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2. 'Sending notice to party, not candidate, marks shift in EC response - Indian express
3. SC declines petition to end Collegium, revive NJAC - The Hindu
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## Important News Articles

### GSI

## 1. India seeks overseas help for lithium processing to avoid relying on China: Report - Indian express

**Relevance:** Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian sub-continent); factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India).

#### Prelims Takeaway

- Cobalt
- Lithium

#### News:

- India is in talks with several countries seeking partnerships for technical help on lithium processing, said four sources familiar with the matter, to bolster its nascent lithium mining and electric vehicle industries and avoid relying on China.

#### Key highlights

- India's Ministry of Mines began discussions with Australia and the United States last year
- The Indian government and some private companies have also sought help from Bolivia, Britain, Japan, and South Korea,
- to develop a lithium mining industry that could provide the chemical feedstocks for batteries for its domestic electric vehicle (EV) industry which could help cut its greenhouse gas emissions and oil dependence.
- India needs technology to process lithium and we are looking to collaborate with other countries which have some experience
- In the absence of processing plants, Indian companies would likely ship lithium ores to China and bring the processed metal back to India
- Neighbour and rival China accounts for almost two-thirds of the world's lithium processing capacity.
- The government's top policy think-tank NITI Aayog has recommended incentives for setting up lithium processing plants.
- India's battery industry will require an annual 56,000 metric tons of lithium carbonate by 2030, according to NITI Aayog.

#### Critical minerals:

- **Identified:** India has identified 30 crucial minerals essential for various industries, including clean energy, defense, and fertilizers.
- **Significance:** These minerals are vital for achieving clean energy goals and national development. The growing demand for electric vehicles and renewable energy creates a massive need for these resources.
- **Global demand:** The global demand for critical minerals is expected to skyrocket due to climate change mitigation efforts, making strategic planning and resource security crucial for India.

#### Challenges and concerns:

- **Concentration:** Critical mineral reserves are heavily concentrated in a few countries, mainly China, creating vulnerabilities in global supply chains due to uneven distribution and processing capabilities.
- **Chinese dominance:** China's dominance in refining critical minerals and rare earths raises concerns about its potential to influence global supply chains and technological advancements through its monopoly.
- **Dependency risks:** India's ambitious clean energy goals rely heavily on critical minerals, particularly for battery manufacturing and renewable energy infrastructure.
- Despite efforts to secure resources through agreements with other countries, India remains heavily reliant on imports, posing challenges for domestic industries and technological advancements.

## GS II

### 2. 'Sending notice to party, not candidate, marks shift in EC response - Indian express

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

#### Prelims Takeaway

- MCC
- ECI

#### News:

- The Election Commission's first ever notices to political parties for alleged Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations by their star campaigners marks a significant shift in the institution's response to such complaints.

#### Key highlights

- In the past, the EC has sent general advisories to parties but whenever there is an MCC violation complaint against an individual, the notice goes to the individual rather than the party.
- This time, however, the EC has sent notices to parties on complaints against star campaigners.
- In the notices, it has underlined that individual star campaigners are responsible for their own speeches and the EC may, on a "case-by-case basis," hold political parties accountable for any MCC violations by their campaigners.
- The change in EC's stance is more significant against the backdrop of high-profile political leaders who have been served notices directly by the Commission for MCC breaches in the past.
- However, it's pertinent to note that no sitting Prime Minister, to date, has been issued a notice on a MCC violation complaint.

#### Model Code of Conduct

- The Model Code of Conduct was agreed to by **all the political parties in 1968**.
- The Election Commission first effectively put to use the Model Code of Conduct in the year 1991 to ensure fair elections and a level playing field.
- As soon as the code kicks in, the party in power — whether at the Centre or in the States — **should ensure that it does not use its official position for campaigning**.
- The party must also avoid advertising at the cost of the public exchequer or using official mass media for publicity on achievements to improve chances of victory in the elections.
- The ruling party also cannot use government transport or machinery for campaigning.
- **Holding public meetings during the 48-hour period** before the hour fixed for the closing of the poll is also prohibited. The 48-hour period is known as "election silence".
- The MCC evolved as part of the ECI's drive to ensure free and fair elections and was the result of a consensus among major political parties.
- It has no statutory backing.
- In other words anybody breaching the MCC can't be proceeded against under any clause of the Code. The EC uses moral sanction or censure for its enforcement.

### 3. SC declines petition to end Collegium, revive NJAC - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Structure, Organization and Functioning of Judiciary

#### News:

- The Supreme Court Registry has refused to accept a petition to end the Collegium system of judicial appointments and revive the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC).

#### Prelims Takeaway

- NJAC
- Collegium system

#### Highlights:

- The Supreme Court Registrar said that the **Collegium system had already been upheld, while the NJAC had been struck down by a Constitution Bench in October 2015**.
  - A review plea against the judgment was also subsequently dismissed by the court in 2018.

#### Collegium system:

- It is a mechanism devised for the **appointment and transfer of judges**.

- It came into existence through **Second and Third Judges Case judgments**.
- There is no law or **Constitutional Provision that mentions or defines the collegium system**.
- The Supreme Court Collegium is headed by **Chief Justice of India and comprises four other senior most judges of the Supreme Court**.
- Meanwhile, the High Court Collegium is headed by its **Chief Justice and four other senior most judges of that High Court**.

**NJAC:**

- **99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014** and the National Judicial Appointments Act, 2014 proposed to create a **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**.
  - NJAC was supposed to be an independent Commission to replace the Collegium System for the appointment of Judges to the higher Judiciary.
- NJAC gave an equal role to the government in judicial appointments. **The Commission was proposed to consist of 6 members:**
  - The Chief Justice of India as the ex-officio Chairperson
  - Two senior-most Supreme Court Judges as ex-officio members
  - The Union Minister of Law and Justice as ex-officio member
  - Two eminent persons from civil society.

## 4. Ship comes under attack off Yemen as Houthi campaign slows down after US strikes- The Hindu

**Relevance:** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

**News:**

- A ship traveling in the **Gulf of Aden** came under attack, the latest assault likely carried out by Yemen's Houthi rebels over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- The attack comes after the **allied warship** shot down a Houthi missile targeting a vessel the day before near the same area.

**Key Highlights:**

- The attack comes after a period of relatively few rebel attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- The Houthis have launched more than **50 attacks** on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November..
- Shipping through the **Red Sea and Gulf of Aden** has declined because of the threat.

**Houthi:**

- The Houthis are an armed religious and political movement in Yemen.
- The Houthis are Zaydi Shiites.
- They are a minority in Yemen, which is predominantly Sunni Muslim, but making up one third of the overall population.
- Its members advocate regional autonomy for **Zaidis in northern Yemen**.
- The Houthis took over the **Yemeni capital Sanaa** in September 2014 and seized control over much of north Yemen by 2016.
- The movement is known for its virulently **anti-American and anti-Semitic rhetoric**.
- Several of the group's leaders have been designated as terrorists by the United States.

**War Affected Yemen:**

- According to the UN, Yemen is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with **80% of its population** dependent on aid and protection.
- Yemen's location at the **strait** linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden is critical for global oil shipments.
- India's most important shipping routes pass through the Gulf of Aden, accounting for **imports of \$50 billion** and **exports of \$60 billion** every year.

**Prelims Takeaway**

- Gulf of Aden
- Houthis

## GS III

## 5. Centre allows 'immediate' export of 2,000 tonnes of white onions- The Hindu

**Relevance:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

**News:**

- The Union government partially relaxed the indefinite ban on onion exports again.
- Paving the way for the "immediate" export of **2,000 tonnes** of white onions, primarily grown in Gujarat, from three designated ports.

**Key Highlights**

- A notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said that exports of white onions would be permitted.
- Gujarat's Horticulture Commissioner certifies the item and quantity being exported.

**DGFT:**

- It is a government organization responsible for the formulation of **Exim guidelines** and principles for Indian importers and Indian exporters of the country.
- It is an attached office of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** and is headed by the Director General of Foreign Trade.
- It grants Code Number to Indian Exporters and Importers. **IEC Number** is a unique 10 digit code required by the traders or manufacturers for the purpose of import and export in India.

**largest producer of Onion .**

- India is the **second largest producer** of onion after China.
- Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are the major onion producing states.
- **Maharashtra ranks first** in Onion production with a share of 42.53% followed by Madhya Pradesh with a share of 15.16% in 2021-22

**Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI):**

- India's agri-export basket is dependent on just **five commodities** making the sector vulnerable to fluctuations in global prices and demand.
- These five products – Basmati Rice, Non-basmati Rice, Sugar, Spices, and Oil Meals– account for **51.5 percent** of India's total agriculture exports.

## 6. 'Emphasize domestic patents, subsidy for semiconductors'- The Hindu

**Relevance-** Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

**News:**

- China's semiconductor industry is facing hesitant investors due to geopolitical tensions, India must seize the opportunities.

**Highlights:**

- Semiconductor design initiatives must be encouraged with improved local fundraising opportunities and incentives for using domestically registered intellectual property (IP).
- Capacity building for high tech and semiconductors is important.
- Though India has **20% of the world's semicon engineers**, none of the IPs are with India
  - **Engineers work for global firms from India**, which register the IP in the U.S. or elsewhere.
  - **There needs to be incentives for domestic registration of IPs in key sectors.**
- ICEA highlighted **China's over-investment in low-tech chips**, crashing global prices and investment appetite for researching them, while opening up initiatives that make access to funding easy with early exits for investors.

**Semiconductors: Design Linked Incentive Scheme**

### Prelims Takeaway

- DGFT
- Agriculture Exports

### Prelims Takeaway

- Design Linked Incentive Scheme
- Intellectual property

- Semiconductors are at the heart of all electronic products and constitute a significant share in the Bill of Material
- The **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme** aims to offer financial incentives as well as design infrastructure support across various stages of **development and deployment** of semiconductor design(s) for
  - **Integrated Circuits, Chipsets, System on Chips, Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor linked design(s) over a period of 5 years.**
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information technology has announced the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme to offset the disabilities in the domestic industry involved in semiconductor design.
- **C-DAC** (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), a scientific society, operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is the Nodal Agency of the DLI Scheme.

## 7. 'Global recovery offers growth upside; food prices to cool' - The Hindu

**Relevance:** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

### Prelims Takeaway

- Budget
- Finance Ministry

### News:

- The global economy is on the way with major economies seeing a growth rebound and risk perceptions about **geopolitical risks receding**,
- Offering a potential upside for growth even as India's economic performance stands out and its key indicators for March reflect a **buoyant** domestic economic landscape.

### Key Highlights

- India's food inflation eased to **8.5%** last month.
- **Core inflation**, which excludes food and energy prices, eased to **3.3%**
- However, Crude oil prices have firmed up since December 2023, partially driven by increasing tension in West Asia and OPEC+ countries.
- India's **foreign exchange** reserves reached an all-time high of **\$645.6 billion**.

### Indian Growth Statistics:

- As per the First Advance Estimates of National Income of FY 2023-24, India's Real GDP is projected to grow at **7.3 per cent**, stated in the Macro-Economic Framework Statement 2024-25.
- As per the IMF, India is likely to become the **third-largest economy in 2027** at market exchange rate.
- It also estimates that India's contribution to global growth will rise by **200 basis points in 5 years**.

### Factors for Economic Optimism:

- **Capital Expenditure:** Indian Capital Expenditure has been on Continuous growth and is expected to provide growth Impetus around Infrastructure and social sectors.
- **Monsoon:** IMD has expected **106%** Rainfall this Monsoon, expecting to yield better Agricultural output and Rural economy.
- **Credit Growth:** All scheduled commercial banks' (ASCB's) credit growth has been **accelerating** since early **2022**.
- **Formalization of the Economy:** Indian Economy has increasingly been formalising leading to higher tax buoyancy and tax collections.
- **Government Initiatives:** Programs like the **PM GATI Shakti**, Jan Dhan Yojana, AyushMan Bharat, have provided a comprehensive growth to India.

### Challenges and Opportunities:

- India must address the **global climate crisis** while growing its own economy to catch-up with developed countries.
- India must find a new paradigm of progress for more **inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth**.
- India's policymakers must develop policies based on Indian demands
- Rural Bharat provides opportunities for Innovations and development.
- India should carefully balance the Global **Crisis** to fulfil its **Energy and Food Security**.

## 8. Intellectual property: India features yet again in the U.S.' 'priority watch list' -The Hindu

**Relevance:** Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-technology, Bio-technology and issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights.

### Prelims Takeaway

- TRIPS
- Special Report 301

### News:

- The U.S. has once again included India in the '**priority watch list**' of countries.
- Along with China, Russia, Venezuela, and three others, for alleged problems related to IP protection and enforcement.
- There will be particularly intense bilateral engagement on the matter during the coming year.

### Key Highlights

- There has been progress under the **U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum** in addressing issues of trademark infringement investigations and pre-grant opposition proceedings,
- Numerous long-standing concerns remain, according to the U.S. Trade Representative's **Special 301 report**.
- Inadequate IP enforcement, including **high rates of online piracy**, and insufficient legal means to protect trade secrets.
- **India said it follows** all the protocols mentioned under **TRIPS**.

### TRIPS:

- "Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights." It is an international agreement that is part of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** framework.
- TRIPS was established to establish consistent and **standardized rules** for intellectual property (IP) rights on a global scale.
- Ensuring that member countries have a **common framework** for protecting various forms of intellectual property, including patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets.

### Types Of Intellectual Property Rights

The main types of intellectual property rights include:

- **Copyright:**
  - Copyright protects original literary, artistic, and creative works, such as books, music, paintings, sculptures, films, and software.
- **Patents:**
  - Patents protect inventions and provide exclusive rights to the inventor for a specified period (usually 20 years) to make, use, and sell the invention
- **Trademarks:**
  - Trademarks protect distinctive signs, symbols, names, and logos used to identify goods or services of a particular business.
- **Trade Secrets:**
  - Trade secrets protect valuable and confidential business information, such as formulas, processes, methods, customer lists, and technical know-how
- **Industrial Designs:**
  - Industrial designs protect the visual ornamental aspects of products, such as their shape, color, texture, and aesthetics.
- **Geographical Indications (GI):**
  - GIs protect products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics that are attributable to that origin.
- **Plant Varieties:**
  - Plant variety protection grants exclusive rights to breeders over new plant varieties they develop.
- **Sui Generis Systems:**
  - Some countries have established unique systems to protect traditional knowledge, folklore, and genetic resources of indigenous and local communities.



## Editorials, Gists and Explainers

### 9. How SC verdict on childcare leave opens up possibilities for women - Indian express

**Relevance:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

**News:**

- Participation of women in the workforce is a matter not just of privilege but a constitutional entitlement” CJI remarked

#### Key Highlights:

- **Article 15** of the Constitution not only restricts **discrimination based on gender but also enables the states to make special provisions for women.**
- The judgment comes at a time when concerns about the **low participation rate of women in the workforce** have been expressed with state and central governments acknowledging the need for **childcare services to bolster women’s participation in paid work.**
- The IMF has predicted a possible alleviation of 27 per cent in India’s GDP through an equal participation of women in the labour force participation.

#### Falling labour force participation of women:

- Female workforce participation in India is hardly **37 per cent.**
- **PLFS 2022 states that 60 per cent women are self-employed and 53 per cent of the self-employed women work as unpaid family helpers.**
- These are intertwined **outcomes of lack of opportunities in the labour market and opting for flexible employment near or at home to balance both.**
- Longer term trends suggest that female **labour force participation rates in India have been puzzling and wide gender differences in participation rate also persists.**

#### Empathy Towards Women workers:

- Women have little choice but to **single-handedly manage the burden of housework, care work and paid work.**
- Socially and economically **marginalised women** are more burdened.
  - Working women often **face penalties in the form of marriage and motherhood** as they are often temporarily forced to **withdraw** from the workforce due to these
- The **Constitution enables the state to make special provisions** for women and children.
  - **Labour Code on Social Protection, 2020, made crèches a gender-neutral entitlement.**
  - It is a significant step in the right direction. The gender-neutral provision underlined care as a “parental” responsibility.
  - **However,** the entitlement was limited to employees of establishments with 50 or more employees.
- Moreover, crèches under the **National Crèches Scheme**, remained underfunded and limited in number and use.
- **Under Mission Shakti project, “Palna Scheme”** was introduced. It provided options to the state governments to open standalone crèches or turn Anganwadi centres into crèches.
  - However, there is a need to institutionalise the initiative with a committed budget.

- **Care needs to be seen as a collective responsibility of the state, employers, and communities.**
  - Labour markets need to consider women as primary earners and enable them to take up full employment.
  - There is evidence of high female labour force participation in countries where unpaid care work responsibilities are equally shared.
  - A decrease in women’s unpaid care work is related to a 10-percentage point increase in women’s labour force participation rate.

## 10. The Indian seafarer deserves better in choppy high seas- The Hindu

**Relevance:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Context:**

- India submitted three papers to the 111th Session of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Legal Committee (LEG).

### Key highlights

- These submissions address crucial issues such as seafarers' security, contract terms, and broader maritime security challenges.
- While acknowledging the IMO's efforts to combat maritime fraud, India has called for broader international cooperation to tackle various maritime threats, including
  - Piracy, armed robbery, extremist attacks, regional conflicts, and emerging risks such as drone attacks and the use of maritime weapons.

### Sea piracy is back

- Recent pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia, including hijackings, suggest a resurgence of piracy.
- India has also highlighted the impact of unlawful recruitment practices on seafarers' well-being and international trade.
- The maritime industry, vital for global trade, depends heavily on seafarers who often face challenges and risks.

### An Indian initiative on rights

- In response, the Indian government and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) launched the 'human rights at sea' initiative.
- Reports reveal cases of seafarers being held in foreign jails, stranded in foreign waters, and subjected to illegal detentions.
- 'Human Rights at Sea' has highlighted abuses against Indian seafarers, including 200 held in foreign jails and 65 stranded in Indonesia for 151 days.
- The NHRC has highlighted the challenges of holding ship owners accountable for violations against Indian seafarers operating under foreign registrations
  - to evade taxes and has stressed the need for proactive cooperation among stakeholders and mechanisms to protect human rights in the maritime industry.
- Recent attacks on commercial ships have heightened safety concerns among Indian seafarers, with some considering quitting their jobs due to security fears. This underlines the urgent need for government support and enhanced protection measures.

## Quick Look

### 1. Bathymetry

- It is the study and mapping of the depth of water in oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams.
- Bathymetric maps are similar to topographic maps, which use lines to show the shape and elevation of land features.
- On bathymetric maps, the lines connect points of equal depth.
- Bathymetry is the foundation of the science of hydrography, which measures the physical features of a water body.
- Hydrography includes not only bathymetry, but also the shape and features of the shoreline
  - The characteristics of tides, currents, and waves; and the physical and chemical properties of the water itself.

### 2. Phi-3-Mini

- Microsoft has described the Phi-3 as a family of open AI models that are the most capable and cost-effective small language models (SLMs) available.
- Phi-3-Mini is believed to be first among the three small models that Microsoft is planning to release.
- It has reportedly outperformed models of the same size in areas like language, reasoning, coding, and maths.

### 3. ATACMS

- The ATACMS is one of the most potent missile systems built by US-based arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin.
- This is a surface-to-surface artillery weapon system. Its biggest strengths are the long-range of attack, ability to fire cluster munitions, and the weapon system's mobility.
- The missiles were part of a \$300 million military aid package for Ukraine.
- There is a mid-range version of the ATACMS, called Block 1, and there is a long-range version, Block 1A.
- ATACMS Block 1 has a range of 165 km and Ukraine was provided these systems last year. ATACMS Block 1A
  - On the other hand, has a maximum range of 300 km which is capable of striking targets well beyond the range of existing Army cannons, rockets and other missiles.

### 4. Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution:

- In 2022, at the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly, a historic resolution was adopted to develop an International Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.
- The resolution requested the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop "the instrument"
  - Which is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal.

- The objective of the global plastics treaty is to set a global framework of standards around accountability, responsibilities, financing, material/chemical standards, import/export restrictions, targets.

## 5. Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2024

- It is released annually by the Food Security Information Network(FSIN) and launched by the Global Network Against Food Crises
  - A multistakeholder initiative that includes United Nations agencies, the European Union, the United States Agency for International Development and non-governmental agencies working to tackle food crises.
- It analyzed a population of 1.3 billion in 2023 across 59 countries. Nearly 282 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity.
- 2023 was the fifth consecutive year of rise in the number of people suffering acute food insecurity
  - Defined as when populations face food deprivation that threatens lives or livelihoods, regardless of the causes or length of time.



## Prelims Track Question

**Q1. About three-fourths of world's cobalt, a metal required for the manufacture of batteries for electric motor vehicles, is produced by**

- A. Argentina
- B. Botswana
- C. The Democratic Republic of the Congo
- D. Kazakhstan

**Q2. Consider the following statements**

1. Election Commission has authority to transfer senior officials in various States to assure free and fair elections
2. During "election silence" period holding public meetings by political parties to influence voters are also prohibited.
3. The model code of conduct was enacted by parliament after LPG reform 1991 to ensure free and fair elections

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

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

**Q3. Consider the following statement regarding Collegium system**

1. It was established by the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act for the appointment of higher judiciary.
2. The Supreme Court Collegium is headed by Chief Justice of India and comprises four other senior most judges of the Supreme Court.
3. It has been clearly defined in the constitution.

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

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

**Q4. Consider the following Statements**

**Statement-I:** Operation Rahat was a mission by India to Yemen

**Statement-II:** It was a Humanitarian mission to help the Yemen people from War.

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

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

**Q5. In India, which of the following can be considered as public investment in agriculture?**

1. Fixing Minimum Support Price for agricultural produce of all crops
2. Computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies
3. Waiver of agricultural loans by the banking system
4. Setting up of cold storage facilities by the governments

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

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. Only Three
- D. All four

**Q6. Consider the following statement regarding Design Linked Incentive Scheme:**

1. It aims to develop and deploy semiconductor designs for over a period of 3 years.
2. It was announced by Ministry of Electronics and Information technology
3. Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, is the Nodal Agency of this Scheme.

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

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

**Q7. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements:**

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidised food grains
2. The oldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q8. Consider the following statement regarding IPR**

1. Intellectual property rights are outlined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2. India has launched KAPILA program to create IPR awareness
3. India is ranked 48th in World Innovation Index, 2023

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

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

**Q9. Consider the following statement regarding Palna Scheme**

1. It provides options to the state governments for opening standalone creches or turning Anganwadi centres into creches.
2. It was earlier known as the National Creche Scheme.
3. Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment implements this scheme

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

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

**Q10. Consider the following pairs:**

**Strait: water bodies it connect**

1. The Strait of Hormuz : Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman
2. Strait of Gibraltar : Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean
3. The Strait of Messina : Tyrrhenian Sea (to the west) and the Ionian Sea

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

## Prelims Track Answer

### Answer 1 Option C is correct

#### Explanation

- Cobalt has emerged as a vital ingredient of the shift to a lower-carbon energy system, but reserves of the metal are concentrated heavily in just a single country.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is home to half of the world's known resources, and currently accounts for around 70% of global production. **Hence option (c) is the correct answer.**
- The metal's use in electronic goods – particularly the rechargeable batteries used in electric vehicles and other forms of energy storage – means interest in it is growing as the electrification of the global energy system continues to gather pace.

### Answer 2 Option A is correct

#### Explanation

- Within 48 hours of announcing the election schedule, the Election Commission instructed the state government to transfer a host of senior officials in various States. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect.** EC does not have authority to transfer.
- The Model Code of Conduct was agreed to by all the political parties in 1968.
- The Election Commission first effectively put to use the Model Code of
- Conduct in the year 1991 to ensure fair elections and a level playing field.
- Holding public meetings during the 48-hour period before the hour fixed for the closing of the poll is also prohibited. The 48-hour period is known as "election silence". **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The MCC evolved as part of the ECI's drive to ensure free and fair elections and was the result of a consensus among major political parties.
- It has no statutory backing. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**

### Answer 3 Option A is correct.

#### Explanation:

- 99th Constitutional Amendment Act, established the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) which was later declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**

- The Supreme Court Collegium is headed by Chief Justice of India and comprises four other senior most judges of the Supreme Court. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- There is no law or Constitutional Provision that mentions or defines the collegium system. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

### Answer 4 Option C is Correct

#### Explanation:

- Operation Rahat:
- India launched a massive air and sea operation to evacuate over **4000 Indian nationals** from Yemen in April 2015.
- Hence **Statement 1 is Correct, Statement 2 is INcorrect.**

### Answer 5 Option B is Correct

#### Explanation:

#### Public investment in agriculture:

- Computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, **Statement 2 is Correct**
- Setting up of cold storage facilities by the governments **Statement 4 is Correct**
- Social Capital development
- However, Schemes like Free Electricity, MSP and Loan Waiver are not investment but methods of reducing Farm Distress. **Statement 1 and 3 are INcorrect**

### Answer 6 Option B is correct

#### Explanation:

- The Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme aims to offer financial incentives as well as design infrastructure support across various stages of development and deployment of semiconductor design for Integrated Circuits, Chipsets, System on Chips, Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor linked design over a period of 5 years. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information technology has announced the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme to offset the disabilities in the domestic industry involved in semiconductor design. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), a scientific society, operating under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is the Nodal Agency of the DLI Scheme. **Statement 3 is correct.**

## Answer 7 Option A is Correct

### Explanation:

- Priority Households to be covered under TPDS, according to guidelines by the State government also Households covered under existing Antyodaya Anna Yojana. **Hence, statement 1 is INcorrect**
- The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Meal and maternity benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the child birth. **Hence, statement 3 is INcorrect**

## Answer 8 Option A is Correct

### Explanation:

- Intellectual property rights are outlined in **Article 27** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **Statement 1 is INcorrect.**
- India has launched KAPILA program to create IPR awareness, **Kalam Programme for IP Literacy and Awareness". Statement 2 is correct.**
- India is ranked **40th** in World Innovation Index, 2023. **Statement 3 is INcorrect.**

## Answer 9 Option B is correct.

### Explanation:

- Under Mission Shakti project, “Palna Scheme” was introduced. It provided options to the state governments to open standalone crèches or turn Anganwadi centres into crèches. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- National creche scheme has been revamped into Palna Scheme. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- Ministry of Women and Child Development has introduced the Palna scheme. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

## Answer 10 Option C is correct

### Explanation

- The Strait of Hormuz is a strait between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman
- Strait of Gibraltar
- This strait is the only connection between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean
- The Strait of Messina, part of which is pictured above, connects the Tyrrhenian Sea (to the west) and the Ionian Sea (to the east)

**Hence all pairs are correct**





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