per 1000 live births in the country (to be achieved by 2010 as prescribed when the NPP was brought out).
- Reducing the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) to under 100 per 1 lakh live births (to be achieved by 2010 as prescribed when the NPP was brought out).

Answer 10 Option C is correct

Explanation

- In the E.V. Chinnaiah v State of Andhra Pradesh Case, 2004, the five-judge Constitution Bench ruled that only the President could determine which communities could receive reservation benefits under Article 341, barring states from altering this list. **Hence, option C is correct.**



Mentorship
India

Mentorship India

Our mission is crystal clear – to provide the finest UPSC mentorship and guidance available in India. We recognize that the path to success in the UPSC examination is both demanding and multifaceted. This is precisely why we have developed a comprehensive approach that goes beyond conventional coaching. Our commitment lies in fostering excellence by equipping aspirants with the necessary tools, knowledge, and unwavering support to not only excel in the examination but also in life itself.

Mentorship India represents more than just an organization; it is a community of ambitious individuals bound together by the shared objective of conquering the UPSC examination. We warmly invite you to embark on this transformative journey alongside us. Whether you are a novice taking your initial steps or a seasoned aspirant aiming for the pinnacle, Mentorship India is your dependable companion in the relentless pursuit of excellence.

+91 9999 057869
www.mentorshipindia.com

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

 @mentorship.india