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Daily Current Affairs

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SOURCES



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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Fact-check unit needed to protect people from fake news: Centre in Bombay HC - The Hindu

Relevance: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation
News: A petition has been filed challenging Rule 3(1)(b)(v) of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules

Prelims Takeaway

- FCU
- Article 19

Highlights:

- Rule 3(1)(b)(v) empowers the government to establish a fact-check unit (FCU) to identify fake, false, and misleading information about its business on social media.
- Defending the FCU, the Union government, said it will prevent people from false information.
- Right to know and the right to not be misled are equally important as the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a).
- Many State governments have FCU, such as Kerala and Uttarakhand.
- Even private firms have FCU, including news organisations who partner with intermediaries to flag false information.
- The Solicitor-General also mentioned how the U.S. suffered during the pandemic with misinformation and fake news being spread on social media.
- The petitioners concluded their arguments contending that the purpose of the FCU was to bring total state censorship on anything that the government does not want people to know, discuss, debate, or question.
- The petitioners have contended that this will have a chilling effect as intermediaries will take things down out of fear.

GS III

2. Advanced medium combat aircraft prototype expected to be ready by 2028-29 - The Hindu

Relevance: Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

News: Design and development of the indigenous fifth generation fighter aircraft (FGFA), Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) is in progress

Prelims Takeaway

- FGFA

Highlights:

- The first prototype is expected to be ready by 2028-29.
- The Defence Ministry is working out a model for bringing in the private sector in a big way, which is important for timely execution of the project.
- The Defence Ministry has already issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) to the industry and three responses were received.
- The target is to have the AMCA ready for induction by 2034
- The AMCA project is particularly critical as it is India's only FGFA that is planned for induction at a time when a series of such FGFA development projects are making progress worldwide.
- China, which has made great progress in the development and deployment of FGFA, has recently deployed its twin-engine J-20 FGFA in Tibet bordering India.
- The AMCA project got sanction from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in March.
- It is envisaged as a 25-tonne twin-engine stealth aircraft with internal weapons bay and diverterless supersonic intake which has been developed in India for the first time.
- It is intended to have an internal carriage of 1,500 kg of payload and 5,500 kg of external payload with 6,500 kg of internal fuel.

3. Expert Committee on Climate Finance submits First Report on Transition Finance to IFSCA- PIB

Relevance: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

News:

- The Expert Committee on Climate Finance has submitted its first report on Transition Finance to the Chairperson, International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA),

Highlights:

- The Expert Committee on Climate Finance was constituted by IFSCA to provide a roadmap to develop a climate finance ecosystem and instruments at GIFT IFSC with a special focus on Transition Finance as well as to provide recommendations on establishing the GIFT-IFSC as a global hub for climate financing.
- The Committee includes experts across policy think tanks, standard setters, consultants, industry, and global financial institutions.
- The Report on Transition Finance captures the recommendations by the Expert Committee under three pillars:
 - 1. Scope and definition of Transition Finance
 - 2. Policy and Regulation,
 - 3. Financial Mechanisms and Instruments.
- It emphasizes the role of transition finance in driving investments towards hard-to-abate sectors such as steel, cement, shipping, fertilizers etc. which are crucial for economic growth of India and other developing nations.
- The report offers strategic recommendations to IFSCA and policy makers by exploring global best practices and regulatory landscapes, to enhance the role of GIFT-IFSC as a gateway for attracting international climate capital flows in order to achieve India's ambitious goal of achieving net-zero by 2070.
- IFSCA will commence work on a framework for Transition Finance based on the report.
- The Committee is expected to continue its work and draft its next report on "Transforming GIFT-IFSC into a Climate Finance Hub".

Prelims Takeaway

- GIFT city
- Climate Finance

4. MoD inks MoU to set up testing facilities in Unmanned Aerial System, Electronic Warfare & Electro Optics domains in Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor-PIB

Relevance: Various Security Forces and Agencies and their Mandate.

News:

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed an MoU to establish three state-of-the-art testing facilities in Chennai under the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor - one each in Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), Electronic Warfare (EW) and Electro Optics (EO) domains.

Highlights:

- The MoU, under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS), was exchanged between MoD and Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation Limited.
- With an outlay of Rs 400 crore, the DTIS was launched by the Defence Minister to set up state-of-the-art testing facilities in collaboration with private industry and Central/State Government, promoting indigenous defense production, reducing military equipment imports and enhancing self-reliance.

Prelims Takeaway

- DTIS
- Aatmanirbar Bharat

- To provide impetus to the defense and aerospace sectors within the Defence Industrial Corridors, seven testing facilities were approved - four in Tamil Nadu and three in Uttar Pradesh.
- The DTIS provides up to 75% government funding as 'Grant-in-Aid', with the remaining 25% funded by the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPVs), comprising Indian private entities and State/Central Governments.
- Upon the completion of the project, they will provide advanced testing equipment and services to both government and private industry, thus giving a boost to 'Aatmanirbharta' in defense.

5. Critical mineral recycling: Govt plans PLI scheme to boost circular economy

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Critical Minerals
- PLI Scheme

News:

- The Ministry of Mines is in the initial stages of designing a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to boost the recycling of critical minerals in India.
- This move aims to foster a circular economy and bolster domestic supply chains, following a lackluster response to recent auctions of critical mineral blocks.

Highlights:

- The proposed PLI scheme aligns with policy recommendations from NITI Aayog and complements the Battery Waste Management Rules (BWMR), 2022, which mandate phased recycling of used electric vehicle (EV) lithium-ion batteries from 2026 onwards.
- The PLI scheme, while yet to be finalized, will target e-waste recycling— often referred to as “urban mining”— to recover critical minerals such as lithium, copper, cobalt, graphite, chromium, and silicon.
- These minerals are crucial for clean energy technologies like solar PV modules, wind turbines, energy storage systems, and EVs, as well as consumer electronics. Feedback from MNRE and MHI is vital, given MNRE's role in solar and wind energy policies and MHI's involvement in the development of the EV ecosystem.
- Similar to other PLI schemes, the one under consideration by the Mines Ministry will incentivise production of recycled critical minerals for secondary use and promote investment in advanced recycling technologies and infrastructure.
- The quantum of incentive is likely to vary based on the type and value of minerals recycled.
- Some recyclers argue the scheme should benefit only those extracting high-purity critical minerals suitable for reuse as primary inputs.
- India's e-waste generation is poised to surge, driven by rapid growth in solar and wind energy infrastructure and EV adoption. Industry estimates project solar PV module waste to jump from 100 kilotons (kt) in FY23 to 340 kt by 2030.
- Additionally, 500 kt of EV batteries are expected to reach recycling units in the coming years. Research indicates that recycling critical minerals can significantly reduce the need for virgin ores and new mines.
- The think tank also recommended the consideration of key parameters for developing such an incentive, including the cell chemistry or minerals and metals being recovered, recovery efficiency of recycled minerals and metals, and benchmarks for domestic utilization of recovered minerals and metals.
- The need to incentivise the growth of critical mineral recycling has become all the more urgent after most critical mineral blocks offered by the Mines Ministry failed to pass the technical bids stage, which requires at least three eligible bidders.
- This indicates a lack of investor interest in domestic mining of critical minerals.

6. Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw to inaugurate the Global IndiaAI Summit 2024

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

Prelims Takeaway

- AI in Governance
- Niti Aayog report

News:

- Global IndiaAI Summit 2024 is scheduled to be held on July 3rd and 4th, 2024 as the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is all set to host an esteemed gathering of international delegates, AI experts, and policymakers at the summit.
- This summit marks a pivotal moment for India as it underscores its commitment to fostering responsible artificial intelligence (AI) development on a global scale.

A commitment to responsible AI development

- Organized against the backdrop of India's leadership role in the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), the summit aims to set new benchmarks in addressing the multifaceted challenges and opportunities presented by AI.
- With a thematic focus on Compute Capacity, Foundational Models, Datasets, Application Development, Future Skills, Startup Financing, and Safe and Trusted AI, the event promises comprehensive discussions that span the entire AI spectrum.
- The Day 1 of the summit will feature a diverse array of sessions designed to delve deep into critical aspects of AI application and governance.
- Notable sessions include "IndiaAI: Large Language Models" exploring how advanced AI models can navigate India's linguistic diversity while upholding ethical standards. Meanwhile, discussions on "Ensuring Safety, Trust, and Governance in the AI Age" will underscore India's commitment to ethical AI deployment, emphasizing global cooperation and regulatory frameworks.
- The second day will pivot towards nurturing talent and scaling AI innovations. "Empowering Talent through AI Education & Skilling" aims to bridge the AI skills gap by spotlighting educational strategies and career pathways.
- Simultaneously, "AI for Global Good: Empowering the Global South" will facilitate dialogues on inclusive AI development, echoing India's advocacy for equitable global AI access.
- "From Seed to Scale—Empowering India's Startup Ecosystem" will highlight initiatives that foster AI entrepreneurship, crucial for propelling India's startup ecosystem onto the global stage. Discussions on "Data Ecosystem" and "AI Competency Framework for Public Sector" will explore robust data governance and AI readiness in public administration, which are essential for effective policy formulation and implementation.
- The Global IndiaAI Summit 2024 serves as a pivotal platform for global stakeholders to collaborate, innovate, and shape the future of AI.
- India reiterates its commitment to harnessing AI's transformative potential by prioritizing responsible AI development while safeguarding ethical standards and inclusivity.
- As the summit unfolds, it is poised to reinforce India's leadership in the global AI landscape, paving the way for a future where AI benefits are accessible to all and contribute significantly to socio-economic advancement worldwide.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

7. What is the significance of 'abhaya mudra', invoked by Rahul Gandhi in Parliament - Indian Express

Relevance: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Context:

- Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, invoked the abhaya mudra, the gesture of the raised open palm that is commonly understood as conveying reassurance and a freedom from fear.

<p>Mudras in Buddhism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Buddhist context, Mudras refers to “hand and arm gestures made during the course of ritual practice or depicted in images of buddhas, bodhisattvas & tantric deities. • For about 500 years after the Buddha, who lived in the 6th or 5th Century BCE, the person of the great teacher was not depicted in the form of an image or sculpture. • At Sanchi, for instance, the Buddha is symbolised by a vacant throne or a footprint. • The earliest depictions of the Buddha in physical form date to roughly around the turn of the first millennium. • Depictions started appearing in the Gandhara art from the northwestern edge of the Indian subcontinent (present day Pakistan and Afghanistan), which drew on Hellenistic influences, and later in the art of the Gupta period, in the Gangetic plains. • In the earliest depictions of Buddharupa, four mudras can be found: the abhaya mudra, or “gesture of fearlessness”; the bhumisparsha mudra, or “Earth-touching gesture”; the dharmachakra mudra, or “gesture of the wheel of dharma”; and the dhyana mudra, or “gesture of meditation”. • With the evolution of Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) and Vajrayana (Thunderbolt Vehicle) Buddhism, and the proliferation of Buddhist artwork outside India, hundreds of mudras entered Buddhist iconography. • In tantric Buddhist traditions, the mudras came to be associated with dynamic ritual hand movements, where they “symbolised material offerings, enacted forms of worship, or signified relationships with visualised deities” 	<p>Gesture of fearlessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abhaya mudra is described by Buswell and Lopez as one “typically formed with the palm of the right hand facing outward at shoulder height and the fingers pointing up • In some cases, both hands may simultaneously be raised in this posture in a “double abhayamudra”. • In Buddhist tradition, the abhaya mudra is associated with the Buddha immediately after he obtained Enlightenment, “portraying a sense of the security, serenity, and compassion that derive from enlightenment”. • According to Buddhist legend, Devadatta, a cousin and a disciple of the Buddha, upon not being granted the special treatment he expected, plotted to harm the Enlightened One. • He fed a wild elephant intoxicants and drove her on the Buddha’s path. • As the disciples scattered before the charging animal, the Buddha raised his hand in the abhaya mudra of love and kindness. • The elephant is said to have calmed down immediately, gone down on her knees, and bowed her head to the Buddha. • This is why the abhaya mudra is also seen as a “gesture of protection” or “gesture of granting refuge”. <p>Abhaya mudra in Hindu religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over time, the abhaya mudra appeared in depictions of Hindu deities, and the Buddha himself was absorbed into the Hindu pantheon as the ninth avatar of the Puranic god Vishnu. • Hindus came to regard the Buddha as an avatar of Vishnu between AD 450 and the sixth century. • The first mention of the Buddha avatar came in the Vishnu Purana (400-500 CE). • As multiple traditions, practices, and cultural influences mingled in the great melting pot of the Hindu religion, manifestations were seen in art and visual depiction of gods. • The abhaya mudra was seen in the depictions, most commonly of Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Ganesha.
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8. Is the bad loan problem shifting to individuals from industries?-THE HINDU

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

Context:

- Until the mid-2010s, banks used to lend massive loans to big industries. When these businesses failed, their loans turned sour. Such bad loans stayed hidden for sometime.
- In 2015, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) carried out a review, following which skeletons tumbled out of the closet.

Key Highlights	Period of mid 2010s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The share of bad loans reached as high as 10% in 2017, which meant that nearly one in every 10 loans had turned bad. A variety of debt recovery channels including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, were used to recover the money. Given the relatively high amount of loans lent to well-known companies, the failures to repay the loans were widely publicised. Following this debacle, banks started offering fewer loans to industries. They also managed to recover more and more bad loans. As a result, banks reached the pink of health in 2024. The latest Financial Stability Report (FSR) of the RBI shows that Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) was at a decadal-low in March this year. NPA is the share of total loans that are overdue for more than 90 days. However, reducing loans to industries meant that banks had to look elsewhere to lend and earn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mid-2010s also saw an increase in loans given to the retail sector. The period also saw a proliferation of instant loan apps, which enticed unsuspecting consumers, especially those younger and more digitally savvy, to take more loans, leading to a debt trap. The share of retail loans grew so much that the sector surpassed both industries and services to have the most outstanding loans. The alarming growth was noticed by the RBI, which had to bring in regulatory measures to curb the rise. Still, the overall picture remains rosy. In fact, the GNPA ratio of personal loans has been reducing consistently reaching 1.2% in March 2024 — the lowest across sectors and within the segment (Chart 2). While the situation does not seem to be alarming, the RBI is clearly worried. In the recent FSR report, it has cited two signs of incipient stress, which it believes should be closely watched. The first sign has to do with slippages, which are fresh additions of bad loans in a year. The share of slippages from retail loans in the overall new additions of NPAs is increasing at a rapid pace. In FY24, slippages from retail loans (excluding home loans) formed 40% of fresh additions of NPAs. The second sign has to do with delinquency level. Between April 2021 and July 2022, Google reviewed 3,500 to 4,000 loan apps and removed/suspended over 2,500 from its Play Store. Delinquency levels for personal loans below ₹50,000 are persistently high in small finance banks and NBFC-Fintechs (Chart 4). If NPAs can be termed as a disease, slippages and delinquencies are symptoms of that. While the banking system appears mostly disease-free, the RBI is worried about the symptoms and is sending one warning signal after another. This time, it is worried about individuals and not industries.

9. Digital jurisprudence in India, in an AI era- The Hindu

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

Context:

- Even though Generative AI (GAI) stands as a transformative force, wielding power to revolutionize society in ground-breaking ways, existing legal frameworks and judicial precedents that have been designed for a pre-AI world may struggle to effectively govern this rapidly-evolving technology.

Safe harbor and liability fixation

- One of the most persistent and contentious issues in Internet governance has been the fixing of liability on “intermediaries” for content hosted by them.
- There are contrasting views on the role of GAI tools.
- Some argue that they should be considered intermediaries since they are used almost like a search engine even though they do not host links to third-party websites.
- Others argue that they are mere “conduits” for user prompts, where altering the prompt leads to changes in output essentially making the generated content akin to third-party speech, and, therefore, attracting lesser liability for the content generated.
- In *Christian Louboutin Sas vs Nakul Bajaj and Ors* (2018), the Delhi High Court held that safe harbor protection applies solely to “passive” intermediaries, referring to entities functioning as mere conduits or passive transmitters of information.
- However, in the context of Large Language Models (LLMs), making a distinction between user-generated and platform-generated content is increasingly challenging.

- Additionally, liability in the case of AI chatbots arises once the information is reposted on other platforms by the user; mere response to a user prompt is not considered dissemination.
- Generative AI outputs have already led to legal conflicts in various jurisdictions.
- In June 2023, a radio host in the United States filed a lawsuit against Open AI, alleging that Chat GPT had defamed him.
- The ambiguity in classifying GAI tools, whether as intermediaries, conduits, or active creators, will complicate the ability of courts to assign liability, particularly in user reposts.

The copyright conundrum	Steps to pursue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 16 of Indian Copyright Act 1957 specifically provides that “no person” shall be entitled to protection of copyright except by the provisions of the Act. • As in India, reluctance persists regarding the provisions of copyright protection to works generated by AI globally. • The critical questions are: should existing copyright provisions be revised to accommodate AI? • If AI-generated works gain protection, would co-authorship with a human be mandatory? Should recognition extend to the user, the programme itself, and by extension, the programmer, or both? • The 161st Parliamentary Standing Committee Report found that the Copyright Act of 1957 is “not well equipped to facilitate authorship and ownership by Artificial Intelligence”. • Under current Indian law, a copyright owner can take legal action against anyone who infringes on his/her work with remedies such as injunctions and damages. • However, the question of who is responsible for copyright infringement by AI tools remains unclear. • Classifying GAI tools, whether as intermediaries, conduits, or active creators, will complicate the courts’ ability to assign liability. • ChatGPT’s ‘Terms of Use’ attempt to shift liability to the user for any illegal output. But the enforceability of such terms in India is uncertain. • The landmark K.S. The Puttaswamy judgment (2017) by the Supreme Court of India established a strong foundation for privacy jurisprudence in the country, leading to the enactment of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP). • While traditional data aggregators or consent managers raise privacy concerns during the collection and distribution of personal information, Generative AI introduces a new layer of complexity. • The DPDP Act introduces the “right to erasure” as well as “right to be forgotten”. • However, once a GAI model is trained on a dataset, it cannot truly “unlearn” the information it has already absorbed. • This raises a critical question. How can individuals exercise control over their personal information when it is woven into the very fabric of a powerful AI model? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider granting GAI platforms temporary immunity from liability following a sandbox approach. • This approach allows responsible development while gathering data to identify legal issues that could inform future laws and regulations. • Second, data rights and responsibilities. The process of data acquisition for GAI training requires an overhaul. Developers must prioritise legal compliance by ensuring proper licensing and compensation for the intellectual property used in training models. Solutions could include revenue-sharing or licensing agreements with data owners. • Third, licensing challenges. Licensing data for GAI is complex as web-data lacks a centralized licensing body similar to copyright societies in the music industry. • A potential solution is the creation of centralized platforms, akin to stock photo websites such as Getty Images, which simplify licensing, streamline access to necessary data for developers and ensure data integrity against historical bias and discrimination. • The jurisprudence around Generative AI (GAI) is hazy and yet to be evolved. It demands a comprehensive re-evaluation of existing digital jurisprudence. • A holistic, government-wide approach and judicious interpretations by the constitutional courts are essential to maximise the benefits of this powerful technology, but safeguarding individual rights and protecting them against unwelcome harm all the while.

10. Two vaccines that brought us to the brink of eradicating polio-THE HINDU

Relevance: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.
News:

- The poliovirus has only one natural host — humans — and many of the early strains of the virus were isolated from humans and wouldn’t infect non-human primates.
- Since scientists kept passing the virus through the brain tissues of macaques, it adapted to that mode of infection.

Eradication target missed

- Polio eradication is one of the top priorities of the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Since Africa was declared polio-free in August 2020, the wild poliovirus has been restricted to rural pockets of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- But according to a recent report in Science, the virus is beginning to reappear in big cities in these two countries.
- This reemergence is a result of vaccine hesitancy due to misinformation, conflict, poverty, and limited access to these isolated regions.
- The WHO's Global Polio Eradication Initiative is thus set to miss its deadline of eradicating polio by the end of 2024.
- The immune system has two main parts: the systemic and the mucosal.
- The systemic component includes the blood, the brain, and all other organ systems.
- The mucosal component includes the inner linings of the digestive and respiratory systems, the urogenital tract, and the eyes.
- These regions are lined with mucous membranes that provide an additional layer of protection, as they frequently come into contact with the external environment.
- Since the OPV went into the stomach, it induced a powerful protective mucosal immune response right where the virus would have to begin its infection.

Advantage of OPV over IPV

- The OPV had multiple advantages over the IPV.
- First, the vaccine induced a protective response at the viral entry site — the gut— allowing it to provide a much greater degree of protection relative to the IPV.
- Second, the OPV was administered orally and didn't require syringes or trained personnel for its administration.
- The world has used both vaccines in the fight against polio. While some countries, such as Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland, relied exclusively on the IPV, most countries have used a combination of the two.
- The latter countries prefer the OPV for its superior protection and ease of administration. When the number of natural polio cases drops to zero, they switch to IPV for its enhanced safety.


—It's about quality—

Quick Look

1. Vanatanu

- Vanuatu, a country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, consisting of a chain of 13 principal and many smaller islands located west of Fiji and east of Australia.
- The islands extend north-south for some 400 miles (650 km) in an irregular Y shape.
- The Torres Islands are the northernmost group.
- Formerly the jointly administered Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides, Vanuatu achieved independence in 1980. The name Vanuatu means “Our Land Forever” in many of the locally used Melanesian languages. The capital, largest city, and commercial centre is Port-Vila (Vila), on Éfaté.

2. Astana Declaration

- The Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana, Kazakhstan in October 2018 endorsed a new declaration emphasizing the critical role of primary health care around the world.
- The declaration aims to refocus efforts on primary health care to ensure that everyone everywhere is able to enjoy the highest possible attainable standard of health.
- The declaration has renewed political commitment to primary health care from Governments, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, academia and global health and development organizations.

3. SVAMITVA

- A Central Sector scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj provides a 'Record of Rights' to village household owners with the issuance of legal ownership cards (Property cards/Title deeds) by mapping land parcels using drone technology.
- The scheme will help in streamlining planning and revenue collection in rural areas and ensuring clarity on property rights.
- The scheme will enable creation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs), using the maps created under this programme.

4. District Mineral Foundation (DMF)

- DMF is a trust set up as a non-profit body under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act 2015.
- To work in the interest and benefits of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations in a manner as may be prescribed by the respective State Government.
- It is funded through the contributions from the holders of major or minor mineral concessions in the district, as may be prescribed by the Central or State Government.
- The operation of DMFs falls under the jurisdiction of the relevant State Government.
- The composition and functions of the District Mineral Foundation shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government.
- The fund for DMF is collected at the district level.

5. Endosulfan

- Endosulfan is an organochlorine insecticide which was first introduced in the 1950s and is commonly known by its trade name Thiodan.
- It is linked to a slew of grave medical conditions, such as neurotoxicity, physical deformities, poisoning and more.
- It is sprayed on crops like cotton, cashew, fruits, tea, paddy, tobacco etc. for control of pests such as whiteflies, aphids, beetles, worms etc.
- Endosulfan is listed under both the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Fact Check Unit (FCU) set up by the Government of India:

1. The Fact Check Unit (FCU) is established under Information Technology Rules
2. The primary role of the FCU is to verify and flag misinformation related to government policies, schemes, and programs.
3. The FCU has the authority to take legal action against individuals or organizations spreading false information.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following aircraft:

1. Rafael
2. MiG-29
3. Tejas MK-1

How many of the above are considered fifth generation fighter aircraft?

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

Q3. Which of the following statements about GIFT IFSC (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City International Financial Services Centre) is/are correct?

1. GIFT IFSC is India's first International Financial Services Centre.
2. It is located in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
3. GIFT IFSC aims to bring back financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centers.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q4. With reference to the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The DAC is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.
2. The DAC is responsible for granting approval to proposals for defence procurements.
3. The DAC aims to ensure expeditious procurement of defence equipment and modernization of the armed forces.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q5. With reference to the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in India, consider the following statements:

1. The PLI Scheme aims to boost domestic manufacturing by providing incentives to companies based on their incremental sales.
2. The scheme covers sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and textiles.
3. The PLI Scheme is exclusively for large-scale industries and does not include micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q6. With reference to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Global AI Summit, consider the following statements:

1. The Global AI Summit is an annual event organized by the United Nations to discuss advancements and ethical implications of AI.
2. AI has been used in various sectors including healthcare, agriculture, and finance.
3. India has its own National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the Abhaya Mudra:

1. The Abhaya Mudra is a gesture of fearlessness and reassurance.
2. It is commonly depicted in images and sculptures of Lord Shiva in Hindu iconography.
3. In the Abhaya Mudra, the right hand is raised to shoulder height with the palm facing outward and the fingers upright.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q8. Consider the following regarding Non-performing Assets (NPAs)

1. When the bank or its auditors have identified the loss, but it has not been written off, it is called a Doubtful asset.
2. When the NPAs have aged more than 12 months, then it is called a Sub-standard asset.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

- A. 1 Only
- B. 2 Only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Q9. With reference to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP), consider the following statements:

1. The DPDP Act, 2023, establishes the Data Protection Authority of India for enforcing the provisions of the Act.
2. The Act provides for the processing of personal data only within the territory of India.
3. Under the DPDP Act, 2023, individuals have the right to correction and erasure of their personal data.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q10. Consider the following statements regarding the Recombinant vector vaccines:

1. These are live replicating viruses that are engineered to carry extra genes derived from a pathogen.
2. Oral polio vaccine (OPV) is a recombinant vector vaccine.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option A is correct

Explanation:

- The Fact Check Unit was established under Rule 3(1)(b)(v) of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- The primary role of the FCU is to verify and flag misinformation related to government policies, schemes, and programs. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- The FCU does not have the authority to take legal action against individuals or organizations spreading false information. Its role is primarily to identify and flag misinformation, while legal actions, if necessary, are handled by other authorities. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 2 Option D is correct.

Explanation:

- Fifth-generation fighters include major technologies developed during the first part of the 21st century.
- They typically have characteristics like stealth, super cruise (prolonged supersonic cruise without reheat), advanced avionics, and networked data fusion for situational awareness.
- Examples of combat-ready fifth-generation fighters include the Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor, Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, Chengdu J-20, and Sukhoi Su-57.
- The Rafale is a fourth-generation(4.5th) fighter jet developed by France. **Option 1 is incorrect.**
- The MiG-29 is also a fourth-generation fighter jet developed by Russia. **Option 2 is incorrect.**
- The Tejas MK-1 is an indigenous Indian fighter, but it falls under the fourth generation (4.5th generation) as well. **Option 3 is incorrect**

Answer 3 Option C is Correct

Explanation:

- GIFT IFSC is indeed India's first International Financial Services Centre. **Statement 1 is Correct.**
- GIFT IFSC is located in the state of Gujarat, not Maharashtra. **Statement 2 is Incorrect.**

- One of the objectives of GIFT IFSC is to bring back financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centers. **Statement 3 is Correct.**

Answer 4 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- The DAC is chaired by the Defence Minister of India, not the Prime Minister. **Statement 1 is Incorrect.**
- The DAC is responsible for granting approval to proposals for defence procurements. **Statement 2 is Correct.**
- The DAC aims to ensure the expeditious procurement of defence equipment and modernization of the armed forces. **Statement 3 is Correct.**

Answer 5 Option A is Correct

Explanation:

- The PLI Scheme aims to boost domestic manufacturing by providing financial incentives to companies based on their incremental sales over a base year. **Statement 1 is Correct.**
- The scheme covers various sectors, including electronics, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and several others. **Statement 2 is Correct.**
- The PLI Scheme is not exclusively for large-scale industries; it also includes micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in several sectors. **Statement 3 is Incorrect.**

Answer 6 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- The Global AI Summit is not organized by the United Nations. It is organized by various international and national bodies, and the host and organizer can vary. **Statement 1 is Incorrect.**
- AI is indeed being used in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and finance, among others. **Statement 2 is Correct.**
- India has its own National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, aimed at guiding the country's AI development and deployment. **Statement 3 is Correct.**

Answer 7 Option C is Correct

Explanation:

- The Abhaya Mudra is a gesture of fearlessness and reassurance. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- While the Abhaya Mudra is significant in various Indian religions and commonly seen in images and sculptures of Buddha, it is not specifically associated with Lord Shiva. **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- In the Abhaya Mudra, the right hand is raised to shoulder height with the palm facing outward and the fingers upright, symbolizing protection, peace, and the dispelling of fear. **Statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 8 Option D is correct.

Explanation

- Based on different parameters, the Non Performing Assets are classified into different types.
- Substandard Assets - These are the assets which have remained NPA for a period of less than or equal to 12 months. **(Hence statement 2 is incorrect)**
- Doubtful Assets - If the asset is in the substandard category for a period of 12 months. **(Hence statement 1 is incorrect)**
- Loss Assets - These assets are of little value, they can no longer continue as a bankable asset, there could be some recovery value.

Answer 9 Option C is Correct

Explanation:

- The DPDP Act, 2023, establishes the Data Protection Authority of India to enforce the provisions of the Act. **Statement 1 is Correct.**
- The Act does not restrict the processing of personal data to only within the territory of India; it includes provisions for cross-border data transfers under certain conditions. **Statement 2 is Incorrect.**
- The DPDP Act, 2023, grants individuals the right to request the correction and erasure of their personal data. **Statement 3 is Correct.**

Answer 10 Option A is correct

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Recombinant vector vaccines are live replicating viruses that are engineered to carry extra genes derived from a pathogen—and these extra genes produce proteins against which we want to generate immunity.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Polio vaccines are vaccines used to prevent poliomyelitis (polio).
- Two types are used: an inactivated poliovirus given by injection (IPV) and a weakened poliovirus given by mouth (OPV).
- COVID-19 vaccines under development using adenovirus as vector are recombinant vector vaccines.



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