UPSC Mentorship
A Unit of Mentorship India

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

25 October 2024

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Geography
ISRO satellites tracking cyclone Dana
Why in News?
ISRO says satellite inputs help in better monitoring and mitigation of cyclone threat

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said its polar orbiting satellite EOS-06 and **geostationary satellite INSAT-3DR** had been tracking the cyclone Dana

Cyclone Dana
1. **Meteorological Context**
   - Cyclone Dana formed over t**he Bay of Bengal** and is expected to impact **Odisha and West Bengal.**
   - It intensified from a **low-pressure area** into a **severe cyclonic storm,** which is a common occurrence during the post-monsoon cyclone season in the Bay of Bengal region.
   - The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast extremely heavy rainfall and high wind speeds exceeding 100 km/h in affected areas.
2. **Cyclone Naming System**
   - Cyclone Dana is named following the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) guidelines, which coordinate the naming of tropical cyclones globally.
   - The name **"Dana"** was proposed by Qatar, one of the countries in the North Indian Ocean cyclone region.
   - This naming convention ensures easier public communication, and each member country in the region provides a list of names to be used sequentially for cyclones.
3. **Impact and Preparedness**
   - **Geographical Impact:** The cyclone is expected to hit coastal areas of Odisha and West Bengal, with vulnerable zones like Puri and Sagar Island being at high risk of flooding and wind damage.
   - **Preparedness Measures:** Local authorities have initiated evacuations, set up cyclone shelters, and closed educational institutions in vulnerable areas to reduce loss of life and property. These proactive measures align with India's broader disaster management strategy, especially the initiatives undertaken by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) to ensure preparedness for natural disasters.
4. **Disaster Management Framework**
   - Cyclone Dana highlights the role of India's **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP),** which aims to reduce vulnerability to cyclones through improved early warning systems, construction of cyclone shelters, and resilient infrastructure in cyclone-prone areas.
   - These measures are part of India's National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP), which seeks to build climate-resilient infrastructure, a key component of India's efforts to address climate-related disasters.
5. **Climate Change Implications**
   - Increasing frequency and intensity of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal region, as seen with Cyclone Dana, may be linked to global climate change.
   - Warmer sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean contribute to more intense cyclones.

Way Forward for Cyclone Preparedness
- Expand ISRO Satellite Monitoring: Increase satellite resources and use AI for better cyclone tracking and prediction.
- Strengthen Local Preparedness: Build more cyclone shelters and enhance community-based early warning systems.
- Develop Climate-Resilient Infrastructure: Focus on resilient coastal infrastructure and fund climate adaptation under NDMP.
- Boost Global Collaboration: Partner with international agencies for advanced cyclone modelling and research.

Question: Cyclones in the Indian Ocean region are increasingly linked to climate change. Evaluate India's climate change policies, focusing on their role in mitigating disaster risks and the adaptation challenges posed by rising cyclone intensity.

Source : The Hindu

Polity

Justice Sanjiv Khanna appointed next Chief Justice of India, will enter office Nov 11

Why in News?

Justice Khanna will have a relatively short tenure of just six months — he is due to retire on March 13, 2025.

Introduction

Justice **Sanjiv Khanna** has been appointed as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI), succeeding Justice D Y Chandrachud.

His appointment is significant not only for its timing but also for the legacy he inherits.

Chief Justice of India (CJI)

- **Head of the Judiciary:** The CJI is the highest-ranking judge in the Supreme Court of India and holds the top position in the Indian judiciary.
- **Constitutional Authority:** Appointed by the President of India, typically based on seniority among Supreme Court judges.
- **Removal of CJI:**
  - **Grounds for Removal:** The CJI can be removed on grounds of proven misbehavior or incapacity.
  - **Process of Removal:**
  - **Initiation:**
  - The process can be initiated by either House of Parliament.
  - A motion for removal must be signed by at least 100 members of the Lok Sabha or 50 members of the Rajya Sabha.
  - **Discussion:** The motion is discussed in the respective House.
  - **Vote:** A two-thirds majority is required in both Houses for the motion to pass.
  - **Investigation:** Following the motion's passage, an investigation is conducted by a committee, usually comprising members from the judiciary and legal experts.

  - **Final Decision:** If the committee finds sufficient grounds for removal, the matter is put to vote again in both Houses.
  - If approved, the President of India removes the CJI.
- **Judicial Responsibilities:**
  - Presides over court proceedings, especially in constitutional benches and cases of significant public interest.
  - Decides on the composition of benches (two or more judges) to hear cases.
- **Administrative Functions:**
  - Oversees the administrative functions of the Supreme Court.
  - Plays a critical role in the appointment, transfer, and promotion of judges in the higher judiciary through the collegium system.
- **Advisory Role:** Advises the President of India on judicial appointments and matters.

Conclusion

Justice Sanjiv Khanna's appointment as CJI comes at a crucial time, with a tenure limited to six months, highlighting the challenges and expectations he will face in leading the judiciary.

Question : Critically analyze the recent judgments by the Supreme Court, particularly regarding constitutional matters, and the role of the Chief Justice in these rulings.

Source : The Indian Express

When Parliament isn't in session, standing committees are where the action is

Why in News?

Unfortunately, these panels have been undermined by governments

Introduction

In the Indian parliamentary system, standing committees play a crucial role in the legislative process, especially when Parliament is not in session. These committees are responsible for scrutinising bills, budgets, and national policy documents, thereby ensuring transparency and

accountability. However, recent trends indicate a decline in their effectiveness, which undermines their purpose.

Standing Committees

Standing Committees are permanent committees constituted by the Parliament of India, established under the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. They assist in the legislative process by reviewing and analysing issues in various sectors.

Types of Committees:

1. **Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs):** Each committee corresponds to a specific ministry or department.
2. **Public Accounts Committee (PAC):** Examines the accounts showing the appropriation of funds by the government.
3. **Estimates Committee:** Reviews the annual financial statements and helps in budget scrutiny.
4. **Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU):** Focuses on the reports of public sector enterprises.

Composition:

- Typically consists of 30 members in Lok Sabha and 16 in Rajya Sabha.
- Members are elected by the respective Houses from among their members, with a proportionate representation of different parties.

Functions

1. **Legislative Review**
   - Analyse bills and policies related to their respective sectors.
   - Recommend amendments before the bill reaches the Parliament.
2. **Oversight and Accountability**
   - Monitor the implementation of government schemes and policies.
   - Ensure accountability of the executive to the legislature.
3. **Public Engagement**
   - Conduct hearings and solicit views from experts, stakeholders, and the public.

Current Status of Standing Committees

1. **Decline in Parliamentary Sessions:**
   Average number of days Parliament sits:

Lok Sabha	Average Days
1st Lok Sabha	135 days
17th Lok Sabha	**55 days**

2. **Legislative Scrutiny**
   - In the 15th Lok Sabha, 70% of bills were sent to committees.
   - In the 17th Lok Sabha, this figure dropped to 20%.
   - Bills now average only nine sittings, indicating rushed scrutiny.

3. **Participation and Gender Representation**
   - Some MPs attended only 1-2 meetings of the Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment in 2023.
   - Women chair only 2 out of 24 committees, highlighting the need for better gender representation.
4. **Delays in Reporting**
   - Delays in tabling reports hinder effective governance.
   - Notable examples include the stalled findings of the Committee on External Affairs on the Doklam issue.

Recommendations for Improvement

1. **Timely Government Responses**
   - **Current mandate:** Government must respond to committee recommendations within six months.
   - **Suggestion:** Reduce this period to 60 days, aligning with practices in the British House of Commons.
2. **Extended Tenure for MPs**
   - Current tenure in committees is one year, leading to expertise loss.
   - **Suggestion:** Adopt a longer tenure, similar to permanent standing committees in the U.S. Congress.
3. **Creation of a Parliamentary Committee on National Economy**
   - Purpose: To annually examine the state of the economy and facilitate public discussions on economic reports.
4. **Establishment of a Constitution Committee**
   - **Purpose:** To review Constitution Amendment Bills for adherence to constitutional mandates before passage.
5. **Pre-Budget Scrutiny:**
   - Demand for Grants (DFGs) should undergo thorough examination, regardless of election cycles.

Conclusion

- To enhance the effectiveness of standing committees, it is essential to implement these recommendations, ensuring they operate as intended within the legislative framework.

Question : Analyse the impact of reduced parliamentary sessions on legislative scrutiny in India. What measures can be taken to improve the situation?

Source : The Indian Expres

International Relation
Building blocks: On the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan
Why in News?
The BRICS Summit showed that Russia was not without friends

Introduction
The 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, held in October 2024, took place amidst heightened global geopolitical tensions.

Representing a third of the global GDP, the BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—along with new members, demonstrated a strategic shift toward countering Western dominance in global governance.

New Members : Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, UAE, Saudi Arabia

BRICS Summit
BRICS is an acronym for a group of five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The BRICS Summit is an annual meeting where leaders of these countries discuss various global and regional issues.

Background
- **Formation:** Initially coined as "BRIC" in 2001, the group was formalized with the first summit held in 2009 in Yekaterinburg, Russia. South Africa joined in 2010, expanding the group to BRICS.
- **Purpose:** To enhance cooperation in political, economic, and cultural fields and to serve as a platform for discussing collective interests.

Objectives
- **Economic Cooperation:** Promoting trade and investment among member countries to enhance economic growth.
- **Political Coordination:** Addressing global issues such as climate change, terrorism, and security, and advocating for reforms in international financial institutions.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Enhancing people-to-people contacts through cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges.

2023 BRICS Summit: Held in Johannesburg, South Africa focusing on issues like:
- Expansion of BRICS membership.
- Strengthening economic ties and cooperation.
- Addressing geopolitical challenges and security issues.
- Enhancing collaboration in areas like technology and sustainable development.

Strategic Takeaways in 16th BRICS
1. **Economic Integration and Alternatives to Western Systems**
   - **Kazan Declaration:** Emphasised the need for a strengthened BRICS economic framework, focusing on resilience against unilateral Western sanctions.
   - **New Initiatives:** Key steps to create alternative mechanisms for economic transactions, including:
     - An interbank cooperation mechanism.
     - A cross-border payment system and insurance setup.
     - Expansion of the BRICS New Development Bank.
2. **Message of Inclusivity and Counter-Balance to the West**
   - The summit's focus underscored the formation of a counterbalance to traditional Western-led financial systems.
   - India highlighted that BRICS is not divisive but inclusive, emphasising India's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy.
3. **Geopolitical Messaging**
   - Russia leveraged the summit to counter the narrative of isolation post-Ukraine conflict, with extensive participation from BRICS nations and the Global South.
   - In a notable gesture, the BRICS Declaration extended support for Palestine amidst ongoing Gaza tensions, showcasing the group's stance on global conflict resolutions.
4. **BRICS as a Platform for Bilateral Resolutions**
   - Noteworthy dialogues included:
   - India-China discussions on the four-year LAC standoff.
   - Iran-UAE and Egypt-Ethiopia tensions addressed through sideline diplomacy.

Question : Discuss the role of BRICS in reshaping global governance structures. How does the expansion of BRICS reflect the shift towards a multipolar world order?

Source : The Hindu

Science
Why did the govt. sanction a 50% hike in prices of commonly used drugs?
Why in News?

According to the government the recent 50% hike in prices of commonly used drugs was sanctioned keeping in mind the larger public interest and to ensure continued availability of drugs

Decision Maker: National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)
Impacted Drugs: Asthma, tuberculosis, bipolar disorder, glaucoma treatments, and others.

Reasons for Price Hike

Reason	Explanation
Increased API Costs	Higher import and raw material costs raised drug production expenses.
Rising Production Costs	Inflation and increased operational expenses influenced production viability.
Unviability at Existing Price	Manufacturers cited that current price caps made drug production unsustainable.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)
- Established in 1997 under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- Regulates prices of pharmaceutical drugs to ensure affordability and availability.

Functions of NPPA
- **Price Regulation:** Fixes prices of essential medicines based on the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO).
- **Market Surveillance:** Monitors compliance with pricing regulations.
- **Consumer Protection:** Ensures consumers are informed and can report overpricing.
- **Transparency:** Publishes drug pricing data.

Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API)
API refers to the substance in a pharmaceutical drug that is biologically active.
It is the core component responsible for the therapeutic effects of the medication.

Drug Pricing Framework in India

Key Mechanism	Details
National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)	Regulatory authority managing the ceiling prices for essential drugs.
Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013	Provides NPPA authority under the Essential Commodities Act to adjust prices.
Annual WPI-Based Revisions	Prices of drugs are adjusted annually based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) changes.
Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)	Mandated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, ensuring manufacturing and storage standards.

Drugs List and Their Usage

Drug	Condition Treated
Atropine	Glaucoma
Streptomycin	Tuberculosis
Salbutamol	Asthma
Pilocarpine	Eye Disorders
Cefadroxil	Bacterial Infections
Desferrioxamine	Iron Toxicity
Lithium	Bipolar Disorder

Conclusion
- The government's 50% price hike in commonly used drugs, sanctioned by the NPPA, aims to address increased production costs and ensure the

continued availability of essential medications.

- This decision reflects the need for sustainable drug manufacturing amid rising API costs and inflation, ultimately prioritising public health interests.

Question : Analyze the impact of rising API costs on India's pharmaceutical industry and public health policy.

Source : The Hindu

Trachoma eliminated as a public health problem in India; what next?

Why in News?

The achievement signifies a major public health success, potentially preventing economic losses of $2.9 to $5.3 billion annually caused by trachoma–related blindness and impairment.

Trachoma and Its Impact

- Trachoma is a chronic, infectious eye disease caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis, affecting individuals in regions with poor hygiene and sanitation.
- It primarily impacts children and women in areas with limited access to clean water.
- The disease is part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) **Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)** initiative and is a key target in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.

Transmission: Spread through contact with eye discharge, contaminated items, or flies.

Symptoms: Eye irritation, swollen eyelids, sensitivity to light, and potential blindness if left untreated.

Neglected Tropical Diseases

NTDs are a diverse group of infectious diseases that primarily affect marginalised populations in tropical and subtropical regions. They often receive less attention and funding compared to other global health issues, despite their significant impact on health, development, and economic stability.

Elimination Milestone and WHO Criteria

India achieved the WHO-defined elimination threshold for trachoma, meaning:

- **Trachomatous Trichiasi**s: Prevalence below 0.2% in people aged 15 years and older.
- **Active Trachoma in Children:** Less than 5% in children aged 1–9 years in endemic regions.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** A health system that can manage sporadic cases to prevent resurgence.

SAFE Strategy: India's Roadmap to Success

The success is largely due to the implementation of WHO's SAFE strategy:

- **Surgery**: Corrects trichiasis and prevents blindness.
- **Antibiotics:** Used to treat and control infection.
- **Facial Cleanliness:** Reduces transmission risks.
- **Environmental Improvement:** Focus on sanitation and clean water access.

Success of SAFE Strategy : The SAFE approach has enabled India to reach the elimination milestone, particularly in states with historically high prevalence, such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

Future Challenges and Required Actions

While trachoma is no longer a public health threat, sporadic cases may still occur. India must:

1. **Continue Surveillance:** Regular nationwide surveys to monitor resurgence.
2. **Sustain Sanitation Initiatives:** Maintain efforts like the Swachh Bharat Mission.
3. **Enhance Public Awareness:** Educate communities to sustain preventive behaviors.
4. **Address Other NTDs**: Apply similar strategies to tackle other diseases like kala-azar and tuberculosis.

Conclusion

- India's success in reducing trachoma prevalence underscores the impact of public health initiatives in improving quality of life and economic productivity.

Question : Analyse the significance of the SAFE strategy in tackling neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in India.

Source : The Hindu

Economy
Officer competency model draws from PM's Mann Ki Baat, speeches
Why in News?
The model includes 34 competencies, categorised into 13 behavioural competencies divided into core and leadership, emphasising self-awareness, personal effectiveness, creativity, innovation, and strategic leadership.

Introduction
The Karmayogi Competency Model, developed by the Capacity Building Commission (CBC), aims to transition Indian civil servants from a "karmachari" (employee) mindset to a "karmayogi" (dedicated worker) approach.

Aspect	Details
Model Developed By	Capacity Building Commission (CBC)
Launch Year	2021
Competencies	34 total (13 behavioural, 21 functional)
Behavioural Competencies	Self-awareness, personal effectiveness, creativity, innovation, strategic leadership
Functional Competencies	Citizen centricity, policy architecture, digital fluency, financial management, data analytics
Training Portal	Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT)
Assessment Method	Proctored assessments followed by course recommendations

Objectives of the Karmayogi Competency Model
- **Enhance Accountability:** Establish a framework for improved performance among civil servants.
- **Citizen-Centric Governance:** Foster a focus on citizen needs and engagement.
- **Future Readiness:** Equip civil servants to adapt to evolving governance challenges and crises.

Principles of Karmayogi Competency Model
The model is built around four core resolutions derived from the Prime Minister's speeches:
1. Vikas (Development)
2. Garva (Pride)
3. Kartavya (Duty)
4. Ekta (Unity)

Implementation Framework
- **Training Requirements:** Civil servants are required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of training each year on the iGOT platform.
- **Performance Tracking:** Competency assessments are linked to an e-HRMS system, enabling real-time tracking of skills and training completion.

Significance of the Karmayogi Model
- **Mindset Shift:** Encourages a transition from merely delivering services to embodying a service-oriented approach without expectations.
- **Global Benchmarking:** The model is informed by global standards, drawing comparisons with competency frameworks in countries like Australia, Singapore, and South Korea.

Conclusion
The Karmayogi Competency Model is a pivotal initiative aimed at reshaping the mindset of Indian civil servants, aligning them with modern governance needs and ensuring effective service delivery to citizens.

Question : Discuss the significance of the Karmayogi Competency Model in enhancing the effectiveness of Indian civil servants.

Source : The Indian Express

Environment
1.5 degrees Celsius target will be 'gone' in a few years: UN report
Why in News ?
The UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report warns that the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C may soon be unattainable.

Introduction
The UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report has raised alarms about the dwindling prospects of achieving the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

According to the report, if current trends continue, this target could be compromised within just a few years.

Analysis on Report of UN Environment Programme

Finding	Data/Statistics
Global Emissions (2023)	Increased by 1.3% from 2022
Emission Growth by Major Emitters	China: 5.2%, India: 6.1%
Required Emission Reduction	42% reduction needed by 2030 from 2019 levels to maintain the 1.5°C target; 57% by 2035.
Current Climate Action Effectiveness	Optimistically, only a 10% reduction by 2030 is anticipated on 2019 levels.
Required Annual Reduction	Minimum of 7.5% each year until 2035 to keep the 1.5°C target alive.

Implications of Current Trends
- The report indicates that the current climate action plans, due for revision by countries by next year, are insufficient.
- They must be significantly enhanced to meet the necessary emission reduction targets.
- A drastic increase in investments in emission reduction strategies is crucial. The cost to bridge the emissions gap could reach approximately $200 per ton of CO2 equivalent, potentially leading to a reduction of 31 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent by 2030.

Call to Action
- The urgency of global leaders to gather at the upcoming climate conference in Baku is underscored, as discussions will focus on significantly scaling up financial resources dedicated to climate action.

Way Forward
1. **Urgent Action Required:** Immediate and significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are critical to keep the target within reach.
2. **Transition to Renewables:** Accelerate the shift to renewable energy sources and enhance energy efficiency across all sectors.
3. **International Cooperation:** Strengthen global partnerships and commitments under the Paris Agreement to ensure collective efforts toward emission reductions.
4. **Investment in Climate Resilience:** Increase funding for climate adaptation and resilience-building initiatives in vulnerable regions.
5. **Public Awareness and Engagement:** Raise awareness about climate change impacts and engage communities in sustainable practices.

Conclusion
- The findings of the Emissions Gap Report underscore the pressing need for immediate and robust climate action.
- Political inertia may lead to irreversible environmental damage, necessitating drastic changes in emissions management strategies to secure a sustainable future.

Question : Discuss the implications of the UN Emissions Gap Report for global climate policy.

Source : The Indian Express

Weather forecasts at panchayat level: what will be known, and how it will help

Why in News ?

In a world of climate change–induced weather uncertainties, localised forecasting will help safeguard agricultural livelihoods and enhance rural preparedness against natural disasters.

Introduction

In the face of climate change-induced weather uncertainties, localized weather forecasting is poised to enhance agricultural productivity and improve disaster preparedness in rural India. The Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting initiative represents a significant step in this direction.

Features of the Initiative

The Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), and the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Objectives

1. **Empower rural communities:** Improve decision-making capabilities in agriculture.
2. **Enhance disaster preparedness:** Equip villagers to handle environmental challenges.
3. **Promote sustainable agricultural practices:** Make rural populations more climate-resilient.

Forecasting Details

- **Type of Forecasts:** Five-day weather forecasts updated hourly.
- **Data Available:**
  - Current temperature
  - Wind speed
  - Cloud cover percentage
  - Rainfall
  - Relative humidity
- **Platforms for Access:** e-GramSwaraj, Gram Manchitra portals, and the Meri Panchayat app.

Benefits to the Public

- The introduction of localised forecasts will directly benefit farmers by enabling them to:

- Plan sowing, irrigation, and harvesting activities based on accurate weather predictions.
- Safeguard agricultural livelihoods and improve rural preparedness against natural disasters.

Importance of Localised Forecasting

- Localised forecasting addresses the inherent uncertainties in predicting sudden weather events, such as cloudbursts. While broad weather patterns like monsoons are relatively easier to forecast, localised predictions can significantly enhance the confidence of small farming communities in their economic activities.

Training and Capacity Building

- To maximise the utility of these forecasts, the Panchayati Raj Ministry is organising training workshops for over 200 representatives of panchayati raj institutions.
- This training aims to enhance their skills in utilising weather forecasting tools and resources effectively.

Conclusion

- The Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting initiative stands to significantly benefit rural communities by providing timely and localised weather information.
- This initiative is crucial in making agriculture more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Question : Discuss the significance of localised weather forecasting in enhancing agricultural resilience in India.

Source : The Indian Express

Editorial, Opinions & Ideas
The Gaza war and the Global South's 'interventions'
Why in News ?
The proverbial Global South seems to be showing a fragmented approach to the crisis

Introduction: The Gaza crisis following the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar by Israel has highlighted significant divergences in the Global South's approach to Israel-Palestine tensions. Nations like South Africa, China, and India have each adopted stances reflecting unique national interests, historical contexts, and geopolitical strategies.

Country Positions and Actions

Country	Position on Gaza Crisis	Notable Actions
South Africa	Aligns with Palestine, invoking anti-apartheid experiences	Took Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking accountability for Israeli leaders
China	Supports Palestinian sovereignty, avoids condemning Hamas	Hosted Palestinian factions for peace talks, uses BRICS to push Global South narratives

India's Stance on Israel-Palestine Conflict
- India's dual approach—supporting Israel's counter-terrorism efforts while recognizing Palestine as a state—reflects a balance between domestic counter-terrorism interests and international peace.
- India's approach to terrorism, shaped by its own security concerns, resonates with Israel's policies.
- This strategy emphasizes multilateral counter-terrorism while underscoring support for a two-state solution to ensure lasting peace.

Challenges to Global South Unity

Challenge	Explanation
India-China Tensions	Differing priorities and rivalries hinder coordinated Global South action
Democracy vs. Autocracy Divide	Contrasting governance models lead to varying approaches to international crises
Limited Military Influence	Lack of substantial military and political power limits the Global South's intervention capacity

Impact on India
- **Diplomatic Balancing:** India must balance its historical support for Palestine with its strong ties to Israel, complicating its diplomatic stance.
- **Counter-Terrorism Focus:** Aligning with Israel on counter-terrorism enhances security cooperation but may polarize perceptions domestically.
- **Geopolitical Competition:** China's strengthened ties with Arab nations necessitate India's proactive diplomatic engagement in the Middle East to maintain influence.
- **Global South Unity:** Fragmentation among Global South nations limits India's ability to forge coalitions, impacting its influence in global governance.

Conclusion
The Gaza crisis highlights the fragmented responses of the Global South, with countries like South Africa strongly opposing Israel, while China and India balance their support for Palestine with national security interests.
Question : Evaluate India's balanced approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict in the context of its national interests and counter-terrorism policy.
Source : The Hindu

Q1. Which of the following factors contribute to the formation and intensification of tropical cyclones like Cyclone Dana?
1. High sea surface temperatures
2. Presence of a low-pressure system
3. High vertical wind shear
4. Monsoon withdrawal

Select the correct answer using the codes below:
A. 1, 2, and 4 only
B. 1 and 3 only
C. 2 and 4 only
D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

Q2. Which of the following countries recently took Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the Gaza crisis?
A. China
B. India
C. South Africa
D. Russia

Q3. Which of the following countries are new members of BRICS as of the 16th BRICS Summit?
A. UAE, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia
B. Egypt, Argentina, Turkey
C. Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Iran
D. Argentina, Brazil, Turkey

Q4. Which of the following best describes the primus inter pares (first among equals) role of the Chief Justice of India?
A. The CJI has a higher voting power on constitutional benches than other judges.
B. The CJI heads the Supreme Court and thus has absolute administrative powers over all other judges.
C. The CJI acts as an administrative head without exercising additional judicial power over other Supreme Court judges.
D. The CJI alone decides the outcomes of constitutional cases based on seniority.

Q5. Which of the following statements correctly describes the role of the Capacity Building Commission under Mission Karmayogi?
1. It monitors the overall progress of Mission Karmayogi.
2. It certifies and evaluates training institutions for quality competency training.
3. It directly recruits civil servants through competency-based exams.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:
A. 1 and 2 only
B. 1 only
C. 2 and 3 only
D. 1, 2, and 3

Q6.With reference to Departmental standing committees, consider the following statements:
1. A standing committee consists of 21 members entirely from Lok Sabha.
2. They consider the national basic long term policy documents presented to the Houses.
3. These committees cannot consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned ministries.

How many statements given above are correct?
Red Book
A. Only One
B. Only Two
C. All Three
D. None

Q7. Which of the following statements about the UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report is/are correct?
1. The report warns that the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement may soon be unattainable.
2. Global emissions in 2023 decreased by 1.3% compared to 2022.
3. A 42% reduction in emissions from 2019 levels is required by 2030 to stay on track for the 1.5°C target.

4. Major emitters such as China and India have committed to reducing their emissions by 6.1% by 2030.

Select the correct answer using code below:
   A. 1 and 3 only
   B. 1, 2, and 3 only
   C. 1, 3, and 4 only
   D. All of the above

Q8. Which ministries are involved in the Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting initiative?
   A. Ministry of Panchayati Raj
   B. Ministry of Earth Sciences
   C. Ministry of Agriculture
   D. Both a and b

Q9. Match the following conditions with the appropriate drugs:

Conditions	Drugs
a) Glaucoma	i) Atropine
b) Tuberculosis	ii) Cefadroxil
c) Asthma	iii) Salbutamol
d) Iron Toxicity	iv) Desferrioxamine

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
   A. a-i, b-ii, c-iii, d-iv
   B. a-iv, b-ii, c-iii, d-i
   C. a-ii, b-iv, c-i, d-iii
   D. a-iii, b-i, c-iv, d-ii

Q10. Consider the following statements regarding the Global South's response to the Gaza crisis:
   1. South Africa has taken Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking accountability for Israeli leaders.
   2. China supports Palestinian sovereignty but avoids condemning Hamas.
   3. India has adopted a strictly pro-Israel stance without recognizing Palestinian statehood.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   A. 1 and 2 only
   B. 2 and 3 only
   C. 1 only
   D. 1, 2, and 3

Solutions

1. **Option A is Correct**
   Explanation:

A. **High Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs):**
   - High SSTs are crucial for tropical cyclone formation as they provide the heat and moisture needed to fuel the cyclone.
   - Warm ocean waters (typically above 26.5°C) allow more evaporation, supplying the energy for the storm.
   - **Contributes to the formation and intensification of tropical cyclones.**

B. **Presence of a Low-Pressure System:**
   - Cyclones form around a low-pressure area where air begins to converge and rise, leading to cloud formation and potentially, a cyclone.
   - **Contributes to the formation and intensification of tropical cyclones.**

C. **High Vertical Wind Shear:**
   - High vertical wind shear (significant difference in wind speed and direction at different heights in the atmosphere) actually disrupts cyclone formation by tilting and weakening the structure of the storm. Cyclones require low vertical wind shear for stability and intensification.
   - **Does not contribute to the formation and intensification of tropical cyclones.**

D. **Monsoon Withdrawal:**
   - The withdrawal of the monsoon can influence tropical cyclone activity, particularly in regions like the Indian Ocean, by shifting atmospheric conditions to favor cyclone formation.
   - **Can contribute to the formation and intensification of tropical cyclones in certain regions.**

2. **Option C is Correct**
   Explanation:
   - The country that recently took Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over actions in Gaza is **South Africa**.
   - South Africa filed a case with the ICJ, accusing Israel of violating its obligations under the Genocide Convention due to the alleged targeting of Palestinians in Gaza.
   - The ICJ has acknowledged its provisional jurisdiction in the matter, allowing South Africa's request to move forward for now.
   - However, a full hearing on the case's merits is yet to take place, where the ICJ will assess whether Israel's actions indeed amount to genocide under international law

3. **Option D is Correct**
   Explanation:
   - As of the 16th BRICS Summit in 2023, five countries were invited to join the BRICS alliance: the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, and Ethiopia. This expansion is part of BRICS' strategic aim to strengthen its influence and encourage a multipolar world order less dominated by Western powers.
   - Leaders from the BRICS countries, including China's described this move as a significant step toward enhancing the role of the Global South in international affairs

4. **Option C is Correct**
   Explanation:
   The term **"primus inter pares,"** meaning **"first among equals,"** accurately describes the Chief Justice of India's role. While the Chief Justice of India (CJI) holds a position of seniority and certain administrative responsibilities, this does not equate to having more judicial power or voting power in legal decisions compared to other Supreme Court judges. Instead:
   - **Administrative Head:** The CJI oversees the administrative functioning of the Supreme Court, including the allocation of cases, formation of benches, and some matters of court management.

- **No Additional Judicial Power:** The CJI's vote carries the same weight as that of other judges on a bench, even on constitutional benches. The CJI cannot unilaterally decide the outcome of cases or wield "absolute" power over judicial decisions.
- **Bench Composition and Case Allocation:** As an administrative leader, the CJI has the authority to constitute benches and assign cases. However, once a bench is constituted, all judges have equal standing in delivering judgments.

5. **Option A is Correct**
   Explanation:
Statement 1 is Correct : The Capacity Building Commission is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation and progress of the Mission Karmayogi initiative. This includes ensuring that the goals set out in the mission are being met and that the capacity-building efforts are effective.
Statement 2 is Correct : The Commission plays a vital role in assessing the quality of training institutions involved in providing competency training to civil servants. By certifying these institutions, it ensures that the training provided meets the required standards for enhancing civil service effectiveness.
Statement 3 is Incorrect : The Capacity Building Commission does not engage in the direct recruitment of civil servants. Recruitment is typically managed by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and other relevant authorities through established examination processes. The role of the Capacity Building Commission focuses on training and capacity enhancement rather than recruitment.

6. **Option B is Correct**
   Explanation:
The main objective of the **standing committees** is to secure more accountability of the Executive (i.e., the Council of Ministers) to the Parliament, particularly financial accountability. They also assist the Parliament in debating the budget more effectively. Currently there are 24 Departmental standing committees functioning in India. 17 Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) were set up in the Parliament in 1993. In 2004, seven more such committees were setup, thus increasing their number from 17 to 24.

Statement 1 is incorrect : Each standing committee consists of 31 members in which 21 are from Lok Sabha and 10 are from Rajya Sabha. The members of the Lok Sabha are nominated by the Speaker from amongst its own members, just as the members of the Rajya Sabha are nominated by the Chairman from amongst its members.
Statement 2 is correct : The functions of each of the standing committees are to consider the demands for grants of the concerned ministries / departments before they are discussed and voted in the Lok Sabha. It also considers national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses.
Statement 3 is correct : One of the limitations of these standing committees is that they should not consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned ministries / departments.

7. **Option A is Correct**
   Explanation:
Statement 1 is Correct : The Emissions Gap Report has consistently highlighted the increasing difficulty of achieving the 1.5°C target, given the current trajectory of global emissions and insufficient policy measures by various nations. It emphasizes the urgent need for enhanced commitments and actions to avoid exceeding this threshold.
Statement 2 is Incorrect : While the report often discusses trends in global emissions, the specific claim about a 1.3% decrease in 2023 would need to be verified against the most recent data. In recent years, global emissions have fluctuated, and while some reports have suggested slight decreases, confirmation would depend on the latest report findings.
Statement 3 is Correct : The Emissions Gap Report outlines that to have a reasonable chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, a substantial reduction in emissions is necessary. The target of a 42% reduction by 2030 from 2019 levels is in line with the necessary global efforts to meet this climate goal.
Statement 4 is Incorrect : While both China and India have made commitments related to emissions reductions, stating a specific figure of 6.1% by 2030 is misleading. China aims for peak emissions around 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060, while India's commitments are outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) but do not specifically amount to a blanket 6.1% reduction target.

8. **Option D is Correct**
   Explanation:

The **Gram Panchayat-Level Weather Forecasting** initiative involves multiple ministries to ensure comprehensive and effective implementation. Here's a breakdown of the relevant ministries:

- **Ministry of Panchayati Raj:** This ministry plays a crucial role in implementing grassroots governance in rural areas. In the context of weather forecasting, it helps facilitate the dissemination of information at the Gram Panchayat level, ensuring that local governance structures are engaged in using weather data for planning and decision-making.
- **Ministry of Earth Sciences:** This ministry is responsible for weather forecasting, climate research, and providing meteorological services. It is key to generating accurate weather forecasts and climate-related information that can be utilized at the local level.
- **Ministry of Agriculture:** While not directly involved in the forecasting itself, this ministry benefits from accurate weather data to support farmers in making informed decisions regarding crop management, irrigation, and other agricultural practices.

9. **Option A is Correct**
   Explanation:

- **Glaucoma :Correct drug:** Desferrioxamine is not used for glaucoma. The appropriate drug is Salbutamol, which helps in controlling intraocular pressure in some formulations (though primarily used for asthma).
- However, Atropine can increase intraocular pressure, so it's not the right match either.
- **Tuberculosis: Correct drug:** Cefadroxil is not used for tuberculosis. The first-line drugs for tuberculosis include Rifampicin, Isoniazid, Ethambutol, and Pyrazinamide.
- **Asthma : Correct drug:** Salbutamol is a bronchodilator commonly used to treat asthma.

- **Iron Toxicity : Correct drug:** Desferrioxamine is used as a chelating agent to treat iron toxicity.

10. **Option A is Correct**
    Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct : as South Africa has taken diplomatic actions that reflect its alignment with the Palestinian cause, including seeking accountability from Israel at the ICJ.

Statement 2 is also correct : China has shown support for Palestinian sovereignty while avoiding direct condemnation of Hamas, focusing instead on a diplomatic approach.

Statement 3 is incorrect : India maintains a dual approach: it supports Israel's right to defend itself while also recognizing Palestinian statehood, reflecting a balance in its foreign policy.

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