

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

By



SOURCES



**Date: 28-29 Apr. 2024**

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## Important News Articles

### GS I

#### 1. Anticyclones, hanging even now over India, link warming to heat - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Important Geophysical Phenomena

**News:**

- During its pre-monsoon demise El Nino's impact on the Indian Easterly Jet tends to produce a stronger and more persistent anticyclone which is leading to long lasting and intense heat waves.

**Highlights:**

- In March, the **anticyclonic circulations over the North Indian Ocean created unusual rainfall over Odisha.**
- **Global warming creates unique features locally that modulate heat waves on top of cool background temperatures.**
- Heat waves over India have been of special concern this season
  - **Some persistent circulation patterns have been creating heat waves and this pattern serves as focal point for improving predictions.**

**Anticyclones:**

- In anticyclonic conditions winds move in a **clockwise direction**, with **air sinking down in the middle of it**. The air is compressed and warmed as it hits the ground and can **create a high pressure heat dome.**
- **During the pre-monsoon season,**
  - The upper-level **Indian Easterly Jet (IEJ)** begins to take shape in the upper atmosphere, across the Arabian Sea, peninsular India, and the Bay of Bengal.
  - A **strong westerly jet** exists to the north.
- During the monsoon season the **westerly jet is pushed north and the IEJ dominates the Indian subcontinent.**
- Anticyclonic conditions can be generated by these two over the Indian Ocean and the Indian subcontinent.
- **A strong anticyclone can bring dry and hot weather over many parts of India while a weak anticyclone produces milder weather.**

**Way forward:**

- India's prediction system and early warning systems have improved.
  - However, **challenges remain** to build resilience for the future by better predicting the trajectory of the weather at every location over India.
- **Governments, their departments, and the people at large need to be trained and engaged with to make this a sustained success.**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- ANTICYCLONE
- CYCLONE

### GS II

#### 2. NHRC accreditation status faces review test this week after being on hold in 2023 - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-judicial Bodies.

**News:**

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is preparing to defend the government's human rights processes at a meeting of the UN-recognised Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to retain its "A status".

**Highlights:**

- **The NHRC's ratings were put on hold in 2023 over concerns on**

#### Prelims Takeaway

- GANHRI
- NHRC
- Paris Principles

- composition procedure
- presence of police personnel in human rights investigations
- lack of gender and minority representation.
- Whether the **NHRC is given an A or B rating will affect its ability to vote at the UN Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies.**
- The meeting will be held as part of the **five-year peer review** for each member of the **114-member alliance.**
- India, since being accredited in **1999, retained its A ranking** in 2006 and 2011, while its status was deferred in 2016 and restored after a year.

**GANHRI:**

- Established in **1993 as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights**
  - It has changed its name to **Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in 2016**
- It gathers NHRIs from all over the world to form a member-based network organization
- **It is a respected partner of the international human rights system.**
- The aim of GANHRI's advocacy work is to **positively influence the substantive outcomes of international human rights mechanisms and processes** by bringing the voices and experiences of NHRIs into global discussions.
- In accordance with the **UN Paris Principles and the GANHRI Statute**, the following classifications for accreditation:
  - **A. Fully compliant with the Paris Principles;**
  - **B. Partially compliant with the Paris Principles.**

**Paris Principles:**

- These are Principles Relating to the **Status of National Human Rights Institutions**
  - They set out the **minimum standards that NHRIs must meet in order to be considered credible and to operate effectively.**
- The key pillars of the **Paris Principles are pluralism, independence and effectiveness.**

**NHRC:**

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India was established in **1993.**
- **It is in conformity with the Paris Principles.**
- The NHRC is an embodiment of **India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights.**
- It is established under **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993** as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006.
- **The Commission consists of a Chairperson, five full-time Members and seven deemed Members.**
  - **Chairman is a former Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge.**
- **The statute lays down qualifications for the appointment of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission.**

### 3. Chemist group resists Centre's move to sell drugs without licence-The Hindu

**Relevance:** Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

**News:**

- The Union government's proposal to permit the sale of **over-the-counter (OTC) drugs without a licence** in India is a cause of deep concern, the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) has said.
- Such a move would contravene existing drug laws, pharmacy regulations, and pertinent legal frameworks, including directives from the Supreme Court.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- DTAB
- OTC drugs

**Key Highlights:**

- Allowing OTC drug sales without proper regulation poses serious threats,
  - including drug abuse,
  - increased risk of adverse drug reaction,
  - delayed access to healthcare,
  - possible compromise in storage of medicines.
- **OTC** treats common, **self-treated medical problems** and symptoms like colds, mild discomfort, allergies, and other benign health issues.

**Over the Counter drugs:**

- **Atul Goel Panel:** India's new OTC policy for drugs, which seeks to reduce treatment costs and promote self-care while ensuring safety.
  - Improve accessibility to commonly used medicines, especially in rural areas
  - Reduce treatment costs for citizens
  - Promote responsible self-care practices
  - Ensure safety and efficacy of OTC drugs
- The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940, and the Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945, **do not define OTC medicines.**
- **The Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB):** A **statutory body** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that advises the Central and State governments on technical matters related to drugs and cosmetics.
  - Established under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940
  - Comprises experts from various fields such as medicine, pharmaceuticals, and chemistry
  - Recommends measures to ensure safety, efficacy, and quality of drugs and cosmetics
  - Advises on import, manufacture, distribution, and sale of drugs and cosmetic

**GS III****4. 'India set to sign trade deal with Oman to expand its West Asia ties'- The Hindu****Relevance:** India and its Neighborhood- Relations.**News:**

- India and Oman will sign a trade deal in the coming months, as New Delhi seeks to expand its ties in West Asia, where rising tensions are putting major shipping routes at risk.
- It will help India with a strategic partner and access to key trade routes in a volatile region.

**Key Highlights:**

- India and Oman have annual trade of less than **\$13 billion**,
- The relationship is important for New Delhi as the Gulf nation is a gateway to the narrow **Strait of Hormuz** between Oman and Iran, a major transit point for global oil shipments.
- India has pivoted to seeking bilateral deals with **GCC( (Gulf Cooperation Council)** member nations such as Oman and United Arab Emirates.
- The planned deal with Oman "also gives a competitive edge as GCC is negotiating trade agreements with Pakistan and China,

**The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

- A political and economic alliance of six countries in the **Arabian Peninsula**: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- **Established in 1981**, the GCC promotes economic, security, cultural and social cooperation between the six states and holds a summit every year to discuss cooperation and regional affairs.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- GCC
- India-Oman Relations

- **All current member states are monarchies**, including three constitutional monarchies (Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain), two absolute monarchies (Saudi Arabia and Oman), and one federal monarchy (the United Arab Emirates).

#### India and GCC:

- The Gulf is an integral part of India's 'extended neighbourhood',
- India is dependent on the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states for **42 per cent of its overall oil imports**; three of the top five oil suppliers to India are Gulf states.
- Indians make up the largest labour community, with an estimated **7.6 million Indian nationals** living and working in the region; especially in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- The **GCC is India's largest regional-bloc trading partner**, which accounted for **\$104 billion** of trade

#### India oman relations

- India has secured access to the key **Port of Duqm** in Oman for military use and logistical support.
- Military Exercises:
  - Army exercise: Al Najah
  - Air Force exercise: Eastern Bridge
  - Naval Exercise: Naseem Al Bahr
- Hindi chair of the **Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR)** in Oman.
- India is the **2nd largest market for Oman's crude oil** exports for the year 2022 after China.

## 5. Drugs worth Rs 600 crore seized from Pakistani boat on way to Sri Lanka; 14 crew members held -Indian Express

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

#### News:

- **The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) seized 86 kg of suspected heroin** worth Rs 602 crore from a Pakistani boat, which was on its way to Sri Lanka via Tamil Nadu off the Porbandar coast in Gujarat
- The drugs were seized during a joint ICG operation with the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) during which the Indian side opened fire injuring one of the crew members.

#### The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

- It is a government agency in India tasked with fighting illegal drug use and trafficking.
- Established in 1986, it works under the Ministry of Home Affairs to enforce the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act
  - which controls the production and sale of such substances.
- This act reflects India's commitment to upholding international agreements on narcotics control.

#### The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS)

- It is a special police force in several states of India including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- In Maharashtra it is headed by senior of the Indian Police Service. The squad has stopped several terrorist attacks in the country.

#### Objective and duties

- To gather information on the anti-national elements
- Coordinate & exchange details with intelligence services like IB and RAW.
- To monitor and eliminate the actions and actions of terrorists, mafias and other organized criminal syndicates.
- The detection and bursting of scams of fake currency notes and narcotics.

#### Prelims Takeaway

- ATS
- Coast guard

## 6. India's imports from China rise to \$101 billion while exports stagnate - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Effects of Liberalization on the Economy, Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth.

**News:**

- With increasing India's dependence on **Chinese industrial goods** like telecom, machinery and electronics, Beijing's share in New Delhi's imports of such goods rose to 30% from 21% in the last 15 years, a report said.

**Key Highlights:**

- The **Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI)** report said, the growing trade deficit with China is a cause of concern.
- The strategic implications of this dependency are profound, affecting not only economic but also **national security dimensions**.

**India's Trade With China:**

- From 2019 to 2024, India's exports to China have stagnated at around \$16 billion annually,
- while imports from China have surged from \$70.3 billion in 2018-19 to over **\$101 billion in 2023-24**.
- Out of these imports from China, **\$100 billion or 98.5%** were in major industrial product categories, which is a major concern.
- growth in imports from China has been much faster than India's overall import growth,
- China's exports to India are growing **2.3 times** faster than India's total imports from all other countries,

**India's Exports to China:**

- According to the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, India's exports to China have been growing slowly in recent years.
- In the financial year 2020-21, India's exports to China were worth **\$21.2 billion**, up from \$16.7 billion in 2019-20.
- Items of Export: The major items that India exports to China include **organic chemicals, cotton yarn, copper, and ores**.

**India's Strategy:**

- **Diversify Imports:**
  - India needs to reduce its dependence on Chinese imports by diversifying its imports from other countries such as Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia.
- **Boost Exports:**
  - India can focus on increasing its exports to China, exporting high-value products like engineering goods, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals..
- **Domestic Industries:**
  - India needs to develop its domestic industries to reduce its reliance on imports.
  - This will not only help reduce the trade imbalance but also create employment opportunities in India.

## 7. Centre releases disaster relief funds for Karnataka and T.N.- The Hindu

**Relevance:** Disaster and disaster management.

**News:**

- The governments of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka moved the Supreme Court **seeking relief funds for calamities such as Cyclone Michaung, floods and drought in 2023**
- the Union government has ordered the release of ₹3,730.32 crore towards "relief assistance for natural calamity" from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

**Key highlights**

- An order by the Finance Ministry said that the amount is being released to the State governments based on the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

### Prelims Takeaway

- RCEP
- India-China Trade

### Prelims Takeaway

- Michaung
- Cyclone

- On March 23, the Karnataka government had moved the Supreme Court against the
- The SDRF is the primary fund available with State governments as part of their response to notified disasters to meet expenditure on providing immediate relief to victims.
- The Centre contributes 75% of the SDRF allocation for general category States and Union Territories and 90% for special category States (northeastern States, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir).
- As per Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the “NDRF supplements the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)
  - in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in the SDRF.
- The States have to submit utilisation certificates, pending which no future allocation is made.

#### **National Disaster Response Fund**

- National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) was renamed as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) **with the enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005.**
- It is defined in Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act).
- It is placed in the “Public Account” of Government of India under “reserve funds not bearing interest”.

#### **Public Accounts:**

- It was constituted under Article 266 (2) of the Constitution.
- It accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker eg. provident funds, small savings etc.
- These funds do not belong to the government and have to be paid back at some time.
- Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament.

#### **Cyclone Michaung**

- The cyclone developed from a **low pressure area in the southwest Bay of Bengal.**
- It gradually intensified into a deep depression, a cyclonic storm, and finally a super-cyclonic storm.
- They were aided by warm sea surface temperatures and the Madden-Julian oscillation, a weather anomaly that influences rainfall patterns.
- It moved northward towards the **Andhra Pradesh coast, while bringing heavy rain and strong winds to north Tamil Nadu.**
- It made landfall near Bapatla district, and weakened into a depression over land.
- **The name Michaung was suggested by Myanmar** symbolises strength and resilience following the list of names prepared by World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

## **Editorials, Gists and Explainers**

### **8. Uttarakhand forest fire: How are forest fires caused and how frequent are they in India?- Indian Express**

**Relevance:** Disaster and Disaster Management.

#### **News:**

- Amid forest fires in Uttarakhand’s Nainital district, the Indian Air Force was engaged in firefighting operations.

#### **Key Highlights:**

- The Nainital, Haldwani and Ramnagar forest divisions were worst affected.
- In some regions, the fires were doused with the help of a **Bambi bucket**, used to pour large amounts of water on the flames in relatively quick intervals.



**Forest Fires:**

- Uncontrolled and non-prescribed combustion or burning of plants in a natural setting such as a forest, grassland, brushland or tundra.
- Consumes the natural fuels and spreads based on conditions like **wind, topography, moisture, vegetation** etc.
- Severe fires occur in many forest types particularly **dry deciduous forest**, while evergreen, semi-evergreen and montane temperate forests are comparatively less prone
- Dry leaves are fuel for forest fires.
- The Forest Survey of India (FSI) website states that nearly **36 per cent** of India's forests are prone to frequent fires.
- Indian State of Forest Report 2021 also found that states in **northeastern India** showed the highest tendency for forest fires.

**Reasons for Forest Fires:**

- **Most fires** are believed to be **man-made**, due to changes in agriculture and unchecked land-use patterns.
- The forest department has previously cited four causes of wildfires: deliberate fires by locals, carelessness, farming-related activities and natural reasons.

**Preventing Forest Fires:**

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) lists the following methods to prevent and control a forest fire:
  - construction of watch towers for early detection;
  - deployment of fire watchers;
  - involvement of local communities,
  - creation and maintenance of fire lines.
- According to the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)** website, two types of fire lines are in practice –
  - **Kachha** or covered fire lines and
  - **Pucca** or open fire lines.
- In Kachha fire lines, the grasses and shrubs are removed while trees are retained to decrease the fuel load.
- The Pucca fire separates a forest/compartments/block from another to control the spread of potential fires.

## 9. Symbol Loading Unit (SLU), the 'matchbox' that feeds EVM candidate information - 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.

**Context:**

- Recently, SC rejected the plea for 100% verification of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips against the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) count
- the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to “seal and secure” the Symbol Loading Unit (SLU) for 45 days after the declaration of election results.

**Key highlights**

- Currently, only the three components of the EVM — the ballot unit, control unit, and VVPAT — are stored for 45 days after the results.
- This is the first time that SLUs, used to load candidate symbols onto the VVPATs, will also be available for examination along with the EVMs if a candidate challenges the results by filing an election petition in court.

**What is a Symbol Loading Unit (SLU) and how does it work?**

- Symbol Loading Units (SLUs) were introduced around the same time as VVPATs
- VVPATs help voters verify their votes — they see a slip with a printed image of the party symbol they voted for.

**How SLU works.**

- But for the VVPAT to print a symbol correctly, information pertaining to the list of candidates and their symbols must be loaded on to the VVPAT machine in the correct order.
- This is where the Symbol Loading Unit, or SLU, comes in.
- The SLU is used to load the symbols of the candidates onto the VVPAT.
- It is a matchbox-sized device that is first connected to a laptop or personal computer, from where a symbol loading application is used to load a bitmap file containing the candidates' names, serial numbers, and symbols.
- The SLU is then connected to the VVPAT to transfer that file on to the paper audit machine.
- This is done under the supervision of a district election officer.

**What happens to an SLU after symbols are loaded?**

- Typically, a small number of SLUs are enough to load symbols onto all VVPATs for a seat.
- According to EC officials, it takes an SLU two to three minutes to load each VVPAT.
- Once the symbol-loading is complete, the SLUs are handed over to the concerned district election officer for safekeeping.
- Thus, in a multi-phase election like the ongoing one for the 18th Lok Sabha, an SLU is typically reused after one phase of polling to load symbols onto VVPATs meant for other seats in subsequent phases.

**What has the SC said about the SLUs?**

- The court has said that the SLUs should be sealed and stored immediately after the symbol-loading process for a seat is complete.
- It must be stored for a period of 45 days after the declaration of results, so that it can be opened and examined like EVMs in case of an election petition.

**And what has the top court said about microcontrollers?**

- In an unprecedented move, the court has allowed candidates to seek verification of EVM software.

**What happens if the microcontrollers, upon verification, are found tampered?**

- The court has only said that if any tampering is found, the candidate will be refunded the cost of verification.

**What changes on the ground?**

- Nothing changes for the voter.
- The ECI will now have to store SLUs for 45 days after voting.
- To reserve one SLU exclusively for one seat, it will need to order more SLUs.
- Also, the ECI will have to examine whether the Representation of the People Act of 1951 has to be amended.
- During this period, the EC machinery does not touch the EVMs. If these machines now need to be unsealed for verification purposes, the poll panel will have to determine how this can be accomplished.

## 10. Inequality can no longer be ignored - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Inclusive Growth**News:**

- The Congress's party's election manifesto has triggered a debate on inequality, concentration of wealth and the measures to address these issues.

**Highlights:**

- The **World Inequality database found that in 2022-23, 22.6% of the national income went to the top 1%, the highest ever since 1922.**
  - Wealth inequality is even more stark with the **top 1% population having 40.1% share in wealth.**
- India has a **low tax-GDP ratio** compared to other middle-income countries
- Its taxation structure is also regressive, **indirect taxes contribute to almost two-thirds of all tax revenue collection.**
- Moreover, **even direct taxes are not very progressive.**
  - According to the **Receipt Budget 2023-24 the effective tax rate** (tax to profit ratio) was 19.14% for companies that had more than ₹500 crore profit before taxes. Meanwhile, for companies in the group of 0-₹1 crore profit to an effective tax rate was 24.82%
- **India's spending on welfare and the social sector is very low compared to other countries.**
  - **Health spending for instance is still around 1.3% of GDP whereas the National Health Policy (NHP) targets achieving 2.5% of GDP by 2025.**

**Addressing inequality:**

- We have **experienced growth accompanied by joblessness.** The discussion, therefore, has to be on generating employment.
  - For this, we have to focus on more **equitable growth with increasing purchasing power of people.**
  - Governments can play a role in this by spending on programmes such as the **NREGA** and the **Public Distribution System.**
- Governments can also contribute to directly creating jobs through **filling up all existing vacancies and expanding much needed public services** in health, education, nutrition and social security sector.
- The quality of jobs, such as of **anganwadi workers, ASHAs and other frontline workers, also need to be improved with adequate wages and improved work conditions.**
- These direct job creation efforts will create **employment opportunities for many, especially women.**
  - They will also contribute to **improving human development outcomes and reduce the burden of unpaid care work on women and free them up for other employment.**

## Quick Look

### 1. Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

- It is an organisation affiliated to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- It is a global network of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) that works to promote and protect human rights.
- GANHRI represents 120 NHRIs from around the world.
- GANHRI's mission is to unite, promote, and strengthen NHRIs to operate in line with the UN Paris Principles.
- Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) reviews NHRIs every five years, and there is an appeal process for NHRIs to ensure greater transparency and due process.
- In a unique peer-review-based accreditation process.
- GANHRI ensures individual NHRIs' compliance with the Paris Principles to ensure their independence, pluralism and accountability.

### 2. Solar Flares

- A solar flare is an intense burst of radiation coming from the release of magnetic energy associated with sunspots. They are our solar system's largest explosive events.
- They are seen as bright areas on the sun, and they can last from minutes to hours.
- In a matter of just a few minutes, they heat the material to many millions of degrees and produce a burst of radiation across the electromagnetic spectrum, including from radio waves to x-rays and gamma rays.
- Although solar flares can be visible in white light, they are often more readily noticed via their bright X-ray and ultraviolet emissions.

### 3. Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN)

- It is the operational arm of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Climate Change Technology Mechanism.
- It is hosted by UN Environment (UNEP) in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and with the support of 11 independent organizations having expertise in climate technologies.
- It was established to accelerate the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low-carbon and climate resilient development at the request of developing countries.
- It provides technology solutions, capacity building, and advice on policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks tailored to the needs of individual countries by harnessing the expertise of a global network of technology companies and institutions.

### 4. Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs)

- It is a specialized financial institution that purchases the bad debts of a bank at a mutually agreed value and attempts to recover those debts or associated securities by itself.
- They are registered under the RBI and regulated under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act, 2002).
- They function under the supervision and control of the RBI.

- As per the RBI, ARC performs the functions namely Acquisition of financial assets, Change or takeover of Management or Sale or Lease of Business of the Borrower, Rescheduling of Debts, Enforcement of Security Interest and Settlement of dues payable by the borrower.
- They take over a portion of the bank's debts, which qualify as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). Therefore, ARCs are involved in the business of asset reconstruction,

## 5. Thar Desert

- It is one of the largest subtropical deserts in the world. It is located partly in northwestern India, and partly in eastern Pakistan.
- It extends across the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana in India, and the provinces of Sindh and Punjab in Pakistan. The majority of the Thar desert is in India (15 percent lies in Pakistan).
- It is bordered by the irrigated Indus River plain to the west, the Punjab Plain to the north and northeast, the Aravalli Range to the southeast, and the Rann of Kachchh to the south.
- It is separated from the Greater Rann of Kutch to the west by the low-lying marshy lands of the Luni River.



**Mentorship**  
India

## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Anticyclones**

1. In anticyclonic conditions winds move in a clockwise direction in the Northern Hemisphere.
2. Strong anticyclones can bring heavy rainfall in many parts of India.
3. They are associated with high pressure systems.

**How many of the above statement is/are correct?**

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

**Q2 Consider the following statements regarding GANHRI**

1. It was Established in 1993 as the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.
2. It is in accordance to Paris Principles.
3. India is not a member.

**How many of the above statement is/are correct?**

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

**Q3. Consider the following Statements about CDSCO**

**Statement 1:** Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for discharges functions assigned to the Central Government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940.

**Statement 2:** It works under the Ministry of Chemicals, as the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India.

**Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?**

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I

- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

**Q4. Consider the following statements about Gulf Cooperation Council-**

1. The GCC countries are those surrounding the Red Sea.
2. The Countries include, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran and UAE,
3. India seeks economic integration efforts and cooperation in trade, investment, energy, workforce, etc.

**How many of the above Statements is/are correct?**

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All Three
- D. None

**Q5. Consider the following statement**

**Statement I:** Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos constitute the Golden Triangle region which is known for its high production of opium, which is used to make heroin

**Statement II:** There is no international organisation to educate people throughout the world about the dangers of drug abuse.

**Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?**

- A. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- B. Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

**Q6. What has been the trend in India's trade relationship with China in terms of imports and exports?**

- A. India's exports to China have increased significantly, while imports have decreased.
- B. India's imports from China have stagnated, while exports have surged, indicating a need to focus solely on increasing imports.
- C. India's trade deficit with China has decreased, indicating a balanced trade relationship which requires imposing trade barriers.
- D. India's exports to China have stagnated, while imports have surged, prompting the need to diversify and boost domestic industries.

**Q7. Consider the following statements**

1. Public Accounts was constituted under Article 266 (2) which accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker
2. Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament.
3. National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) is placed in the "Public Account" of Government of India under "reserve funds not bearing interest".

**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 regarding Forest Fires:**

1. The Western Himalayas including Uttarakhand and Himachal are most to Forest Fires
2. The Kaccha fire line separates a forest block or compartment from another to control the spread of potential fires.
3. Approximately 36% of India's forests are prone to frequent fires.

**How many of the above Statements is/are correct?**

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All three
- D. None

**Q9. Consider the following statements**

1. The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 empowers the Election Commission to recognise political parties and allot symbols.
2. The EC is the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger under the rule.
3. For splits in all registered parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court.

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

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

**Q10. Consider the following statements**

1. In India, direct taxes contribute to almost two-thirds of all tax revenue collection.
2. India has a low tax-GDP ratio compared to other middle-income countries
3. India spends around 10% of it's GDP on health.

**How many of the above statement is/are correct?**

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

## Prelims Track Answer

**Answer 1 Option B is correct.**

**Explanation:**

- Winds in an anticyclone blow clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- A strong anticyclone can bring dry and hot weather over many parts of India while a weak anticyclone produces milder weather. **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Anticyclones have air sinking down in the middle of it. The air is compressed and warmed as it hits the ground and can create a high pressure heat dome. **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Answer 2 Option A is correct.**

**Explanation:**

- Established in 1993 as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. It changed its name to Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in 2016. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- GANHRI is in accordance with Paris Principles. These are Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions. They set out the minimum standards that NHRIs must meet in order to be considered credible and to operate effectively. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- India is a member of GANHRI, since being accredited in 1999, it has retained A ranking in 2006 and 2011, while its status was deferred in 2016 and restored after a year. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

**Answer 3 Option C is Correct**

**Explanation:**

- It is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- It works under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India. **Statement 2 is INcorrect.**

**Answer 4 Option A is Correct**

**Explanation:**

- The GCC countries are those surrounding the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman . **Statement 1 is INcorrect.**
- The Countries include Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and UAE, **not Iran** **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- India seeks economic integration efforts and tremendous potential for cooperation in trade, investment, energy, workforce, etc. **Statement 3 is correct.**

**Answer 5 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- The Golden Triangle is a region in Southeast Asia where the borders of Thailand, Myanmar, and Laos meet at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong Rivers. This region is known for its high production of opium, which is used to make heroin **Statement 1 is correct.**
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):
- UNODC is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime, in addition to being responsible for implementing the United Nations lead programme on terrorism.
- It was established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention.
- Headquarters: Vienna, Austria
- Functions:
- UNODC works to educate people throughout the world about the dangers of drug abuse. **Statement 2 is INcorrect.**

**Answer 6 Option D is Correct**

**Explanation:**

- **India's exports to China have stagnated**, while imports have surged, prompting the need to diversify imports from other countries and boost domestic industries.
- Recent reports highlight a concerning trend in India's trade relationship with China, wherein India's exports to China have remained stagnant while imports have surged, leading to a growing dependence on Chinese imports.

- In response to this challenge, the suggested strategy is to diversify imports from other countries such as Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia, and simultaneously boost domestic industries. This approach aims to reduce India's reliance on Chinese imports, enhance economic resilience, and address the trade imbalance. **Statement 4 is correct.**

**Answer 7 Option C is correct**

**Explanation**

- National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) was renamed as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) with the enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005.
- It is defined in Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act).
- It is placed in the "Public Account" of Government of India under "reserve funds not bearing interest".
- Public Accounts:
- It was constituted under Article 266 (2) of the Constitution.
- It accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker eg. provident funds, small savings etc.
- These funds do not belong to the government and have to be paid back at some time.
- Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament. **Hence, all statements are correct.**

**Answer 8 Option A is Correct**

**Explanation:**

- The Indian State of Forest Report 2021, released by the Forest Survey of India, highlights various aspects of forest cover and forest-related issues in India. According to this report, approximately **36% of India's forests are prone to frequent fires. Statement 3 is correct.**
- **Kachha fire lines** involve the **removal of grasses and shrubs** while retaining trees to reduce the fuel load and prevent the spread of fires. On the other hand, Pucca fire lines are constructed to separate forest compartments or blocks to control the spread of potential fires. **Statement 2 is INcorrect.**

- Indian State of Forest Report 2021 also found that states in **northeastern India** showed the highest tendency for forest fires. **Statement 1 is INcorrect.**

**Answer 9 Option B is correct**

**Explanation**

- In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.
- The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 empowers the Election Commission to recognise political parties and allot symbols. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect.**
- The EC is the only authority to decide issues on a dispute or a merger under the order.
- The Supreme Court (SC) upheld its validity in Sadiq Ali and another vs. ECI in 1971. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It applies to disputes in recognised national and state parties.
- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the EC usually advises the warring factions to resolve their differences internally or to approach the court. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect.**
- In almost all disputes decided by the EC so far, a clear majority of party delegates/office bearers, MPs and MLAs have supported one of the factions.
- Before 1968, the EC issued notifications and executive orders under the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

**Answer 10 Option A is correct.**

**Explanation:**

- In India, indirect taxes contribute to almost two-thirds of all tax revenue collection. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- India not has a low tax-GDP ratio compared to other middle-income countries for instance India's tax-GDP ratio is 17% compared to 25% in Brazil. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- India's spending on welfare and the social sector is very low compared to other countries. Health spending for instance is still around 1.3% of GDP whereas the National Health Policy (NHP) targets achieving 2.5% of GDP by 2025. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**



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