

Current News Analysis

12-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

1. GS2 Related

1. Amid tensions, China expels South Korean missionaries

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/China-expels-South-Korean-missionaries-amid-tensions/article17289346.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- In a recent development, China has expelled 32 South Korean Christian missionaries.

Larger Background:

- In South Korea, China is widely believed to be retaliating against Seoul's plan to host the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system of the U.S. military, against the threat of the missile attack from North Korea.
- But there was no indication of a direct link between the expulsions and tension over THAAD
- China's Communist Party says it protects freedom of religion, but keeps a tight rein on religious activities and allows only officially recognised religious institutions.
- The US has announced it would deploy THAAD in South Korea to neutralise the threat from North Korea's alleged Nuclear ambitions. However, this decision has irked China and become lead to a rupture in Sino-US relationship.

What is THAAD?

- The Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system of the U.S. military is an easily transportable defensive weapon system to protect against hostile incoming threats such as tactical and theatre ballistic missiles at ranges of 200km and at altitudes up to 150km.
- The THAAD system provides the upper tier of a 'layered defensive shield' to protect high value strategic or tactical sites such as airfields or populations centres.
- The THAAD missile intercepts exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric threats.

C.GS3 Related

1. Green drive on blue waters — solar power lights up naval vessel

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/Green-drive-on-blue-waters-%E2%80%94-solar-power-lights-up-naval-vessel/article17290319.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- INS Sarvekshak is a naval survey vessel.
- This warship of the Navy has turned to the sun to generate a share of its on-board power.
- This ship has innovatively deployed the zero-maintenance solar power system, capable of generating 5.4KW electricity, by customising and installing ‘razor-thin, flexible’ solar panels on the canopy of its telescopic (retractable) helicopter deck.

Challenges

- Rigid, glass-topped solar panels are unsuitable in the humid, salty marine environment, as they cannot withstand high wind speeds.
- They were found to be unfit for fitment on ships and they needed to be stationary for the sensors to receive sunlight.
- Conventional, fume-emitting batteries posed a further challenge, as they are not advisable over turbulent seas

Innovative Deployment

- Given these constraints, the team then decided on the ‘light weight, extra-thin and flexible panels that would not break’.
- These panels have been imported from the U.S. through a local vendor.
- These panels have a maintenance free life for 24 years while the no-fume solid electrolyte batteries have a guaranteed life of 20 years.

2. India’s own interceptor missile soars high

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/India%E2%80%99s-own-interceptor-missile-soars-high/article17290456.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- An indigenously developed interceptor missile on 11th February, 2017 successfully destroyed an incoming ballistic missile in a direct hit.
- This demonstrated the capability of India’s Ballistic Missile Shield (BMD), which is under development.
- With this test, India has crossed an important milestone and has entered an exclusive club of four nations with developing capabilities to secure its skies and cities against hostile threats.

3. What is the Thor experiment?

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/Demystifying-Science-%E2%80%94-February-12-2017/article17289347.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- It is an experiment aims to investigate electrical activity from thunderstorms.
- Between 10 and 100 kilometres in the atmosphere, the interaction between charged particles produces a variety of dazzling electric phenomena from blue jets to red sprites.
- The Thor experiment will look at them with a thundercloud imaging system from the vantage point of the International Space Station.

Aim of this Experiment

- The key aims of the study include understanding how these discharges influence water vapour levels, cloud formation, and eventually changes in climate.

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

PIB

1. India Successfully Test Fires Exo-Atmospheric Interceptor Missile

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158392>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- India successfully conducted a test wherein an incoming ballistic missile target was intercepted by an exo-atmospheric interceptor missile off the Bay of Bengal.
- With this commendable scientific achievement, India has crossed an important milestone in building its overall capability towards enhanced security against incoming ballistic missile threats.
- It has entered an exclusive club of four nations with developing capabilities to secure its skies and cities against hostile threats.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar lauded the efforts of the DRDO and all the scientists involved for their dedicated efforts in this significant achievement.

2. ‘India Pharma 2017’ & ‘India Medical Device 2017’ International Conference inaugurated

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158390>

Category: Economy, Science and Technology

Topic: Pharma Industry

Key Points:

- Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananthkumar inaugurated the 2nd edition of India Pharma & India Medical Device International Conference in Bengaluru.
- The three day event, with the Vision - 'For Responsible Healthcare', is being organized by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) from 11th-13th February, 2017.
- Addressing the gathering, Shri Kumar called the International Conference as a 'Pharma and Medical Devices Kumbh'. He called upon all the stakeholders present to make India as the 'Pharmacy of the World'.

Important Statements

- Talking about the achievements of the Pharma sector, the Minister congratulated the industry for achieving a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of over 15% and expressed confidence that the sector would be worth \$55 billion by 2020 from the present \$32 billion.
- The Minister also said that India accounts for around 20% of the World's generic medicine supply chain, exporting to over 250 countries globally. Indian Pharma Industry provides over 60% of global vaccines, he added.
- Further, Shri Kumar informed that in this fiscal year, the Indian Pharma sector has received Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) close to \$14 billion and has generated employment for over 2.5 million people across India.
- The Minister also announced from the podium that Bengaluru, being the hub of Information technology and skilled manpower, would prove to be the ideal location to set up a Pharma and Med Tech Zone and hence the Ministry would work with the State Government to establish it soon. This step would give a boost to domestic manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and medical devices in India under the Make in India mission, he added.

3. First Indigenous Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C) in IOC Configuration to be Handed over to IAF During Aero India 2017

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158393>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- The first indigenous Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C) in IOC configuration shall be handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF), on 14th February during Aero India 2017 at Yelahanka Air base in Bengaluru.

Significance of the system

- The Airborne Surveillance System is a game changer in air warfare.
- The AEW&C System is a system of systems populated with state-of-the art Active Electronically Scanned Radar, Secondary Surveillance Radar, Electronic and

- Communication Counter Measures, LOS (Line of Sight) and beyond LOS data link, voice communication system and self protection suite, built on an Emb-145 platform, having an air to air refueling capability to enhance surveillance time.
- A Complex tactical software has been developed for fusion of information from the sensors, to provide the air situation picture along with intelligence to handle identification/classification threat assessment.
 - Battle management functions are built in house to work as a network centric system of Integrated Air Command & Control System (IACCS) node.

Concluding Remarks

- This system has been developed and evaluated through collaborative efforts between DRDO and the IAF, with coordination for certification clearance and quality assurance by CEMILAC and DGAQA.
- The AEW&C system has undergone all weather and environmental trials and has been accepted by the IAF for induction.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

Airborne Early Warning and Control System

Exo-Atmospheric interceptor

THAAD system

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

Airborne Early Warning and Control System

Exo-Atmospheric interceptor

THAAD system

Practice Questions

Date: 12th February, 2017
Category: Science and Technology
Topic: Developments
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

- 1] The “Thor Experiment” was recently in the news. What is it?
- 1] It is an experiment aims to investigate electrical activity from thunderstorms.
- 2] The key aims of the study include understanding how these discharges influence water vapour levels, cloud formation, and eventually changes in climate.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

It is an experiment aims to investigate electrical activity from thunderstorms. The key aims of the study include understanding how these discharges influence water vapour levels, cloud formation, and eventually changes in climate.

Date: 12th February, 2017
Category: Science and Technology
Topic: Developments
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

- 2] Consider the following statements, regarding “INS Sarvekshak” which was recently in the news,
- 1] INS Sarvekshak is a naval survey vessel.
- 2] This ship has innovatively deployed the zero-maintenance solar power system, capable of generating 5.4KW electricity.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

INS Sarvekshak is a naval survey vessel. This warship of the Navy has turned to the sun to generate a share of its on-board power. This ship has innovatively deployed the zero-maintenance solar power system, capable of generating 5.4KW electricity, by customising and installing 'razor-thin, flexible' solar panels on the canopy of its telescopic (retractable) helicopter deck.

Date: 12th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements regarding the "THAAD" system which was recently in the news,

1] The Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system of the U.S. military is an easily transportable defensive weapon system to protect against hostile incoming threats such as tactical and theatre ballistic missiles at ranges of 200km and at altitudes up to 150km.

2] The THAAD missile intercepts exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric threats.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Both the statements are correct.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system of the U.S. military is an easily transportable defensive weapon system to protect against hostile incoming threats such as tactical and theatre ballistic missiles at ranges of 200km and at altitudes up to 150km.

The THAAD missile intercepts exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric threats.

Date: 12th February, 2017

Category: Geography

Topic: World Geography

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

4] The “38th Parallel” divides which two countries?

- a) North and South Korea
- b) Canada and the United States
- c) North Vietnam and South Vietnam
- d) Poland and Germany

Ans a) The 38th Parallel separates North and South Korea.

Date: 12th February, 2017

Category: Environment and Ecology

Topic: Renewable Energy

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

5] Consider the following statements,

1] International Solar Alliance (ISA) is conceived as a coalition of solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to address their special energy needs and will provide a platform to collaborate on addressing the identified gaps through a common, agreed approach.

2] ISA was launched jointly by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November, 2015 at Paris on the side-lines of the 21st CoP meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

3] The ISA will strive to bring together more than 121 solar resource rich nations for coordinated research, low cost financing and rapid deployment.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 and 3 Only
- b) 2 and 3 Only
- c) 1 and 2 Only
- d) Neither 1 nor 2 nor 3

Ans d) All the statements are correct.

ISA was launched jointly by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November, 2015 at Paris on the side-lines of the 21st CoP meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The ISA will strive to bring together more than 121 solar resource rich nations for coordinated research, low cost financing and rapid deployment. ISA will put India globally in a leadership role in climate and renewable energy issues. It will also give a platform to showcase its solar programmes.

Current News Analysis

13-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

1. GS2 Related

1. South Kashmir seethes after 7 die in Kulgam

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/South-Kashmir-seethes-after-7-die-in-Kulgam-encounter/article17291640.ece>

Category: Internal security

Topic: Internal security

Backgorund:

- Kashmir is in turmoil since the killing of Burhan Wani.

Key Points:

- “Two militants belonged to Hizbul Mujahideen and two others were associated with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT),” said Brigadier Chakarwarty. “Their death is bound to impact the morale of the terrorists.”
- Opposition National Conference leader asked "Why was the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) not followed?".

Article 370 :

- Article 370 of the Indian constitution is an article that grants special autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The article is drafted in Part XXI of the Constitution: Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions.
- The state's constituent assembly was empowered to recommend the articles of the Indian constitution to be applied to the state or to abrogate the Article 370 altogether.
- After the state constituent assembly has dissolved itself without recommending abrogation, the Article 370 was deemed to have become a permanent feature of the Indian constitution.

2. No action yet on proposal to hike President's pay

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/No-action-yet-on-plan-to-hike-President%E2%80%99s-pay/article17292472.ece>

Category: President

Topic: Indian Polity

Key Points :

- For over six months now, President Pranab Mukherjee has been drawing less salary than a Joint Secretary in the Government of India as a proposal to increase the salaries of the President, the Vice-President and Governors has been gathering dust in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
- The Home Ministry had proposed an increase in the salary of the President from the current ₹1.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh per month. Similarly for the Vice-President, the proposal was to increase the salary from ₹1.1 lakh to ₹3.5 lakh per month.
- Though the file to increase the salary of the two constitutional posts was moved six months ago, it was stuck in the PMO, an official said. Queries to the PMO went unanswered.
- The boost in salary is commensurate with the recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission, implemented last year.
- The Commission gave its report to the government in 2016 and proposed an average increase of 14% in salaries of all government employees. The Commission submits its report once every 10 years.
- "When we realised that the President is drawing a salary less than even a Director-level officer in the Government of India, we calculated the hike to be ₹5 lakh. The Cabinet Secretary, the seniormost in the government hierarchy, gets ₹2.5 lakh currently," said a senior government official.
- An official said the delay in processing the proposal could be due to a similar proposal to hike the salaries of parliamentarians — as recommended by a joint committee on salaries and allowances of members of Parliament — meeting with severe criticism. The committee headed by BJP MP Yogi Adityanath had recommended a hike in salary of the MPs from current ₹1.4 lakh a month to ₹2.8 lakh a month.
- "Once the PMO clears the files pertaining to the President's salary, it will be sent to the Parliament for approval before getting a sanction from the union Cabinet," said the official.

3.North Korea test fires ballistic missile

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/North-Korea-test-fires-ballistic-missile/article17292762.ece>

Category: International relations

Topic: Policies of developing/ developed countries affecting Indian interests

Key Points :

- Japan calls it 'absolutely intolerable'; U.S. President Donald Trump assures Tokyo of full support .
- North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the sea early on Sunday, the first such test since U.S. President Donald Trump was elected, and his administration indicated that Washington would have a calibrated response to avoid escalating tensions.
- The launch marks the first test of Mr. Trump's vow to get tough on an isolated North Korean regime that last year tested nuclear devices and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate in violation of United Nations resolutions.
- Once fully developed, a North Korean ICBM could threaten the continental United States, which is about 9,000 km from North Korea.
- The Trump administration is also likely to step up pressure on China to rein in North Korea, reflecting Mr. Trump's previously stated view that Beijing has not done enough on this front, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Chinese Angle :

- China is North Korea's main ally but has been frustrated by Pyongyang's repeated provocations, although it bristles at pressure from Washington and Seoul to curb the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

US' Response :

- Mr. Trump and his aides are likely to weigh a series of possible responses, including new U.S. sanctions to tighten financial controls, an increase in naval and air assets in and around the Korean peninsula and accelerated installation of new missile defence systems in South Korea, the administration official said.
- But the official said that given that the missile was believed not to have been an ICBM and that Pyongyang had not carried out a new nuclear explosion, any response will seek to avoid ratcheting up tensions.
- Mr. Trump has pledged a more assertive approach to North Korea but given no clear sign of how his policy would differ from Mr. Obama's so-called strategic patience.

C.GS3 Related

1. Frost & Sullivan report

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/Commerce-Dept.-special-arm-may-drive-foreign-trade-policy/article17292508.ece>

Category: Indian economy

Topic: Issues in Indian economy

Background:

- India's foreign trade strategy and policy is currently being piloted predominantly by the Prime Minister's Office and External Affairs Ministry.

Report Findings :

- The report — prepared by the global consultancy firm Frost & Sullivan and submitted on December 23, 2016, to the commerce & industry ministry — also makes a strong case for a higher profile for the Indian Trade Service (ITS) in matters of trade policies & systems.
- At present, the officials belonging to the Indian Administrative Service, Foreign Service and Revenue Service evidently have a relatively superior role over ITS cadre regarding decisions on crucial trade policy matters.
- The report proposed that "... a dedicated ministerial arm under Department of Commerce will deal exclusively with trade-related policy inputs, their formulation and their rollout with the bulk of implementation work handled by a digital platform."
- The Frost & Sullivan report advocated that "the operational implementation of the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) should reside with the department of commerce providing the trade community one single entity to deal with."
- The FTP should be considered a "dynamic document," according to the report.
- It added that any change necessitated with respect to the ongoing requirements must be approved by the (commerce) departmental arm responsible for policymaking.
- "Once approved by all ministerial stakeholders including the Department of Commerce, Department of Revenue and Ministry of External Affairs, a single communication should be issued by the departmental arm dedicated to FTP," it stated.

Recommendations

- The report mooted that a transformed DGFT should be made accountable for all trade promotion activities for India — providing services such as trade representation in foreign countries, research & development, market intelligence, business matchmaking services as well as public relations, advertising and marketing services.
- Noting that the DGFT needs to re-skill its resources to be successful, the report said: “Future recruitment should focus on professionals with experience and qualifications in trade and commerce from reputed institutions.”

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

1.The Hindu

1. Solar power breaks a price barrier

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/Solar-power-breaks-a-price-barrier/article17292695.ece>

Category: Environment

Topic: Renewable energy

Key Points :

- In another barrier-breaking development, the auctioned price of solar photovoltaic (SPV) power per kilowatt hour has dropped below ₹ 3 to ₹ 2.97 in Madhya Pradesh, providing a clear pointer to the future course of renewable energy.

- The levelled tariff — factoring in a small annual increase for a given period of time — for the 750 MW Rewa project over a 25-year period is ₹ 3.29, which is less than half the rate at which some State governments signed contracts in recent years.
- The progress of this clean source of energy must be deepened with policy incentives, for several reasons.
- Arguably, the most important is the need to connect millions of people without access to electricity. A rapid scaling-up of solar capacity is vital also to meet the national goal of installing 100 gigawatts by 2022, a target that is being internationally monitored as part of the country's pledges under the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- It will also be transformational for the environment, since pollution from large new coal-based power plants can be avoided. There is everything to gain by accelerating the pace of growth that essentially began in 2010, with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.
- Yet, performance has not matched intent and the target of installing 12 GW solar capacity in 2016-17 is far from attainable, since it fell short by almost 10 GW as of December.

SHORTCOMINGS :

- A glaring lacuna in the national policy on renewables is the failure to tap the investment potential of the middle class.
- While grid-connected large-scale installations have received maximum attention, there is slow progress on rooftop solar.
- Clearly, adding capacity of the order of more than 10 GW annually over the next six years towards the 100 GW target will require active participation and investment by the buildings sector, both residential and commercial.

Way Forward :

- This process can be kick-started using mass participation by citizens, with State electricity utilities being given mandatory time frames to introduce net-metering systems with a feed-in tariff that is designed to encourage the average consumer to invest in PV modules, taking grid electricity prices into account.
- The experience of Germany, where robust solar expansion has been taking place over the years, illustrates the benefits of policy guarantees for rooftop installations and feed-in tariffs lasting 20 years.
- SPV costs are expected to continue to fall, and tariffs paid both for large plants and smaller installations require periodic review. At some point, significant subsidies may no longer be necessary. That scenario, however, is for the future.

Conclusion :

- Currently, India needs a lot more good quality power, which renewables provide. Solar power is an emissions-free driver of the economy, generating growth in both direct and indirect employment. A lot of sunlight remains to be tapped.

2. Economic Times

1. CAG should audit GSTN, leave internal working to its board

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/cag-should-audit-gstn-leave-internal-working-to-its-board/>

Category: Indian Polity

Topic: Constitutional Bodies

➤ Should the Comptroller and Auditor General audit the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), which is the nodal body to which indirect tax payments (other than Customs duty) by all producers and suppliers of goods and services will file their tax payments, once GST kicks in, and will reconcile input tax credit claims with tax receipts? The government holds only a minority stake of 49% in GSTN, but the company would process more than half the nation's tax receipts.

Why GSTN Should be a private body :

➤ The whole point of setting up GSTN as a private company was to make it fleet of foot and efficient, with the operational freedom to keep functional an information network to which billions of tax payment receipts and input tax credit claims would be uploaded and which must process these filings at top speed to find reconciliation or spot tax liability.

➤ To build multiple rounds of redundancy, and maintain and upgrade its server capacity and speed, GSTN needs to be free from the time-consuming and suboptimal rules and procedures of government procurement and recruitment.

➤ As the principal shareholder, the government has the opportunity to appoint the kind of directors to the GSTN board who would ensure good corporate governance and expenditure control, aided by the normal audit process.

➤ There is no reason for the CAG to audit the internal working of GSTN and raise objections that might be procedural rather than substantive in nature but could still serve to raise needless controversy over GSTN's functional integrity.

➤ But when it comes to the work done by GSTN, there is every reason for the CAG to be involved. In fact, the scrutiny and audit of tax filings of a sample from the total filings is an integral part of the GST process, meaning that this part of GSTN's work is open to scrutiny by revenue officials, in any case.

Way Forward :

➤ GSTN opposes the idea of a CAG audit, but the CAG and some other parts of the government feel otherwise. The solution to this budding controversy is fairly straightforward: GSTN's own finances should be audited like a private company's while the CAG must audit the tax collection work.

3. Business Line :

1. A bankable idea

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/editorial/government-arc-on-npas-needs-checks/article9537611.ece>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Banking

Background :

- The crackdown on high-profile defaulter Vijay Mallya may be making headlines, but there can be no escaping the urgent need to stem the rising tide of gross non-performing assets (at 9 per cent of bank lending or 4.5 per cent of the GDP, it amounts to ₹ 6.75 lakh crore and mounting).
- These have applied the breaks on lending by banks and investment by the indebted corporates concerned. Private investment had actually started to shrink by 2015-16 and in 2016-17 “so far it seems to have contracted by more than 7 per cent”, the Economic Survey 2017 notes.

Earlier attempts to reduce NPAs:

- It appears that earlier efforts to clean up the mess and start on a clean slate — the 5/25 scheme, strategic debt restructuring and S4A (or Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets) and private asset reconstruction companies — have not helped enough.
- PARA is expected to clean up the balance sheets of banks, leaving them free to lend without encumbrance, even as they are recapitalised to the extent of the write-downs.
- It appears that the Budget set aside only ₹ 10,000 crore for bank recapitalisation, against last year's ₹ 25,000 crore, with a view to arriving at greater clarity on the problem before committing the money. RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya has observed that a ‘bad bank’ will have to be “designed right” for it to work.
- There are over 20 asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) in operation, many of them private players. Private ARCs, according to the Survey, have not picked up more than 4-5 per cent of the book value of the NPAs.

Way Forward :

- The RBI governor has rightly pointed to the need for “pragmatism” in dealing with the fraught issue of NPAs. This entails the recognition, as spelt out in the Survey, that NPAs are “an economic problem, not a morality play”, the shenanigans over Mallya notwithstanding. Ultimately, the objective should be to get credit growth back to double digit rates, with checks and balances to deal with irregularities.

PIB

1. President of India Congratulates DRDO on the Successful Test-Firing of the PRITHVI Defence Vehicle Interceptor Missile

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158401>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Defence

Key Points:

- India now joins a select group of nations having such an effective Ballistic Missile Defence System.
- This is a significant milestone in boosting India's defence capabilities and will provide enhanced security against incoming ballistic missile threats.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

3. Tags

Practice Questions

Date: 13th February, 2017

Category: Indian Polity

Topic: Constitutional Posts

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the statements about CAG of India :

1]The Comptroller and Auditor-General shall not be eligible for further office either under the Government of India or under the Government of any State after he has ceased to hold his office.

2] The CAG shall be appointed by the President.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d)

Both the statements are correct.

Article 148 - Comptroller and Auditor-General of India

There shall be a Comptroller and Auditor-General of India who shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal and shall only be removed from office in like manner and on like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

- The Comptroller and Auditor-General shall not be eligible for further office either under the Government of India or under the Government of any State after he has ceased to hold his office.

Date: 13th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

2] Recently, India successfully test fired PRITHVI Defence Vehicle Interceptor Missile. Consider the following statements :

1] It is indigenously developed.

2] PDV (Prithvi Defence Vehicle) mission is for engaging the targets in the exo-atmosphere region at an altitude above 50 km of earth's atmosphere.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

It is indigenously developed.

"PDV (Prithvi Defence Vehicle) mission is for engaging the targets in the exo-atmosphere region at an altitude above 50 km of earth's atmosphere. Both, the PDV interceptor and the two-stage target missile, were successfully engaged," said a Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) official, according to news agency PTI.

Date: 13th February, 2017

Category: International bodies

Topic: WTO

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

3] Which country has filed a case against India in solar case in WTO ?

- a) USA
- b) Canada
- c) Germany
- d) Pakistan

Ans a) Both the statements are correct.

On February 11, 2014, the US had filed a second complaint against India and the second phase of its National Solar Mission at WTO. It said India's programme violated trade agreements between the two countries by restricting US companies from doing business in India. The complaint alleged that the DCR mandate put into place by India discriminated against US exports and favoured Indian manufacturers of solar panels and cells.

Date: 13th February, 2017

Category: Indian Polity

Topic: Governance

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

4] Consider the statements about 7th Pay Commission :

- 1) Central Pay Commissions in India are constituted every five years to review the principles and structure of emoluments of central government employees and recommend changes.
- 2) It is headed by A K Mathur.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None

Ans b)

Central Pay Commissions in India are constituted every ten years to review the principles and structure of emoluments of central government employees and recommend changes.

It is headed by A K Mathur.

Date: 13th February, 2017

Category: Indian Polity

Topic: President

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

5] Consider the following statements about President :

1] President appoints Chairman and other members of UPSC and Joint Public Service Commissions

2. President appoints Attorney General of India.

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) 1 and 2 Only
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) All the statements are correct.

President of India makes appointment to other constitutional officers and other important members of union government. These include: Prime Minister Other ministers on advice of Prime Minister Chief Justice of India Other Judges of Supreme Court on advice of the Chief Justice Chief Justice and other judges of high courts Chairman and other members of UPSC and Joint Public Service Commissions Attorney General of India

Current News Analysis

14-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

1. GS2 Related

1. UN calls for urgent meet over North Korea's ballistic missile test

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/UN-calls-for-urgent-meet-over-North-Korea%E2%80%99s-ballistic-missile-test/article17299459.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on 13th February, 2017 condemned North Korea's latest ballistic missile test.
- He also called for a united international response to the "further troubling violation" of UN resolutions.
- Mr. Guterres appealed "to the international community to continue to address this situation in a united manner".

Reaction from other countries

- China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said it opposes North Korean missile launches that violate UN resolutions.
- Russia's Foreign Ministry called the launch "a demonstration of contempt for UN Security Council resolutions".

2. Anil Ambani firm to service over 100 U.S. Navy ships

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/Anil-Ambani-firm-to-service-over-100-U.S.-Navy-ships/article17299487.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Bilateral Relations

Key Points:

- Anil Ambani group's Reliance Defence and Engineering has inked a major contract with the U.S. Navy to provide repair and alteration services for ships of the Seventh Fleet.
- This would be the first instance of an Indian company, either public or private, providing logistical support to the U.S. military within Indian territory.
- The signing of the agreement is a follow-up to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed between New Delhi and Washington in August 2016.

C.GS3 Related

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

The Hindu

1. North Korea lobbs a missile challenge

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/North-Korea-lobbs-a-missile-challenge/article17297918.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- North Korea launched a medium-range ballistic missile on 12th February, 2017.
- Last year, the North Korean government, tested at least a dozen missiles and even vowed to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile that could hit the U.S.
- The UN Security Council has already imposed a host of sanctions on North Korea.

Trump's Reaction

- Trump's immediate reaction was marked by measured restraint.
- His reaction was in sharp contrast to his response to the recent missile test by Iran.
- The reaction was different perhaps because Mr. Trump knows that the stakes are higher as North Korea is a nuclear power.

Options before the U.S.

- North Korea is already isolated.
- War is out of the question as North Korea could directly target America's allies in East Asia with nuclear weapons.
- It has been suggested that a feasible idea is to get China, which still has some leverage over North Korea, on board and engage the Kim regime diplomatically, without removing the sanctions.
- In conclusion, it is important to note that responding to North Korea's provocative posturing with counter-provocations will yield hardly any diplomatic dividend.

The Economic Times

1. India could host the UN, in a brand-new town

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/india-could-host-the-un-in-a-brand-new-town/>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- In a recent development, the US has turned down a visa application from a senior legislator from Pakistan, senate deputy chairman Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri.
- Senate deputy chairman Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri was planning to travel to New York to attend a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the United Nations.
- Although the precise reason for visa refusal has not been disclosed, it is perceived to be linked to restrictions on religious groups.

Where can the UN possibly relocate?

- It is important to note that people from all countries need to travel to the UN, regardless of their denominational or ideological compatibility with the present US administration.
- It has been suggested that it is time to relocate the UN.
- US politicians and its conservative media have been asking for long to slash US payments to the UN.
- Switzerland would be a natural choice for lots of people, with its long policy of neutrality, political and financial stability and capacity to provide security.
- China could also make a strong pitch and back it up with a large promise of funding.
- It has also been suggested that India would be the ideal place to house a relocated UN.

Strengths of India

- India is culturally diverse, can avoid extreme weather, is reasonably well-connected to the rest of the world, besides being a democracy that offers great food, fine beaches, warm hospitality and an ancient culture of intricate bureaucracy.
- But, India desperately needs to urbanise for reasons to do with its internal growth dynamics.

BusinessLine

1. Demonetisation transformed mindsets

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/venkaiah-naidu-responds-to-chidambaram/article9539723.ece>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Government Policy

Key Points:

Background:

Minister for urban development and information & broadcasting, Venkaiah Naidu, shares his thoughts in this article on the demonetization initiative by the government. This article presents a synopsis of his views.

- The Government had repeatedly stressed that the decision to demonetise high value currency was not taken in isolation.

- A series of important measures ranging from constituting an SIT headed by a former Supreme Court judge to trace black money stashed abroad to the Income Declaration Scheme preceded the game-changing decision as part of the war against black money, corruption and terror-funding.
- Even as re-monetisation is continuing at a fast pace and the objective of the Government to curb black money and corruption is making a huge positive impact among the masses, the blind critics of demonetisation are still not able to come to terms with the below telling facts.

These are as follows:

- a) A 38 per cent increase in the filing of personal income tax returns post-demonetisation,
 - b) significant growth in both direct and indirect taxes,
 - c) integration of parallel economy with formal economy, and
 - d) enlarged revenues to the coffers of the Centre and various State governments.
-
- It is important to note that the increase in revenues would enable the governments hike spending on social welfare and development schemes and give a huge fillip to economy-driving sectors such as housing.
 - While having a totally cashless society is a utopian ideal, the measures taken towards building a less-cash society will greatly reduce corruption.
 - With India's cash to GDP ratio at 12.2 per cent being higher than several other countries, including emerging economies, the drive towards a digital economy would benefit all — from government (prevent leakage of revenues) to individuals — because of the virtual nature of transactions.

PIB

1. President of India Congratulates DRDO on the Successful Test-Firing of the PRITHVI Defence Vehicle Interceptor Missile

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158401>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee congratulated DRDO on the successful test-firing of the Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) Interceptor Missile.
- India now joins a select group of nations having such an effective Ballistic Missile Defence System.
- The nation is proud of this accomplishment made by DRDO.
- This is a significant milestone in boosting India's defence capabilities and will provide enhanced security against incoming ballistic missile threats.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) Interceptor Missile

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) Interceptor Missile

Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)

Practice Questions

Date: 14th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the following statements,

1] Prithvi is a Surface-to-Surface Missile.

2] The Nag missile is an anti-tank guided missile.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

Prithvi is a Surface-to-Surface Missile. The Nag missile is an anti-tank guided missile.

Date: 14th February, 2017
Category: Science and Technology
Topic: Developments
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

2] Consider the following statements, regarding “INS Sarvekshak” which was recently in the news,

1] BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile named after two rivers, the Brahmaputra in India and the Moskva in Russia.

2] Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defense system.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile named after two rivers, the Brahmaputra in India and the Moskva in Russia. Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defense system.

Date: 14th February, 2017
Category: Indian Economy
Topic: Microeconomics
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements,

1] Demonetization is the act of stripping a currency unit of its status as legal tender.

2] Monetization is the process of converting or establishing something into legal tender.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Both the statements are correct.

Demonetization is the act of stripping a currency unit of its status as legal tender. Monetization is the process of converting or establishing something into legal tender.

Date: 14th February, 2017

Category: International Relations

Topic: International Institutions, Reports

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

4] Which of the following organizations brings out the publication known as 'World Economic Outlook'?

- (a) The International Monetary Fund
- (b) The United Nations Development Programme
- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Answer: (a) The International Monetary Fund brings out the publication known as 'World Economic Outlook'.

Date: 14th February, 2017

Category: International Relations

Topic: International Institutions, Reports

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

5] Which of the following organizations bring out the report known as 'Global Competitive Index'?

- (a) The International Monetary Fund
- (b) The United Nations Development Programme
- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Answer: (c) The World Economic Forum brings out the report known as 'Global Competitive Index'.

Current News Analysis

15-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

1. Weather officials to study possible emergence of El Nino

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Weather-officials-to-study-possible-emergence-of-El-Nino/article17303765.ece>

Category: Geography

Topic: World Climatology

Key Points:

- Scientists from the India Meteorological Department, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences are expected to meet in Pune to analyse a range of forecasts from international climate models – and their own – that suggest waters are likely to warm and change wind patterns enough to El Nino-like conditions.

What is El Nino?

- El Nino refers to an anomalous heating up of the waters in the central-eastern regions of the equatorial Pacific and implies a consistent, average rise in temperature of 0.5 degree Celsius above normal.
- El Nino is an oscillation of the ocean-atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific having important consequences for weather around the globe.
- Historically that translates to the monsoon drying up over India six out of 10 years.

2. GS2 Related

1. India to join Moscow meet on Afghanistan

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-to-join-Moscow-meet-on-Afghanistan/article17303436.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- In a recent development, India is among six nations participating in a conference on Afghanistan's future in Moscow on 15th February, 2017.
- Incidentally, this is roughly two months after Russia hosted a similar conference with only China and Pakistan.

- It is important to note that after India and particularly Afghanistan objected to being cut out of the discussion, Moscow agreed to expand its ambit, announcing a six-nation conference of Russia, India, Iran, Pakistan, China and Afghanistan.
- It is reported that the issue of exclusion was raised by Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar during his talks with the Russian delegation at the Heart of Asia conference in Amritsar in early December last year.
- MEA spokesperson Vikas Swarup said, “India has always believed in close and constructive cooperation for peace, stability, security and development in Afghanistan. To this end we actively participate in several bilateral and multilateral consultations,”

The Geopolitical Situation

- India is increasingly uncomfortable with Russia’s overtures to Pakistan on defence issues.
- Significantly, Russia did not join the U.S., U.K. and France in sponsoring a resolution against Jaish chief Masood Azhar at the U.N. sanctions committee last month, a resolution which China then put a hold on.
- Russia has been seen as favouring a softer line on the Taliban as a counter to the spread of Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan.
- Russia and China have also been coordinating closely to demand the delisting of senior Taliban leaders designated as terrorists by the U.N. sanctions committee.

2. Following sanctions, Venezuelan Vice-President hits out at the U.S.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/Following-sanctions-Venezuelan-Vice-President-hits-out-at-the-U.S./article17303200.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests

Key Points:

- U.S. authorities recently said that the vice president of Venezuela was an international drug trafficker and slapped severe sanctions on him.
- The U.S. Department of Treasury labeled El Aissami a drug "kingpin," accusing him of facilitating shipments by air and sea, and having links to drug gangs in Mexico and Colombia.
- The U.S. Department of Treasury sanctioned Mr. El Aissami and Samark Lopez, whom it identified as his associate, on accusations of masterminding an international network shipping drugs to Mexico and the United States.
- Venezuela’s Vice-President later called his blacklisting by the United States on drug charges an “imperialist aggression”
- The Venezuelan government has frequently cast U.S. and opposition accusations of drug-trafficking, corruption and human rights abuses as a false pretext to justify meddling in Venezuela and a push to topple him.
- In fact, Venezuelan opposition groups have long accused Mr. El Aissami of repressing dissent, participating in drug trafficking rings, and supporting militant groups such as Hezbollah.

C.GS3 Related

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

The Hindu

1. Sharpening the fight against tobacco

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/Sharpening-the-fight-against-tobacco/article17302601.ece>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Interventions

Key Points:

- Towards the end of 2016, the Commerce Ministry sent a note to the Cabinet proposing a blanket ban on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the tobacco sector.
- It is important to note that although India banned FDI in tobacco manufacturing in 2010, foreign tobacco companies are allowed to invest through technology collaboration, licensing agreements and by forming a trading company.
- The Commerce Ministry's proposal, which NITI Aayog has opposed, would put an end to all kinds of participation of foreign companies in the tobacco sector.

Government's Position

- The government cites the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) as the reason for this step.
- As per this convention, India is under an obligation to reduce high consumption of tobacco products which pose a grave public health danger.

Impact

- This proposal has not gone down well with American tobacco giant, Philip Morris International (PMI).
- This company has invested in the Indian tobacco market through a licensing agreement with Godfrey Phillips India.

Challenges

- It is quite possible that PMI might challenge any such blanket ban under India's bilateral investment treaties (BITs).
- From an international context, Philip Morris Asia (PMA) challenged Australia's plain packaging regulations under the Hong Kong-Australia BIT.
- Further, PMI challenged Uruguay's regulation requiring tobacco companies to put pictorial warnings on 85% of the area on cigarette packets, under the U.S.-Uruguay BIT.

The Way Ahead

- It has been suggested that India should consider alternative regulatory measures, which will better achieve the objective of reducing tobacco consumption and be less investment-restrictive as well.

For example: a) One such measure is adopting plain packaging regulation.

b) We are unsure how prohibiting FDI through licensing arrangements, etc. would help reduce tobacco consumption. Domestic players could occupy the market freed up by foreign players.

c) Another effective measure is to increase taxes on tobacco products.

Though they have increased over the years, some studies argue that overall taxes on cigarettes in India are still low relative to other countries.

It is also important to note that for strange reasons, bidis have often been exempted from increase in excise taxes despite being the most commonly used tobacco in India.

Further, it is worth remembering whether banning FDI in tobacco manufacturing in 2010 result in reduced tobacco consumption? On the other hand, studies from Australia show that smoking rates plunged by 12.2% after plain packaging regulations were introduced.

- It is worth remembering that in 2012, Baijayant Panda introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) proposing plain packaging of cigarettes in India. However, the bill failed.
- In 2014, the Allahabad High Court allowed a petition on plain packaging regulation and said that the Central government must implement it.

The Economic Times

1. Getting the solar power goal on track

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/getting-the-solar-power-goal-on-track/>

Category: Indian Economy; Environment and Ecology

Topic: Infrastructure; Renewable Energy

Key Points:

- There is widespread energy poverty and the lack of quality power in large parts of India, and concurrently our greenhouse gas emissions are large and rising fast.

The Way Ahead

- To speedily concretise forward-looking plans for solar power at rail stations,
- To focus on meeting lighting demand in adjoining areas too, so as to reap economies of scale.
- The way forward for the Railways is to proactively access funds from the Clean Environment Cess corpus, seek accelerated depreciation, generation-based incentives, etc, and explore other innovative financing options to actualise its solar power targets in a time-bound fashion

Concluding Remarks

The Railways have a path-breaking opportunity to adopt solar power for lighting purposes and, in the process, handsomely boost its market capitalisation.

PIB

1. Domestic threats to security can be conventional or non-conventional: Vice President

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158455>

Category: Internal Security

Topic: Challenges to Internal Security

Key Points:

- The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that the domestic threats to security can be conventional or non-conventional.
- The Vice President said that safeguarding the political and cultural identity of a state necessitates identification of threats, potential and actual, that emanate from within a state.
- Protection of India and Indian interests also implies being an active participant in the global community of states.
- This necessitates shaping and reinforcing the rules, norms and institutions that would be the foundation of peace, security and prosperity in the coming decades.
- Foremost among these would be conventional and non-conventional threats to security.

Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence for 2014-15

- The report sums up our security environment and challenges to it.
- Defining it as a complex interplay of regional and global imperatives and challenges, the thrust of strategy and policies is aimed at providing a secure, stable, peaceful and prosperous neighbourhood.
- The operative principle for this is building strength through strategic autonomy and self reliance.
- The Report depicts terrorism, insurgency and sectarian conflict from our West and North as threats to stability along with challenge posed by non-traditional threats such as WMD proliferation, drugs, human trafficking, etc.
- New challenges have also emerged in the domains of Cyber and Space, with the demonstration of offensive and capabilities by certain countries.

2. PM congratulates ISRO on successful launch of PSLV-C37 and CARTOSAT satellite together with 103 nano satellites

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158463>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has congratulated ISRO on successful launch of PSLV-C37 and CARTOSAT satellite together with 103 nano satellites.

- "Congratulations to ISRO for the successful launch of PSLV-C37 and CARTOSAT satellite together with 103 nano satellites.
- This remarkable feat by ISRO is yet another proud moment for our space scientific community and the nation. India salutes our scientists.
- Spoke to the Secretary, Department of Space and congratulated him & the entire team of scientists on today's exceptional achievement", the Prime Minister said.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence for 2014-15

Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence for 2014-15

Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act

Practice Questions

Date: 15th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the following statements,

1] Cartosat-2 is an Earth observation satellite in a sun-synchronous orbit and the second of the Cartosat series of satellites.

2] The imagery of Cartosat-2 series satellite will be useful cartographic applications, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management like road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps, precision study, change detection to bring out geographical and manmade features and various other Land Information System (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

Date: 15th February, 2017
Category: Geography
Topic: World Climatology
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

2] Consider the following statements,

1] El Nino refers to an anomalous heating up of the waters in the central-eastern regions of the equatorial Pacific and implies a consistent, average rise in temperature of 0.5 degree Celsius above normal.

2] La Niña is the positive phase of the El Nino Southern Oscillation and is associated with cooler than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

El Nino refers to an anomalous heating up of the waters in the central-eastern regions of the equatorial Pacific and implies a consistent, average rise in temperature of 0.5 degree Celsius above normal. La Niña is the positive phase of the El Nino Southern Oscillation and is associated with cooler than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

Date: 15th February, 2017
Category: Geography
Topic: Various Parts of the World
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements,

- 1] The neighbouring countries of Venezuela are Colombia, Brazil and Guyana.
- 2] The world's highest uninterrupted waterfall, Angel Falls is a waterfall in Bolivia.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans b) 2 Only

The world's highest uninterrupted waterfall, Angel Falls is a waterfall in Venezuela.

Date: 15th February, 2017
Category: International Relations
Topic: International Agreements
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

4] Consider the following statements,

- 1] The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO.
- 2] The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

Both the statements are correct.

Date: 15th February, 2017
Category: International Relations
Topic: Reports, Organizations
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

5] Which of the following organizations bring out the report known as 'Global Corruption Report (GCR)'?

- (a) Transparency International
- (b) The United Nations Development Programme
- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Answer: (a) Transparency International brings out the report known as 'Global Corruption Report (GCR)'

Current News Analysis

16-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

1. Bill seeks to curb extravagant weddings

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Bill-seeks-to-curb-extravagant-weddings/article17309199.ece>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Initiatives and Interventions

Key Points:

- A recent bill in the Lok Sabha seeks to put a limit on the number of guests to be invited and dishes to be served in weddings to check “show of wealth”.
- The concerned bill is the “The Marriages (Compulsory Registration and Prevention of Wasteful Expenditure) Bill, 2016”.
- This bill may be taken up as a private member’s Bill in the coming session.

A brief about the Bill

- The Bill also wants those spending above Rs. 5 lakh to contribute towards marriages of poor girls.
- Further, according to this bill, if a family spends above Rs. 5 lakh on a wedding, it has to contribute 10% of the amount on marriages of girls from poor families.
- Specifically, The bill seeks that “if any family intends to spend more than Rs. 5 lakh towards expenditure on marriage, such family shall declare the amount proposed to be spent in advance to the appropriate government and contribute 10% of such amount in a welfare fund which shall be established by the appropriate government to assist the poor and Below Poverty Line families for the marriage of their daughters.”
- The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit extravagant and wasteful expenditure on marriages and to enforce simpler solemnization.

C. GS3 Related

1. Can’t advance Rafale deliveries: Dassault

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Can%E2%80%99t-advance-Rafale-deliveries-Dassault/article17309183.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments, Defence

Key Points:

- India had requested to advance the delivery schedule of Rafale fighter jets.
- In response to this demand by India, Dassault Aviation, the manufacturer of these jets have stated that it was not possible as the jets have to be customised.
- India ordered 36 jets last year from France and deliveries are scheduled between 2019 and 2022.
- Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar had earlier said that they would request France to speed up deliveries further if possible.
- Under the terms of the contract, Dassault will begin training Indian pilots and technicians in operating the jets next year.
- Dassault will also bid for the Navy's tender for at least 57 carrier based aircraft.

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

The Hindu

1. ISRO sets the bar high

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/ISRO-sets-the-bar-high/article17308083.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) boosted its reputation further when it successfully launched a record 104 satellites in a single mission, by relying on its workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle rocket.

A brief account of the satellites launched

- An earth observation Cartosat-2 series satellite and two other nano satellites were the only Indian satellites launched: the remaining were from the United States, Israel, the UAE, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan and Switzerland.
- Of the 101 foreign satellites launched, 96 were from the U.S. and one each from the other five countries.

International Context

- Until now, Russia held the record of launching 37 satellites in a single mission, in 2014, while the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the U.S. launched 29 satellites in one go in 2013.
- Last June, ISRO had come close to NASA's record by launching 20 satellites in one mission.
- But ISRO views the launch not as a mission to set a world record but as an opportunity to make full use of the capacity of the launch vehicle.

Significance of the Launch

- The launch is particularly significant as ISRO now cements its position as a key player in the lucrative commercial space launch market by providing a cheaper yet highly reliable alternative.

The Way Ahead

- ISRO plans to launch more Cartosat-2 series satellites and even an improved version. Besides setting the record for the most number of satellites launched in a single mission, the Indian space agency has launched two nano satellites weighing less than 10 kg. It is a technology demonstrator for a new class of satellites called ISRO nano satellites (INS).

Objective of ISRO nano satellites (INS)

- The main objective of the INS, which will be launched together with bigger satellites, is to provide a platform on which payloads up to 5 kg from universities and R&D laboratories, and ISRO itself can be easily integrated for carrying out scientific research activities.
- With many Indian universities already building and launching nano satellites, the availability of a dedicated nano satellites platform is sure to boost space research in India.

2. The foul air we breathe

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/The-foul-air-we-breathe/article17308084.ece>

Category: Environment and Ecology

Topic: Pollution, Air Quality

Key Points:

- A new international report has drawn attention to the deadly pollutants that pervade the air that people breathe in India, causing terrible illness and premature death.
- This report is “The State of Global Air 2017”, conducted jointly by the Health Effects Institute and the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation.
- This report quantifies further what has been reported for some time now: that the concentration of the most significant inhalable pollutant, fine particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less (PM2.5), has been growing in India.
- It is important to note that several studies show long-term evidence of a steady deterioration in air quality in many countries.
- Burning of crop residues has a central role in causing pollution.
- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute proposed steps to convert the waste into useful products such as enriched fodder, biogas, biofuel, compost and so on, little progress has been made.

The Way Ahead

- In a country producing about 500 million tonnes of crop residues annually, the issue needs to be addressed in mission mode.
- Easy access to cheap solar cookers and biogas plants will also cut open burning, and help the rural economy.
- In conclusion, India’s clean-up priorities need to shift gear urgently, covering both farm and city.

The Economic Times

1. EC should scrap the ban on exit polls

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/ec-should-scrap-the-ban-on-exit-polls/>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Elections

Key Points:

Development:

- On January 29, the Election Commission (EC) had banned the conduct and publication of exit polls between February 4 and March 8, when five states were scheduled to vote.
- The editor of the online edition of Hindi daily Dainik Jagran had published an exit poll for the first phase of Uttar Pradesh elections.
- He was subsequently arrested.

Reaction to this development

- It has been suggested that it is condemnable to arrest a journalist for doing his job of disseminating information received from another agency, a pollster called RDI.
- Further, it has been expressed that the arrest will tend to strengthen state intolerance of media and could create a climate of suppression of facts that citizens need to know in order to take informed decisions and form opinions.

A critical look into exit polls

- The EC is of the opinion that the results of such polls influence voting behaviour during an election that plays out in multiple phases.
- For example, in the case of UP, India's largest state, voting would be conducted in seven phases spread over February 11 to March 8.
- Whether exit polls would outweigh the complex calculations voters have is debatable.
- But even if it is conceded that exit polls influence voting behaviour, why is that a bad thing? Leaders' speeches and rallies influence voting behaviour. So does advertising. Should these be banned?

PIB

1. Agreement between India and Croatia on Economic Cooperation

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158461>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Bilateral Agreements

Key Points:

- An agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on Economic Cooperation was signed by Commerce and Industry Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Government of India and Ms. Martina Dalic, Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of the Economy, Government of the Republic of Croatia on 14th February, 2017 in Zagreb, Croatia.

Prior Agreement Signed

- India and Croatia had earlier signed an Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation in September, 1994 with an aim to promote and develop bilateral trade and economic relations.
- The present Agreement between India and Croatia would be a step in continuity as the last one expired in November, 2009.

Bilateral Trade

- India's bilateral trade with the Republic of Croatia during 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 were US\$ 148.86 million, US\$ 205.04 million and US\$ 148.44 million respectively.
- The bilateral trade during the last three years has remained stable despite global slowdown.

2. PSLV-C37 Successfully Launches 104 Satellites in a Single Flight

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158472>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- In its thirty ninth flight (PSLV-C37), ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the 714 kg Cartosat-2 Series Satellite along with 103 co-passenger satellites.
- The imagery from the Cartosat-2 series satellite will be useful for cartographic applications, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management like road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps, change detection to bring out geographical and manmade features and various other Land Information System (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications.
- The data sets could be used for urban planning of 500 cities under the Amrut Planning Scheme.
- The government initiative of 100 smart city programme in which these data sets could be used for master plan preparation and detailed geospatial data preparation for rural roads and infrastructure development.
- The remaining 101 co-passenger satellites carried were international customer satellites from USA (96), The Netherlands (1), Switzerland (1), Israel (1), Kazakhstan (1) and UAE (1).
- This mission involved many technical challenges like realising the launch of a large number of satellites during a single mission within the time frame sought by the customers from abroad. Besides, ensuring adequate separation between all the 104 satellites during their orbital injection as well as during their subsequent orbital life was yet another challenge associated with this complex mission.
- With the successful launch, the total number of customer satellites from abroad launched by India's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV has reached 180.

3. Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi urges schools to strictly observe Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158468>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Social Justice

Key Points:

- The Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has urged schools to strictly observe Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment, issued by the National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) of WCD Ministry.
- The WCD Ministry has asked the Ministry of Human Resource Development for wide spread circulation and implementation of the Guidelines for Elimination of Corporal Punishment in schools.
- This was done in the light of the recent disturbing incident of girl students who were meted out tormenting corporal punishment in the school for not completing their homework. The incident was widely reported in the media, thereby bringing to public attention the issue of corporal punishment used in schools.
- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) under the authority of Ministry of Women & Child Development has developed and issued Guidelines for Eliminating Corporal Punishment in schools.

What do the guidelines entail?

- The Guidelines state constitution of Special Monitoring Cells to take prompt action in cases of physical punishment or harassment of children.
- They also suggest that Corporal Punishment Monitoring Cells (CPMCs) should hear grievances related to corporal punishment within 48 hours of the occurrence.
- The guidelines suggest that school teachers should provide a written undertaking that they would not engage in any action that could be construed as amounting to physical punishment, mental harassment or discrimination.
- It also says that schools should have annual social audits of physical punishment, harassment and discrimination.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

Corporal Punishment Monitoring Cells (CPMCs)

Cartosat-2

The Marriages (Compulsory Registration and Prevention of Wasteful Expenditure) Bill, 2016

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

Corporal Punishment Monitoring Cells (CPMCs)

Cartosat-2

The Marriages (Compulsory Registration and Prevention of Wasteful Expenditure) Bill, 2016

Practice Questions

Date: 16th February, 2017

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Initiatives and Interventions

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the following statements regarding “The Marriages (Compulsory Registration and Prevention of Wasteful Expenditure) Bill, 2016”,

1] According to this bill, if a family spends above Rs. 5 lakh on a wedding, it has to contribute 10% of such amount towards a welfare fund which shall be established by the appropriate government to assist the poor and Below Poverty Line families for the marriage of their daughters.

2] The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit extravagant and wasteful expenditure on marriages and to enforce simpler solemnization.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

According to this bill, if a family spends above Rs. 5 lakh on a wedding, it has to contribute 10% of such amount towards a welfare fund which shall be established by the appropriate government to assist the poor and Below Poverty Line families for the marriage of their daughters. The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit extravagant and wasteful expenditure on marriages and to enforce simpler solemnization.

Date: 16th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

2] Consider the following statements regarding 'ISRO nano satellites (INS)'

1] The INS system is developed as a co-passenger satellite to accompany bigger satellites on PSLV.

2] The main objective of the INS is to provide a platform on which payloads up to 5 kg from universities and R&D laboratories, and ISRO itself can be easily integrated for carrying out scientific research activities.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

The INS system is developed as a co-passenger satellite to accompany bigger satellites on PSLV. The primary objectives of INS system are to:

- Design and develop a low cost modular Nano satellite in the weight range of 10 kg capable of carrying payloads up to a weight of 5 kg
- Provide an opportunity for ISRO technology demonstration payloads
- Provide a standard bus for launch on demand services
- Provide an opportunity to carry innovative payloads for Universities / R&D laboratories

Date: 16th February, 2017

Category: Geography

Topic: Various Parts of the World

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements,

1] The neighbouring countries of Croatia are Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Slovenia.

2] The 'Horn of Africa', includes the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

The neighbouring countries of Croatia are Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Slovenia. The 'Horn of Africa', includes the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

Date: 16th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Space

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

4] Consider the following statements,

1] PSLV is ISRO's versatile launch vehicle for launching multiple satellites in polar SSOs, Low Earth Orbits (LEO) as well as Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) and sub GTO.

2] The PSLV has been in service for over twenty years and has launched various satellites for historic missions like Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter Mission, Space Capsule Recovery Experiment, Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) etc.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

Both the statements are correct.

Date: 16th February, 2017
Category: International Relations
Topic: Reports, Organizations
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

5] Which of the following organizations bring out the report known as 'Global Environment Outlook'?

- (a) UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
- (b) Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)
- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Answer: (a) UNEP brings out the report known as "Global Environment Outlook"

Current News Analysis

17-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

1. Talaq case may go to Constitution Bench

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/Talaq-case-may-go-to-Constitution-Bench/article17316291.ece>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Interventions, Judiciary

Key Points:

- The Supreme Court on 16th February, 2017 said it had to examine if personal law practices like triple talaq and polygamy were the “fundamental traits” of Islam.
- The Centre asked the Supreme Court to determine whether personal laws can be brought under the ambit of Article 13 (laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the fundamental rights) of the Constitution.

Background:

- The AIMPLB had submitted that the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction to strike down any provisions of personal law, but organisations and Muslim women from various walks of life across the country urged the court to strike down triple talaq and polygamy as “un-Islamic.”

A Look into Specifics

- In this context, the Centre’s question as to “whether personal law is ‘law’ under Article 13” is significant.
- Article 13, for one, is so inclusive in its ambit that the term ‘law’ in the constitutional provision includes anything from an “ordinance, order, by-law, rule, regulation, notification and even customs and usages” passed or made by the Legislature or any other “competent authority.”
- The Article mandates that any law in force in India before or after the commencement of the Constitution should not violate the fundamental rights of citizens enshrined in Part III of the Constitution.
- A judicial declaration from a Constitution Bench under Article 13 that personal laws are liable to comply with the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution would bring religious law, even uncodified practices, under judicial review.

Personal Laws and Article 13

- If the Supreme Court agrees that personal laws are included in the definition of laws under Article 13, the door will be opened wide for an aggrieved person to challenge in court a particular personal law of a religion as violative of the fundamental rights.
- In case the challenge succeeds in court, the personal law, to the extent of its inconsistency, shall become void.

Precedents

- The courts have made discordant notes about the immunity enjoyed by personal laws.
- The Bombay High Court in *State of Bombay versus Narasu Appa Mali* had held that personal law is not 'law' under Article 13.

2. India, Afghanistan take a hard line on Taliban at Moscow conference

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-Afghanistan-take-a-hard-line-on-Taliban-at-Moscow-conference/article17314301.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: India and her Neighbourhood- Relations

Key Points:

- India and Afghanistan took a hard line at the six-nation talks in Moscow on 15th February, 2017, opposing the dominant view from Russia, China and Pakistan to involve the Taliban in reconciliation efforts.

Important Statements Made:

- External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup said that denying "safe havens or sanctuaries to any terrorist group or individual in countries of our region," was essential to stabilising the situation in Afghanistan.
- Reconciliation efforts must be driven by the Afghanistan government and could only be facilitated by "friends and well wishers of Afghanistan," he said, indicating that the previous round of QCG (Quadrilateral Cooperation Group) hosted by Pakistan was not acceptable.
- Another point of contention that emerged was over the composition of the talks hosted by Russia.
- Afghanistan made a strong pitch for the United States to be included as one of its most important partners.
- It said it was a necessary part of all processes to "end war and usher in sustainable peace in Afghanistan".

Concluding Remarks

- With U.S. troop levels down to their lowest of about 8,400 at the end of President Obama's tenure, Afghanistan's government has been hoping President Trump will increase assistance to the country.

3. Two-state solution remains 'only way' for Israel-Palestine peace, insists UN

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/Two-state-solution-remains-%E2%80%99only-way%E2%80%99-for-Israel-Palestine-peace-insists-UN/article17316255.ece>

Category: International Relations

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Key Points:

- In a recent development, the UN envoy for the West Asia peace process told the Security Council that the two-state solution remains “the only way” to meet the aspirations of the Palestinians and Israelis.
- The envoy urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders to “carefully contemplate the future”, which he warned could be one “built on perpetual conflict, rising extremism and occupation”.

Trump's Comments:

- Mr. Trump had earlier announced that the U.S. would not insist on a two-state solution to the conflict.
- This comment was a break from Washington's decades-old policy and from the international consensus on the peace process.

Reaction to the Comments:

- Mr. Trump's comments have triggered sharp responses from Muslim countries and organisations.
- Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit said on 16th February, 2017 resolving the conflict would require a two-state solution.
- Mr. Gheit affirmed that the conflict “requires a comprehensive and just peace based on a two-state solution with an independent Palestinian state”, a statement said after he met UN chief Antonio Guterres in Cairo.

C.GS3 Related

1. Dassault, Reliance form JV for Rafale

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/Dassault-Reliance-form-JV-for-Rafale/article17316209.ece>

Category: Indian Economy, Science and Technology

Topic: Manufacturing, Developing new technology

Key Points:

- Reliance Aerostructure Limited has incorporated a 51:49 joint venture with Dassault Aviation.
- This effort has been made to capture a major share of the offset business arising from the €7.87 billion deal for Rafale fighter jets.
- The facility will come up at Dhirubhai Aerospace Park at Mihan, Nagpur and the construction work on the greenfield facility will start in May 2017, according to a company statement.

Background

- India and France signed a purchase agreement for the supply of 36 Rafale fighter jets for €7.87 billion in September last year.
- The contract includes a 50% offset obligation or about Rs. 30,000 crore, the largest-ever offset contract in India.

- DRAL will aim to grab a major share of this business, including components and parts.

Role of DRAL

- DRAL will support the Centre's "Make in India" and "Skill India" policies and develop major Indian programmes with high levels of technology transfer to benefit the entire aerospace sector.
- The proposed strategic partnership between Dassault and Reliance will also focus on promoting research and development projects under the IDDM programme (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured), an initiative of Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

The Hindu

1. The bumps ahead

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/The-bumps-ahead/article17314053.ece>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Inflation, Government Policy

Key Points:

- Indian is an economy that relies on public investment and private consumption to revive private investment and growth.

Important Statistics

- The last round of official statistics on prices and industrial activity signal testing times ahead.
- Industrial output plummeted by 0.4% in December 2016, led by a 2% decline in manufacturing (just five of 22 industries registered positive growth) and a 6.8% decline in consumer goods.
- Wholesale prices have risen at the fastest pace in two and a half years this January, at 5.25%.
- The fact that wholesale prices have risen at a fast pace, is particularly noteworthy since the pace of price rise at the consumer level slowed to 3.2% in the same month.
- In contrast, consumer prices had risen fractionally faster (3.4%) than wholesale prices (3.39%) in December.
- It is believed that this divergence in wholesale prices and the prices consumers pay is unlikely to last long.

Potential Concerns

- A rise in oil prices beyond \$65 a barrel would be a cause for concern, as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has said in his recent Budget.
- It is important to note that higher oil price-led inflation will bring back into focus the high excise duties on petroleum products that have boosted the Centre's tax kitty over the past couple of years.

- The RBI has cited 'transitory effects of demonetisation on inflation and output' as the rationale to hold interest rates and shift from an accommodative monetary stance to 'neutral'.

Concluding Remarks

- If inflation spikes in the coming months, it could further compress consumer spending, with obvious consequences for the investment cycle and job creation.

The Economic Times

1. Let's Not Rush Into More Bank Mergers

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/lets-not-rush-into-more-bank-mergers/>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Money and Banking

Key Points:

- In a recent development, the Union Cabinet gave a nod to the State Bank of India's (SBI) merger with its own five associate banks.
- It has been suggested that this is a welcome move.

Impact of the decision

- This decision will place the country's largest lender among the top 50 global lenders. This will bring efficiency in its treasury operations and lower operating costs.
- Bigger size would allow SBI to finance large infrastructure projects and takeover deals with greater ease.

Challenges and Prospects

- Already, the SBI carries the tag, along with ICICI, of a domestic systemically important bank and, therefore, needs to set aside more capital than its peers to cover risks. The combined entity should be well capitalised.
- The problem of bad loans must be resolved so that capital infusion does not end up as provisioning against bad loans.
- Employee integration could be tricky, apart from other reported challenges such as provisions for pension liability due to differing employment benefit structures and synchronising accounting policies for recognition of bad loans.

Concluding Remarks

- India needs more payment banks and small banks to achieve financial inclusion, not gigantism.

PIB

1. Tarini to be Inducted into Indian Navy on 18 February 17

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158527>

Category: Defence, Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Key Points:

- The Indian Navy's second ocean going sailboat Tarini will be inducted at a ceremony scheduled to be held at the INS Mandovi Boat Pool on evening of 18 February 2017.
- In order to promote ocean sailing activities and to encourage women empowerment, the Indian Navy conceptualized the idea of the First Indian All Women Circumnavigation of the Globe.

A brief note about Tarini

- The sail boat Tarini is being inducted into the Navy and is slated to be the platform for First Indian All Women Circumnavigation of the Globe expedition of the Indian Navy.
- INSV Tarini is almost identical to her illustrious predecessor, the iconic Mhadei which has sailed over 115000 nautical miles in the past eight years.
- The boat draws her origin from the famous Tara-Tarini temple of Orissa's Ganjam district. The word Tarini means a Boat and is also a Sanskrit word for Saviour.
- Tara-Tarini is a patron deity for sailors and merchants and is worshipped for safety and success at sea.
- Tara-Tarini of Orissa is known to have historical linkages with the river Goddess Mhadei- the exclusive boat deity of the Mhadei river of Goa.
- Both the deities Tarini and Mhadei have sculptural similarities.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:

1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn

Quadrilateral Cooperation Group

Article 13

INS Mandovi

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

Quadrilateral Cooperation Group

Article 13

INS Mandovi

Practice Questions

Date: 17th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Developments

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the following statements regarding the sail boat 'Tarini',

1] The sail boat Tarini is being inducted into the Navy and is slated to be the platform for First Indian All Women Circumnavigation of the Globe expedition of the Indian Navy.

2] The boat draws her origin from the famous Tara-Tarini temple of Orissa's Ganjam district. The word Tarini means a Boat and is also a Sanskrit word for Saviour.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

Date: 17th February, 2017

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Judiciary

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

2] The constitution is the supreme law of the land. The guardian of the constitution is,

a) The Supreme Court

- b) The Constituent Assembly
- c) The Parliament
- d) The President

Ans a) The Supreme Court of India is the guardian of the constitution.

Date: 17th February, 2017
Category: Polity and Governance
Topic: Judiciary
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements,

- 1] The primary duty of the Supreme Court is to ascertain whether the laws are executed and obeyed properly and to see to it that no person is deprived of justice in any court of law.
- 2] Article 131 of the Indian Constitution vests the Supreme Court with original and exclusive jurisdiction to determine the justiciable disputes between the Union and the States or between the States.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

The primary duty of the Supreme Court is to ascertain whether the laws are executed and obeyed properly and to see to it that no person is deprived of justice in any court of law.

Article 131 of the Indian Constitution vests the Supreme Court with original and exclusive jurisdiction to determine the justiciable disputes between the Union and the States or between the States.

Date: 17th February, 2017
Category: Polity and Governance
Topic: Judiciary
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

4] Consider the following statements,

- 1] Under Article 32 of the constitution of Supreme Court can issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights.
- 2] These writs are in the nature of Habeas Corpus, Mandamus, Prohibition, Certiorari, and Quo Warranto.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

Both the statements are correct.

Date: 17th February, 2017
Category: Geography
Topic: Various Parts of the World
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

5] Consider the following statements,

- 1] It is bordered by Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China.
- 2] The Durand Line is a frontier boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both 1 and 2

Both statements are correct.

Current News Analysis

18-02-2017

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

1. There's no concept of National Song: SC

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/theres-no-concept-of-national-song-says-sc/article17323101.ece>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Interventions, Judiciary

Key Points:

- The Supreme Court has orally noted that “there is no concept of National Song”.
- The Supreme Court has refused to intervene in a petition seeking a direction to the government to frame a national policy to promote and propagate the ‘National Song’, along with the National Anthem and the National Flag.
- A Bench of Justices Dipak Misra, R. Banumathi and Mohan M. Shantanagoudar, in a short order, said it should be clearly noted that Article 51A (a), citing the citizens’ fundamental duties, does not refer to ‘National Song.’
- “It only refers to National Flag and National Anthem,” the order observed.

Petition that was filed

- The petition was filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay.
- The petition had contended that a national policy should be framed “in the spirit of Article 51A to achieve the great golden goals, as set out in the Preamble of the Constitution of India.”
- The petition also sought the court to “ascertain the feasibility of singing/playing the National Anthem and National Song in the Parliament/Assembly, public offices, courts and schools on every working day.”

A brief note about Article 51(a)

- Article 51A(a) mandates that citizens should abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

C.GS3 Related

1. Helicopter deal takes shape

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/helicopter-deal-takes-shape/article17322225.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Manufacturing, Developing new technology

Key Points:

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Rosoboronexport and Russian Helicopters of Russia had entered into a joint venture (JV) for manufacturing Kamov-226T light utility helicopters in India.
- This joint venture (JV) will be registered very soon and the final contract is likely to be signed this year.

Further Developments

- The HAL is setting up a new helicopter manufacturing facility at Tumakuru outside Bengaluru where the Kamov's would be built in addition to other helicopters in its portfolio.
- Russia expects the helicopter to function the same way as the JV for Brahmos cruise missile.
- The Kamov-226T helicopters are meant to replace the aging and obsolete Cheetah and Chetak fleets of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The number is expected to go beyond 200 given the requirement from the services. India and Russia intend to export the Kamov-226T to third countries after meeting domestic requirement.

2. Apple to start India manufacturing in coming months with iPhone SE

<http://in.reuters.com/article/apple-india-manufacturing-idINKBN15X03W>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Manufacturing

Key Points:

- Apple Inc will in the coming months start assembling its lower-priced iPhone SE models at a contract manufacturer's plant in Bengaluru.
- Apple's Taiwanese manufacturing partner Wistron Corp is setting up a plant in Bengaluru to focus solely on assembling iPhones.
- Apple's move comes as it seeks to boost its share in the world's fastest growing major mobile market, where handsets far cheaper than Apple's iPhones dominate.
- It also comes as smartphone sales growth is slowing in Asia's other massive market, China.

D. GS4 Related

E. Important Editorials

The Hindu

1. Working on the ISRO principle

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/working-on-the-isro-principle/article17321178.ece>

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Space, Developments

Key Points:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is an agency of the government of India associated with the development of cutting-edge technology and global standards in execution.
- In fact, by launching 104 satellites from a single rocket, it has now set the global standard in a field.

Reasons why ISRO is successful

- ISRO reports to the Prime Minister and his office rather than a line ministry.
- This has been critical to its success. In line ministries, ministers and bureaucrats have a tendency to micromanage their turf, and this includes autonomous bodies, agencies and enterprises.
- The geographical location of the organisation also matters in terms of creating an appropriate ecosystem to nurture excellence. A number of critical government-run organisations and enterprises are either headquartered in Delhi (because it's the seat of the Union Government).
- ISRO, headquartered in Bengaluru, is distant from Delhi and immune from the capital's drawbacks.
- More importantly, it is located in the appropriate geography in what is India's science and technology hub.
- It has the right ecosystem to attract talent and build its knowledge capabilities more than most government agencies do.
- Unlike many government agencies which are staffed by generalists, ISRO is staffed by specialists right from its technocratic top management.
- ISRO is also more agnostic than most government agencies about cooperating with and working with the best in the private sector. The building blocks of many of ISRO's successes come from outside the government system.

Concluding Remarks

- Cutting-edge research and development in spheres where there may not be ready profits is one area the government should focus on building ISRO-like institutions. Defence could be one such.
- Independence from line ministries is important for a high performing organisation.
- The creation of high performing government bodies requires starting from scratch and focussing on a few basics:
 - a) Real autonomy from ministries,
 - b) Right geographical location/appropriate ecosystem, a team of specialists,
 - c) Partnership with the private sector and operating only in spheres where there is no alternative to government.

The creation of a handful of such agencies could have a transformative effect.

The Economic Times

1. Missing Pieces in Commodity Markets

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/missing-pieces-in-commodity-markets/>

Category: Indian Economy

Topic: Government Policy

Key Points:

- In Finance minister Arun Jaitley's Budget 2017 speech, he did mention that the commodities markets require reforms for the benefit of farmers.
- He also called for an operational and legal framework to integrate spot and derivatives markets for commodity trading, which is unexceptionable.
- It is important to note that the capital markets regulator, Sebi, faces legal difficulties in allowing options trading in commodities, and has reportedly decided to focus, for now, on attracting more institutional players to the commodity futures market.
- But such segmented approach in market design will not do.

Framework

- We lack a firm legal framework for commodity options.
- The Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1952, does have provisions that give rise to a measure of uncertainty in futures trading.
- While the FCRA is under the Union List, trades on the underlying commodities fall under the State List for agricultural commodities.
- There are various other standalone laws, such as the Warehousing Act, 2007, or the Food Safety Act, 2006, or the APMC Act that produce an incoherent ecosystem for commodity derivatives.

Concluding Remarks

It is advisable to have a sophisticated and well-developed financial system to better manage myriad risks across currencies, securities and derivative contracts.

PIB

1. Science Express Should Reach Out to more than Six Lakh Villages of The Country': Anil Madhav Dave

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158534>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Interventions

Key Points:

- Three Ministers jointly flagged off the 9th phase of Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS) from Safderjung Railway Station.
- Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Anil Madhav Dave, said that in future, the Science Express should reach out to 6.5 lakh villages of the country.
- He emphasised that till the train is transformed into a peoples' movement and a vehicle to motivate people to take individual actions and initiatives to fight climate change, it will not succeed in its endeavours on the ground and will only be reduced to becoming a point of discussions in seminars.

BACKGROUND:

- Science Express is an innovative mobile science exhibition mounted on a 16-coach AC train which has been custom-built for Department of Science & Technology (DST) by Indian Railways.
- This unique mobile exhibition was first launched in October 2007 by DST. Since then, it has made eight tours of the country, travelling about 1,42,000 km and exhibiting at 455 locations.
- Over its 1602 exhibition days, Science Express received an overwhelming response and 1.56 crore visitors. SECAS has become the largest, the longest running and the most visited mobile science exhibition.

2. India accelerating efforts to eliminate measles and control rubella by 2020, convenes expert group to recommend measures

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=158542>

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Initiatives

Key Points:

- Accelerating efforts to eliminate measles and control rubella, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, convened a meeting of an Expert Advisory Group to recommend strategies to end the scourge of these killer and debilitating diseases by 2020.
- The expert advisory group on measles and rubella, congratulated India for its efforts so far and, especially for launching the Measles and Rubella campaign earlier this month.
- It recommended timely roll out of the remaining phases of the MR campaign, besides further stepping up surveillance and strengthening the reach of the measles-rubella vaccination campaign, to maximize the gains made so far, and make progress in the fight against measles and rubella.
- India has made important gains in recent years. Measles deaths have declined by 51% from an estimated 100,000 in the year 2000 to 49,000 in 2015.
- This has been possible by significantly increasing the reach of the first dose of measles vaccine, given at the age of nine months under routine immunization programme, from 56% in 2000 to 87% in 2015.
- In 2010 India introduced the second dose of measles-containing vaccine in routine immunization programme to close the immunity gap and accelerate measles elimination.
- Nearly 11.8 crore children aged nine months to 10 years were vaccinated during mass measles vaccination campaigns between 2010 and 2013 in select states of the country. During the recent annual Union Budget presentation, the government reiterated its commitment to measles elimination.

F. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn:**1. Concepts-in-News: Related Concepts to Revise/Learn**

Science Express

Article 51A

2. BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGS IN NEWS

BILLS/ACTS/SCHEMES/ORGANISATIONS IN NEWS	Links to Refer
India Innovation Index: A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII	http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157941

3. Tags

Science Express

Article 51A

Practice Questions

Date: 18th February, 2017

Category: Science and Technology

Topic: Basic Science

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

1] Consider the following statements,

1] Measles is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and it is normally passed through direct contact and through the air.

2] The virus infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

Measles is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and it is normally passed through direct contact and through the air. The virus infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body.

Date: 18th February, 2017
Category: Polity and Governance
Topic: Basic Provisions
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

2] Consider the following statements,

1] Article 51A(a) mandates that citizens should abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.

2] Recently, a bench of Justices of the Supreme Court, in a short order, said it should be clearly noted that Article 51A (a), citing the citizens' fundamental duties, does not refer to 'National Song.'

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans c) Both the statements are correct.

Date: 18th February, 2017
Category: Polity and Governance
Topic: National Symbols, Anthem
Source: The Hindu
Difficulty level: Medium
Type: Factual

3] Consider the following statements,

1] The song 'Vande Mataram', was composed in Sanskrit by Bankimchandra Chatterji.

2] The words 'Satyameva Jayate', written in Devnagari Script, which is also the National Motto of India, are from the 'Mundaka Upanishad'.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

Both the statements are correct.

The song 'Vande Mataram', was composed in Sanskrit by Bankimchandra Chatterji. The words 'Satyameva Jayate', written in Devnagari Script, which is also the National Motto of India, are from the 'Mundaka Upanishad'.

Date: 18th February, 2017

Category: Polity and Governance

Topic: Government Initiatives

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

4] Consider the following statements regarding the 'Science Express' which was recently in the news,

1] Science Express is an innovative mobile science exhibition of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt. of India, mounted on a 16 coach AC train.

2] It has become the largest, the longest running and the most visited mobile science exhibition and has six entries in the Limca Book of Records.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans d) Neither 1 nor 2

Both the statements are correct.

Date: 18th February, 2017

Category: International Relations

Topic: Reports, Organizations

Source: The Hindu

Difficulty level: Medium

Type: Factual

5] Which of the following organizations bring out the report known as 'Global Wage Report'?

- (a) ILO (International Labour Organization)
- (b) The United Nations Development Programme

- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Answer: (a) ILO (International Labour Organization) brings out the report known as 'Global Wage Report'