

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



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### **Important News Articles**

1. 'Look into delisting of Kukis, Zomis from ST list' - The Hindu
2. Rule of law vs Right to Liberty: What Court said - Indian Express
3. 'Viksit Bharat Yatra aims to help schemes reach all beneficiaries' - The Hindu
4. Saved by sponge - Down to Earth
5. Karnataka HC bans mining activity near KRS reservoir - The Hindu
6. Income inequality declines, says SBI research unit countering K-shaped eco recovery claims - Indian Express

### **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

7. An ambitious push for values, ethics in higher education - The Hindu
8. Understanding the EU's carbon border tax - The Hindu
9. From red ant chutney to black rice, the 7 Odisha products that have bagged GI tags - Indian Express
10. Surgical care in India is a neglected part of public health - The Hindu

### **Quick Look**

1. First Advance Estimates
2. Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary
3. Bobbili Veena
4. iDEX
5. Trichoderma
6. Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

## Important News Articles

### GS II

#### 1. 'Look into delisting of Kukis, Zomis from ST list' - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

##### Prelims Takeaway

- Meiteis
- Lokur Committee

**News:**

- The Manipur government is urged by the Centre to examine a request for the **removal of "Nomadic Chin-Kuki" from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list in Manipur.**

**Background**

- In 2023, various **Meitei groups sought inclusion in the ST list**, with an appeal from Meitei Pangals.
- The **conflict between valley-based Meitei people and hill-based Kuki-Zo people** erupted in May 2023, resulting in numerous casualties and displacements.
- A Manipur High Court order on March 19, 2023, triggered the conflict, **directing the state government to recommend ST status for Meiteis.**

**Criteria for STs and Objections**

- The Lokur Committee's 1965 criteria for declaring communities as STs** include primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness, and backwardness.
- Specific concerns include the absence of tribe names in the ST list, **allowing room for enrollment of non-indigenous individuals.**

**Historical Rejections of Meiteis' Inclusion**

- Records reveal that the **Meitei community's proposal for inclusion in the ST list was rejected in 1982 and 2001**
  - with authorities citing their lack of tribal characteristics and listing them as the "dominant group" in Manipur.

#### 2. Rule of law vs right to liberty: What Court said - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity

##### Prelims Takeaway

- Article 142
- Article 14

**News:**

- The Supreme Court, while overturning the **Gujarat government's decision to grant remission to Bilkis Bano case** convicts, delves into the intersection of personal liberty and the rule of law.

**The Importance of Rule of Law**

- The court acknowledges personal liberty as a **fundamental right under Article 21** but raises the question of whether the rule of law can override it.
- The rule of law, as defined by John Adams, is characterized as a **check against executive lawlessness**, ensuring no arbitrary arrest or detention without legislative sanction.

**Court's Interpretation of Rule of Law**

- The court interprets the rule of law as a mechanism **to ensure that the state fulfills its duties, preventing abuse of legal processes due to inaction**, arbitrary actions, or failures to comply with legal obligations.
- Breaching the rule of law is seen as negating equality under Article 14**, making judicial scrutiny necessary for its enforcement.

**Judiciary as Guardian of Rule of Law**

- The court emphasises that the judiciary must be a beacon in upholding the rule of law to prevent selective application and a dangerous state of affairs in democracy.



**Rule of Law vs. Arbitrariness**

- The court cites Justice H R Khanna's dissenting judgement, stating that **the rule of law is the antithesis of arbitrariness.**
- It references a 2014 ruling, noting that justice encompasses not only the rights of convicts but also those of victims and law-abiding sections of society.

**Rejecting Plea for Liberty**

- The court rejects the convicts' plea for protection of liberty, asserting that the rule of law must prevail, and the orders of remission should be set aside.
- It invokes **Article 142 of the Constitution**, stating that it cannot be used to allow individuals to remain out of jail when orders are deemed null and void.

**Restoration of Status Quo**

- Complying with the principle of equal protection of law under Article 14, the court justifies the deprivation of liberty for the convicts as they were erroneously set at liberty against the law.
- The court emphasizes restoring the status quo ante, as the remission orders have been quashed, rejecting the plea for protecting the convicts' liberty.

### 3. 'Viksit Bharat Yatra aims to help schemes reach all beneficiaries' - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

**News:**

- The Prime Minister said the main goal of **Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) was to ensure that government schemes** reached all deserving people.

**Key Highlights**

- The government has planned to further increase the number of such beneficiaries to two crore, **via programmes like 'NaMo Drone Didi Scheme' under which about one lakh drones had been demonstrated during VBSY.**
- At present, training is being given for the use of drones in the agricultural sector only.

**Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra**

- It is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness through outreach activities to achieve saturation of schemes of Govt. of India across the country covering all Gram Panchayats, Nagar Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies.
- The campaign is being taken up by adopting a whole of government approach with active involvement of various Ministries/Departments of Government of India, State Governments, Central Govt. Organizations and Institutions.
- It aimed to reach out to the vulnerable who are eligible under various schemes but have not availed benefit so far.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Vikasit Bharat Sankalp Yatra
- NaMo Drone Didi Scheme

**GS III**

### 4. Saved by sponge - Down to Earth

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

**News:**

- **As oceans warm up**, women in Zanzibar **switch from seaweed to climate-resilient sponge farming** to stay afloat

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Sponge
- Global warming

**Sponge**

- Sponges, unlike seaweed, possess remarkable resilience to climate change
- They require **minimal maintenance, and command premium market prices**, according to marine biologist Aziza Said from the University of Dodoma, Tanzania.
- Additionally, sponge farming requires little financial resources and technical expertise, as these organisms grow and propagate naturally.
- Most sponges are hermaphrodites, harbouring both male and female reproductive organs, enabling them to self-propagate effortlessly.
- **New sponges emerge from small buds** that detach from the parent sponge and begin independent growth.
- Even damaged or fragmented sponges can regenerate into new individuals.
- This remarkable regenerative ability underpins the ease and feasibility of commercial sponge farming.
- **Unlike synthetic sponges, sea sponges are free from harmful substances** like chemicals and microplastics

**Uses**

- These sponges are used for bathing and general hygiene
- Their skeletons break down into microscopic pieces of silicon, which helps control the carbon cycle in the ocean and reduces the greenhouse effect.
- Dissolved silicon is critical for the growth of diatoms, tiny organisms which absorb large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> in the ocean using photosynthesis.

**5. Karnataka HC bans mining activity near KRS reservoir - The Hindu**

**Relevance:** Disaster and disaster management.

**News:**

- The High Court of Karnataka has **banned all types of mining and quarrying activities** within a 20-km radius of the historic Krishnarajasagar (KRS) dam in Mandya district.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Dam Safety Act, 2021
- The National Dam Safety Authority

**Key points**

- The ban will apply even for those **mining activities within a 20-km radius** for which permissions/licences were already granted by the authorities
  - or already operating in the area, or were permitted on the orders of the court in earlier rounds of litigation, the High Court said.
- The court also said that the ban will be in force till the completion of a study by experts and the decision to be taken by the State committee on dam safety
  - set up as per the provisions of the **Dam Safety Act, 2021**.

**Dam Safety Act, 2021**

- The Act provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all specified dams across the country.
- These are dams with height more than 15 metres, or height between 10 m -15 m with certain design and structural conditions.
- **Institutional Mechanism**
  - The National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)
  - The National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)
  - State Dam Safety Organisations
  - The State Committee on Dam Safety

## 6. Income inequality declines, says SBI research unit countering K-shaped eco recovery claims - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Economy

**News:**

- The Economic Research Department of the State Bank of India recently reported a **decline in income inequality** in India.
- It attributes this decline to a **higher tax base** and a **shift in taxpayers from lower to higher income tax brackets**.

### Prelims Takeaway

- K-shaped Recovery
- Gini Coefficient

### Migration to Higher Income Brackets

- 36.3% of taxpayers** have moved from lower to higher income tax brackets, resulting in a **21.3% increase in additional income**.
- Income-tax returns filed by individuals earning between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh increased by 295% between AY 2013-14 and AY 2021-22.

### Contribution of Top Taxpayers

- Top 2.5% of taxpayers' contribution in income declined** from 2.81% in FY14 to 2.28% in FY21.
- Share of combined income of top earners with over Rs 100 crore income decreased from 1.64% in FY14 to 0.77% in FY21.

### Trends in Small Firms and Consumption

- 19.5% of small firms transitioned into larger ones through **MSME value chain integration**.
- Consumption of the bottom 90% of the population increased by Rs 8.2 lakh crore post-pandemic.

### K-shaped Recovery

- The report dismisses claims of a K-shaped recovery as "**flawed, prejudiced, and ill-concocted**."
  - The concept of K-shaped recovery came to light during the **covid 19 pandemic**.
  - It signifies a **diverging economic scenario** where certain sectors of the economy will be thriving while other sectors will continue to decline or struggle to recover.
- Growth is seen in all income classes but its skewedness has been decreasing with **convergence of income towards the middle**, indicating a positive economic trend.

### Other Key Findings

- Gini coefficient of taxable income declined** significantly from 0.472 to 0.402 during FY14-FY22.
- Decline in two-wheeler sales is attributed to a **shift towards four-wheelers** and not rural distress.
- Female tax filers constitute around 15%** of individual tax filers.
- Consumption data from platforms like Zomato suggests **rising experience-centric income groups**, refuting claims of distress.

## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

## 7. An ambitious push for values, ethics in higher education - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced **Mulya Pravah 2.0**, a revised version of the 2019 Mulya Pravah guideline.
- Objective:** To instill human values and professional ethics in higher education institutions.
- It was triggered by a survey of human resource managers revealing **prevalent unethical practices** in various organizations.
- Practices include favouritism, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, inconsistency in discipline, lack of confidentiality etc.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Aditya L1 Mission
- Lagrange Points



**Mulya Pravah 2.0**
**Objectives**

- Build value-based institutions by promoting respect for fundamental duties, constitutional values, and national bonding.
- Address issues of corruption, malpractices and violations of ethics in higher education.
- Mulya Pravah 2.0 underscores the need for transparency in administration, emphasizing decision-making guided by institutional and public interest.
- Aims to eliminate discriminatory privileges of officials and encourages the punishment of corrupt practices.

**Expectations from Higher Education Institutions**

- Ensure integrity, trusteeship, harmony, accountability, inclusiveness, commitment, respectfulness, belongingness, sustainability, constitutional values and global citizenship.
- They act in the best interest of the institution, creating a conducive culture and work environment.
- They must refrain from misappropriation of resources and refuse to accept items which may affect the impartial performance of duties.

**Confidentiality and Right to Information**

- The guideline stresses the importance of maintaining confidentiality, which may counter with the right to information as an instrument to ensure accountability.
- Suggests voluntary disclosure of critical information by higher education institutions to deter malpractices and boost public confidence.

**Role of Teachers and Unions**

- Teachers need to act as role models, demonstrating good conduct and setting high standards.
- Staff and student unions should support the administration in development activities and raise issues in a dignified manner.

**Conclusion**

- Concerns arise about the guideline's potential misuse to **suppress dissent and undermine collective voices.**
- Therefore, a **more inclusive approach** is needed, allowing stakeholders to **actively participate in decision-making.**

## 8. Understanding the EU's carbon border tax - The Hindu

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

**Context:**

- A concerning development for India is the European Union (EU)'s **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** and its potential implications.

**Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**

- Objective: To tax carbon-intensive products coming into the EU from 2026
- Implemented in two phases, with the first (transitional phase) starting from October 1, 2023.
- CBAM intends to achieve the target of a 55% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, under the European Green Deal.
- A response to the risk of EU industries being replaced by carbon-intensive imports from countries like India or China.

**Mechanism and Phases**

- CBAM mirrors the EU's Emission Trading System (ETS) but focuses on imports.
  - The EU's Emission Trading System (ETS) sets a cap on the amount of GHG emissions permitted.
  - Under the EU-ETS, companies covered by the scheme have to 'buy' allowances corresponding to their GHG emissions.
  - Financial incentives are provided to cut emissions, but energy-intensive industries receive free allowances to ensure their competitiveness.
- Transitional phase (until December 2025): Reporting GHG emissions without financial obligations.
- Definitive phase (from January 1, 2026): Importers must surrender CBAM certificates based on declared emissions.
- The CBAM will be applied to the actual declared carbon content embedded in the goods imported to the EU.

**India's Response and Initiatives**

- India criticizes CBAM as "ill-conceived," potentially harming its manufacturing sector.
- India's own Carbon Credit Trading System (CCTS) is still in the planning stages.
  - It was introduced in December 2022 by amending the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
  - It is proposed to combat climate change by incentivising actions for emission reductions leading to increased investments in clean energy by the private sector.
  - The obligatory CCTS model is also coupled with the voluntary market-based mechanism called the Green Credit Programme Rules
- The Green Credit Programme Rules encourage more environmentally proactive actions going beyond the carbon reduction mandate.

**Impact on India**

- India is reportedly among the top eight countries adversely affected by CBAM, particularly in sectors like steel.
- As per the Global Trade Research Initiative report, in 2022, 27% of India's exports of iron, steel, and aluminium products worth \$8.2 billion went to the EU.

**India's Options**

- India may challenge CBAM as violative of the Paris Agreement's common but differentiated responsibilities principle.
- The EU could collect the tax and return funds to affected countries for green technology investments.
- The ongoing negotiations with the EU must be closely observed.
- India has already challenged the CBAM before the World Trade Organization under the special and differential treatment provisions.

**Other Considerations**

- The EU overlooks factors like cheap labour, alternative production methods, and expansion opportunities in other geographies.
- These might dictate the shift of production by EU industries outside the EU.
- The UK plans to enforce its own CBAM by 2027, adding pressure on India's exports.

### Conclusion

- India needs to **formulate its own carbon taxation measures** that align with the principles of the Paris Agreement while simultaneously **safeguarding its industries' interests**.

## 9. From red ant chutney to black rice, the 7 Odisha products that have bagged GI tags - Indian Express

**Relevance:** Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

### Context:

- Recently, **seven products from Odisha** have bagged the coveted **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.

### Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- Geographical Indications of goods refer to the place of **origin of a product**, conveying an **assurance of quality and distinctiveness**.
- In India, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, awards GIs.

### Significance of GI Tag

- A GI registration is **given to an area**, allowing traders to sell it with the GI logo.
- Any unauthorized use can lead to legal prosecution under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- GI tags also help **protect the interests of the local growers and artisans** by preventing duplicity of the products and sale from unauthorised traders.
- Consumers can **identify certified goods** through GI tags.

<p><b>1. Kapdaganda shawl</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woven by the women of Dongria Kondh tribe, reflecting tribal heritage of the Dongria Kondhs.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dongria Kondh tribe is a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) in the Niyamgiri hills in Odisha's Rayagada and Kalahandi districts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The shawl is worn by both men and women and the Dongrias give it to their family members as a token of love and affection.</li> <li>Embroidered with red, yellow, and green threads with each colour holding significance.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green: Mountains and hills</li> <li>Yellow: Peace and happiness</li> <li>Red: Symbol of blood</li> </ul> </li> <li>The motifs in the shawls are mostly lines and triangles, believed to be a reflection of the importance of mountains for the community.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Lanjia Saura Painting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is one of the oldest tribal art forms, also known as Idital.</li> <li>It belongs to the Lanjia Saura community, a PVTG largely residing in the Rayagada district. These paintings are in the form of exterior murals painted on the mud walls of homes.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show gratitude to their deities and forefathers, and also for the well-being of their community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>They feature subjects like tribal humans, trees, animals, birds, the Sun and the Moon.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Koraput Kala Jeera Rice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The black-coloured rice variety, also known as the 'Prince of Rice', is famous for its aroma, taste, texture and nutritional value.</li> <li>As the rice grains resemble cumin seeds, it is also called Kala Jeera.</li> <li>Its consumption helps in increasing haemoglobin levels and improves metabolism in the body.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Similipal Kat chutney</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The chutney made with red weaver ants is a traditional delicacy of the tribals in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.</li> <li>The ants are found in the forests of Mayurbhanj, including in the Similipal forests</li> <li>The chutney is believed to be a good source of nutrients like protein, calcium, zinc, vitamin B-12, iron, magnesium, potassium, etc.</li> <li>Its consumption is believed to help boost immunity and prevent diseases.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinjal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is known for its prickly thorns on the stems and the whole plant.</li> <li>The green and round fruits contain more seeds as compared to other genotypes.</li> <li>It is famous for its unique taste and relatively short quick cooking time.</li> <li>The plants are resistant to major insects and can be grown with minimal pesticide.</li> <li>It is being widely cultivated in Nayagarh district of the state.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Odisha Khajuri Guda (Jaggery)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a natural sweetener extracted from date palm trees and has its origin in the Gajapati district.</li> <li>Traditionally, the jaggery is prepared in a trapezoidal form called 'Patali Gur' and is organic by nature.</li> <li>It is dark brown and has a unique taste.</li> </ul> <p><b>7. Dhenkanal Magji</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a type of sweet made from cheese from buffalo milk, with distinct characteristics in terms of appearance, taste, flavour, shape, and size.</li> <li>It also has unique nutritional values that distinguish it from other cheese-based sweets.</li> </ul>
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## 10. Surgical care in India is a neglected part of public health - The Hindu

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

### Context:

- Five billion people** around the world lack the **fundamental right to access surgery** when required.



**Right to Access Surgery in India**

- Millions of children and adults in India, regardless of their condition, face challenges in accessing surgical care, treating it as a luxury.
- More than 90% of rural Indians are estimated to lack access to surgery when needed.

**Challenges in Access**

- Challenges such as difficulty reaching hospitals on time due to poor infrastructure, lack of facilities, and transportation issues.
- Scarcity of essential resources like surgeons, anaesthetists, and clinical staff in many parts of India.
- The capacity to perform enough surgeries is also undermined by disparities based on geographical location, affordability etc.
  - The met need for major surgeries is less than 7% in rural India.

**Quality of Surgical Care**

- The quality of surgical care is important, which depends on factors like surgeons' training, equipment availability, and peri-operative care.
- However, the data on perioperative mortality is heterogeneous and missing in several instances.

**Financial Impact on Patients**

- Due to limited universal healthcare coverage and capabilities in public health facilities, patients seeking private care face devastating financial impacts.
- Over 60% of surgery patients in rural India experience catastrophic expenses, risking impoverishment.

**India as an Exemplar for Challenges**

- India is described as an archetype for low and middle-income countries regarding the lack of access to surgical care.
- Despite current efforts by individual initiatives and programs, persistent systemic gaps still exist.
  - Examples include
    - Rural surgeons gathered under the Association for Rural Surgeons of India
    - Organisations such as SEARCH and Jan Swasthya Sahyog (JSS) which serve tribal populations in difficult-to-reach areas.

**Need for a Surgical Action Plan**

- The lack of access to surgical care as a public health concern must be recognised and incorporated into mainstream health policymaking.
- A National Surgical Obstetric Anaesthesia Plan (NSOAP) should be initiated in India.
- Using existing data, integrating surgical care data in existing surveys and systems, and building new dedicated data collection mechanisms are the ways out.



**Mentorship**  
India

## Quick Look

### 1. First Advance Estimates

- According to the First Advance Estimates (FAEs), India's GDP will grow by 7.3% in the current financial year (2023-24).
- The FAE is presented at the end of the first week of January every year and are only the first estimates of growth for that financial year.
  - By the end of February, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) releases the Second Advance Estimates and, by the end of May, the Provisional Estimates.
- The FAE are based on the performance of the economy over the first 7-odd months, and the data are extrapolated to arrive at an annual picture.
- They are the last GDP data released before the Union Budget for the coming financial year (which is presented on February 1) is finalised.
- As such, the FAEs constitute the base for the Budget numbers.
- This year's FAEs draw some additional significance as they provide the first complete picture of economic growth in the 10 years of the present government.

### 2. Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is a protected area of India in the Himalayan foothills of West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh.
- It conjoins Sessa Orchid Sanctuary to the northeast and Pakhui Tiger Reserve across the Kameng river to the east.
- It is situated in the biodiversity hotspot of Eastern Himalayas and home to over 500 bird species.
- It is also a part of the Kameng Elephant Reserve.
- It is notable as a prime birding site due to the extraordinary variety, numbers and accessibility of species.
- It derives its name from the Red Eagle Division of the Indian army which was posted in the area in the 1950s.
- Flora: The temperate cloud forest is intermixed with dense bamboo patches and broadleaved evergreen forest across a wide altitudinal range, with conifers and rhododendrons at the higher elevations.
- Fauna: Capped langur, Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, red panda, Asiatic black bear, Arunachal macaque and gaur.

### 3. Bobbili Veena

- It is a traditional 'Saraswati Veena' from Bobbili and is famed for its fine tune and distinctive notes.
- It is a large plucked string instrument used in Carnatic music.
- The making of the veena began in the 17th century during the reign of Pedda Rayudu, the king of Bobbili Samsthanam who was a great patron of music.
- These veenas are crafted from Jack-wood tree logs in Gollapalli, a town in Bobbili (Andhra Pradesh).
  - Jack-wood is preferred as it is light and the unique grain of the wood renders the quality of swara or tone.
- A single piece of wood is used to create the instrument giving it the name 'Ekandi Veena'.
- With their origin dating back to the 17th Century, these veenas are played in a distinctive style, which also led to the coinage of the 'Bobbili Veena Sampradayam'.
- It earned a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2012 for its unique design and high-quality craftsmanship.

#### 4. iDEX

- It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Defence, Govt of India launched in 2018.
- The objective of the scheme is to cultivate an innovation ecosystem in the Defence and Aerospace sector by collaborating with startups, innovators, MSMEs, incubators, and academia.
- iDEX offers grants and support for R&D with significant potential for future adoption in Indian defence and aerospace.
- It is currently engaged with around 400+ Startups and MSMEs.
- It is recognized as a game-changer in the defence ecosystem, iDEX has received the PM Award for Innovation in the defence sector.
- Funding: It will be funded and managed by a 'Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)' which has been formed as a 'not for profit' company as per the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose, by the two founder memberse. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL.

#### 5. Trichoderma

- The formulation named 'Tricholime', integrates Trichoderma and lime into a single product, making the application easier for farmers.
- Trichoderma is a fungal biocontrol agent, has proven effective in suppressing several soil-borne plant pathogens and serves as a successful bio-pesticide and bio-fertilizer in crop production.
- Recognizing the importance of Trichoderma and the challenges posed by traditional lime applications, the scientists at IISR developed 'Tricholime' to integrate lime and Trichoderma

#### 6. Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This is typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is valid for 10 years following which it can be renewed

**Mentorship**  
India



## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Nomadic Chin-Kuki**

1. Nomadic Chin-Kuki is a community seeking inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list in Manipur.
2. The representation for delisting Nomadic Chin-Kuki from the ST list was made by Maheshwar Thounaojam, National Secretary of the Republican Party of India (Athawale).
3. The conflict in Manipur between Meitei people and Kuki-Zo tribes has escalated due to the demand for ST status by Nomadic Chin-Kuki.

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

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

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the "Rule of Law":**

1. The Rule of Law is a concept that prioritizes executive lawlessness and allows officials to arrest or detain individuals without legislative sanction.
2. According to the Supreme Court, breaching the Rule of Law would not impact the concept of equality as prescribed by Article 14 of the Constitution.
3. The judiciary, as per the court's interpretation, is not considered a central pillar in upholding the Rule of Law in a democratic state.

**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 "Viksit Bharat Yatra**

1. Viksit Bharat Yatra is a nationwide initiative by the Government of India aimed at promoting sustainable development in rural areas.
2. The yatra focuses on enhancing infrastructure, education, and healthcare facilities in remote villages across India.

3. Viksit Bharat Yatra is a cultural exchange program initiated to strengthen ties between rural and urban communities.

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

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

**Q4. Consider the following statements regarding "sponge farming**

1. Sponge farming involves cultivating marine sponges for commercial purposes, particularly for use in cosmetic and medical industries.
2. Marine sponges are a type of plant that can be grown in controlled underwater environments, similar to hydroponics in agriculture.
3. Sponge farming has gained attention for its potential environmental benefits, such as improving water quality and providing habitats for marine organisms.
4. The primary location for sponge farming is in freshwater lakes, as marine environments are less conducive to controlled cultivation.

**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 regarding the "Dam Safety Act, 2021,"**

1. The Dam Safety Act, 2021, is a legislation enacted by the Indian Parliament to ensure the safety and maintenance of dams in the country.
2. The act aims to establish a national regulatory framework for the inspection, operation, and maintenance of dams to prevent disasters.
3. The Dam Safety Act, 2021, empowers the Central Water Commission (CWC) to oversee dam safety at the national level.
4. The legislation mandates the formation of State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO) to carry out inspections and ensure compliance with safety standards at the state level.

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

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

**Q6. Which of the following statements most aptly describe the term “K-shaped recovery”?**

- A. It is the most-optimistic scenario in which the economy quickly rises after an economic crash.  
B. It is a scenario where the economy fails to regain the level of GDP even after years go by.  
C. It is a scenario in which the economy, after falling, struggles around a low growth rate for some time, before rising gradually to usual levels.  
D. It occurs when, following a recession, different parts of the economy recover at different rates, times, or magnitudes.

**Q7. Which of the following statements reflect the primary objective of Mulya Pravah 2.0, seen in the news recently?**

- A. It aims to inculcate human values and professional ethics in higher education institutions.  
B. It aims to foster collaboration with foreign universities providing institutions with access to cutting-edge facilities and resources.  
C. It aims to promote financial profitability and competition among institutions.  
D. It aims to expand the infrastructure facilities and campus amenities.

**Q8. Consider the following statements on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**

1. It aims to tax carbon-intensive products coming into the EU from 2026.  
2. It intends to achieve the target of a 55% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

**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

**Q9. With reference to the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, consider the following statements**

1. A GI registration is given to a trader or a specific geographical location or origin.  
2. GI Tag ensures that only the authorised users are allowed to use the popular product name.  
3. In India, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, awards GIs.  
4. Once granted, a GI Tag is valid for 10 years following which it can be renewed.

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

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

**Q10. With reference to Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, consider the following statements**

1. It offers a sum insured of Rs. 5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care.  
2. It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.  
3. The National Health Authority (NHA) ensures the effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments.

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

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

## Prelims Track Answer

### Answer 1 Option A is correct

#### Explanation

- Nomadic Chin-Kuki is a community that has been seeking inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list in Manipur, not delisting. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The representation for delisting Nomadic Chin-Kuki from the ST list was made by Maheshwar Thounaojam, National Secretary of the Republican Party of India (Athawale), not for inclusion. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The conflict in Manipur between Meitei people and Kuki-Zo tribes is not directly linked to the demand for ST status by Nomadic Chin-Kuki. The conflict primarily arose due to Meitei groups seeking inclusion in the ST list, leading to tensions with Kuki-Zo tribes. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

### Answer 2 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- The Rule of Law is a concept that acts as a check against executive lawlessness, ensuring that no official or administrator can arrest or detain a person without legislative sanction. It is designed to prevent arbitrary actions and promote governance based on laws. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- According to the Supreme Court, breaching the Rule of Law does impact the concept of equality, as prescribed by Article 14. The court emphasizes that equality before the law becomes an "empty" word if its violation is not subject to judicial scrutiny, and if courts don't enforce the Rule of Law. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The judiciary is considered the guardian of the Rule of Law and a central pillar in upholding it in a democratic state. The court, in its interpretation, emphasizes that the judiciary must be a beacon in upholding the Rule of Law to prevent selective application and ensure a robust democracy. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

### Answer 3 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- Viksit Bharat Yatra is not a nationwide initiative by the Government of India for promoting sustainable development in rural areas. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**

- The term "Viksit Bharat Yatra" doesn't align with a specific government initiative for rural development. **Hence, statement 2 is INcorrect**

- It is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness through outreach activities to achieve saturation of schemes of Govt. of India across the country covering all Gram Panchayats, Nagar Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies.

**Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**

### Answer 4 Option B is correct

#### Explanation

- Sponge farming involves cultivating marine sponges for various purposes, including commercial use in industries such as cosmetics and medicine. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**

- Marine sponges are not plants; they are simple aquatic animals. The process of sponge farming involves cultivating these marine animals, not plants, in controlled underwater environments. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**

- Sponge farming has been explored for its potential environmental benefits, including improving water quality and providing habitats for marine organisms. Sponges can filter water, removing impurities and debris. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**

- The primary location for sponge farming is in marine environments, not freshwater lakes. Marine sponges are adapted to saltwater conditions, and controlled cultivation is typically carried out in suitable marine habitats. **Hence, statement 4 is incorrect**

### Answer 5 Option D is correct

#### Explanation

- The Dam Safety Act, 2021, is a legislation enacted by the Indian Parliament to ensure the safety and maintenance of dams in the country. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- The primary objective of the Dam Safety Act, 2021, is to establish a national regulatory framework for the inspection, operation, and maintenance of dams to prevent disasters. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**



- The Dam Safety Act, 2021, empowers the Central Water Commission (CWC) to oversee dam safety at the national level. **Hence, statement 3 is correct**
- The legislation mandates the formation of State Dam Safety Organizations (SDSO) to carry out inspections and ensure compliance with safety standards at the state level. **Hence, statement 4 is correct**

**Answer 6 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- A K-shaped recovery occurs when, following a recession, different parts of the economy recover at different rates, times, or magnitudes. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- This is in contrast to an even, uniform recovery across sectors, industries, or groups of people.
- A K-shaped recovery can reflect creative destruction in an economy, which occurs when new technologies and industries replace older ones over the course of a recession.
- It can reflect the public policy response to a recession in terms of monetary and fiscal policy, which can benefit some segments of the economy more than others - leading to income inequality.
- It can simply reflect the differential impact that the initial recession had on different parts of the economy.

**Answer 7 Option A is correct****Explanation**

- Mulya Pravah 2.0 by the University Grants Commission (UGC), aims at instilling human values and ethics in higher education institutions. **Hence, option A is correct.**
- It addresses unethical practices in higher education, identified through a survey of human resource managers.
- The guideline focuses on transparency, accountability, and fairness in decision-making processes.
- It calls for the eradication of discriminatory privileges, punishment for corruption, and encourages a conducive culture for teaching, learning, and research.

**Answer 8 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aims to tax carbon-intensive products coming into the EU from 2026. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Implemented in two phases, with the first (transitional phase) starting from October 1, 2023.
- Transitional phase (until December 2025): Reporting GHG emissions without financial obligations.
- Definitive phase (from January 1, 2026): Importers must surrender CBAM certificates based on declared emissions.
- CBAM intends to achieve the target of a 55% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, under the European Green Deal. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- CBAM mirrors the EU's Emission Trading System (ETS) but focuses on imports.
- The CBAM will be applied to the actual declared carbon content embedded in the goods imported to the EU.

**Answer 9 Option C is correct****Explanation**

- Geographical Indications of goods refer to the place of origin of a product, conveying an assurance of quality and distinctiveness.
- It is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods).
- A GI registration is given to an area, allowing traders to sell it with the GI logo. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Any unauthorized use can lead to legal prosecution under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In India, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, awards GIs. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- It is governed and directed by the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- Validity: 10 years following which it can be renewed. **Hence, statement 4 is correct.**

**Answer 10 Option D is correct****Explanation**

- PM-JAY is the world's largest health insurance scheme fully financed by the government.
- Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Health Benefit Packages covers surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.
- It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by

latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- The National Health Authority (NHA) has been constituted as an autonomous entity under the Society Registration Act, 1860 for effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

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