

10 July 2024



Daily Current Affairs

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SOURCES



Date: 10 July 2024

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Important News Articles

GS II

1. India, Russia to boost bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2030 - The Hindu

Relevance: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

News: India and Russia agreed to increase bilateral trade to \$100 billion dollars by 2030

Highlights:

- A joint vision statement on trade and economic cooperation by the end of the decade looked at nine issues
 - elimination of non-tariff barriers
 - the development of a "bilateral settlement system using national currencies
 - ironing out customs procedures and using new connectivity routes (Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route and Northern Sea Route and the International North-South Transport Corridor via Iran)
 - investments in the energy sector including nuclear energy
 - infrastructure development
 - investment promotion
- In addition, India and Russia signed a number of MoUs between institutions on climate change, polar research, legal arbitration and pharmaceutical certification and other issues.
- Trade between India & Russia stands at around \$65 billion, mostly because of the surge in India's imports of Russian crude at discount after the invasion of Ukraine led to the oil sanctions by the U.S. and Europe.
- Achieving the target would catapult the business relationship to levels of trade India currently has only with bigger economies such as the U.S., China and the European Union.
- The focus on economic issues was a shift from previous Annual Summits where military supplies and the defence and strategic partnership between the two countries had been at the top of the agenda.

Prelims Takeaway

- India - Russia

2. Centre holds review of NEP with States, to chart five-year action plan-The Hindu

Relevance: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

News:

- The Union Education Ministry began a two-day meeting to review the progress of the National Education Policy's implementation in States and Union Territories.
- The meeting on Tuesday was attended by representatives of the National Council of Educational Research and Training, State Councils of Educational Research and Training, Central Board of Secondary Education, and Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalaya representatives.

Highlights:

- The main aim of the meeting was reviewing the NEP, 2020 and its implementation and alignment of the flagship schemes of the Ministry, such as Samagra Shiksha, PM SHRI, PM Poshan and ULLAS. He said the meeting would help in developing an NEP road map for the coming five years.
- Discussions would be held on:
 - the five-year action plan; 100-day action plan;
 - status of the progress of infrastructure and civil works,
 - ICT and smart classrooms under Samagra Shiksha;
 - discussion on the status and setting up of Vidya Samiksha Kendras and 200 educational channels;
 - finalization of data for the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) for 2023-24; best practices;

Prelims Takeaway

- NEP 2020
- Concurrent List

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha might come on board PM-SHRI under the NEP by mid-July. However, States such as Delhi, West Bengal and Punjab were still at loggerheads with the Centre over various facets of NEP implementation.
- “The implications of coming on board are to ensure seamless transition of students migrating to different universities and ensuring transfer of credits smoothly, one of the long-term visions of the National Credit Framework under NEP, 2020”.
- The Union Education Minister said that in its four years of implementation, the NEP had made considerable progress.
 - He stressed the importance of education in the mother tongue and in Indian languages, and urged the States to work as a unit with the Centre to replicate best practices.
- In a first, the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur said it would start offering its B.Tech. programme in Hindi and English, and two sections would be identified based on preferences for lectures in respective languages.
 - “The institute has further mentioned that the courses will be taught in both languages by the same instructor to ensure the same rigor”

3. Prime Minister receives Russia’s highest State Award- PIB

Relevance: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

Prelims Takeaway

- India- Russia Ties
- Russia -Ukraine conflict

News:

- In a special ceremony in St. Andrew Hall in the Kremlin, President of the Russian Federation, conferred Russia’s highest national award “**The Order of St. Andrew the Apostle**” on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his contribution to fostering India-Russia ties.

Highlights

- The award was announced in 2019.
- While accepting the award, the Prime Minister dedicated it to the people of India and to the traditional bonds of friendship between India and Russia.
- He further stated that the recognition illuminates the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries.
- This award was instituted over 300 years ago. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is the first Indian leader to be conferred with this award.

4. 12th Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting between India & UAE held in Abu Dhabi to strengthen bilateral defense & security ties- PIB

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Joint Defence Cooperation Committee

News:

- Recently, the 12th edition of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting between India and UAE was held in Abu Dhabi
- During the meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of opportunities for collaboration to further strengthen defense and security cooperation between the two countries.

Key highlights

- Detailed discussions were held in areas such as training, joint military exercises, defense industrial cooperation, subject matter expert exchange, R&D etc.
- Both sides deliberated on the regional security situation, including maritime security, and underscored the need to enhance collaboration to tackle the security challenges.
- Exchanging visits in different domains to benefit from experience and knowledge of each other was also discussed.
- Mutual exchange of training opportunities in niche areas was also agreed.
- The India-UAE JDCC was established in 2006.
- Since then, 11 rounds have been held. The 12th meeting provided an opportunity to further augment India’s defence and security relations with the UAE, strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

GS III

5. Coal Ministry Takes Proactive Measures for Disposal and Repurposing of Fly Ash- PIB

Relevance: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

News:

- In a significant move towards environmental protection and resource utilization, the Ministry of Coal (MoC) is actively working to ensure the proper disposal and repurposing of fly ash generated by thermal power plants.
- By disposing this byproduct of coal-based power generation, the Ministry is leading the charge towards a sustainable future, prioritizing environmental well-being and fostering a circular economy.

Highlights:

- To minimize the environmental impact of coal combustion, the Ministry of Coal (MoC) promotes the proper disposal of fly ash.
- Extensive research and development have enabled the effective use of fly ash for filling voids and as a component in construction materials. This not only reduces its environmental footprint but also supports sustainable development practices.
- The interested Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) apply for the allocation of mine voids to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). A total of 19 mines have been allocated to 13 TPPs.
- This allocation addresses environmental concerns associated with fly ash disposal and promotes sustainable practices within the coal mining sector.
- Additionally, approximately 20.39 lakh tonnes of fly ash have been repurposed to date at Gorbicoal mine pit-1.
- Effective management promotes its use in construction activities, thereby minimizing waste, conserving natural resources, and reducing the carbon footprint.
- The Ministry of Coal, in collaboration with the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI), is in the process of creating a centralized portal to manage the application process for the allocation of mine voids to Thermal Power Plants (TPPs) for fly ash backfilling activities.
- This portal aims to streamline operations and ensure transparency and efficiency.
- The Ministry of Coal ensures the safe handling and management of fly ash, mitigating potential environmental concerns associated with the leaching of heavy metals and fine particle emissions and will continue to innovate and implement sustainable practices, ensuring a cleaner and greener future for India.
- Fostering collaboration with power plants, industries, and regulatory bodies, the Coal Ministry aims to achieve optimal fly ash management.
- This collective effort paves the way for a cleaner environment, a healthier future, and a more sustainable approach to energy generation.

Prelims Takeaway

- SO₂ Pollution
- Power Plants

6. Financial Inclusion-Index rises to 64.2 in March 2024- The Indian Express

Relevance: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it.

News:

- The Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index), which captures the extent of financial inclusion across the country, stood at 64.2 in 2024 from 60.1 in 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said

Highlights:

- The improvement in the index was due to growth witnessed across all sub-indices, the RBI said.
- The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

Prelims Takeaway

- Financial Inclusion
- Jan Dhan Yojana

- The FI-Index comprises three broad parameters
 - Access (having a weight of 35 per cent in the index),
 - Usage (weight 45 per cent), and
 - Quality (weight 20 per cent)
 - Each of these consists of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.
- The Index is responsive to ease of access, availability and usage of services, and quality of services, comprising all 97 indicators.
- Improvement in FI-Index is mainly contributed by usage dimension, reflecting deepening of financial inclusion, the RBI said.
- The index has been conceptualized as a comprehensive index incorporating details of banking, investments, insurance, postal as well as the pension sector in consultation with government and respective sectoral regulators.
- The FI-Index has been constructed without any 'base year' and as such it reflects cumulative efforts of all stakeholders over the years towards financial inclusion.
- The annual FI-Index for the period ending March 2021 was 53.9 as against 43.4 for the period ending March 2017.
- The FI-Index is published annually in July every year.

7. Minimum Support Price, loan waiver crucial issues for farmers - The Hindu

Relevance: Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices; Public Distribution System - Objectives, Functioning, Limitations, Revamping

Prelims Takeaway

- Indian Agriculture

News: Farmers expect the new government to make a radical break from all its earlier Budgets.

Highlights:

- The National Crime Records Bureau data tells us that 1,00,474 farmers and agricultural workers committed suicide between 2015 and 2022.
- This is a tragic indication of the agrarian crisis in the country.
- The most important issue for farmers in the country today is statutory minimum support price at the rate of C2+50%, that is one-and-a-half times the comprehensive cost of production, as recommended by the M.S. Swaminathan Commission.
 - Unless that is done, it's going to be impossible even to begin to resolve the agrarian crisis.
- The government should bring control through the Budget on the corporates who are producing the inputs.
- The Budget should help public sector companies engaged in the production of inputs.
- The third expectation from the Budget is that they give a complete one-time loan waiver for farmers and agricultural workers all over the country.
 - Unless this is done, farm suicides cannot be prevented.
- This government has written off loans worth about ₹16 lakh crore of corporates.
- Loan waiver, bringing down the cost of production and ensuring MSP at a rate of C2+50 have to be done together.
- If this is done, 70% of the crisis in the agrarian sector can be dealt with.
- In the light of continuous drought, flood, unseasonal rains and hailstorms, there should be a comprehensive crop insurance scheme, which is totally different from the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
- The fifth point is on the question of irrigation and power. Public sector investment in irrigation and power has been cut down in the last 10 years.
- A number of irrigation projects are incomplete in the country. If they are completed, a large section of land will come under irrigation.
- So, the Budget should have provisions to complete these irrigation projects.
- The number of workdays in MGNREGA has come to just 42. The government will have to increase the wages to ₹600 and the number of days of work to at least 200.

- The seventh point, which is very important, is the question of land.
- In total violation of the Land Acquisition Act, there's massive acquisition of farm lands by corporate houses.
- Land acquisition must be done only when strictly necessary for a public purpose. Radical land reforms must be initiated and completed.
- To raise resources for all this, the Union government must impose wealth tax and inheritance tax.
- Direct taxes must be increased and indirect taxes must be reduced.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

8. What is the draft Digital Competition Bill?- The Hindu

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

Context:

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) constituted a Committee on Digital Competition Law (CDCL) to examine the need for a separate law on competition in digital markets.
- The CDCL deliberated on the issue for a year and came to the conclusion that there was a need to supplement the current ex-post framework under the Competition Act, 2002 with an ex-ante framework.

What is an ex-ante framework?

- The Competition Act, 2002 is the primary legislation concerned for preventing practices that have an adverse effect on competition.
 - It establishes the Competition Commission of India (CCI) as the national competition regulator.
 - As with competition law in all other jurisdictions, the Competition Act, 2002 is based on an ex-post framework.
 - This means that the CCI can use its powers of enforcement only after the anti-competitive conduct has occurred.
 - In the case of digital markets, the CDCL has advocated for an ex-ante competition regulation.
 - This means that they want the CCI's enforcement powers to be supplemented such that it allows it to pre-empt and prevent digital enterprises from indulging in anti-competitive conduct in the first place.
- The European Union is the only jurisdiction where a comprehensive ex-ante competition framework, under the Digital Markets Act, is currently in force.
- The CDCL agrees with this approach because of the unique characteristics of digital markets.
- Therefore, the CDCL has advocated for preventative obligations to supplement the ex-post facto enforcement framework.

What is the draft's basic framework?

- The draft Bill follows the template of the EU's Digital Markets Act.
- It does not intend to regulate all digital enterprises, and places obligations only on those that are "dominant" in digital market segments.
- At present, the draft Bill identifies ten 'core digital services' such as online search engines, social networking services, video sharing platform services etc.
- The draft Bill prescribes certain quantitative standards for the CCI to identify dominance of digital enterprises.
- These are based on the 'significant financial strength' test which looks at financial parameters and 'significant spread' test based on the number of users in India.
- Even if the digital enterprise does not meet quantitative standards, the CCI may designate an entity as a "systemically significant digital enterprise (SSDE)" based on qualitative standards.

What has been the response?

- The overriding sentiment towards the draft Bill has been one of opposition. First, there is considerable skepticism on how well an ex-ante model of regulation will work.
- Studies have also shown that restrictions on tying and bundling and data usage would negatively impact MSMEs that have come to rely significantly on big tech to reduce operational costs and enhance customer outreach.
- Interestingly, a group of Indian start-ups have supported the draft Bill arguing that it would address concerns against monopolistic practices by big tech.
- However, they have argued for a revision of financial and user based thresholds citing concerns that it may lead to domestic start-ups being brought within the regulatory net.

9. Rajasthan to become first State to adopt a road safety action plan for 10 years-THE HINDU

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

News:

- Rajasthan will shortly become the first State in the country to adopt an action plan for road safety for the next 10 years.
- the action plan, to be accompanied by a government policy, will be aimed at reducing road accidents in the State by 50% till 2030

Key Highlights of the Plan

According to the draft:

- **Phase 1 (2025–2027):** This stage will concentrate on enhancing institutional frameworks, building capacity, and meeting interim targets outlined in the action plan.
- **Phase 2 (2028–2030):** The goal here is to achieve a 50% reduction in road accident fatalities in line with the UN's Second Decade of Action for Road Safety.
- **Phase 3 (2031–2033):** This phase aims to reduce road accident fatalities by 75%.

Reasons for Increased Road Accidents

- The “Annual Report on ‘Road Accidents in India-2022,” published by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, reveals that India experienced 4.6 trillion accidents, resulting in 168,000 deaths and over 400,000 serious injuries. This represents a 12% increase in accidents and a 10% rise in fatalities. Contributing factors include:
 - Insufficient infrastructure
 - Poor enforcement of traffic laws
 - Inadequate engineering practices
 - Lack of public awareness regarding safe driving
 - Poor quality of detailed project reports (DPRs)
 - Insufficient deterrent effect of legal consequences

Impact of Road Accidents

- The repercussions of road accidents extend well beyond the immediate losses, causing an economic impact equivalent to 3.18% of the GDP. They also lead to reduced workforce productivity due to fatalities and disabilities, and substantial financial burdens from medical expenses, vehicle repairs, and damage to infrastructure.

Good Governance

- Kerala has achieved a milestone with zero road deaths on its network of roads, including the challenging hill routes leading to the Sabarimala temple. The state managed to maintain zero road accident fatalities for two consecutive years starting from 2019-20, thanks to continuous efforts by the state government—an unprecedented achievement in India.

Required Measures

To address the issue, the following measures are necessary:

- Adoption of smart infrastructure, such as:
 - Intelligent traffic management systems
 - Real-time data analytics
- Leveraging emerging technologies to reduce human errors and improve collision avoidance, including:
 - Vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication
 - Autonomous driving systems
- India aims to cut the number of road accidents by 50% by 2030.

10. Behind Russia’s ‘high income’ rating from World Bank: Why Western sanctions haven’t worked-INDIAN EXPRESS

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

News:

- Almost two and a half years after the imposition of wide-ranging Western sanctions, Russia’s economy doing Unexpectedly well
- Earlier this month, the World Bank upgraded Russia from an “upper-middle income” country to a “high-income” one, a status it last had in 2014.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The ranking was boosted by growth in trade (+6.8%), the financial sector (+8.7%), and construction (+6.6%), which led to increases in both the real (3.6%) and nominal (10.9%) GDP.

The resilience of Russia

- Restrictions on trade and financing from the G7 countries and EU resulted in trade diversion to China, India, Türkiye, Central Asia and the South Caucasus, and investment in new infrastructure and logistics
- Matching this process, the share of Russia's external trade transactions in the currencies of countries that imposed sanctions fell from about 80% in 2021 to less than 30% in 2023.
- Indeed, things are much better than they might have been.
- Russia's job market is strong, unemployment is at a record low, and rising wages continue to propel consumer spending.
- Following a relatively small contraction of 1.2% in 2022, the economy outperformed expectations in 2023, growing by 3.6%.
- However, the medium to long-term economic prospects remain dull.
- Businesses and households in Russia face great uncertainty, with sweeping restrictions on exports, crucial and persistent gaps in the supply of technological equipment, and higher trade costs

Why curbs on Russian economy haven't worked

- **OIL:** The sanctions on Russia's energy sector are not as tight as the ones that were imposed on Venezuela or Iran. The West designed the sanctions keeping in mind its own interests, to ensure that Russia would continue to produce fossil fuels, and there would be no significant surge in oil prices. The sanctions, and subsequent price caps, were loosely designed.
 - the oil that used to go to Europe is now being absorbed elsewhere, especially China and India.
- **INVESTMENT:** Investment is flowing to Russia's defense and manufacturing sectors.
- **CONSUMPTION:** Private consumption has recovered strongly, adding 2.9 percentage points to GDP growth

Conclusion:

- Also, some sanctions had been imposed in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea, and those had already been factored in the cost.
- Economic policy mandarins in Moscow have learnt to work around these measures over time.

Quick Look

1. KVIC

- It is a statutory body established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.
- It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- The functions of the KVIC is to build a strategic reserve of raw materials and implements for supply to producers.
- To create common service facilities for processing raw materials as semi-finished goods and provisions for facilities for marketing KVI products.
- To enhance the sale and marketing of Khadi and other products of village industries or handicrafts.

2. Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT)

- It has been conceived as a 30-metre diameter primary-mirror optical and infrared telescope that will enable observations into deep space.
- It is proposed as a joint collaboration involving institutions in the U.S., Japan, China, Canada, and India.
- It will be the world's most advanced and capable ground-based optical, near-infrared, and mid-infrared observatory.
- It will integrate the latest innovations in precision control, segmented mirror design, and adaptive optics.
- At the heart of the telescope is the segmented mirror, made up of 492 individual segments. Precisely aligned, these segments will work as a single reflective surface of 30m diameter

3. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is the largest research and development (R&D) organisation in India.
- CSIR has a pan-India presence and has a dynamic network of 37 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 3 Innovation Complexes and 5 units.
- Established: September 1942
- CSIR is funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology and it operates as an autonomous body through the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- President: Prime Minister of India (Ex-officio), Vice President: Union Minister of Science and Technology (Ex-officio)

4. Carbon Credit

- A carbon credit (also known as carbon offset) is a credit for greenhouse emissions reduced or removed from the atmosphere by an emission reduction project, which can be used by governments, industry, or private individuals to compensate for the emissions they generate elsewhere.
- Those that cannot easily reduce emissions can still operate, at a higher financial cost.
- Carbon credits are based on the "cap-and-trade" model that was used to reduce sulfur pollution in the 1990s.

- One carbon credit is equal to one metric ton of carbon dioxide, or in some markets, carbon dioxide equivalent gases (CO₂-eq).
- The credits for such activities are often certified by unofficial third-party companies and sold to others.
- Such transactions have been flagged for lack of integrity and double counting.

5. The National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)

- Formerly known as the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), is India's strategic response to combat tuberculosis (TB).
- The programme aims to eliminate TB as a public health issue in India by 2025, in line with Prime Minister ambitious target set in 2018.
- The NTEP focuses on early detection, regular and complete treatment of TB, prevention strategies, and strengthening TB care and control services. It includes:
- Universal Drug Susceptibility Testing (UDST) to identify drug-resistant TB cases early.
- Provision of free diagnosis and treatment for all TB patients across the country.



Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

1. The INSTC is a multi-modal network of ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, and Russia.
2. The primary objective of the INSTC is to reduce the time and cost of transport of goods between India and Central Asia.
3. Azerbaijan is a key member of the INSTC, providing crucial transit routes through its territory.

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 statements regarding the distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the States in India:

1. Education is listed under the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
2. Public health and sanitation is an item under the State List.
3. Both the Union and State legislatures can make laws on subjects listed under the Concurrent List.

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

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the geography of Eastern Europe:

1. The Carpathian Mountains extend through several Eastern European countries including Romania and Slovakia.
2. The Danube River flows through more countries than any other river in the world, including several Eastern European countries.
3. Ukraine shares a border with Hungary and Romania but not with Poland.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between India and the UAE

1. It is a bilateral trade pact that will cover over 90% of India's exports
2. It covers commodities like leather, processed agriculture and dairy products, handicrafts, gems and jewelry and nearly all items produced by the Indian economy.
3. It will also include the agriculture sector

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the above

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding thermal power plants, fly ash, and SO₂ emissions:

1. Fly ash is a byproduct of coal combustion in thermal power plants.
2. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has mandated the utilization of fly ash in construction activities to reduce environmental pollution.
3. Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from thermal power plants can contribute to acid rain and respiratory problems.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):

1. PMJDY aims to provide universal access to banking facilities with at least one basic banking account for every household.
2. Under PMJDY, accounts opened can only be linked to Aadhaar for direct benefit transfers (DBT).
3. PMJDY provides for an overdraft facility after six months of satisfactory operation of the account.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding Minimum Support Price (MSP), the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), and agriculture policies of the Government of India:

1. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is announced by the Government of India for certain crops before the sowing season to ensure farmers a guaranteed price.
2. The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for various crops based on factors such as cost of production, market prices, and demand-supply conditions.
3. The MSP policy is applicable to all crops grown in India without any regional restrictions.

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 statements regarding the Competition Commission of India (CCI):

1. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) was established under the Competition Act, 2002.
2. CCI is responsible for preventing practices that have an adverse effect on competition.
3. The orders of the CCI can be appealed to the Competition Appellate Tribunal (COMPAT).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q9. Consider the following statements with reference to Atal Bhujal Yojana

1. It is a scheme to facilitate sustainable groundwater management implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
2. It is funded by the Centre and the states on a 50:50 basis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q10. China recently signed a 'Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement' with which country?

- A. Saudi Arabia
- B. UAE
- C. Israel
- D. Russia

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is Correct

Explanation:

- The INSTC is indeed a multi-modal network involving ship, rail, and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, and other countries. **Statement 1 is Correct**

Statement 1 is Correct

- The primary objective of the INSTC is to reduce the time and cost of transport of goods between India and Central Asia, making trade more efficient and cost-effective. **Statement 2 is Correct**
- Azerbaijan is a key member of the INSTC, providing crucial transit routes through its territory, which enhances connectivity within the corridor. **Statement 3 is Correct**

Answer 2 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- Education was transferred from the State List to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976. **Statement 1 is Incorrect**
- Public health and sanitation is indeed an item under the State List. **Statement 2 is correct**
- Both the Union and State legislatures can make laws on subjects listed under the Concurrent List. **Statement 3 is correct**

Answer 3 Option A is Correct

Explanation:

- The Carpathian Mountains indeed extend through several Eastern European countries, including Romania and Slovakia. **statement 1 is correct**
- The Danube River flows through 10 countries, the most of any river in the world, including several Eastern European countries. **statement 2 is correct**
- Ukraine shares a border with Hungary, Romania, and Poland. Therefore, **statement 3 is incorrect**.

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- It is a bilateral trade pact that will cover over 90% of India's exports (**Statement 1 is correct**)

- It covers commodities like leather, processed agriculture and dairy products, handicrafts, gems and jewellery and nearly all items produced by the Indian economy (**Statement 2 is correct**)
- It will also include the service sector (**Statement 3 is incorrect**)

Answer 5 Option D is Correct

Explanation:

- Fly ash is indeed a byproduct of coal combustion in thermal power plants. **Statement 1 is correct**
- The MoEFCC has mandated the utilization of fly ash in construction activities such as the manufacture of cement, bricks, and road construction to mitigate its environmental impact. **Statement 2 is correct**
- Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from thermal power plants can contribute to acid rain, which can harm ecosystems and structures, and can cause respiratory problems in humans. **Statement 3 is correct**

Answer 6 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- PMJDY aims to provide universal access to banking facilities with at least one basic banking account for every household. **Statement 1 is correct**
- Accounts under PMJDY can be linked to various identification documents, not just Aadhaar, for direct benefit transfers (DBT). **Statement 2 is incorrect**
- PMJDY provides for an overdraft facility of up to ₹10,000 after six months of satisfactory operation of the account. **Statement 3 is correct**

Answer 7 Option A is Correct

Explanation:

- The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is indeed announced by the Government of India for certain crops before the sowing season to ensure farmers a guaranteed price. **Statement 1 is correct**

- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommends MSPs for various crops based on factors such as cost of production, market prices, and demand-supply conditions. **Statement 2 is correct**
- The MSP policy is not applicable to all crops grown in India; it is announced for specific crops, and the implementation can vary regionally based on government procurement and other factors. **Statement 3 is Incorrect**

Answer 8 Option A is Correct

Explanation:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) was established under the Competition Act, 2002.
- CCI is responsible for preventing practices that have an adverse effect on competition.
- The orders of the CCI can be appealed to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), as the Competition Appellate Tribunal (COMPAT) was dissolved in 2017 and its functions were transferred to the NCLAT.

Answer 9 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Atal Bhujal Yojana is a Central Sector Scheme for facilitating sustainable groundwater management with an outlay of Rs. 6000 crore.
- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- The scheme is being funded by the Government of India and the World Bank on a 50:50 basis. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The entire World Bank's loan component and central assistance will be passed on to the States as grants.
- Objective: To improve the management of groundwater resources in select water stressed areas in identified states viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- It promotes panchayat led groundwater management and behavioural change with a primary focus on demand-side management.

Answer 10 Option A is Correct

Explanation

- The People's Bank of China and the Central bank of Saudi Arabia recently inked a local currency swap deal.
- The agreement, valid for three years and subject to extension by mutual consent, involves a sum of 50 billion yuan (\$6.93 billion) or 26 billion Saudi riyals. This bilateral currency swap arrangement is anticipated to bolster financial collaboration between the two nations, enhance the utilization of local currencies, and foster increased trade and investment, as stated in the official announcement.



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