

General Studies

Current Affair Test (June-2024)

1. Ans: (b)

- India has kickstarted the process of unifying its four airspace regions under Project Indian Single Sky Harmonized Air Traffic Management at Nagpur (ISHAN).
- This initiative is expected to enhance air traffic management, benefiting airlines and passengers by making operations more efficient and safer.
- Challenges include technological implementation, process changes, and retraining of staff.
 - ♦ Currently, Indian airspace is divided into 4 FIRs i.e. Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, and a sub-FIR in Guwahati, each managed separately.

2. Ans: (a)

- In India, the debate over inheritance tax as a tool to address economic inequality is ongoing.
- **What is Inheritance Tax?**
 - ♦ It is a tax levied on the assets inherited by individuals from a deceased person. The tax rate depends on the value of the inherited property and the heir's relationship to the decedent. Refer: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2024/04/30/inheritance-tax/>

3. Ans: (b)

- The RBI released a draft Master Direction for Electronic Trading Platforms (ETPs), seeking feedback from stakeholders by May 31.
- **What are ETPs?**
 - ♦ Electronic Trading Platforms (ETPs) are electronic systems that facilitate the trading of various financial instruments such as securities, money market instruments, foreign exchange instruments, derivatives, and more. Unlike recognized stock exchanges, ETPs operate as electronic platforms where buyers and sellers can execute trades electronically.
 - ♦ In India, examples of ETPs include: NSE NOW (NSE's Online Trading System), BSE Bolt, Currency ETPs, MCX (Multi Commodity Exchange) and NCDEX (National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange)
- There are a total of seven credit agencies in India viz, CRISIL, CARE, ICRA, SMREA, Brickwork Rating, India Rating and Research Pvt. Ltd and Infomeries Valuation and Rating

4. Ans: (b)

- Statements 1 and 3 are correct.
- Recently, IREDA (Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency), the financing agency for

Renewable projects in India, was conferred with 'Navratna status' by the Department of Public Enterprises (Ministry of Finance)

- IREDA is under the administrative control of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. It was established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987.
- This status grants greater autonomy and facilitates quicker decision-making, attracting more investments and skilled talent. As a Navratna PSU, IREDA can operate more efficiently, compete effectively, and achieve sustainable growth.

5. Ans: (a)

- Only statement 4 is correct.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that the Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) limits for investment in various securities will remain unchanged for the current fiscal year.
- G-Secs, or Government Securities, are tradable instruments issued by governments through auctions conducted by the RBI. They come in two types: short-term, known as treasury bills, with maturities of less than one year, and long-term, known as Government bonds or dated securities, with maturities of one year or more. The Central Government can issue both treasury bills and government bonds, while State Governments issue only government bonds, also known as State Development Loans (SDLs).
- S2 is incorrect because although government securities can be used for financing various government projects, they are not primarily used for state government projects.
- S3 is incorrect because government securities are not issued in the form of equity shares; Government bonds are debt instruments that the country's government issues to raise capital from the general public.

6. Ans: (c)

- S1: FDI involves acquiring a significant ownership stake in a foreign company, allowing the investor to have control over management decisions and operations. In contrast, FPI entails purchasing securities like stocks and bonds in foreign companies without obtaining ownership control. FPI investors are not involved in the day-to-day management of the companies they invest in.
- S2: FDI can indeed contribute to economic growth by bringing in capital, technology, and expertise, which can stimulate local industries and create

employment opportunities. FPI, on the other hand, primarily serves the purpose of diversifying investment portfolios and generating returns for investors.

7. Ans: (b)

- Money market instruments are short-term financing instruments aiming to increase the financial liquidity of businesses
- The main characteristic of money market instruments is that they can be easily converted to cash, thereby preserving an investor's cash requirements.
- The list of money market instruments traded in the money market are-
- call/notice money market
 - ♦ The call/notice money market forms an important segment of the Indian money market. Under call money market, funds are transacted on overnight basis and under notice money market, funds are transacted for the period between 2 days and 14 days.
- **Certificate of Deposit**
 - ♦ Lending substantial financial resources to an organization can be done against a certificate of deposit. The operating procedure is similar to that of a fixed deposit, except the higher negotiating capacity, as well as lower liquidity of the former.
- **Commercial Paper**
 - ♦ This type of money market instrument serves as a promissory note generated by a company to raise short term funds. It is unsecured, and thereby can only be used by large-cap companies with renowned market reputation.
 - ♦ The maturity period of these debt instruments lies anywhere between 7 days to one year, and thus, attracts a lower interest rate than equivalent securities sold in the capital market.
- **Treasury Bills**
 - ♦ These are only issued by the central government of a country when it requires funds to meet its short-term obligations.
 - ♦ These securities do not generate interest but allow an investor to make capital gains as it is sold at a discounted rate while the entire face value is paid at the time of maturity.
 - ♦ Since treasury bills are backed by the government, the default risk is negligible, thus serving as an optimal investment tool for risk-averse investors.
- **Repurchase Agreements**
 - ♦ Commonly known as Repo, it is a short-term borrowing tool where the issuer availing the funds guarantees to repay (repurchase) it in the future.
 - ♦ Repurchase agreements generally involve the trading of government securities. They are subject to market interest rates and are backed

by the government.

- **Banker's Acceptance**

- ♦ One of the most common money market instruments traded in the financial sector, a banker's acceptance signifies a loan extended to the stipulated bank, with a signed guarantee of repayment in the future.

8. Ans: (c)

- NABARD has initiated a study to evaluate the impact of Geographical Indication (GI) products.
 - ♦ This study aims to assess the benefits received by artisans and producers due to GI tags.
- In India, GI tags are issued as per the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. This tag is issued by the Geographical Indication Registry under the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

9. Ans: (b)

- In 2023, while world food prices experienced a significant decline from their 2022 highs, India saw persistently high food inflation, reaching 9.5% in December 2023. This contrasts sharply with global deflation of - 10.1% during the same period.
- If inflation were entrenched, it would mean that prices would not come back down, and that the new prices we see in the market would be a more permanent fixture in the economic life of citizens.
- Entrenched inflation tends to stick around even after the immediate problems that spurred it on have resolved.

10. Ans: (b)

- In 2023, while world food prices experienced a significant decline from their 2022 highs, India saw persistently high food inflation, reaching 9.5% in December 2023. This contrasts sharply with global deflation of - 10.1% during the same period.
- Core inflation — that is the inflation rate when prices of food and fuel are taken away. Core inflation typically rises and falls more gradually than inflation in food and fuel.

11. Ans: (c)

- Demand-pull inflation occurs when the aggregate demand for goods and services in an economy exceeds aggregate supply, leading to upward pressure on prices.

Option C accurately describes this situation where demand outstrips supply, causing prices to rise.

Options A and B describe scenarios related to monetary policy but do not specifically address the relationship between demand and supply. Option D describes a situation of deflation, where demand is lower than supply, leading to falling prices.

12. Ans: (c)

- Hyperinflation is an extreme form of inflation characterized by rapid and out of-control increases in prices. One consequence of hyperinflation is the erosion of savings and wealth as the real value of money rapidly declines.

Option C accurately describes this consequence, as individuals' savings and assets lose value in hyperinflationary environments.

Options A, B, and D are not consequences associated with hyperinflation; instead, they may be observed under conditions of low or stable inflation.

13. Ans: (a)

- SEBI has mandated Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to establish an institutional mechanism to deter potential market abuse, including front-running, following recent instances observed by the market regulator

14. Ans: (a)

Only Statement 3 is correct.

The Square Kilometer Array will not be a single large telescope, but a collection of thousands of dish antennas operating as a single unit. The name, Square Kilometer Array, comes from the original intention to create one square kilometre (one million square metre) of effective area for collecting radio waves. This was meant to be achieved by installing thousands of smaller antennas in a specific array design that would make them function like a single radio telescope. The antennas, about 200 of them in South Africa and more than 130,000 in Australia, are being installed in sparsely populated locations, chosen to ensure they are as far away from human activities as possible. This has been done in order to minimise signal interference from undesirable Earth-based sources. Though none of the SKA facilities would be located in India, there are immense science and technology gains for the country by participating in the project as a full member. The intellectual properties generated by the project, though owned by the SKA Observatory, would be accessible to all the member countries.

15. Ans: (a)

- Disinvestment refers to the process of the government selling its stake in public sector enterprises. This can involve selling shares of state-owned companies to private investors, thereby reducing the government's ownership and control over these enterprises.

16. Ans: (b)

- Anti-dumping duties are measures imposed by importing countries to counteract the dumping of goods, which occurs when foreign producers sell goods in another country at prices lower than their home market prices or below production costs.

This practice can harm domestic industries by undercutting prices and creating unfair competition.

Therefore, antidumping duties are imposed as taxes or tariffs on these dumped goods to level the playing field and protect domestic industries from such practices.

17. Ans: (b)

- Statement 1 is correct: The nominal effective exchange rate (NEER) is an unadjusted weighted average rate at which one country's currency exchanges for a basket of multiple foreign currencies. The nominal exchange rate is the amount of domestic currency needed to purchase foreign currency. If a domestic currency increases against a basket of other currencies inside a floating exchange rate regime, NEER is said to appreciate. If the domestic currency falls against the basket, the NEER depreciates.
- Statement 2 is not correct. An increase in REER means that the country's currency has appreciated not only in nominal terms but also adjusted for inflation. This could actually make exports more expensive and imports cheaper, potentially reducing trade competitiveness.
- Statement 3 is true. If domestic inflation is higher than inflation in other countries, it would lead to a higher increase in the nominal exchange rate (NEER) compared to the real exchange rate (REER), leading to a divergence between the two.

18. Ans: (a)

- The Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) is a measure that takes into account both nominal exchange rate movements and relative price changes (inflation) between countries.

Option A is correct because it accurately describes REER, emphasizing its adjustment for inflation to provide a more accurate reflection of a country's international competitiveness. Option B is incorrect because it overlooks the crucial aspect of inflation adjustment in REER calculations.

Option C is incorrect because REER is not calculated based on a country's GDP but rather on a basket of foreign currencies.

Option D is incorrect because REER is not related to measuring the stability of a country's stock market; it focuses on the competitiveness of a country's exports in international markets.

19. Ans: (a)

- In the fiscal year 2023-24, China has overtaken the US as India's largest trading partner, with a total two-way commerce of \$118.4 billion, as per the data from the economic think tank GTRI. India's exports to China rose by 8.7 percent to \$16.67 billion, while imports increased by 3.24 percent to \$101.7 billion. Conversely, exports to the US dipped slightly to \$77.5 billion, and imports decreased by about 20 percent to \$40.8 billion.

20. Ans: (d)

- S1 is incorrect because the IIBX is not solely

focused on trading in gold bullion. It facilitates trading in various precious metals including gold, silver, platinum, and palladium.

- S2 is incorrect as the IIBX is headquartered in GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, not in Mumbai.

21. Ans: (b)

- Statements 1 and 2 are correct.
- Recently, India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation surged to a 13-month high of 1.26%, up from 0.5%, driven primarily by increases in food and fuel prices.
 - ♦ The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is an economic indicator that measures the average change in prices of goods at the wholesale level, i.e., before they reach the retail level.
 - ♦ It is used to track inflation and deflation trends in the economy by reflecting price changes in a basket of wholesale goods.
- S3: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Raghuram Raja in 2014 announced that the central bank had adopted the new Consumer Price Index (CPI) (combined) as the key measure of inflation.

22. Ans: (b)

- S1: The Tea Board is a statutory body set up under section 4 of the Tea Act, 1953 was constituted on 1st April 1954.
- S2: The present Tea Board is functioning as a statutory body of the Central Government under the Ministry of Commerce.
- S3&S4: The head office of the Tea board is in Kolkata. Currently, the Tea Board has two overseas offices located in Dubai and Moscow. Its functions include rendering financial and technical assistance for the cultivation, manufacture and marketing of tea, export promotion, aiding Research and Development activities for augmentation of tea production and improvement of tea quality.

23. Ans: (d)

- Statement 1: Correct. Inflation is defined as the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising, and subsequently, purchasing power is falling. Central banks attempt to limit inflation, and avoid deflation, to keep the economy running smoothly.
- Statement 2: Correct. Hyperinflation is an extremely high and typically accelerating inflation, often exceeding 50% per month. It can lead to the quick erosion of the real value of local currency, as the prices of all goods increase.
- Statement 3: Correct. Deflation is the decrease in the general price level of goods and services, which can increase the real value of money. This is the opposite of inflation and can be harmful to the economy, leading to reduced consumer spending and increased real value of debt.
- Statement 4: Correct. The Consumer Price Index

(CPI) measures the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. The Producer Price Index (PPI) measures the average change over time in the selling prices received by domestic producers for their output. Both are used to gauge inflation.

24. Ans: (d)

- The inflation target in India is indeed fixed in terms of the all-India Consumer Price Index (CPI)-Combined. This index reflects the price changes for a basket of goods and services consumed by households.

25. Ans: (c)

- The Finance Ministry has tasked SBI with forming a committee to address co-lending issues, aiming to boost credit flow.
- Statement 1 is True: Co-Lending Loans involve a partnership between a bank and a non-banking financial company (NBFC) to provide loans to borrowers. This collaborative approach leverages the strengths of both institutions: the reach and customer relationships of NBFCs and the funding advantages of banks.
- Statement 2 is True: Under the Co-Lending Model, the bank and the NBFC share the risk and reward associated with the loan in a predetermined ratio. This means both entities contribute to the loan amount and share the interest income and potential defaults according to their agreed proportions.
- Statement 3 is False: Co-Lending Loans are not exclusively used for largescale infrastructure projects. They are primarily aimed at increasing credit access to underserved sectors such as MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), agriculture, and other priority sectors.
- Statement 4 is True: The primary objective of the Co-Lending Model is to enhance the reach of credit to underserved sectors of the economy. This model helps in improving the flow of credit to sectors that may not be adequately served by traditional banking channels alone, thus promoting financial inclusion.

26. Ans: (b)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised supervisory concerns regarding the functioning of asset reconstruction companies (ARCs).
- Statement 1 is correct: ARCs in India are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which sets guidelines and standards for their operations.
- Statement 2 is correct: The primary objective of ARCs is to manage and recover the bad loans they acquire, thereby improving the overall asset quality of the banking sector.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: ARCs are not allowed to accept deposits from the public. Their operations

are primarily focused on the acquisition and resolution of distressed assets, not on accepting deposits like commercial banks.

27. Ans: (b)

- Archaeologists from Ashoka University recently unearthed prehistoric artefacts made from fossil wood at the National Fossil Park in Ghugwa, Madhya Pradesh.
- **About Ghugwa National Fossil Park:**
 - ♦ Located in the Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh, was established as a National Park in 1983. Situated in a tropical dry deciduous landscape, it boasts fossilized plants dating back between 40 million and 150 million years ago. The park is renowned for its preserved fossils of various woody plants like eucalyptus, date palm, and neem, as well as climbers, leaves, flowers, fruits, and even dinosaur egg fossils.

28. Ans: (b)

- IUCN launched the Global Species Action Plan Online Knowledge Platform, known as GSAP SKILLS, at the Fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **About GSAP Skills:**
 - ♦ The Global Species Action Plan (GSAP) SKILLS platform brings GSAP content online, enabling real-time updates of technical tools and resources. Its purpose is to facilitate global collaboration and partnerships by connecting decision-makers, species conservation practitioners, and experts at all levels.

The platform's objectives include providing real-time updates on technical resources and ensuring their accessibility and relevance.

It also offers information on species conservation interventions, actions, and sub-actions for each Global Biodiversity Framework target, along with details on actors and technical tools.

- ♦ Managed by IUCN, the platform meets the needs of governments and stakeholders for species conservation actions.

Additionally, it receives support from the Ministry of Environment, the Republic of Korea, and the Tech4Nature Initiative launched by IUCN and Huawei in 2020.

29. Ans: (c)

- Statement 1 is correct: The Global Biodiversity Framework was indeed adopted during COP15, which highlights the global commitment to addressing biodiversity loss.
- Statement 2 is correct: The framework includes ambitious targets, such as protecting at least 30% of the world's land and marine areas by 2030, known as the "30 by 30" target.

30. Ans: (a)

About Eucalyptus: Insta Current Affairs Quiz Compilation (May - 2024)

- It is native to Australia, Tasmania, and nearby islands, and is an evergreen tree primarily planted for fuel and furniture wood, as well as paper and pulp production. However, concerns arise due to its high water consumption, toxicity to animals, and flammable oil emissions. Despite being a biomass production champion, its rapid growth exacerbates water depletion and soil fertility reduction, leading to ecological concerns.
- known for their fragrant leaves, which contain essential oils used in various medicinal and industrial applications.

31. Ans: (c)

- At the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) emphasizes sustainable development for SIDS.
- The GEF was established in 1991 to address global environmental issues.
- The GEF provides grants and funding to developing countries for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals and waste.
- The GEF operates independently of the United Nations.
- The World Bank serves as the trustee of the GEF Trust Fund.
- The GEF works in partnership with international institutions, NGOs, and the private sector.

32. Ans: (c)

- Several political parties have released the list of their star campaigners for the upcoming Lok Sabha General Elections.
 - ♦ The Representation of the People Act, 1951, defines rules around star campaigners, who are leaders of political parties appointed for campaigning.
 - ♦ A recognised political party can appoint a maximum of 40-star campaigners while a registered unrecognized political party can appoint up to 20.
 - ♦ These campaigners can incur travel expenses for campaigning without affecting candidates' expenditure limits.

33. Ans: (c)

- Article 31C protects laws enacted to ensure the "material resources of the community" are distributed to serve the common good (Article 39(b)) and that wealth and the means of production are not "concentrated" to the "common detriment" (Article 39(c)).
- Article 39 of the Constitution lists certain directive

principles of state policy, which are meant to be guiding principles for the enactment of laws, but are not directly enforceable in any court of law.

- As per Article 31C, these particular directive principles (Articles 39(b) and 39(c)) cannot be challenged by invoking the right to equality (Article 14) or the rights under Article 19 (freedom of speech, right to assemble peacefully, etc).
- Article 31C was introduced by The Constitution (Twenty-fifth) Amendment Act, 1971.
- The 25th amendment was challenged in the seminal Kesavananda Bharati case (1973) in which 13 judges held by a narrow 7-6 majority that the Constitution has a “basic structure” that cannot be altered, even by a constitutional amendment.

34. Ans: (b)

- The Supreme Court rejected the application of the ‘eggshell skull’ rule in a medical negligence case, restoring a compensation of Rs 5 lakhs awarded by the district consumer forum.
- **What is the ‘eggshell skull’?**
 - ♦ The “eggshell skull” rule, also known as the “thin skull rule” in some cases, is a legal principle applied in civil litigation. Essentially, it dictates that a defendant in a lawsuit is liable for all injuries caused to the plaintiff, even if the plaintiff’s condition makes them more susceptible to harm than an average person.
 - ♦ In this case, Jyoti Devi suffered prolonged pain due to a needle left in her abdomen after surgery. While lower courts applied the rule, the SC ruled it inapplicable as Jyoti didn’t have pre-existing vulnerabilities. The ruling emphasized prolonged suffering and delayed justice as factors justifying the enhanced compensation.

35. Ans: (c)

- Accused persons in prison can contest polls but are barred from voting. The legal status distinguishes between the right to vote and the right to be elected.
- In 1975, the Supreme Court in the case of Indira Gandhi v Raj Narain recognised that free and fair elections are a part of the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution of India, and any laws or policies that would violate this principle could be struck down.
- Though free and fair elections have been placed on the highest constitutional pedestal, the Supreme Court has held that the rights to elect and be elected do not enjoy the same status. For instance, a five-judge constitution Bench in 2006, in the case of Kuldeep Nayar v. Union of India held that the right to vote (or the right to elect as it was called) is “pure and simple, a statutory right”. This means that voting is not a fundamental right and can be repealed.
- The same was held for the right to be elected by the Bench, ruling that laws enacted by Parliament could regulate both these statutory rights.

36. Ans: (c)

- The Supreme Court has reserved its verdict on whether private properties can be considered ‘material resources of the community’ under Article 39(b) of the Constitution.
 - Article 39(b) directs the state to distribute material resources for the common good, while Article 31C empowers the state to take over such resources.
- Additionally, Article 39(c) aims to prevent wealth concentration.

37. Ans: (b)

- Under Article 168, states can have either one or two Houses of legislature. Article 169 leaves the choice of having a Vidhan Parishad to individual states.
- Under Article 171, a Council cannot have more than a third of the number of MLAs in the state, and not less than 40 members. A third of the MLCs are elected by MLAs, another third by a special electorate comprising sitting members of local government bodies such as municipalities and district boards, 1/12th by an electorate of teachers, and another 1/12th by registered graduates. The remaining members are appointed by the Governor for distinguished services in various fields.
- Besides Andhra Pradesh, five other states have Vidhan Parishads — Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, UP. Jammu and Kashmir had a Council until the state was bifurcated into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

38. Ans: (c)

What is the Right to Peaceful Death?

- The Right to Peaceful Death refers to the right of individuals to pass away with dignity and without unnecessary suffering.
- It is not explicitly mentioned in the Indian Constitution. However, the Supreme Court of India has recognized the right to die with dignity as a fundamental aspect of the right to life under Article 21. This recognition came in the landmark case of Common Cause (A Regd. Society) v. Union of India (2018), where the court upheld the legality of passive euthanasia and the right to make advance directives for medical treatment.

39. Ans: (c)

- Education in the mother tongue is emphasized through various provisions and initiatives:
 - Article 350A: Mandates states to provide primary education to linguistic minority groups in their mother tongue.
 - Section 29 of the Right to Education Act, 2009: Advocates for the medium of instruction to be in the mother tongue whenever possible.
 - NISHTHA FLN: Promotes teaching in mother tongue, regional language, and home language.
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- 52 Entry-Level Primers: Developed by NCERT and Indian Institute of Languages for teaching children in various mother tongues and local languages.
- International Mother Language Day: Observed on 21st February, initiated by Bangladesh and recognized by UNESCO in 1999.
- Yuelu Proclamation by UNESCO: Emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting linguistic diversity.

40. Ans: (c)

- Acts like the Maternity Benefit Act or its amendment have been enacted in the spirit of the DPSP (Article 42).
- Statement 2: These are socialist principles which draw their moorings from the history of economic thought in India. India upholds an economic system based on the principles of equity, fairness and justice, and therefore, such rights (provisions) are crucial to ensure labour welfare.

41. Ans:(b)

- S1: The NCDRC was established under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 to provide a mechanism for the quick resolution of consumer disputes.
- S2: Centre notifies rules for Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021
 - ♦ The revised pecuniary jurisdiction for entertaining consumer complaints shall be upto -
- 50 lakh for District Commissions,
- More than
- 50 lakh to
- 2 Crore for State Commissions and
- More than
- 2 Crore for National Commission
- S3: The NCDRC is headquartered in New Delhi, not Mumbai.
- S4: Orders of the NCDRC can be appealed directly to the Supreme Court of India, making it the apex consumer dispute redressal authority before reaching the highest judicial body.

42. Ans: (c)

- S1: True: The Right to Property was originally a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution, enshrined in Articles 19(1)(f) and 31.
- S2: True: The 44th Amendment Act of 1978 removed the Right to Property from the list of Fundamental Rights. This amendment was enacted to facilitate land reforms and address issues related to property holdings and acquisition.
- S3: True: After the 44th Amendment, the Right to Property was made a legal right under Article 300A of the Indian Constitution. This article states

that no person shall be deprived of his property except by authority of law, which means the right is now subject to reasonable restrictions and is not absolute.

- S4: False: The Right to Property, as a legal right under Article 300A, can be regulated and restricted by the government through the authority of law. This allows the state to impose reasonable restrictions on property rights in the public interest, such as for land acquisition and other regulatory purposes.

43. Ans: (c)

- Article 21 of the Constitution of India states, "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." This fundamental right is a cornerstone of Indian democracy, ensuring that every individual enjoys the right to live with dignity and personal freedom. The Supreme Court of India has interpreted this article expansively to include various derivative rights such as the right to privacy, the right to a healthy environment, the right to shelter, and the right to education. This broad interpretation underscores the importance of Article 21 in safeguarding the fundamental human rights of individuals against arbitrary state actions.

44. Ans: (a)

About the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC):

- It was established as a statutory body under the NCBC Act, 1993, and was granted Constitutional Status through the 102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018, with the insertion of Article 338B. The commission consists of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and three other Members in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Government of India. Its mandate includes investigating and monitoring all matters related to the safeguards provided for socially and educationally backward classes. Additionally, the NCBC advises the Central Government on OBC inclusion/exclusion requests from state or central governments. Parliament has the power to include or exclude communities from the Central List of OBCs.
- The commission presents its report to the President annually and at other times as it deems fit. If the Government disagrees with its recommendations, it must record its reasons.
- While the NCBC makes recommendations regarding the inclusion or exclusion of communities in the Central List of OBCs, these recommendations are not binding on the government. The final decision rests with the government.

45. Ans: (d)

- Recent incidents involving Sitaram Yechury and G Devarajan, where changes were made to their

speeches aired on Doordarshan and AIR, have sparked controversy.

- Statement A is correct because the right to dissent is fundamental in a democracy, allowing individuals and groups to express disagreement with government actions and policies without facing retaliation or punishment. This freedom is crucial for a healthy, dynamic political environment where diverse opinions can contribute to better governance and accountability.
- Statement B is also correct as the right to dissent is closely linked to the broader concept of free speech, which is a cornerstone of democratic societies. This right ensures that citizens can freely express their views, challenge authority, and participate in public discourse, which are all vital for democracy to thrive.
- Statement C is incorrect because while governments may regulate dissent to ensure it does not incite violence or chaos, outright suppression of dissent is contrary to democratic principles. Democracies must balance maintaining public order with protecting individual rights to free expression and protest. Suppression of dissent typically leads to authoritarianism rather than the healthy functioning of a democratic society.

46. Ans: (c)

- The Constitution of India does not define the term 'tribe'. Article 342 (i) empowers the President to specify Scheduled Tribes. Fifth Schedule establishes Tribes' Advisory Councils. STs constitute 8.6% of the Population (census 2011). Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records 698 STs in India. Bhil is the largest tribal group (38%) followed by Gonds. Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal Population in India. Santhal are the oldest Tribes in India.

47. Ans: (b)

- A dispute has arisen over the Election Commission's (EC) handling of voter turnout data, particularly related to Form 17C.
 - ♦ Form 17C records detailed polling data, including the number of votes cast and rejected at each booth.
 - ♦ The Commission maintained there is no legal mandate for it to make public the total number of votes cast in each polling station. It says copies of Form 17C are shared with the polling agents present immediately upon the close of polling.
- **About Form 17C:**
 - ♦ The Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 require the EC to maintain two forms- Forms 17A and 17C. Form 17A records the details of every voter who enters a polling booth and casts their vote. Form 17C contains the total number of votes cast.

48. Ans: (b)

- The Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) is a system designed to facilitate voting for certain categories of voters who cannot vote in person. This includes service voters (such as members of the armed forces), their spouses, and other eligible individuals like those in diplomatic missions.

The key feature of ETPBS is that it allows these voters to receive their postal ballots electronically. Once they receive the ballot, they can mark their choices and return the ballot via postal mail. This system aims to make the voting process more accessible and efficient for those who are unable to vote in person due to their service obligations or location.

49. Ans: (d)

- Article 329(b) of the Constitution, found in Part XV alongside articles 324- 329, governs electoral matters.
- Article 324 grants the Election Commission powers to oversee elections, while Article 329 addresses the judiciary's role in electoral affairs.
- Article 329(a) prohibits the judiciary from challenging laws regarding electoral district boundaries or seat allocation.
- Article 329(b), as amended by the Constitution (19th Amendment) Act, 1966, mandates that elections can only be questioned through an election petition presented according to laws made by the appropriate Legislature.
- The Representation of the People Act, 1951, further establishes the authority of high courts to hear and decide on election petitions, with Supreme Court review possible.
- In past rulings, the Supreme Court clarified that "election" in Article 329(b) encompasses the entire electoral process, from notification to result declaration, and barred judicial interference at intermediary stages.

50. Ans: (a)

Tensions have escalated at the Second Thomas Shoal, with China blocking manoeuvres and disrupting supply missions. The Philippines has refuted China's claim of reaching an agreement over the South China Sea dispute, labelling it as propaganda.

- Second Thomas Shoal (located near the Spratly Islands) is a submerged reef in the South China Sea. The shoal is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) but is also claimed by China.

51. Ans: (a)

About the South China Sea:

- It is a vast area of the western Pacific Ocean, stretching from Singapore and the Strait of Malacca in the southwest to the Strait of Taiwan in the northeast. It is a region of significant geopolitical tension due to various territorial disputes.

One major dispute involves the “nine-dash line” claimed by China, which encompasses most of the South China Sea and overlaps with the exclusive economic zone claims of several other countries, including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Key disputed features include: Insta Current Affairs Quiz Compilation (May - 2024)

- ◆ Paracel Islands (controlled by China but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam)
- ◆ Spratly Islands (claimed by multiple countries including China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia)
- ◆ Scarborough Shoal (claimed by China, Taiwan, and the Philippines)

52. Ans:(a)

53. Ans: (c)

- **The Narmada River System**

- ◆ The Narmada is a river located in central India.
- ◆ It rises to the summit of the Amarkantak Hill in Madhya Pradesh state.
- ◆ It outlines the traditional frontier between North India and South India.
- ◆ It is one of the major rivers of peninsular India. Only the Narmada, the Tapi, and the Mahi rivers run from east to west.
- ◆ The river flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.
- ◆ It drains into the Arabian Sea in the Bharuch district of Gujarat.

- **The Tapi River System**

- ◆ It is a central Indian river. It is one of the most important rivers of peninsular India with the run from east to west.
- ◆ It originates in the Eastern Satpura Range of southern Madhya Pradesh state.
- ◆ It flows in a westward direction, draining some important historic places like Madhya Pradesh's Nimar region, East Vidarbha region and Maharashtra's Khandesh in the northwest corner of the Deccan Plateau and South Gujarat before draining into the Gulf of Cambay of the Arabian Sea.
- ◆ The River Basin of Tapi River lies mostly in eastern and northern districts of Maharashtra state.
- ◆ The river also covers some districts of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat as well.
- ◆ The principal tributaries of Tapi River are Waghur River, Aner River, Girna River, Purna River, Panzara River and Bori River.
- ◆ The River Cauvery originates at Talakaveri in Coorg District of Karnataka in Brahmagiri Range of hills in the Western ghats

54. Ans: (c)

- A recent study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) predicts a significant warming of the Indian Ocean, leading to a tenfold increase in marine heatwaves, from an average of

20 days per year to 220– 250 days per year. The Arabian Sea experiences maximum warming.

- **What is the period of heat waves over India?**

- ◆ It is occurring mainly during March to June and in some rare cases even in July. The peak month of the heat wave over India is May.

55. Ans: (a)

- Only statement 1 is correct.
- S1: Indonesia is an archipelago comprising over 17,000 islands and is the world's largest island country by total area.
- S2: Manila is the capital of the Philippines.
 - ◆ The Indonesian Government has devised a plan to relocate the capital to Nusantara, a new city, which is reportedly under construction on the eastern coast of Borneo, approximately 870 miles north of Jakarta.
- S3: Mount Fuji is located in Japan, not Indonesia. Indonesia is known for its volcanoes, including Mount Bromo and Mount Krakatoa, but not Mount Fuji.

56. Ans: (d)

- The completion ceremony for the TAO telescope site was held in Santiago, Chile.
- The Atacama Desert is famous for its extreme aridity, making it the driest desert on Earth. Its unique climate conditions have led to its reputation as one of the most inhospitable environments on the planet.

57. Ans: (c)

Salt flats, also known as salars, are a prominent geological feature of the Atacama Desert. These vast expanses of dried salt lakes create a surreal landscape that adds to the desert's unique allure.

58. Ans: (b)

- Shaksgam Valley (also called Trans-Karakoram Tract) is an area of about 5,200 km² north of the Karakoram watershed, administered by China, but claimed by India. While under Pakistan's control since 1947, Pakistan recognized Chinese sovereignty over it in the 1963 Sino-Pakistan Agreement.

India disputes this claim, asserting it is part of the Kashmir region. The Shaksgam Valley is strategically important due to its proximity to the Siachen glacier, a critical area amidst India-China tensions.

59. Ans: (c)

- Indonesia's Mount Ruang volcano recently erupted, triggering the highest level of alert.
- Indonesia is home to many volcanoes due to its location along the Pacific Ring of Fire, where several tectonic plates meet and interact. This convergence creates intense geological activity, including the subduction of oceanic plates beneath continental plates, which leads to volcanic eruptions. Indonesia has approximately 130 active volcanoes.

- Mount Ruang is a stratovolcano situated in Indonesia's Sulawesi Islands. Other notable volcanoes in Indonesia include Krakatau, Merapi, and Semeru.

60. Ans: (c)

- Indonesia's Mount Ruang volcano recently erupted, triggering the highest level of alert.
- Mount Ruang is a stratovolcano situated in Indonesia's Sulawesi Islands. Other notable volcanoes in Indonesia include Krakatau, Merapi, and Semeru.

61. Ans: (c)

- The Eta Aquariids meteor showers, active from April 16, will peak on May 5 and 6.
 - ♦ This annual event, caused by debris from Halley's Comet, peaks on May 5 and 6.

It's known for its rapid speed, producing long, glowing tails. Best observed from the Southern Hemisphere, around 30 to 40 meteors can be seen per hour during peak times.

- Meteor showers occur when Earth's orbit intersects with the debris trail left behind by a comet or, less commonly, an asteroid. As Earth moves through this debris field, particles burn up in the atmosphere, creating streaks of light commonly known as "shooting stars." Comets, with their dusty tails, are the primary source of meteor showers.

62. Ans: (b)

- The Bhadra is a river in Karnataka state in southern India.
- It originates in Gangamoola near Kudremukha, Western Ghats range, and flows east across the southern part of Deccan Plateau, joined by its tributaries the Somavahini near Hebbe, Thadabehalla, and Odirayanahalla. It flows through the towns of Kudremukh, Kalasa, Horanadu, Haluvalli, Balehonnur, Balehole and Narasimharajapura.

63. Ans: (c)

- Nepal plans to introduce a new Rs 100 currency note featuring disputed territories with India, including Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani.
- Previously, in 2020, Nepal passed its second Constitution Amendment Bill which provided legal status to its claims over these territories
- India has objected to this move, considering it an "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims.

64. Ans: (b)

- Kalapani is the largest territorial dispute between Nepal and India, situated at a tri-junction with Tibet (China). The disagreement stems from the origin of River Kali, demarcated in the Treaty of Sagauli (1816). Nepal claims the river west of Kalapani as the main River Kali, originating at Limpiyadhura or Lipulekh pass, while India argues it originates

from a rivulet named Pankhagad, defining the border differently.

65. Ans: (c)

- It is a masonry gravity dam situated on the Periyar River in Thekkady, Idukki district, in Kerala.

66. Ans: (d)

- The first case of a walrus dying from bird flu was recorded on Hopen Island in the Svalbard archipelago. However, it's unclear whether it was the H5N1 or H5N8 strain, and there's a possibility that other walruses found also had bird flu.
- Hopen, an island in the Svalbard archipelago (Norway), was discovered in 1596 during Willem Barentsz's expedition. Since 1947, the Norwegian Meteorological Institute has operated a staffed weather station on the island with a crew of four. Hopen is home to a significant number of polar bears in winter. Additionally, Hopen is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.

67. Ans: (c)

- Sudan is a country in Northeast Africa. It borders the Central African Republic to the southwest, Chad to the west, Egypt to the north, Eritrea to the northeast, Ethiopia to the southeast, Libya to the northwest, South Sudan to the south, and the Red Sea. It was the largest country by area in Africa and the Arab League until the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

68. Ans: (c)

- S1: Correct. Urban Heat Island (UHI) is primarily caused by the absorption of solar radiation by urban surfaces like buildings and pavement, which leads to increased heat release compared to natural surfaces like vegetation.
- S2: Correct. The UHI effect is often more pronounced during the night as urban structures retain heat absorbed during the day and release it slowly, keeping temperatures elevated compared to surrounding rural areas.
- S3: Incorrect. Planting trees in urban areas can mitigate the UHI effect by providing shade and evaporative cooling through transpiration, thereby reducing surface temperatures.
- S4: Correct. UHI contributes to increased energy consumption for cooling purposes in urban areas, as higher temperatures necessitate more extensive use of air conditioning and other cooling systems to maintain indoor comfort levels.

69. Ans: (c)

- Siberia's "gateway to the underworld," the Batagay crater, is expanding at an alarming rate of 35 million cubic feet (1 million cubic meters) annually due to permafrost thaw.
- **What is Batagaika Crater?**
 - ♦ Located in Russia's Far East is the world's

largest permafrost crater, formed by melting permafrost dating back to the Quaternary Ice Age. It began to form in the 1960s when surrounding forest clearance triggered permafrost thaw, causing the land to sink. However, thawing permafrost poses environmental risks, as the release of organic carbon into the atmosphere could exacerbate global warming.

70. Ans: (d)

- Permafrost refers to ground that remains frozen for two or more consecutive years, typically found in polar regions but also in some high-altitude or high-latitude regions.

S1 is incorrect because permafrost can also exist in non-polar regions.

S2 is incorrect because permafrost is not a type of rock but rather a type of ground condition.

S3 is incorrect because permafrost is indeed affected by climate change, with rising temperatures causing it to thaw, which can lead to infrastructure damage, such as roads, buildings, and pipelines, due to ground instability.

71. Ans: (b)

- Statements 1 and 3 are correct.
- The Supreme Court has prohibited four states—Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat—from granting fresh mining leases in the Aravalli region.
- This directive, based on a report by the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), includes hills and a 100-meter-wide buffer zone around them.
- The Aravalli Range, among the world's oldest fold mountains, is home to diverse flora and fauna, with significant rivers originating from its slopes. However, it faces major threats such as illegal mining, deforestation, and undermining of the Natural Conservation Zone (NCZ) designation, particularly by Haryana.
- Mount Abu is Rajasthan's only hill station, which is located in the Sirohi district, within the Aravalli Range.

72. Ans: (a)

- The Cook Islands in association with New Zealand, is spearheading deepsea mining exploration for minerals crucial in electric car batteries.
- The Cook Islands, a self-governing island state, is situated in the South Pacific Ocean, with its capital at Avarua on Rarotonga Island. The Northern islands are low-lying coral atolls, while the Southern islands are larger and volcanic.

73. Ans: (c)

- The colors of auroras are determined by the types of gases in the Earth's atmosphere. When charged particles from the Sun collide with gas molecules in the Earth's atmosphere, they emit light of various colors. Oxygen molecules typically produce green

and red auroras, while nitrogen molecules produce blue and purple auroras.

74. Ans: (d)

- Geomagnetic storms occur when there is a significant disturbance in the Earth's magnetosphere, caused by changes in the solar wind or solar magnetic field interacting with the Earth's magnetic field. These storms can lead to fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field, causing disturbances in the magnetosphere and ionosphere. These disturbances can result in various effects such as auroras, radio communication disruptions, and potential damage to satellites and electrical power grids. Therefore, option D is the correct choice as it accurately describes the impact of geomagnetic storms on the Earth's magnetic field.

75. Ans: (a)

- S1: Correct. Coronal mass ejections (CMEs) are indeed bursts of solar wind expelled from the Sun's corona. These ejections are significant events involving the release of a large amount of plasma and magnetic field from the solar corona into space.
- S2: Incorrect. While CMEs do consist of charged particles, they are not primarily composed of charged particles. CMEs contain mostly plasma, which is a state of matter consisting of ionized gas particles. This plasma contains charged particles like protons and electrons, but it also includes neutral particles.
- S3: Incorrect. CMEs can have a significant impact on Earth's magnetic field and ionosphere. When the charged particles associated with a CME interact with Earth's magnetosphere, they can cause geomagnetic storms, which may disrupt satellite operations, communication systems, and power grids. Refer: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2024/05/14/geomagnetic-storms/>

76. Ans: (b)

- Chabahar Port is indeed located in Iran, specifically in the southeastern region of the country, near the border with Pakistan. It serves as a significant strategic point for trade, particularly for India, Afghanistan, and Iran, providing an alternative route for connectivity and reducing dependence on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The port has garnered international attention for its potential to boost regional trade and economic development, especially with the construction of infrastructure such as roads and rail links connecting it to Afghanistan and beyond.

77. Ans: (d)

- The US has warned of potential sanctions following India's signing of a 10-year contract with Iran to operate the Chabahar port.
- Chabahar port is located in Iran, not Iraq (S1 is incorrect).

While India has invested significantly in the development of the Chabahar port, it is not solely operated by India (S2 is incorrect).

The strategic importance of Chabahar lies in its role as a gateway for trade to Afghanistan and Central Asia, providing an alternative route that bypasses Pakistan. Chabahar port is primarily a commercial port, and its main purpose is trade, not military activities (S3 is incorrect).

78. Ans: (c)

- Sahul refers to the landmass that existed during the last glacial maximum when the sea levels were lower, connecting present-day Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania into a single landmass. This land bridge facilitated human migration and the spread of flora and fauna between these regions.

79. Ans: (b)

- Statement 1: Correct. Soil nailing is indeed a technique used to stabilize slopes and excavations. It involves inserting reinforcing elements, called soil nails, into the ground to create a composite mass that resists deformation.
- Statement 2: Incorrect. Soil nails are typically installed at an angle, not vertically. The angle of installation is usually between 10 to 20 degrees from the horizontal to provide optimal stability and resistance to the forces acting on the slope or excavation.
- Statement 3: Correct. The technique involves the insertion of reinforcing elements, usually steel bars, into the soil to enhance its strength and stability.
- Statement 4: Incorrect. While soil nailing can be used in various soil types, it is not primarily for soft soils with high moisture content. The method is versatile and can be used in a range of soil conditions, but it is particularly effective in stiff clays, dense sands, and other cohesive soils.

80. Ans: (b)

- India is establishing its first research testbed to study severe thunderstorms known as Nor'westers, primarily affecting the eastern and northeastern regions.
- Thunderstorms are most likely to develop under conditions where warm, moist air rises into cooler air. This process is called convection. As the warm, moist air ascends, it cools and the water vapor condenses into clouds, releasing latent heat.

This heat further fuels the rising air, leading to the formation of cumulonimbus clouds, which are characteristic of thunderstorms. In contrast, high-pressure systems with descending air, cold, dry air descending into warmer air, and stable air masses with minimal vertical movement do not favor the development of thunderstorms because they do not promote the necessary rising motion and moisture needed for thunderstorm formation.

81. Ans: (b)

- Statement 1: Correct. Nor'westers are indeed most commonly observed during the pre-monsoon months, particularly from March to May. This is the period when the conditions for their formation are most favorable.
- Statement 2: Incorrect. Nor'westers predominantly affect the eastern and northeastern regions of India, particularly states like West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Assam, and Jharkhand, rather than the coastal regions of the western coast.
- Statement 3: Correct. Nor'westers are vital for the agriculture of eastern India as they provide essential rainfall for crops such as jute and rice, helping to mitigate the effects of dry conditions.
- Statement 4: Incorrect. While the interaction between hot, humid air from the Bay of Bengal and cold, dry air from the northwest contributes to the formation of Nor'westers, this is not the primary cause. The primary mechanism involves intense surface heating and the lifting of moist air, leading to the development of these violent thunderstorms.

82. Ans: (c)

- The report released by the World Economic Forum
- Earth Observation (EO) technologies gather data about Earth's natural and artificial features. EO includes remotely sensed data from satellites and insitu data from sensors.
- EO could also help reduce over 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ annually by 2030 through early warning systems and environmental impact monitoring.
- Global initiatives like MethaneSAT and Allen coral Atlas aim to address these challenges and leverage EO for various purposes.

83. Ans: (c)

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) (founded 1911; HQ: New Delhi) is India's top biomedical research organization, responsible for formulating, coordinating, and promoting medical research. Its mission includes conducting and implementing medical research for societal benefit and translating innovations into public health solutions. Funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Clinical Trials Registry – India (CTRI) is the government of India's official clinical trial registry. The National Institute of Medical Statistics of the Indian Council of Medical Research established the CTRI on 20 July 2007. Since 2009 the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation has mandated that anyone conducting clinical trials in India must pre register before enrolling any research participants.

84. Ans: (a)

- The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a maritime

zone established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It extends up to 200 nautical miles from the coastal baseline of a country. Within this zone, the coastal state has exclusive rights to explore, exploit, conserve, and manage both living and non-living resources. These rights include fishing, oil and gas extraction, and other economic activities. Other countries' vessels enjoy freedom of navigation through the EEZ, but they must comply with the coastal state's laws and regulations regarding resource exploitation. Therefore, option A is the correct answer as it accurately describes the nature and purpose of the Exclusive Economic Zone.

85. Ans: (d)

- The report was released by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
- A report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reveals that about 76 million people were internally displaced (IDPs) globally by the end of 2023, up from over 71 million in 2022. Of these, over 68 million were displaced due to conflict and violence, with Sudan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, and Yemen hosting nearly half.
- In South Asia, Manipur is a significant contributor.
- The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre or IDMC is an international non-governmental organization established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council in Geneva. It is focused on monitoring and providing information and analysis on the world's internally displaced persons

86. Ans: (d)

- A report, titled 'Land Squeeze', released by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)
- In India, over 70% of arable land faces degradation and desertification. Additionally, the top 10% of landowners control 45% of the farmland, and the average agricultural holding is just 1.08 hectares (2015-16).
- What is Land Squeeze?: Land Squeeze refers to the increasing and converging pressures on global farmland, leading to issues like land degradation, desertification, land concentration, and fragmentation
- IPES-Food is an international non-profit association, with the goal to promote transition to sustainable food systems around the world and it was registered in Belgium in the year 2015.

87. Ans: (c)

Released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

- A report covering 2015-2021 reveals that rhinoceroses and cedars were the most impacted animal and plant species, respectively. The largest number of seizures during this period involved corals, followed by crocodiles and elephants.

- Animal species seizures increased from 2015 to 2019 before declining in 2020 and 2021, while plant species seizures saw a sharp rise in 2020 and 2021.
- Wildlife crime, defined as the illegal taking, possession, trade, or use of wild animals and plants or their derivatives, is driven by demand for medicine, pets, bushmeat, and ornamental plants, along with the high profits from illegal trade and corruption undermining regulations.
- Globally, efforts to combat wildlife crime include the UNODC's Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, launched in 2014, and the Wildlife Crime Initiative by TRAFFIC and WWF
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), established in 1997 by merging the UNDCP and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division, focuses on combating illicit drug trafficking and abuse, crime prevention, criminal justice, international terrorism, and political corruption. It adopted its current name in 2002 and is part of the United Nations Development Group.

88. Ans: (d)

- The Indian Air Force conducted a test of BHISHM portable hospital cubes in Agra, marking the first such test by the IAF.
- BHISHM cubes are part of "Project BHISHM" aimed at providing a rapid medical response for up to 200 casualties. Equipped with innovative tools, including AI and data analytics, the cubes are easily transportable and deployable within 12 minutes, suitable for various emergency scenarios.

These cubes were strategically deployed during the Pran Pratishtha ceremony in Ayodhya earlier this year to enhance medical preparedness and response capabilities.

89. Ans: (a)

- India and Iran signed a 10-year contract on Chabahar Port, but the US State Department warned against business deals with Iran due to potential sanctions under CAATSA.
- S1: CAATSA was enacted in response to various actions by Russia, including its interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, its involvement in the conflict in Ukraine, and its support for the Assad regime in Syria.
- S2: It, enacted in 2017, is a US law targeting countries engaged with Russia, North Korea, and Iran through economic sanctions. It imposes penalties on nations conducting significant transactions with Russian intelligence and military entities.

In 2018, the US House of Representatives passed an amendment exempting India from CAATSA sanctions for purchasing the S-400 missile defence system from Russia.

90. Ans: (c)

- Fifty years ago (1974), India conducted its first nuclear test, Operation Smiling Buddha, in Pokhran, marking its entry into the nuclear club.
- India's 'No First Use' (NFU) policy is a commitment that it will not use nuclear weapons as a means of warfare unless first attacked by an adversary using nuclear weapons. This policy is a part of India's nuclear doctrine, which emphasizes maintaining a credible minimum deterrent and adheres to the principle of non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. The NFU policy reflects India's stance on nuclear disarmament and its strategic restraint in the use of nuclear capabilities.

91. Ans: (c)

- Muria tribal farmer practices the traditional 'deda' seed preservation method, handed down by his ancestors.
- **About the Murias Tribe:**
 - ♦ They are a sub-group of the Gond tribe, primarily residing in Chhattisgarh, India. They are known for their involvement in the Muria Rebellion of Bastar in 1876, which was a revolt against Gopinath Kapardas, the diwan of Bastar.

The Murias have unique customs, including the practice of burying the dead in structures called "Gudi," where a stone is placed 6 to 7 feet high. Additionally, they have a social institution known as "Ghotul," where young boys and girls have the freedom to choose their own life partners.

92. Ans: (b)

About Dr. Verghese Kurien (1921-2012):

- Also known as the 'Father of the White Revolution in India,' he spearheaded 'Operation Flood,' the world's largest agricultural program. He established 30 farmer-run institutions and played a key role in the success of the Amul brand, leading India to become the world's largest milk producer in 1998.

His efforts extended to managing the Delhi Milk Scheme and making India self-sufficient in edible oils. Honoured with the Ramon Magsaysay Award, Krishi Ratna, World Food Prize, and India's highest civilian awards (Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan), National Milk Day on November 26 commemorates his birth anniversary.

93. Ans: (a)

- The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) heads the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, overseeing the approval of licenses for specified drug categories in India, including blood products, vaccines, and IV fluids. DCGI operates under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and establishes standards for drug manufacturing, sales, import, and distribution in

the country.

94. Ans: (b)

- Dr Purnima Devi Barman from India has been awarded the 2024 Whitley Gold Award (dubbed 'Green Oscar') by the UK charity Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) for her efforts to save the Greater Adjutant Stork (Hargila).
- The Whitley Gold Award is a prestigious accolade awarded annually to individuals or organizations for their exceptional contributions to wildlife conservation. It includes a substantial cash prize that is intended to support the awardee's ongoing conservation projects. However, recipients are not selected solely based on their academic achievements in environmental science. Instead, the selection criteria emphasize practical conservation efforts and demonstrable impact in the field of wildlife conservation.

95. Ans: (b)

- The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), through a circular, has directed all device license holders and manufacturers to report any adverse events on the Materiovigilance Programme of India (MvPI) platform to mitigate risks and ensure public health safety.
- **About MvPI:**
 - ♦ It was launched in 2015, and has been overseen by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission since 2018. It serves as the National Coordination Centre, focusing on monitoring Medical Device Associated Adverse Events (MDAE) and raising awareness among healthcare professionals. MDAE reports can be submitted by various stakeholders, including clinical specialists, biomedical engineers, nurses, pharmacists, and patients.

96. Ans: (c)

- Materiovigilance Programme of India (MvPI) was launched in 2015, and is overseen by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission since 2018.

97. Ans: (d)

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the TTDI 2024
- TTDI assesses factors and policies for sustainable and resilient Travel and Tourism development. This second edition evolved from the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), WEF's flagship index since 2007.
- India's rank improved to 39 in 2024 from 54 in 2021

98. Ans: (d)

Global Land Outlook Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists

- Released by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- The report examines the relationship between rangelands and their human communities, particularly pastoralists, to identify protection strategies.

- Rangelands, comprising ecosystems like grasslands, savannahs, and deserts, cover over 54% of the Earth's surface, with 78% in drylands.
- Up to 50% of rangelands are degraded due to factors like land use changes, excessive grazing, and urban expansion.
- In India, rangelands cover about 121 million hectares, with 100 million hectares underutilized.
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), adopted in 1994, is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. India has ratified it.

99. Ans: (b)

- The World Bank report, released at the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia, defines shared prosperity as boosting prosperity for the poorest to achieve equitable societies.
- Four building blocks of prosperity: Health and Education, Jobs and Income, Peace and Social Cohesion, and Environment.

- Population growth, urbanization, and climate change increase global water access disparity.
- In 2022, 197 million people in the world lacks safe drinking water, and 211 million lack basic sanitation.
- World Water Forum: Held every three years, co-hosted by the World Water Council and a host country. Aims to raise water issues on the political agenda and support international water issue resolutions.

100. Ans: (c)

- At the 15th Foundation Day event of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the Attorney General of India highlighted the challenges digital markets pose for global competition regulators.
- S1: CCI operates under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- S2: The primary legislation governing CCI is the Competition Act, 2002.
- S3: CCI has the authority to impose penalties on enterprises that violate competition laws.



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