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SOURCES



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GS I

1. Japan found enough minerals off a remote Pacific island to fuel its EV plans for over a decade

Source: Business Insider

Prelims:

Mains:

Context: Researchers recently found a motherlode of around 230 million metric tons of minerals crucial to making electric car batteries on the seabed off Minami-Torishima Island.

Minami-Torishima Island:

- Minami-Torishima Island, also known as **Marcus Island**, is an isolated **Japanese coral atoll** in the **northwestern Pacific Ocean**.
- It is the **easternmost territory belonging to Japan** and the **only Japanese territory on the Pacific Plate**, past the Japan Trench. It lies 1,950 km southeast of central Tokyo.
- The **shape** of the island is close to an **equilateral triangle**.
- It's **formed by a raised coral reef**, which is about 2 km on each side and 6 km around.
- The **terrain is flat**, with a maximum altitude of 9 m, but outside of the reef is a steep cliff that's about 1,000 m deep, and the surrounding waters go down to about 6,000 m at their deepest.
- **Climate:** Located in the **transitional zone between tropical and subtropical** climates, the Island has an **oceanic climate** with an average annual temperature of around 25.6 °C.
- The **exclusive economic zone** based on the baseline of the **Minamitorishima Island** is some 430,000 km², larger than Japan's land area.



GS III

2. DRDO takes up preliminary study on development of indigenous conventional submarine

Source: The Hindu

Prelims:

Mains:

Context: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has taken up a preliminary study on the design and development of an indigenous conventional submarine under Project-76.

Project-76:

- Under Project 76, the Warship Design Bureau of the Indian Navy is working on designing and developing the country's first indigenously conventional diesel-electric submarine.
- The Indian Navy wants to build 12 submarines under Project 76.
- Envisioned as air-independent propulsion (AIP)-equipped diesel-electric attack submarines, these submarines, expected to have a submerged displacement of 3,000 tons, represent a leap beyond their foreign-designed predecessors like Project-751 (India) and Project-75 submarines.
- It aims to succeed the Sindhughosh (Kilo) class, emphasizing the Navy's commitment to maintaining a robust 3,000-ton class of submarines.
- It is expected to feature some of the most advanced features such as, indigenous Weapon Control system and Lithium-ion batteries.
- It represents a pivotal milestone in India's pursuit of maritime supremacy, amalgamating top-tier French technology from Project 75 and the expertise of German/Spanish collaboration from Project 751 (India).
- The objective is to initiate the construction of the prototype by 2028.
- This undertaking holds immense significance for India's submarine-building capabilities, aiming to reduce reliance on foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for submarine design.

3. Kerala govt issues warning against amoebic meningoencephalitis: Know what it is

Source: The Times of India

Prelims:

Mains:

Context: Due to continued rain in Kerala, the health department has issued caution on amoebic meningoencephalitis.



Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM):

- It is a rare, usually **fatal, infection of the central nervous system** (brain and spinal cord).
- It is caused by a type of **free-living amoeba** (a microscopic, single-celled organism) called **Naegleria fowleri**.
 - **Naegleria fowleri occurs in shallow surface waters** and incorrectly maintained swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas, particularly in warm climates.
 - The amebas can enter the brain through the nose when people swim in contaminated warm, fresh water.
 - The amoeba then **invades the brain and meninges** through the nose.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Symptoms, which include **fever, headache, vomiting, and sensitivity to light**, typically appear within five days of infection and progress rapidly.
 - In the later stages, one can suffer from a **stiff neck, seizures, hallucinations, and even coma**.
- **Treatment:**
 - There are **no standard treatments** for the treatment of PAM.
 - **Combination therapy** using medicines to treat parasites offers the most promise.
- PAM differs from **granulomatous amebic encephalitis**, which is another very rare, usually fatal infection of the central nervous system caused by different free-living amebas, *Acanthamoeba* species or *Balamuthia mandrillaris*.

4. Next phase of conservation plan for Great Indian Bustard

Source: The Indian Express

Prelims:

Mains:

Context: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has approved Rs 56 crore for the next phase of the conservation of Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and Lesser Florican.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- GIBs are the largest among the four-bustard species found in India.
 - The other three being **MacQueen's bustard, lesser florican** and the **Bengal florican**.
- Being terrestrial birds, they spend most of their time on the ground with occasional flights to go from one part of their habitat to the other.
- They feed on insects, lizards, grass seeds etc. GIBs are considered the flagship bird species of grassland and hence barometers of the health of grassland ecosystems.

Next phase of conservation plan for Great Indian Bustard

- **Overview**



- **Funding Approval** - The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has allocated Rs 56 crore for the next phase of the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and Lesser Florican.
- **Conservation Goals** - The plan includes habitat development, in-situ conservation, completion of conservation breeding centers, and releasing captive-bred birds.
- **Proposal Recommendation** - The National CAMPA executive committee recommended the Wildlife Institute of India's (WII) proposal for scaling up the project for 2024-2033.
- **Project Components**
 - **First Component**
 - **Conservation Breeding Centers:** Completion of the CBC in Jaisalmer's Ramdevra and development of the Sorsan Lesser Florican facility.
 - **Captive-bred Birds:** Preparatory work for releasing captive-bred birds and post-release monitoring.
 - **Artificial Insemination:** Development and implementation as a backup for captive breeding.
 - **Second Component**
 - **In-situ Conservation** - Efforts in other range states including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
 - **Timeline and Activities**
 - **Population Estimation-** Between 2024-2026, WII will estimate GIB populations in Jaisalmer and range states, and conduct rangewide population estimation of the Lesser Florican.
 - **Egg Collection-** Annually collect two to four GIB eggs and six to ten Lesser Florican eggs.
 - **Rewilding-** Set to begin in 2027, identifying and developing release sites, and creating soft release enclosures.
- **Background**
 - The conservation programme has been running since 2016 for long-term recovery of critically endangered GIB and Lesser Florican.
 - As of now, around 140 GIBs and fewer than 1,000 Lesser Floricans are surviving in the wild.
 - Severe decline due to hunting, habitat loss, depredation of eggs, and overhead power lines.
- **Current Conservation Facilities**
 - GIB Breeding Centers: Located in Rajasthan's Sam and Ramdevra with 40 GIBs.
 - Lesser Florican Center: Located in Sorsan with seven individuals.
- **Legal Oversight**
 - **Supreme Court Involvement** –
 - The SC is also monitoring the GIB and Lesser Florican conservation programme.
 - A petition seeking protection of the two species is pending before it.
 - **Power Line Issue** –
 - SC initially ordered burying power lines in GIB habitats but recalled the order in 2024 due to practicality concerns.
 - An expert committee is studying the issue.



Editorial, Ideas and Opinions

5. Should education be brought back to the State list

Source: The Hindu

Prelims:

Mains:

Context: The NEET-UG exam faced controversies with issues like grace marks, allegations of paper leaks, and other irregularities. The UGC-NET exam was cancelled after being conducted, and the CSIR-NET and NEET-PG exams have been postponed.

- Against this backdrop, there has been ongoing debate about transferring education back to the state list.

Status of Education – Historical Background

- **Early phase - Education in Provincial list**
 - The Government of India Act, 1935 during the British rule created a federal structure for the first time in our polity.
 - The legislative subjects were distributed between the federal legislature (present day Union) and provinces (present day States).
 - Education, as an important public good, was kept under the provincial list.
- **After Independence**
 - After independence, the trend set by the GoI Act 1935 was continued and education was part of the 'State list' under the distribution of powers.
- **Recommendation of Swaran Singh Committee**
 - During the Emergency, the Congress party constituted the Swaran Singh Committee to provide recommendations for amendments to the Constitution.
 - One of the recommendations of this committee was to place 'education' in the concurrent list in order to evolve all-India policies on the subject.
- **42nd constitutional amendment and status of education**
 - The 42nd constitutional amendment (1976) by shifting 'education' from the State list to the concurrent list.
 - No detailed rationale was provided for this change.
- **Attempt to bring back education in State list**
 - The Janata Party government led by Morarji Desai passed the 44th constitutional amendment (1978) to reverse many of the controversial changes made through the 42nd amendment.
 - One of these amendments that was passed in the Lok Sabha but not in the Rajya Sabha was to bring back 'education' to the State list.
 - Since then, education remains in concurrent list of the Constitution.

Prevailing international practices



- In the **United States**, educational standards and standardized tests are set by state and local governments, while federal oversight focuses on financial aid and key educational policies.
- **Canada** delegates education entirely to its provinces.
- In **Germany**, educational legislative authority resides with its states (Länder).
- **South Africa** has national departments for school and higher education, with provinces implementing national policies and addressing local educational needs.

Way forward

- **Arguments for 'Education' in Concurrent List**
 - **Uniform Education Policy** - Advocates argue for a unified approach to education across the country to improve standards and ensure consistency.
 - **Synergy Between Centre and States** - Central coordination is seen as beneficial for aligning national goals with state-level implementation.
 - **Corruption and Lack of Professionalism** - Critics cite concerns about inefficiencies and ethical issues within state-level management of education.
- **Arguments for Restoring 'Education' to State List**
 - **Recent Issues with Centralisation** - Events like NEET controversies highlight that centralized control does not eliminate problems, challenging assumptions about governance efficacy.
 - **Autonomy and Tailored Policies** - States argue for autonomy to tailor educational policies to local needs, especially concerning syllabus, testing, and admissions for professional courses.
 - **One size fits all approach can not work** - Considering the vast diversity of the country, a 'one size fits all' approach is neither feasible nor desirable.
 - **Financial Distribution** - A significant amount of education expenditure is borne by the states, suggesting a need for productive discussion towards moving 'education' back to the State list.
 - According to the Ministry of Education's 2022 report on education spending, out of the total ₹6.25 lakh crore spent by education departments in 2020-21, the Centre contributed 15%, and the States contributed 85%.
 - When including all other departments' spending on education and training, the breakdown shifts to 24% by the Centre and 76% by the States.
- **Way forward**
 - **Hybrid Model** - Experts suggest maintaining central oversight for regulatory frameworks like medical and technical education while devolving policymaking autonomy to states.
 - **Collaborative Governance** - Emphasis must be given on productive dialogue between central and state authorities to achieve balanced educational reforms and efficient resource allocation.



6. Curtains on old IPC, CrPC, Evidence law, new criminal codes come into effect from today

Source: The Indian Express

Prelims:

Mains:

Three new criminal laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) - came into effect across the country on July 1.

- They brought widespread changes in India's criminal justice system and ended colonial-era laws - the Indian Penal Code (1860), Code of Criminal Procedure (1973) and the Indian Evidence Act (1872).
- Together, these three laws govern the criminal justice jurisprudence - from defining penal offences, prescribing processes for investigation and evidence gathering to governing the process of a trial in court.

Breaking Down the Three New Criminal Laws:

- **The BNS introduces some new crimes:** For example,
 - **Clause 69:**
 - It penalises sexual intercourse through the employment of “deceitful means” and mentions upto 10 years imprisonment and a fine for the offence.
 - Deceitful means include the false promise of employment or promotion, inducement, or marrying after suppressing identity.
 - Critics say that this might end up criminalising consensual relationships and provide a fillip to the “love jihad” narrative in some cases.
 - **Clause 103:**
 - It (for the first time) recognises murder on the ground of race, caste, or community as a separate offence.
 - In 2018, the SC had directed the Centre to consider a separate law for lynching and the new provision gives legal recognition to such crimes.
 - **Inclusion of offences such as organised crime and terror:**
 - Clause 111(1) of the BNS borrows heavily from the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).
 - **Organised crime** encompasses any continuing unlawful activity including kidnapping, robbery, vehicle theft, extortion, land grabbing, contract killing, economic offences, cyber-crimes, etc.
 - **Clause 304(1):** It defines snatching as a new crime, distinct from theft.
 - **Community service as an alternate form of punishment for some offences:**
 - These include small theft, defamation, and attempt to die by suicide with an intention to keep a public official from discharging her duty.
 - However, the BNS does not define what constitutes community service, leaving it to the discretion of judges.
- **BNSS:**
 - **The expansion of detention in police custody:** From the 15-day limit in the CrPC to up to 90 days.
 - **Victim-centric approach:** The BNSS states that in cases where the punishment is seven years or more, the victim shall be given an opportunity of being heard before withdrawal of the case by the government.



- **Trials in absentia:** Where a person accused of a crime can be tried and convicted in his absence. Critics argue that the introduction of trials in absentia under normal criminal law allows the state to forgo its duty to properly locate the accused before the trial begins.
- **Removes the provision for statutory bail:** If an accused has more than one offence against his name.
- **BSA:**
 - **Modified the definition of document:**
 - By including electronic and digital records and recognising digital and electronic records as primary evidence.
 - Now, the digital or electronic records will have the same legal effect, validity, and enforceability as other documents.
 - **Expanded the scope of secondary evidence:** It included additional categories such as oral admissions, written submissions, etc.
 - **Modified the need for confessional admission:** A confession made by an accused person is irrelevant in a criminal proceeding.

Upsides and Downsides of the Three New Criminal Laws:

- **Upsides:**
 - **Sexual intercourse with a minor wife** has been brought under the ambit of rape.
 - **The inclusion of offences for mob-lynching** is crucial, and signals a legislative acknowledgement of such hate crimes.
 - In a progressive step, the BNS entirely leaves out the contentious **Section 377** of the IPC which criminalises “carnal intercourse against the order of nature”.
 - **The emphasis on video-conferencing of trials**, and prescription of timelines for speedy trials should improve justice delivery but their success will depend on implementation on the ground.
- **Grey areas:**
 - The consultation process (during pandemic) and the **hasty passage of the laws** through Parliament has caused much disquiet.
 - According to some legal experts, although the new laws make significant changes, **they do not ‘overhaul’ the existing laws.**
 - Despite the government’s claims (of doing away with sedition), **the BNS has in fact introduced the offence with a wider definition.**
 - **With rape laws still not made gender-neutral**, there is little criminal recourse for male victims of sexual assault.

Analysing the Government’s Preparation for Implementing the 3 Criminal Laws:

- **Operational training:** For example, the Bar Council of India has mandated that the new laws be incorporated into curricula of universities and Centres of Legal Education from the 2024-25 academic year.
- **Publicity/awareness campaign:** The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) is coordinating efforts of the Inter-Ministerial Group for a coordinated publicity campaign.
- **Tech upgradation:**
 - NCRB has made 23 functional modifications in the **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** application to facilitate tech compatibility, including on registration of FIRs.
 - NIC has developed applications such as **eSakshya, Nyay Shruti, and eSummon** to facilitate videography/photography of crime scenes, judicial hearings, and delivery of court summons electronically.
- **Capacity building:** The BPR&D has developed 13 training modules to build capacity of the police, prisons, prosecutors, judicial officers, forensic experts, and central police organisations.



In Brief

7.INS RANVIR ARRIVES AT CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH

Source: The Hindu

Context:

Recently, the Indian Naval Ship INS Ranvir, of the Eastern Fleet under the aegis of the Eastern Naval Command arrived at Chattogram, Bangladesh as part of an Operational Deployment.

INS Ranvir:

- It is a **Rajput Class Guided Missile Destroyer** which has undergone upgrade with state of art weapons and sensors, majority being indigenous.
- It is the **fourth of the five**Rajput-class destroyers built for the Indian Navy which was commissioned on **28 October 1986**.
- During this visit, personnel from the Indian and Bangladesh navies will engage in a wide range of professional interactions including **Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE)**, cross-deck visits, community outreach and friendly sports fixtures.
- On completion of harbour phase, INS Ranvir will participate in a **Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX)/ PASSEX with ships** of the Bangladesh Navy.
- **Significance of the visit:** It will further strengthen the longstanding friendship, cooperation as also the robust interoperability between both nations through a series of engagements and activities aligned with Government of India's focus on **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)**.

What is the SAGAR Initiative?

- It is an Indian foreign policy doctrine that was **introduced in 2015**.
- The aim of SAGAR is to **enhance cooperation and mutual trust** between India and its neighbouring countries, particularly in the **Indian Ocean region**.
- The SAGAR policy has several components, including ensuring maritime security and safety, promoting sustainable development and economic growth, and strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties between nations.



8. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) Launches eSankhyiki Portal for Enhanced User Experience and Ease of Data Access

Source: The Hindu

Context:

- It provides **real-time inputs for planners**, policy-makers, researchers and the public at large.
- The objective of this portal is to establish a **comprehensive data management** and sharing system for ease of dissemination of official statistics in the country.
- It has two modules namely:
 - **Data Catalogue Module:** This module catalogues the major data assets of the Ministry at one place for ease of access.
 - It allows users to search within datasets, including within tables, and download data of interest to increase its value and re-usability.
 - The module has **seven data products**, namely **National Accounts Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Index of Industrial Production, Annual Survey of Industries, Periodic Labour Force Survey, Household Consumption Expenditure Survey** and **Multiple Indicator Survey**.
 - The Data Catalogue section already includes over **2291 datasets** along with specific metadata and visualization for each dataset for user convenience.
 - **Macro Indicators Module:** This module offers time series data of **key macro indicators** with features for filtering and visualizing data enabling ease of access for the users.
 - The module also allows users to download custom datasets, visualizations and share them through APIs, thereby increasing the re-usability of data.
 - The first phase of the module includes four major products of MoSPI: **National Accounts Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Index of Industrial Production, and Annual Survey of Industries**, encompassing the data of the last ten years. The portal currently hosts more than 1.7 million records.
- It has officially been launched on Statistics Day.
- The initiative is in sync with the theme of the Statistics Day- '**Use of data for Decision making**' as ease of access of data is the prerequisite for evidence based decision making.
- It is a **user centric data portal** which facilitates use and reuse of information for creating impact through value addition and analysis by the users.



Daily Quiz

1. What is the primary objective of the eSankhyiki portal launched by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)?

- A) To provide training to statisticians
- B) To establish a comprehensive data management and sharing system
- C) To conduct surveys on household consumption
- D) To promote international statistics cooperation

2. What is the primary aim of the SAGAR initiative?

- A) To promote cultural exchange programs
- B) To enhance cooperation and mutual trust between India and its neighboring countries
- C) To boost tourism in the Indian Ocean region
- D) To increase India's naval presence in the Atlantic Ocean

3. Which of the following is NOT one of the four-bustard species found in India?

- A) Great Indian Bustard
- B) MacQueen's Bustard
- C) Lesser Florican
- D) Houbara Bustard

4. Consider the following statements regarding the conservation efforts for the Great Indian Bustard (GIB):

- 1. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has allocated Rs 56 crore for the next phase of the conservation of GIB and Lesser Florican.
- 2. The conservation plan includes habitat development, in-situ conservation, and the release of captive-bred birds.
- 3. The Supreme Court has ordered the complete burial of power lines in GIB habitats.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

5. Consider the following statements regarding the National CAMPA executive committee's recommendations:

- 1. The committee recommended scaling up the project for the conservation of GIB and Lesser Florican from 2024 to 2033.
- 2. The recommendations include setting up new conservation breeding centers in Sorsan and Jaisalmer.
- 3. The committee advised discontinuing the egg collection program for the GIB.



Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 only
- B) 1 and 2 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: B) 1 and 2 only

6. Consider the following statements regarding the status of education in India:

1. The Government of India Act, 1935, placed education under the provincial list.
2. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976) moved education from the State list to the Concurrent list.
3. The 44th Constitutional Amendment successfully moved education back to the State list.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

7. Consider the following statements regarding Project-76:

1. Project-76 is aimed at developing India's first indigenously designed conventional diesel-electric submarine.
2. The submarines under Project-76 are expected to feature air-independent propulsion (AIP) technology.
3. The submarines are designed to have a submerged displacement of 5,000 tons.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 only
- B) 1 and 2 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

8. Consider the following statements regarding the significance of Project-76:

1. Project-76 aims to succeed the Sindhughosh (Kilo) class submarines.
2. It amalgamates technology from both French and German/Spanish collaborations.
3. The project is intended to reduce India's reliance on foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for submarine design.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 only
- B) 2 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3

9. Consider the following statements regarding Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM):

1. PAM is a rare and usually fatal infection of the central nervous system.
2. It is caused by a free-living amoeba called Acanthamoeba.
3. The amoeba Naegleria fowleri can enter the brain through the nose when people swim in contaminated warm, fresh water.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3



10. Consider the following statements regarding the three new criminal laws in India:

1. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) introduces new crimes and provides up to 10 years imprisonment and a fine for sexual intercourse through deceitful means.
2. The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) expands police custody from the previous 15-day limit to up to 60 days.

3. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) includes electronic and digital records as primary evidence.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, and 3



Solutions

Answer 1 B) To establish a comprehensive data management and sharing system

Answer 2 B) To enhance cooperation and mutual trust between India and its neighbouring countries

Answer 3 D) Houbara Bustard

Answer 5 A) 1 and 2 only

Answer 6 A) 1 and 2 only

Answer 7 B) 1 and 2 only

Explanation: The first two statements are correct: Project-76 aims to develop India's first indigenously designed conventional diesel-electric submarine and will feature AIP technology. The third statement is incorrect as the submarines are designed to have a submerged displacement of 3,000 tons, not 5,000 tons.

Answer 8 D) 1, 2, and 3

Explanation: All three statements are correct: Project-76 aims to succeed the Sindhughosh (Kilo) class submarines, amalgamates technology from French and German/Spanish collaborations, and is intended to reduce India's reliance on foreign OEMs for submarine design.

Answer 9 B) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: The first and third statements are correct: PAM is a rare and usually fatal infection of the central nervous system, and Naegleria fowleri can enter the brain through the nose when people swim in contaminated warm, fresh water. The second statement is incorrect because PAM is caused by Naegleria fowleri, not Acanthamoeba.

Answer 10 : B) 1 and 3 only

Explanation: The first and third statements are correct: the BNS introduces new crimes with penalties for deceitful means and the BSA includes electronic and digital records as primary evidence. The second statement is incorrect because the BNSS expands police custody up to 90 days, not 60 days.





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