

## G.S.PAPER-1

### Topic: Social Issues

#### 1. 'Debate over triple talaq stems from ignorance'

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/debate-over-triple-talaq-stems-from-ignorance/article18402554.ece>

#### Context:

Should Muslim Personal laws be reformed?

#### What's in news?

- **Jamaat-e-Islami Hind** released a booklet titled '**Problems Facing Muslim Women and their Solution**' to create awareness about Muslim Personal Law awareness.
  - ✓ Burden of preserving Islamic family tradition lies on Muslim women.
  - ✓ Accuses media and anti-Islamic forces of showing Muslims in a negative manner.
  - ✓ According to the organization - the current debate on 'triple talaq' and objections raised on Muslim personal laws are a consequence of the "rot" and religious ignorance in Muslim society.

#### 'Managers of family'

- Terming Muslim women "supervisors" and "managers" of the family.
- Un-Islamic customs and traditions prevalent in society today are due only to the women unaware of her din (faith).
- The JIH also says that those Muslim women who approached the Supreme Court against 'triple talaq' and polygyny are "**irresponsible and ignorant of Islamic teachings**" for thinking they are "**oppressive to women.**"
- It also justifies polygyny among Muslims claiming it is "compatible with human nature."
- While declaring that is a "great sin" for a man to pronounce three talaqs in one go, the booklet says it is not desirable if a man makes "haste in bringing his matrimonial life to an end."
- Even as it claims that both men and women have rights to divorce under Islamic Law, the **booklet discourages Muslim women from divorcing their husbands.**
- However, it acknowledges that women are being deprived of their rightful share of inheritance under Quranic laws.
- It argues against taking disputes to court, saying that "when the cases are made public, anti-Islam forces get a chance to point fingers at Islam."

## Topic: Geography

### 2. Farakka barrage not to blame for Bihar floods: Uma

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/farakka-barrage-not-to-blame-for-bihar-floods-uma/article18401435.ece>

#### Context:

- Last year, monsoon rains led to severe floods in Bihar and Chief Minister of the state — who petitioned Prime Minister Modi — said decommissioning the 40-year-old, 2.6 km-long Farakka Barrage was the only way out.
- **Blame: Farakka Barrage originally conceived to keep the Kolkata port navigable had only worsened the flood situation in Bihar over the years.**

#### Union Water Resource Minister innovative solution:

- Union Water Resources Minister, Uma Bharti, has stated that the Farakka Barrage — said to be responsible for aggravating floods in Bihar during the monsoon — is blameless.
- Developing the waterway between Haldia and Allahabad will take care of the silt accumulation in the Barrage.

#### Water Way:

- National Waterway 1 (NW1) will be on the Ganga from Haldia in West Bengal to Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, stretching 1,620 kilometres. The NW1 will span Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- Project being funded by the World Bank.
- Project also involves constructing barrages.

#### Madhav Chitale Committee:

- Committee, led by retired engineer Madhav Chitale, investigates the problems of siltation in the Ganga.
- Solution: Constuction of navigable water ways.

#### Farakka Barrage

- Barrage across the Ganges River, located in the Indian state of West Bengal, roughly 16.5 kilometres (10.3 mi) from the border with Bangladesh near Chapai Nawabganj District. The barrage is about 2,240 metres (7,350 ft) long.
- The purpose of the barrage is to divert 1,100 cubic metres per second (40,000 cu ft/s) of water from the Ganges to the Hooghly River for flushing out the sediment deposition from the Kolkata harbour without the need of regular mechanical dredging.



- After commissioning the project, it was found that the diverted water flow from the Farakka barrage was not adequate to flush the sediment from the river satisfactorily.

## **G.S.PAPER-2**

### **Topic: Bilateral Relations**

#### **1. U.S. keen to expand Malabar exercise to include Australia**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/us-keen-to-expand-malabar-exercise-to-include-australia/article18394812.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- The U.S. is keen on expanding **Malabar trilateral exercises** but it will be a decision based on discussion and consensus with the partner countries, said a senior U.S. Navy officer.
- The first step is an observer status and then potentially as participants.

#### **Next Edition:**

- The next edition of Malabar is scheduled to be held in July this year in the areas “surrounding India in Bay of Bengal” for which the planning conferences are under way.

#### **Australia's willingness to join:**

- Australia has requested India for observer status at this year's Malabar exercises and is awaiting a final decision.
- But India has been reluctant to let expand the exercises further from the trilateral format which included Japan due to sensitivities from China.
- Japan and the U.S. are keen on expanding the games to include Australia which was expressed by officials from both countries on various occasions.

#### **Focus:**

- This year's exercises are expected to focus on Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) with increasing Chinese submarine presence in the Indian Ocean.

#### **Basic Information:**

- Malabar exercise began in 1992 as a bilateral naval exercise between India and the U.S. has since grown in scope and complexity acquiring considerable heft in recent times.
- In 2015, it was expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of Japan.

### **Topic: Health Issues**

#### **2. Focus on cold chain for safety of vaccines**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-miscellaneous/tp-others/focus-on-cold-chain-for-safety-of-vaccines/article18402827.ece>

#### **Context:**

- Union government has set the target for achieving 90% vaccination by 2021.

- The focus of the **universal immunisation programme** has shifted to **strengthening of the cold chain to ensure the safety of vaccines**.

#### **Cold Chain and Immunisation:**

- A cold chain is essentially a temperature-controlled supply chain with a series of continuous storage, transportation and distribution.
- Experts said that a well-managed supply chain has emerged as the most fundamental step for immunisation.
- Health care experts and medical professionals have emphasised on addressing managerial and operational challenges in the supply chain management of vaccines at a workshop organised .
- Experts also highlighted the significance of routine immunisation in the public health delivery system and nutrition among women and children.
- It was pointed out that the universal immunisation programme was catering to 2.60 crore infants and 3 crore pregnant women in the country, while saving 25 lakh lives every year.
- Since an effective intervention was needed to deliver life-saving vaccines in time to the targeted beneficiaries, the cold chain management covered the aspects of vaccine handling, stock control, minimising vaccine wastages, handling emergency situations, storage and distribution.
- Over 25% of vaccines go to waste globally, mainly because they lose their potency before the vials are opened, while India records about 5.50 lakh child deaths annually due to vaccine-preventable diseases.

### **3. Plateful of pain**

<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/plateful-of-pain-57788>

#### **Context:**

- Our health, 25 years from now, would be the sum total of the daily impacts of a degrading environment on our bodies
- Triggers such as air pollution, toxins in water and food and climate change would work synergically
- Different permutations and combinations of communicable and non-communicable diseases would weaken our bodies

#### **Disease burden due to Climate Change:**

- Climate change would possibly be the biggest cause for diseases 25 years from now
- A warmer world would help vectors proliferate and expand their territories
- Deadly new diseases would emerge from dried-up forests, piggybacking on animals that would have nothing to sustain them there
- We have no idea what these new zoonotic diseases would be and have no drugs to treat them

- Our inability to deal with the Zika epidemic is a rude reminder of our helplessness
- Even known enemies like cholera would spread to newer areas in a warmer world and extreme weather events such as sudden rain
- Heat strokes would become more common

#### **Climate change and malnutrition:**

- Climate change and extreme weather events would destroy crops, and persistent droughts would dry up forestlands, which would have been otherwise an alternative source for food-stuff
- This would perpetuate food scarcity
- As a result, some parts of the world would have to deal with chronic malnutrition

#### **Future Food:**

- The food we would be left with would be the next big determinant of our health in the future
- It would be full of obesogenic toxins and cancer-causing agrochemicals
- Genetically modified (GM) foods that are linked with allergies would become more common in our markets, despite the fact by that time, more data on GM food's detrimental effects would have accumulated
- Food rich in fat, salt and sugar rich foods would lead to obesity and increase the risk of diabetes and heart ailments

#### **Lifestyle diseases:**

- There are problems such as Internet addiction, which are bound to increase with time
- More aging populations would result in a large number of people suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases
- Psychological problems, including depression, too would be high
- Light pollution would disturb our sleep and, in turn, result in many chronic diseases

#### **Post-antibiotic era:**

- The proportion of communicable diseases might go down, the fact that we would be in the post-antibiotic era, when pathogens would have stopped responding, is a cause for concern
- Treating simple infections would be difficult
- This could mean that India and other parts of the world too would fail to eliminate diseases such as kalaazar, filariasis, leprosy, measles and tuberculosis and miss national deadlines set by governments

#### **Implications:**

- The increase in diseases has wide-ranging public health implications
- We are already witnessing a trend towards the privatisation of public healthcare, and private healthcare is not likely to be bothered about the poor, who would have the least capacities to adapt in a changing world
- Moreover, it seems we will be unable to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 3, which says that by 2030, countries would have to find ways to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all of all ages
- Goal 2, which promises to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, seems unattainable
- Only the affluent might have the luxury of benefitting from medical breakthroughs
- There would be artificial hearts, kidneys and lungs to deal with organs damage

#### **Artificial organs in future world:**

- Road accident victims who lose limbs would have the option of bio-prosthetics, which outperform the natural body parts
- Artificial uterus would take care of infertility issues
- Even artificial eyes would be available
- Diagnostic tests would be performed on sweat, instead of blood, and wearable sensors would monitor us day and night
- Surgeries would be less invasive
- Personalised medicines would make life better for the sick
- We would even find ways to deal with the pesky little vectors by using fungi and bacteria

### **G.S.PAPER-3**

#### **Topic: Environmental Science and Ecology**

##### **4. Japan's men-only island up for World Heritage status**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/japans-men-only-island-up-for-world-heritage-status/article18400810.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- Japan's island of Okinoshima, a men-only ancient religious site in Fukuoka prefecture, to be soon added to the list of World Heritage list.
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), notified Japan of its decision.

#### **Cultural Practice:**

- **Okinoshima** still follow strict taboos from ancient times, including the controversial ban on women from entering the island .Men setting foot on the island are first required to strip all clothes and perform a cleansing ritual.

- It was also the site of successful exchanges with the people of the Korean Peninsula and China between the fourth and ninth centuries.
- **National treasure:** Some 80,000 artefact brought as gifts from overseas have been uncovered on the island, including gold rings from the Korean Peninsula and glass cup fragments from Persia.

#### 5. 'Quality of water has improved'

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/quality-of-water-has-improved/article18402571.ece>

##### Context:

- Highlights of recently carried out survey on water awareness by **The World Water Council** in major parts of the world, including India.

##### Highlights:

- The standard of drinking water in India has improved in the last five years but a lot of work still remains to be done.
- More than one-third of Indians think that not enough is being done to achieve the UN's sustainable development goals to make water and sanitation for all a reality by 2030.
- 31% of Indians said they had been in a situation where it was unsafe to drink water but they had no other choice and suffered from diseases like diarrhoea and gastroenteritis.
- A majority (71%) of Indians said that safe drinking water had improved over the last five years.
- 62% of the Indians said they believed that the government was doing enough to support access to safe drinking water.

#### World Water Forum

- The survey was done ahead of the 8th World Water Forum that is scheduled to take place in the Brazilian capital Brasilia in March 2018.

##### Basic information:

#### World Water Forum

- The World Water Forum is an event focusing on perceived issues surrounding water. It is hosted by the World Water Council and takes place every three years. World Water Forum aims to:
  - Raise awareness with decision makers and the public at large on water issues and, subsequently, to generate action;
  - Contribute to improving access to water supply and sanitation and report on progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals;[2]
  - Provide opportunities to progressively develop shared visions on challenging water issues, to develop new partnerships and to pave the way for cooperation and action among a wide diversity of organisations and individuals;
  - Encourage greater media attention for water issues and solutions

## **World Water Council**

- The **World Water Council** is an international think tank founded in 1996, with its headquarters in Marseille, France.
- It has 341 members (March 2017) which include organizations from the UN and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector (construction, engineering and manufacturing companies), governments and ministries, academic institutions, international organizations, local governments, and civil society groups.
- Founders and constituent members of the World Water Council include the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature(IUCN), the International Water Association (IWA), Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux, the United Nations agencies UNDP and UNESCO, and the World Bank.
- Its stated mission is "**to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management, and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on earth.**"
- Every third year the World Water Council organizes the World Water Forum in close collaboration with the authorities of the hosting country.

## **Topic: Science and Technology**

### **6. NASA missions on solar system**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sci-tech-and-agri/nasa-missions-on-solar-system/article18402610.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- A new mission to Saturn's moons Titan or Enceladus to find signs of life beyond Earth cannot be ruled out as NASA says it is reviewing 12 proposals for future unmanned solar system mission to be launched in the mid-2020s.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements:

1. In India, magnetite is the most important industrial iron ore in terms of the quantity used
2. The iron ore produced in Goa is of lower grade when compared to the other major iron ore producing states

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Correct Answer: B

Type: Geography

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

Magnetite is the finest iron ore with a very high content of iron up to 70 per cent. It has excellent magnetic qualities, especially valuable in the electrical industry.

Hematite ore is the most important industrial iron ore in terms of the quantity used, but has slightly lower iron content than magnetite (50-60 per cent).

Over 85 per cent of the iron ore produced in Goa is of low-grade. Compared to Goa, over 90 per cent of the ore produced in the other four major states producing iron ore — Chhatisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka and Jharkhand — is of a higher grade with ferrous content of more than 60 per cent.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Many auto companies in India already manufacture car engines which support the Bharat Standard (BS)-VI norms
2. At present, BS-IV auto fuels are being supplied all over the country

Which of the above statements is/are true?

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

Correct Answer: A

Type: Current Affairs

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

“I am confident the automobile industry will support us on this move. We will support them in the difficulties that they face but to control pollution, they also need to support us...Many auto companies already export car engines which support the BS VI norms. Moreover, we have given them time till 2020 to implement it,” Mr. Gadkari said.

At present, BS-IV auto fuels are being supplied in over 30 cities while the rest of the country has BS-III fuels.

3. The first University Commission of independent India, is popularly known as the

- a) Radhakrishnan Commission
- b) Maulana Azad Commission
- c) Prasad Commission
- d) Zakir Commission

Correct Answer: A

Type: Current Affairs

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

In the context of Indian Universities’ presence (rather, the lack of it) in top-200 world rankings, this is of relevance: “..The first University Commission of independent India, popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948, pointed out that universities need to have ‘world-mindedness and national sentiments’..”

4. The Rashtriya e-market Services Ltd. (ReMS) is a

- a) Joint venture created by the Government of India and the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) in order to create a national common agricultural market
- b) Joint venture created by the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture in order to create a national common agricultural market
- c) Unified Market Platform offering single licensing system for around 50 agricultural markets in Karnataka
- d) Joint venture created by the Government of Madhya Pradesh and NCDEX Spot Exchange in order to create a unified state agricultural market

Correct Answer: C

Type: Geography

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

“In Karnataka, 51 of the 155 main market yards and 354 sub-yards have been integrated into a single licensing system. Rashtriya e-market Services Ltd. (ReMS), a joint venture created by the State government and NCDEX Spot Exchange, offers automated auction and post auction facilities (weighting, invoicing, market fee

collection, accounting), assaying facilities in the markets, facilitate warehouse-based sale of produce, facilitate commodity funding, price dissemination by leveraging technology. The wider geographical scope afforded by breaking up fragmented markets has enabled private sector investment in marketing infrastructure.”

## GS Paper 2

### Topic : Polity

#### 1. Defence pay hike from May

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/defence-pay-hike-from-may/article18404958.ece>

- After a hold up of around eight months, military work force are probably going to get their overhauled pay suggested by the Seventh Pay Commission with unfulfilled obligations in May's pay.
- The Union Cabinet issued arrangements a week ago to implement the suggestions for military faculty.

#### Basic Info :

- Pay Commission is set up irregularly by Government of India, and gives its proposals with respect to changes in pay structure of its workers. Since India's Independence, seven pay commissions have been set up all the time to audit and make suggestions on the work and pay structure of all considerate and military divisions of the Government of India.
- The seventh Central Pay Commission (7CPC), constituted in February 2014 to survey the standards and structure of remunerations of all focal government non military personnel workers including safeguard powers, presented its give an account of 19 November 2015.
- 7CPC's proposals influences the association, rank structure, pay, remunerations and annuity, of 13,86,171 military work force.

### Topic : International Relations

#### 1. Space for all: South Asia satellite launch a positive signal to the neighbourhood

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/space-for-all/article18404975.ece>

#### Key Points :

- By propelling the GSAT-9 'South Asia satellite', India has reaffirmed the Indian Space Research Organization's logical ability, yet the informing is maybe more geopolitical than geospatial.
- India has most likely picked up goodwill over the subcontinent through the motion, and the minute was perfectly caught by the videoconference that took after the dispatch, demonstrating all SAARC pioneers (except for Pakistan's) as

one on one screen as they talked about the advantages they would get in correspondence, telemedicine, meteorological estimating and broadcasting.

- The Belt and Road Initiative is a foundation system that each SAARC country other than India has marked on to.
- At long last, by proceeding with the venture in spite of Pakistan's choice to haul out, the Modi government is flagging that it will proceed with its arrangements for the area — 'SAARC short one' — if vital.
- This vision was managed a minor blow as of late when Bhutan hauled out of the 'smaller than usual SAARC' elective arrangement of an engine vehicles understanding for BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India Nepal), yet the administration's steadiness demonstrates it won't be dissuaded by the undeniable local requirements of the SAARC gathering.

## 2. Japan pitches for Chabahar port

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/japan-pitches-for-chabahar-port/article18405900.ece>

- Japan is keen on collaborating with India on projects in Asia and Africa as a counter to China's Belt and Road initiative (B&RI).

### Basic Info :

- India-Iran cooperation in the field of development of infrastructure and regional connectivity including the development of Chabahar Port is in line with the Tehran Declaration (2001) and the New Delhi Declaration (2003).
- Chabahar Port lies outside the Persian Gulf in Iran and will help in expanding maritime commerce in the region.

### Advantages of Chabahar Port :

Following the Chabahar port development agreement with Iran, India will get access to Eastern transit Corridor to:

- Eastern part of Iran
- Afghanistan, which is a landlocked country
- CIS countries like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan etc
- Alternative to North South Corridor (Access to Russia and North Baltic countries).

## GS Paper 3

Topic : Economy

1. This time with feeling: RBI's new power must be accompanied by wider reform

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/this-time-with-feeling/article18404974.ece>

Key Points :

- The ordinance enabling the RBI to act on bad loans must be accompanied by wider reform.
- The Centre has empowered the Reserve Bank of India to get banks to take tougher steps, including insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings against defaulters, to address the growing volume of bad loans on their books.
- An ordinance to amend the Banking Regulation Act of 1949 has been issued to quell doubts whether the existing provisions allowed the RBI to direct banks to deal with specific stressed assets.
- The RBI has also been vested with the power to form oversight committees wherever it deems fit. Currently such committees exist only for loans brought into a scheme for sustainable structuring of stressed assets, also known as S4A.

Some reforms taken till now :

- In 2015, the Prime Minister launched a Gyan Sangam conclave with bankers, and an Indradhanush road map to revitalise public sector banks.
- Last year, a Banks Board Bureau was set up to recommend the appointment of top bosses at banks and help them develop strategies and plan raising of capital.

Need to do further reforms :

- If the government wants to see a spurt in investment and job-creation, it needs to do more than just pin its hopes on new oversight committees.
- It must amend the anti-corruption law as has been promised for a while now, and accept the need to fix the policy-level stress affecting sectors such as telecom, power and highways.

2. ADB eyes Delhi as regional hub

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/adb-eyes-delhi-as-regional-hub/article18405760.ece>

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has operationally started working to create several regional hubs including New Delhi as one for South Asia.

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, India's Governor to the ADB, had earlier urged the multilateral lender to establish a hub in New Delhi, so that it could expedite lending to development projects across the region.
- India, is a founding member of the ADB and its fourth-largest shareholder. The bank's current portfolio of financing in the country includes 87 sovereign loans totalling \$13.2 billion.

### 3. Time for a digital Indian Rupee

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/time-for-a-digital-indian-rupee/article18404956.ece>

- With a dream to place India on the digital India scene, the nation is starting to comprehend transformative plan like demonetisation by the legislature.
- Advanced exchanges have taken off with Net keeping money, charge cards, computerized wallets, installment portals, Aadhaar pay, PPI, UPI, installments bank and BHIM since demonetisation.
- The digital fiat cash works in an indistinguishable path from do notes and coins. By uprightness of its computerized nature, it can possibly be the most monetarily comprehensive instrument.
- Any individual in India can hold it, exchange it and utilize it to settle obligations, be it a rancher living in Gahmar town in U.P. or, on the other hand a salaried individual in Mumbai, with or without a financial balance.

#### Advantages :

- It would have two additional advantages over paper notes and coins. It would transcend time and space, i.e. it could be transacted remotely between two parties. And, it would be counterfeit-proof!
- First, the advanced technology would prevent any fraud. Also, any counterfeit with a single rupee could be detected immediately without hurting circulation.
- The digital currency would bring more innovation, competition, better consumer protection, more consumer choices, more open access and better regulatory transparency. It would create a 'firewall' between banking and digital payment systems, protecting bank accounts and information on digital systems.
- Since digital India Rupee would be a centrally-issued sovereign currency, it would possess immense trust, security and control. It would also bring transparency on black money, tax evasion and other illicit activities under the legal framework. Also, with the negligible logistics costs and benefits of riding on existing infrastructure, the cost of digital India Rupee would be marginal.
- India's cash-to-GDP ratio is 12.04%. The transition from physical notes and coins to a digital currency could drastically bring this down at par with the rest of the world.

Practice Questions :

1. Consider the statements :

1. The development of Chabahar Port is in line with the Tehran Declaration (2001) and the New Delhi Declaration (2003).
2. Chabahar Port lies in the Gulf of Oman in Iran and will help in expanding maritime commerce in the region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

Answer : A

Topic : IR

Type : Factual

Explanation :

India-Iran cooperation in the field of development of infrastructure and regional connectivity including the development of Chabahar Port is in line with the Tehran Declaration (2001) and the New Delhi Declaration (2003).

Chabahar Port lies outside the Persian Gulf in Iran and will help in expanding maritime commerce in the region.

2. Consider the statements :

1. Pay Commission is a constitutional body.
2. Pay Commission will not give recommendations to pay related things to defense personnel.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

d) None

Answer : D

Topic : Polity

Type : Factual

Pay Commission is set up intermittently by Government of India, and gives its recommendations regarding changes in salary structure of its employees. Since India's Independence, seven pay commissions have been set up on a regular basis to review and make recommendations on the work and pay structure of all civil and military divisions of the Government of India.

3. Consider the statements :

1. The digital fiat currency works in the same way as do notes and coins.

2. Any person in India can hold it, transfer it and use it to settle debts with or without a bank account.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) None

Answer : C

Topic : Economy

Type : Factual

Explanation :

The digital fiat currency works in the same way as do notes and coins. By virtue of its digital nature, it has the potential to be the most financially inclusive instrument.

Any person in India can hold it, transfer it and use it to settle debts, be it a farmer living in Gahmar village in U.P. or a salaried individual in Mumbai, with or without a bank account.

4. Who is the India's governor to Asian Development Bank ?

- a) Governor of RBI
- b) Finance Minister
- c) Secretary to the Finance Ministry
- d) Commerce and Industry Minister

Answer : B

Topic : Economy

Type : Factual

Finance Minister is the India's governor to Asian Development Bank.

5. Recently Gyan Sangam was in news. What is this about ?

- a) Tax reforms
- b) Initiative to bring more innovation in the higher education
- c) Banking reforms
- d) To do indigenization of defense sector

Answer : C

Topic : Economy

Type : Factual

In 2015, the Prime Minister launched a Gyan Sangam conclave with bankers, and an Indradhanush road map to revitalise public sector banks.



## **G.S.PAPER-2**

### **Topic: Polity**

#### **Act tough against Maoists, States told**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/act-tough-against-maoists-states-told/article18411774.ece>

#### **Context:**

- Meeting of Chief Ministers and top-officers of the Left Wing Extremism affected states

#### **Highlights:**

- States to take ownership in leading operations against the Maoists.
- An aggressive approach needs to be adopted to solve the menace
- No deployment of army in anti-naxal operations , even for the purpose of training.
- Unified Coordination and Command is needed on the LWE front.
- Central armed police forces to actively co-ordinate with the States.

#### **States voice concern:**

- **States having meagre resources to cater to the needs of such operations alone.**
- Several States also raised the issue of discontinuation of central schemes such as Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) and Integrated Action Plan (IAP) and a considerable reduction in central funds as an impediment to winning the war against the Maoists.

#### **Way forward:**

- Prevention of Money Laundering Act needed a review to make it more effective in choking funds to the Maoists
- Additional deployment of forces.
- Proper implementation of schemes in the LWE areas.

## **Topic: Bilateral Relations**

### **China offers to rename OBOR to allay India's fears**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/china-offers-to-rename-obor-to-allay-indias-fears/article18410413.ece>

**Context:** Chinese One Belt One Road and India's apprehensions. India has refused to confirm or regret its attendance at China's Belt and Road Forum to be held in Beijing on May 14-15.

### **What's in news?**

- China is planning to consider renaming the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) if it would end India's reservations over its One Belt One Road (Or Belt and Road Initiative) passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- China insists that the OBOR has no connection to sovereignty disputes.

### **4-point solution:**

- Chinese 4-point solution to **"manage differences"** between India and China, including –
  - ✓ New treaty on cooperation
  - ✓ Restarting talks on a free trade agreement (FTA)
  - ✓ An early resolution to the border issue
  - ✓ Aligning the B&R with India's "Act East policy."

### **Territorial dispute**

- China has no intention to get involved in the sovereignty and territorial disputes between India and Pakistan
- The CPEC is for promoting economic cooperation and connectivity. It has no connections to or impact on sovereignty issues.

### **Key point:**

- According to the Chinese government more than 100 countries will participate, and all SAARC countries minus India have already signed on to the 60-nation infrastructure initiative first proposed in 2013.

### **‘India can play great role in peace efforts’**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-can-play-great-role-in-peace-efforts/article18410759.ece>

#### **What’s in news?**

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to arrive in India.
- The visit aimed at strengthening old ties.
- Palestinian wants India to play important role in the Israel-Palestine peace process.

### **G.S.PAPER-3**

#### **Topic: Economy**

#### **Centre to raise with U.S. non-tariff barriers**

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/markets/centre-to-raise-with-us-non-tariff-export-curbs/article18410274.ece>

#### **What’s in news?**

- India is planning to take up with the Trump administration the barriers imposed by the U.S., which are hurting Indian goods exports to that country in sectors including **agriculture, pharmaceuticals and other industrial products**.
- The issue would be the agenda of the next **India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** — the main bilateral platform for discussing and resolving trade and investment issues.

#### **U.S. “non-tariff/Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) barriers:**

- The U.S. non-tariff/Sanitary & Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) barriers include those imposed under laws concerning bio-terrorism, child-labour, national security, ‘Buy America’ norms preferring U.S.-made items
- American suppliers in U.S. Government purchases, registration fee hikes (in sectors such as pharma), food safety as well as animal and plant health regulations.

#### **Various protectionism measures:**

- **Child labour:** According to the Indian Commerce Ministry, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has arbitrarily listed 23 items produced in India on the **‘List of Goods Produced by Child Labour or Forced Labour’** — which is in effect a ban on their import.
- **X-ray scanning of containers:** The Ministry has also referred to the U.S. Government measures envisaged within an initiative to counter potential terrorist threats to the international maritime container trade system. **X-ray scanning of containers** cause additional costs for Indian exporters across sectors.

- **The Trade Expansion Act of 1962 of the U.S.:** allowing American manufacturers to petition for curbing imports from third nations on **national security grounds** without providing proof from industry. This move restricts foreign competition.
- **Pharma exports:** increase in registration fees, approval delays and low approval rates for registrations mandatory for sale of all new drugs in the U.S. Ayurveda and traditional Indian medicines are hit by the U.S. requirement of clinical trials while the practice of traditional Indian medicine systems such as Siddha and Unani are not allowed by the U.S. Federal Government.
- **Agricultural commodities:**
  - ✓ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency registers, approves and fixes a tolerance level for certain pesticide residues. Indian Basmati Rice exports will be hurt owing to import alerts due to the presence of such pesticide residues.
  - ✓ U.S. **requirement of irradiation treatment and inspection of mangoes** prior to shipping from India. It is a time-consuming and costly certification process hurting the competitiveness of Indian mangoes in the U.S. market. Indian grapes, litchis, pomegranates, honey, marine and meat products are also impacted.
- The U.S. has imposed countervailing duties on Indian exports, including those by steel and paper industries.

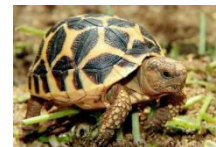
## Topic: Environmental Science and Ecology

### Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary hitches wagon to star tortoises

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/chinnar-wildlife-sanctuary-hitches-wagon-to-star-tortoises/article18410581.ece>

#### What's in news?

- An ambitious project of the Kerala Forest Department at **the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS)** to rehabilitate Indian **star tortoises (Geochelone elegans)** seized from smugglers has turned into a major success.
- CWS is the only rehabilitation centre for star tortoises in the country. The CWS is the only place in Kerala where star tortoises are known to occur in the wild.
- The sanctuary is haven for tortoises seized from poachers.



## Topic: Internal Security and defense

### Push for private sector in defence production

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/push-for-private-sector-in-defence-production/article18411043.ece>

#### What's in news?

- The Government has accelerated efforts to finalise the ambitious **Strategic Partnership (SP) model**, which would give a major boost to private sector participation in defence manufacturing.
- The policy, which is part of the **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016**, will set out guidelines on how major Indian private sector companies can tie up with global Original Equipment Manufacturers in critical military systems and platforms.
- The final clearance would be accorded by the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**.

#### Defence Acquisition Council:

- The Government has set up a Defence Acquisition Council headed by the Defence minister for decision making in regard to the totality of the new planning process, which inter-alia involves according 'in principle' approval of Capital Acquisitions in the long term perspective plan and according 'in principle' approval for each Capital Acquisition programme.
- The decision flowing from the Defence Acquisition Council are to be implemented by the following three Boards:-
  - ✓ Defence Procurement Board headed by the Defence Secretary;
  - ✓ Defence Production Board headed by the Secretary (Defence Production);
  - ✓ Defence Research & Development Board headed by the Secretary (Defence Research & Development).

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year on January 9th to mark
  - a) The date of return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa for good
  - b) The date of departure of Mahatma Gandhi to South Africa from India
  - c) The date when Independent India first received a Non-Resident Indian's remittance
  - d) The date of return of indentured labourers from the Caribbean in 1948

Incorrect

Correct Answer:A

Type: G.K

Level: moderate

Explanation: The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year on January 9th to mark the date of return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa for good

2. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is under the

- a) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
- b) Ministry of Agriculture
- c) Ministry of Food Processing Industries
- d) None of the above

Correct Answer: A

Type: Current Affairs

Level: moderate

Explanation:

APEDA is under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

3. Which among the following contributes the maximum number of troops to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations?

- a) India
- b) North America
- c) Africa
- d) Asia Pacific

Correct Answer: C

Type: Current Affairs

Level: moderate

Explanation: Africa contributes the maximum number of troops to the UN peace keeping operations.

4. Consider the following statements

- 1. India, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh have recently signed a Motor Vehicles Agreement
- 2. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 between India and Nepal is still in force

Which of the above statements are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) 2 only
- c) Both
- d) None

Correct Answer: C

Type: Current Affairs

Level: moderate

Explanation:

Aug 2014: The two Prime Ministers agreed to review, adjust and update the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 and other bilateral agreements. Both sides agreed that the revised Treaty should better reflect the current realities and aim to further consolidate and expand the multifaceted and deep rooted relationships in a forward looking manner.

## G.S.PAPER-2

### Topic: Polity

#### 1. Disclose foreign funds, MHA tells political parties

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/disclose-foreign-funds-mha-tells-political-parties/article18415883.ece>

#### What's in news?

- The Ministry of Home Affairs issued notices to all political parties, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, to disclose the foreign funds received by them.
- Notices were sent as per norms prescribed under the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010**, which bars any political party from receiving donations from any “foreign company”.

#### Changes made in FCRA:

- Last year, government had amended the FCRA through the Finance Bill route
  - ✓ Amendment allowed foreign origin companies to fund NGOs
  - ✓ Cleared the way for donations to political parties by changing the definition of “foreign companies”.
- The amendment ensures that “donations made by such (foreign shareholding) companies to entities including political parties will not attract provisions of the FCRA, 2010”.
- Contributions made by Indian companies with foreign holdings up to the prescribed limit as per the extant Foreign Direct Investment policy will not be treated as foreign contribution.

#### Representation of People's Act and foreign funds:

- The Representation of People's Act bars parties from receiving foreign funds.

#### The Foreign Contribution (regulation) Act, 2010

“It is a consolidating act whose scope is to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals or associations or companies and to prohibit acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activities detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”

## Topic: Bilateral Relations

### 2. Netherlands backs India's bid for permanent seat in UN security council

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/netherlands-backs-india-s-bid-for-permanent-seat-in-un-security-council/story-98Me1IiJOAHLNVjAd0ox3I.html>

#### What's in news?

- The Netherlands came out in support of India's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), saying the country is a "prime candidate" if the premier global body were to expand.

#### UN reforms and new innovative ideas:

- India and other G4 nations including Brazil, Germany and Japan recently said they were open to innovative ideas and willing to not exercise veto as permanent members of a reformed Security Council until a decision on it has been taken.

#### G4 nations:

- The G4 nations comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan are four countries which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.
- Unlike the G7, where the common denominator is the economy and long-term political motives, the G4's primary aim is the permanent member seats on the Security Council.
- Each of these four countries have figured among the elected non-permanent members of the council since the UN's establishment.

### 3. Despite CPEC, our stand on Kashmir unchanged, says China

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-insists-cpec-does-not-change-its-position-on-kashmir/article18414285.ece>

#### What's in news?

- China reiterated that its position on the Kashmir issue remained unchanged despite its "promotion" of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as an economic undertaking.
- China's Ambassador Luo Zhaohui rebutted the assumption that the CPEC infringed **India's sovereignty**, as it passed through the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). **"The CPEC is for promoting economic cooperation and connectivity. It has no connections to or impact on sovereignty issues,"** he said.

## **G.S.PAPER-3**

### **Topic: Economy**

#### **1. NITI Aayog shelves A.P. port project**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/niti-aayog-shelves-ap-port-project/article18415456.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- NITI Aayog finally shelved a proposal to develop a greenfield port at Dugarajapatnam in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh as it was found to be technologically and financially unviable.
- The decision to close the chapter was triggered by the techno-economic feasibility study conducted by American consultant Aecom for the Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT), the major equity partner in the project.
- The development of the greenfield port has been mentioned in the A.P. Bifurcation Act, 2014.
- UPA-II had obtained the Cabinet's approval for the project along with another port in Sagar (West Bengal). Sagar project is gaining momentum.

#### **Dugarajapatnam port:**

- No progress on the Dugarajapatnam port ever since it was finalised .
- It was proposed to be located at Nakkapalli in Visakhapatnam and Ramayapatnam in Prakasam district.
- One of the main reasons for finding Dugarajapatnam unviable is its proximity to Chennai, Krishnapatnam, Kattupalli and Kamarajar (Ennore) ports. The massive dredging required to handle big size vessels is another deterrent.
- A port of a large scale is not viable anywhere as the country is witnessing economic slump and most of the ports are not able to ensure capacity utilisation.

#### **Green field**

- It refers to investment in Building new production facilities in a foreign country.
- It refers to investment in a manufacturing, office, or other physical company-related structure or group of structures in an area where no previous facilities exist.

#### **Brownfield**

- It refers to investment Used for purchasing or leasing existing production facilities to launch a new production activity.

## 2. Tax processed foods: FSSAI panel

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tax-processed-foods-fssai-panel/article18415721.ece>

### What's in news?

- A committee of medical experts and nutritionists has recommended a **tax on “highly-processed” foods and sugar-sweetened beverages**.
- The body, tasked by the Food Standards and Safety Authority of India (FSSAI), which is a Union Health Ministry body, has also advocated :
  - ✓ **Ban on advertisements promoting foods high in FSS (fat, salt, sugar) during TV shows and channels aimed at children.**
  - ✓ A progress towards a total ban, as being done in a few other countries like Chile is the need of the hour.
  - ✓ Celebrity endorsements of such foods need to be discouraged.
  - ✓ Study on urban populations: Low Income Groups (LIG) reportedly consumed more fried snacks and sweets than High Income Groups (HIG) and, the highest consumption of bakery items was in slums
  - ✓ **Detailed labels must:**
    - All packaged food carry detailed labels specifying the energy value in kcal (kilo calories); the amounts of protein, carbohydrates and fat; and the amount of any other nutrient for which a nutrition or health claim is made.
    - If relevant, the label should also specify the amount or type of fatty acids or the amount of cholesterol, saturated fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids in gram (g) and cholesterol in milligram (mg), the panel said

## Topic: Science and Technology

### 3. ‘Primitive hominids lived alongside modern humans’

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/primitive-hominids-lived-alongside-modern-humans/article18415791.ece>

### What's in news?

- **New research observations :**
  - ✓ Primitive hominids may have lived in Africa at the same time as humans
  - ✓ New findings that could change the understanding of human evolution.
  - ✓ Fossils found deep in South Africa’s Rising Star cave complex in 2013 have been dated by several expert teams with their findings suggesting the hominids, called **Homo naledi**, may have lived alongside Homo sapiens.
  - ✓ It had earlier been thought that the hominids were millions of years old.
  - ✓ **Homo naledi** is found to be aged between 2,36,000 and 3,35,000-years-old — the beginning of the rise of modern human behavior.

## Miscellaneous:

### 4. 'Tallest bridge built can withstand blasts'

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tallest-bridge-built-can-withstand-blasts/article18416628.ece>

#### What's in news?

- The world's tallest railway arch bridge over the Chenab river in Jammu, providing rail connectivity to Kashmir, will be capable of handling high intensity blasts and resisting the worst possible natural disaster.
- The 1.3 km long bridge over the Chenab at a height of 359 metres will be 35m taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris and five times the height of the Qutab Minar in Delhi.
- The bridge will be a crucial link in the 111-km stretch between Katra (Jammu) and Banihal (Kashmir) which is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla section of the railway project aimed at linking Kashmir through rail with the rest of the country.

<b>Steel wonder</b> A look at the 24,000 tonne bridge coming up across Chenab river <b>Project lead:</b> Konkan railway <b>Estimated cost:</b> <b>₹1,200 crore</b> <b>Length:</b> <b>1.3 kilometre</b> <b>Height:</b> 359 metres (35 metres taller than Eiffel Tower/five times the height of Qutub Minar)	 <b>Construction in progress</b> <b>Project completion (tentative):</b> March 2019 <b>Shock management:</b> Can withstand earthquakes of Zone 5 level and high intensity blasts <b>All weather friend:</b> Can resist temperature of -20 °C and wind speeds of 250 kmph	 <b>New era:</b> An artist's impression of the bridge being constructed across Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir • AFP
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## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Among the following who are the Agaria Community?
  - a. A traditional toddy tappers community of Andhra Pradesh
  - b. A traditional fishing community of Maharashtra.
  - c. A traditional silk-weaving community of Karnataka
  - d. A traditional salt-pan workers community of Gujarat.

Correct Answer: d

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation: The Agaria are a Muslim community found in the state of Gujarat in India.

2. In which State is the Buddhist site Tabo Monastery located?
  - a. Arunachal Pradesh
  - b. Himachal Pradesh
  - c. Sikkim
  - d. Uttrakhand

Correct Answer: b

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation: Tabo Monastery is located in the Tago village of Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh.

3. In which one of the following States has India's largest private sector sea port has been commissioned recently?
  - a. Andhra Pradesh
  - b. Karnataka
  - c. Kerala
  - d. Tamil Nadu

Correct Answer: a

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation: Andhra Pradesh

4. An increase in the Bank Rate generally indicates that the
  - a. Market rate of interest is likely to fall
  - b. Central Bank is no longer making loans to commercial banks
  - c. Central Bank is following an easy money policy
  - d. Central Bank is following a tight money policy

Correct Answer: d

Type: Economy

Level: Moderate

Explanation: A Tight monetary policy is a course of action undertaken by Central Bank to constrict spending in an economy, or to curb inflation when it is rising too fast. The increased bank rate increases the cost of borrowing and effectively reduces its attractiveness.

5. If Panchayats is dissolved, elections are to be held within

- a. 1 month
- b. 3 months
- c. 6 months
- d. 1 year

Correct Answer: C

Type: Polity

Level: Moderate

Explanation: Duration of Panchayats is 5 years. Fresh election to constitute a Panchayat shall be completed before the expiry of its term; or in case of dissolution before the expiry of a period of 6 months from the date of its dissolution.

## G.S.PAPER-2

### Topic: Polity

#### 1. Funds to parties: Govt. may amend FCRA again

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/funds-to-parties-govt-may-amend-fcra-again/article18421352.ece>

#### Context:

- Delhi High Court issued notice to the government for not initiating any action against the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, which received foreign funds from two subsidiaries of Vedanta, a U.K.-based company.
- The Home Ministry will seek the Attorney-General's opinion to amend the repealed **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) 1976**, which barred foreign donations to political parties.

#### FCRA amendment:

- FCRA was amended last year through the Finance Bill route.
- This amendment allowed foreign-origin companies to fund NGOs and also cleared the way for donations to political parties by changing the definition of "foreign companies."
- Even though the amendment was done retrospectively it only made valid the foreign donations received after 2010, the year when the 1976 Act was amended.

#### Contempt petition:

- **Association for Democratic Reforms**, a political watchdog, moved a **contempt petition** against the Home Ministry in March pointing out that the directives of the High Court against the two political parties which received foreign funds were not followed.
- The ADR filed a PIL plea against the two parties for violating the FCRA.
- The Delhi High Court had held that the donations were illegal in 2014, but the two parties challenged the order in the Supreme Court but later withdrew the petition.

#### Foreign companies definition anomaly:

- The original FCRA provision- declares that any company with over 50 per cent FDI was a foreign entity
- Finance and Commerce ministries- treat companies based in India and having Indian directors and employees as Indian subsidiaries.

## 2. Supreme Court plans to go paperless

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-plans-to-go-paperless/article18420746.ece>

### What's in news?

- **The Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **ICMIS**, a significant step being taken by the Supreme Court: **one that will take it from a being a paper court to becoming a digital court.**
- The Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS) will allow a litigant to **digitally file** a case and watch its progress on a **real-time basis**.
- The system will help litigants access data and retrieve information online.
- There is a proposal to integrate the system with all the 24 High Courts and the subordinate courts.
- **Advantage:** usher in transparency, reduce manipulation and help the litigant track the progress of a case on a real time basis.
- **Pendency of cases:** Over 61,000 cases are pending in the apex court, while the 24 High Courts have 38.70 lakh pending cases.

## 3. EC to hold all-party meet on EVMs

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ec-to-hold-all-party-meet-on-evms/article18420836.ece>

### What's in news?

- The Election Commission released the agenda for an all-party meeting on May 12.
- The agenda includes –
  - ✓ Deliberations on the security of electronic voting machines (EVMs).
  - ✓ The electoral body will also invite suggestions from the parties on conducting a “machine tampering” challenge.
  - ✓ Suggestions on revisiting the rules on counting of paper slips from the VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) system will also be discussed.
  - ✓ **Stringent provision-** The proposal to make bribery and undue influence during elections a cognisable offence. The Commission is of the view that law has to be amended to make penal provisions more stringent.
  - ✓ To discuss proposals such as one on capping donations in cash at Rs. 20 crore or 20% of the donations in a year, whichever is less.

### Election Commission proposals:

- The EC has proposed that anyone charged with bribery be disqualified from contesting elections.
- The EC has been calling for disqualification even prior to the conviction by court in the case of for serious offences.

- The EC has suggested that for crimes punishable with imprisonment of five years or more for a case registered at least six months earlier, disqualification should commence from the stage the charges are framed by the court.

### **Representation of the people Act and EC:**

- In Representation of the People Act, there is a specific section (58A) that empowers the EC to order a re-poll or to countermand election in a constituency in the event of booth capturing.

### **Topic: Bilateral Relations**

#### **4. Recourse to ICJ ‘carefully considered’**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/recourse-to-icj-carefully-considered/article18421290.ece>

#### **Context:**

- India got a stay on Pakistan’s death sentence to arrested **former Navy official Kulbhushan Jadhav** at an **international tribunal**.
- The government defended going to the tribunal, as a **“carefully considered decision.”**
- The Ministry of External Affairs said the decision to resort to arbitration at the **International Court of Justice**, after **a gap of 46 years**, was appropriate as the ultimate aim is to save Mr. Jadhav’s life.

### **India and ICJ:**

- India has in the past refused to accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ on issues such as the **Atlantique aircraft incident** of 1999 and in **the Saurav Kalia case**.

### **Atlantique aircraft incident**

- The Atlantique Incident was an event in which a Breguet Atlantic patrol plane of the Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm, with 16 people on board, was shot down by the Indian Air Force for violating Indian airspace. The episode took place in the Rann of Kutch on 10 August 1999, just a month after the Kargil War.
- Pakistan later lodged a compensation claim at the International Court of Justice, blaming India for the incident, but the court dismissed the case, ruling that the Court had no jurisdiction in the matter

**Saurav Kalia case:** Captain Saurabh Kalia was an officer of the Indian Army who was killed during the Kargil War while being held as a prisoner of war by the Pakistani security forces. He along with five other soldiers of his patrolling team was captured alive and kept in captivity where they were tortured, then killed.

## **The International Court of Justice :**

- **The International Court of Justice** (French: Cour internationale de justice; commonly referred to as the World Court, ICJ or The Hague) is the primary judicial branch of the United Nations (UN).
- Seated in the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands, the court settles legal disputes submitted to it by states and provides advisory opinions on legal questions submitted to it by duly authorized international branches, agencies, and the UN General Assembly.
- **Jurisdiction:** As stated in Article 93 of the UN Charter, all 193 UN members are automatically parties to the Court's statute. Non-UN members may also become parties to the Court's statute under the Article 93(2) procedure. Once a state is a party to the Court's statute, it is entitled to participate in cases before the Court. However, being a party to the statute does not automatically give the Court jurisdiction over disputes involving those parties.

## **Topic: Health Issues**

### **5. Rajasthan to launch action plans for reducing infant mortality**

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/rajasthan-to-launch-action-plans-for-reducing-infant-mortality/article18422469.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- The Rajasthan government has decided to launch district-level action plans for utilising locally available resources to reduce infant mortality rate (IMR).
- The action plans will be based on the socio-economic conditions prevailing in each district.
- Importance of district-level action plans - better coordination among the doctors working in the primary health centres for optimum utilisation of resources.
- The IMR in Rajasthan was 32 for every 1,000 live births, according to Sample Registration System Baseline Survey-2014.
- Action plans would aim at reducing IMR to 12 per 1,000 live births by 2030 by improving the intensive care units, referral services and availability of the medical staff and strengthening the infrastructure.

### **6. After coronary stents, cap on prices of other devices likely**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/after-coronary-stents-cap-on-prices-of-other-devices-likely/article18420942.ece>

#### **What's in news?**

- Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said the government was considering capping prices of other medical devices.
- In February, the **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** had capped the price of bare-metal stents at Rs.7,260 and drug-eluting stents at Rs. 29,600, after declaring coronary stents as “**essential medicines.**”

#### **Why such a move?**

- To ensure medicines and medical devices remain affordable.

**The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA):**

- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a government regulatory agency {set up as per executive order and thus not a statutory body} that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.
- The NPPA was formed on 29 August 1997. It has been given powers to implement and enforce the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO), 1995/2013.
- It can fund studies regarding pricing of drugs.
- It also has the task to monitor drug shortages and take appropriate actions to rectify it.
- It also has to collect and maintain data regarding the import and export of drugs, market shares of pharmaceutical companies and their profits.
- It also handles legal disputes that arise out of policies created by it.
- It advises the Government of India in matters of drug policies and pricing.
- It renders advice to the Central Government on changes/ revisions in the drug policy.
- It can also cap the prices of a drug and recently it capped the prices of coronary stent.

**7. Multidrug-resistant TB will rise in India, says new study**

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/multidrug-resistant-tb-will-rise-in-india-says-new-study/article18420846.ece>

**Context:**

- Health Ministry set itself an ambitious target of eliminating tuberculosis (TB) by 2025
- A new study in the medical journal Lancet says that India's TB crisis is likely to get worse.

**Report:**

- Multidrug Resistant-Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), a version of the disease where patients do not respond to first-line drugs, will become more common than it is now.
- The report projects that, by 2040, the percentage of MDR-TB will make up 32.5% of all TB cases in Russia, 12.4% of the TB cases in India, 8.9% of the TB cases in the Philippines, and 5.7% of all TB cases in South Africa.

## Hotspot of MDR-TB

- India is home to the most serious **‘hotspots’ of MDR-TB transmission**, especially overcrowded cities such as Mumbai.
- Not only does **India shoulder the highest TB burden in the world**, with over 2 million of the 10 million reported cases, it also accounts for the most drug-resistant patients — nearly 1.3 lakh people who do not respond to first-line drugs.
- It is estimated that each year there are 10.4 million new cases of TB, leading to 1.8 million deaths globally.
- Nearly 40% of all drug-resistant cases occur in Russia, India, the Philippines, and South Africa – accounting for more than 230,000 cases of drug-resistant disease in 2015..

## Key Fact:

- Two new TB drugs, **Bedaquiline and Delamanid** are to be made available in India’s national healthcare system.
- The drug is available only in six sites across the country, and according to the Health Ministry’s TB report, only 207 of the 79,000 patients who need the drug have access to it.

## G.S.PAPER-3

### Topic: Economy

#### 1. Rail regulator to define performance standards

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/rail-regulator-to-define-performance-standards/article18420449.ece>

### What’s in news?

- India’s first rail regulator, Rail Development Authority (RDA) functional areas:
  - ✓ Look at tariff structures for passenger and freight operations
  - ✓ Set standards of performance and efficiency - enforceable under the Railways Act.
  - ✓ RDA defined standards of performance and efficiency ,would be notified as rules under the Railway Act to give a binding force upon acceptance
  - ✓ RDA would be authorised to check for deviations and suggest remedial measures
  - ✓ The regulator will provide guidance on quantity and quality of service provided to passengers. These may include setting standards including

hours of service, frequency of trains, capacity per coach, cleanliness level, and quality of water, food, furnishing and linen.

**RDA's non-functional areas:**

- The regulator will, however, not involve itself in policy making of the Indian Railways, operations and maintenance of the rail system, financial management, setting technical standards and compliance of safety standards, the resolution said.
- Regulator would only make recommendations on tariff and not impose a tariff on the Indian Railways.

**Regulator's structure:**

- The Railway Board also defined the structure of the RDA with a Chairman along with three members each for tariff, public private partnership and efficiency, standards and benchmarking.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Identify the correct Statement

- A. The Representation of the People Act bar political parties from receiving foreign funds.
- B. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act bar political parties from receiving foreign funds.
- C. Both A and B
- D. Neither A nor B

Correct Answer: C

Type: Polity

Level: Easy

Explanation: The Representation of the People Act and the FCRA bar political parties from receiving foreign funds.

2. Consider the following statement with reference to The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

- 1. It is a statutory body
- 2. It controls the prices of Pharmaceutical drugs in India.

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1only
- B. 2only

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer: B

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation: The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a government regulatory agency {set up as per executive order and thus not a statutory body} that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.

3. Consider the following statements

1. In Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis, patients do not respond to second-line of drugs.
2. Drugs like **Bedaquiline and Delamanid** are not adequately available in India's national healthcare system.
3. India shoulders the highest TB burden in the world

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. All are correct
- D. 1 and 3 only

Correct Answer: B

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

- ✓ Multidrug Resistant-Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), a version of the disease where patients do not respond to first-line drugs
- ✓ **Bedaquiline and Delamanid** are to be made available in India's national healthcare system.
- ✓ Not only does **India shoulder the highest TB burden in the world**, with over 2 million of the 10 million reported cases, it also accounts for the most drug-resistant patients — nearly 1.3 lakh people who do not respond to first-line drugs.

4. Consider the following statements

1. Railway Development Authority would involve in policy making of Railways.
2. Railway Development Authority would involve in setting safety standards for the railways.
3. Railway Development Authority would impose tariff on Indian Railways.

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only

- C. All are correct
- D. None of the above

Correct Answer: D

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

India's first rail regulator, Rail Development Authority (RDA) functional areas:

- ✓ Look at tariff structures for passenger and freight operations
- ✓ Set standards of performance and efficiency - enforceable under the Railways Act.
- ✓ RDA defined standards of performance and efficiency ,would be notified as rules under the Railway Act to give a binding force upon acceptance
- ✓ RDA would be authorised to check for deviations and suggest remedial measures
- ✓ The regulator will provide guidance on quantity and quality of service provided to passengers. These may include setting standards including hours of service, frequency of trains, capacity per coach, cleanliness level, and quality of water, food, furnishing and linen.

**RDA's non-functional areas:**

- **The regulator will, however, not involve itself in policy making of the Indian Railways, operations and maintenance of the rail system, financial management, setting technical standards and compliance of safety standards,.**
- **Regulator would only make recommendations on tariff and not impose a tariff on the Indian Railways.**

Who is the present Indian member of the International Court Of Justice?

- A. Dalveer Bhandari
- B. N.V Ramana
- C. Amitava Roy
- D. Arjan Kumar Sikri

Correct Answer:A

Type:G.K

Level:Easy

Explanation: Dalveer Bhandari (born 1 October 1947) is an Indian member of the International Court of Justice and was a judge of the Supreme Court of India.

## G.S.PAPER-1

### Topic: Social Issues

#### 1. Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims worst off, says Indian Exclusion Report

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/dalits-adivasis-muslims-worst-off-says-indian-exclusion-report/article18427801.ece>

#### In news:

- 2016 Indian Exclusion Report (IXR)- released by Centre for Equity Studies (CES) in New Delhi
- **Crux:** Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims continue to be the worst-hit communities in terms of exclusion from access to public goods
- 2016 Report reviews exclusion with respect to four public goods: pensions for the elderly, digital access, agricultural land, and legal justice for under trials.
- The groups most severely and consistently excluded from provisioning tend to the same historically disadvantaged groups: **Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, and persons with disabilities and age-related vulnerabilities**
- India's refusal to be a signatory to a non-binding UN Human Rights Council resolution to protect human rights on the Internet indicates reluctance to incorporate a rights-based approach to access.

#### Meagre land holdings:

- ✓ The pattern of land distribution “broadly reflects the socio-economic hierarchy — large landowners invariably belong to the upper castes, cultivators to the middle castes, and agricultural workers are largely Dalits and Adivasis.
- ✓ The rate of landlessness was highest among Dalits, at 57.3%. Among Muslims, it was 52.6%, and 56.8% of women-headed households were landless. Around 40% of all those displaced by “development activity” were Adivasis.
- ✓ Where Dalits, Muslims and women owned land, the holdings were meagre in size, with only 2.08% of Dalit households owning more than two hectares of land. Also, the quality of land owned by Dalits was very poor, with 58% of it having no irrigation facility
- ✓ Land reform efforts have not benefited Dalits, women or Muslims significantly
- ✓ Land allotments to SC/ST households were often only on paper, as allottees were forcefully evicted or not allowed to take possession

#### Digital exclusion:

- ✓ 1.063 billion Indians were offline even though India ranks among the top five nations in terms of the total number of Internet users.
- ✓ Poverty and geographic location were the two major barriers to digital access, with urban locations enjoying better Internet penetration rates.

**Internet reach:**

- ✓ IT access have been riddled with implementation problems like poor infrastructure, a lack of adequate institutional frameworks, low literacy in the targeted areas, and poor cooperation from government officials
- ✓ **In the new thrust towards a cashless economy, digital exclusion can often also result in financial exclusion**

**G.S.PAPER-2****Topic: Health Issues****2. Govt. regulator gives nod for GM mustard**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-regulator-gives-nod-for-gm-mustard/article18430592.ece>

**What's in news?**

- **The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)**, India's apex regulator for genetically modified seeds.
- GEAC cleared GM mustard for environmental release and **use in farmer fields**.
- Approval is dependent on a final nod from Environment Ministry.

**Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH -11):**

- The transgenic mustard
- Developed by a team of scientists at Delhi University led by former vice chancellor Deepak Pental under a government-funded project.
- It uses a system of genes from soil bacterium that makes mustard — generally a **self pollinating plant** — better suited to hybridisation than current methods.

**Key Fact:**

- GM mustard would be the first transgenic food crop to be allowed for commercial cultivation in Indian fields and would be a gateway for several genetically-modified food crops in India.
- GM seeds are the need of the hour, since they are able to address threats from climate change.

**Bt brinjal blocked:**

- Bt Brinjal was cleared by the Committee in 2010 but was blocked by then Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh, who cited, among other things, a paucity of safety tests.

## What is Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)?

- It is established under Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
- It is the apex body for approval of activities involving large scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants
- It is also responsible for approval of proposals relating to release of genetically engineered organisms and products including experimental field trials

## G.S.PAPER-3

### Topic: Economy

#### 3. Centre to release new series of IIP, WPI data

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/centre-to-release-new-series-of-iip-wpi-data/article18428352.ece>

#### What's in news?

- A new series of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Wholesale Price Index (WPI) will be released.
- Main motive is to bring greater accuracy and improved synchronisation among data sets, in turn leading to better policies.
- **Base year revised:** The base year for the IIP and the WPI will be 2011-12 and not the current 2004-05. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and gross value addition also have 2011-12 as the base year.
- The new series of IIP will include technology items such as smart phones, tablets, LED television and tablets.
- The new WPI series will include toys and games as a separate group.

#### 4. Boost for defence manufacturers

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/boost-for-defence-manufacturers/article18429015.ece>

#### What's in news?

- Defence Minister Arun Jaitley held consultations with representatives of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CII) on the proposed **Strategic Partnership (SP) model** meant to promote the private sector in defence manufacturing.
- **Strategic Partnership (SP) model advantages:**
  - ✓ Enhance competition
  - ✓ Increase efficiencies
  - ✓ Facilitate faster and more significant absorption of technology
  - ✓ Create a tiered industrial ecosystem

- ✓ Ensure development of a wider skill base
- ✓ Trigger innovation and enable participation in global value chains as well as promote exports.
- **Modalities of the model:**
  - ✓ Government intends to boost private sector participation and create domestic expertise in four key areas, namely, **fighter aircraft, helicopters, submarines, and armoured vehicles and main battle tanks.**
  - ✓ **Technology transfer:** One company would be selected for each area based on its competence, which would then tie up with the foreign Original Equipment Manufacturer selected through the procurement process, to build the platform in India with significant technology transfer.
- **Army apprehensive**
  - ✓ SP model would block new technology and new players coming to the defence sector.
  - ✓ On the other hand, existing defence players argue for committed orders for the next 30 years to give them the economies of scale as defence involves large investments.

#### 5. Voluntary unemployment rising: Debroy

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/voluntary-unemployment-rising-debroy/article18428330.ece>

#### What's in news?

- Niti Aayog member Bibek Debroy indicated a dramatic rise in voluntary unemployment across the country, where people choose not to work **below a certain income level after 'investing' in education.**
- India is currently under the phase of **'jobless growth' as well as 'growth-less jobs'** — and fail to capture the pre-dominantly informal and unorganised nature of the Indian economy.
- The primary growth in jobs will come from the services sector

#### CMIE survey

- Data compiled by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy based on a household survey with a 'reasonably decent sample size,' indicates a raise in voluntary unemployment.

## Topic: Environmental Science and Ecology

### 6. Ahmedabad gets air quality monitors to battle pollution

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/ahmedabad-gets-air-quality-monitors-to-battle-pollution/article18429564.ece/amp/>

#### What's in news?

- Ahmedabad civic body is launching a comprehensive **Air Quality Index (AQI) and Air Information and Response (AIR) plan** in order to effectively battle increasing air pollution.

#### **Air Quality Index (AQI) and Air Information and Response (AIR) plan :**

- It includes an air pollution alert system and health risk communication, based on **real-time data**.
- The initiative by the **Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)** focuses on
  - ✓ **Health risk communication**
  - ✓ Immediate and long term actions to reduce the impact of rising air pollution.
- The new air quality monitors installed across the city will collect and report data on smog and toxic pollutants as part of the AQI.
- It will be used to inform residents on when to take precautions and minimise exposure to pollution.
- Initiative involves five key factors
  - I. Health risk communication
  - II. Inter-agency coordination
  - III. Increasing capacity of medical professionals and
  - IV. Targeted activities for vulnerable groups like school children, senior citizens and
  - V. Adults with heart or lung disease.
- **LED signalling:**
  - ✓ AQI forecast reading 'very poor' air quality (301-400) triggers a health alert that is to be issued by the civic body through its communication channels.
  - ✓ The alert needs to be displayed in colour-coded messages on a dozen large-size LED screens installed on city roads, social media platforms and traditional media like newspapers and radio.
- **Global best practice:**

Ahmedabad's AIR plan is based on global best practices on AQI health risk communication from Beijing, Los Angeles, Mexico City and New Delhi.

## TOPICS IN NEWS

Transgene:

- A transgene is a gene or genetic material that has been transferred naturally, or by any of a number of genetic engineering techniques from one organism to another. The introduction of a transgene (called "transgenesis") has the potential to change the phenotype of an organism.
- In its most precise usage, the term transgene describes a segment of DNA containing a gene sequence that has been isolated from one organism and is introduced into a different organism.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Cases in Supreme Court can be filed only through
  - A. Advocates-on-record.
  - B. Senior advocates
  - C. Lawyers
  - D. None of the above

Correct Answer: A

Type: Polity

Level: Easy

Explanation: Cases in SC can be filed only through Advocates-on-record.

2. The first transgenic food crop allowed for commercial cultivation in Indian fields is
  - A. Mustard
  - B. Cotton
  - C. Brinjal
  - D. PL-480

Correct answer: A

Topic: Current Affair

Level: Easy

Explanation:

GM mustard would be the first transgenic food crop to be allowed for commercial cultivation in Indian fields and would be a gateway for several genetically-modified food crops in India

3. Consider the following statement with reference to Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH -11)

1. Transgenic mustard crop
2. Cross-pollinating plant.

Identify the correct statement

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

Correct answer: A

Type: Current Affair

Level: Moderate

Explanation:

**Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH -11):**

- The transgenic mustard
- Developed by a team of scientists at Delhi University led by former vice chancellor Deepak Pental under a government-funded project.

It uses a system of genes from soil bacterium that makes mustard — generally a **self pollinating plant**.

4. **The base year for the new series of IIP, WPI data is**

- A. 2004-04
- B. 2010-11
- C. 2011-12
- D. 2012-13

Correct answer: C

Type: Economy

Level: Easy

Explanation: **Base year revised:** The base year for the IIP and the WPI will be 2011-12 and not the current 2004-05. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and gross value addition also have 2011-12 as the base year.

5. India's first bio refinery plant has set up in which of the following state?

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Assam
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Maharashtra

Correct Answer: D

Type: G.K.

Level: Easy

Explanation: India's first bio-refinery plant has been inaugurated by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highway Nitin Gadkari at Rahu in Pune district, Maharashtra. The plant will produce ethanol from variety of biomass. The bio-refinery plant is capable of producing one million litre of ethanol per annum by processing a variety of agro-residue like rice and wheat straw, cotton stalk, cane trash, corn cobs with superior product yields. Biofuel is cost-effective and pollution-free.

## G.S.PAPER-1

### Topic: Social Issues

#### 1. No mutual consent in triple talaq, observes CJI Justice JS Khehar

<http://www.india.com/news/india/no-mutual-consent-in-triple-talaq-says-cji-justice-js-khehar-2125232/>

**Context:** constitutional validity of the system of instant divorce in Muslim community (Issue of triple talaq and polygamy).

#### Observations:

- The Chief Justice of India, Justice JS Khehar – there is **no mutual consent in the system of triple talaq**.
- **Ram Jethmalani** abhorred the practice and said the system is in **contravention of the Article 14 of the Constitution**, which guarantees the right to equality
- Forum for Awareness of National Security- the triple talaq is a method of terminating marriage contract which lies only with men but not with women
- Salman Khurshid - judicial review of the matter was not required.
- Additional solicitor general Tushar Mehta put forward government's stand on the issue - the Centre was against triple talaq.
- The apex court made a strong observation as to the practice of triple talaq as it called it the '**worst and undesirable form**' of dissolution of marriage among the members of the Muslim community. The court, however, said that the system is considered legal in certain schools of Islam.

## G.S.PAPER-2

### Topic: Polity

#### 2. Issue fresh licences for meat traders: HC

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/issue-fresh-licences-for-meat-traders-hc/article18441545.ece>

#### Context:

- The Yogi Adityanath government, soon after coming into power had directed administrative and police authorities to shut down or seal slaughterhouses in the State which according to it were **running unlawfully or were unregistered**.
- The State also shut down meat shops.
- Issue of livelihood.

#### Reasons given by the government:

- The State has no obligation to construct slaughter houses or make provisions for them and was merely acting against illegal setups in accordance with the norms of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

**In news:**

- The Allahabad High Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government
  - ✓ To start issuing fresh licences and no-objection certificates (NOCs) to meat traders in the State.
  - ✓ Renew existing licences.
- **Verdict:**
  - ✓ The responsibility for constructing slaughterhouses lay with the local municipal corporations
  - ✓ The State could not prevent people from eating meat.

**3. Rajnath Singh to States: Ensure comfortable environment for Kashmiris**

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/rajnath-singh-to-states-ensure-comfortable-environment-for-kashmiris-4652964/>

**In news:**

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh advised all the Chief Ministers to ensure “comfortable environment” for Kashmiri students and workers in their states as there have been incidents of their harassment at some places.
- Singh’s advice came at a meeting of **Northern Zonal Council** of the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan, National Capital territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh here.

**Zonal Council:**

The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, **Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru** in 1956 when during the course of debate on the report of the States Re-organisation Commission, he suggested that the States proposed to be reorganised may be grouped into four or five zones having an Advisory Council 'to develop the habit of cooperative working’ among these States. This suggestion was made by Pandit Nehru at a time when linguistic hostilities and bitterness as a result of re-organisation of the States on linguistic pattern were threatening the very fabric of our nation. As an antidote to this situation, it was suggested that a high level advisory forum should be set up to minimise the impact of these hostilities and to create healthy inter-State and Centre-State environment with a view to solving inter-State problems and fostering balanced socio economic development of the respective zones.

**COMPOSITION OF ZONAL COUNCILS**

In the light of the vision of Pandit Nehru, five Zonal Councils were set up vide Part-III of the States Re-organisation Act, 1956. The present composition of each of these Zonal Councils is as under:

- i. **The Northern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh;

- ii. **The Central Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- iii. **The Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal;
- iv. **The Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli; and
- v. **The Southern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972. The State of Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council vide North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002 notified on 23rd December, 2002..

### **COMMITTEES OF ZONAL COUNCILS**

Each Zonal Council has set up a **Standing Committee** consisting of Chief Secretaries of the member States of their respective Zonal Councils.

### **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ZONAL COUNCILS**

- **Chairman** - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman** - The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members**- Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers**- One person nominated by the Planning Commission for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone
- Union Ministers are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.

### **ROLE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ZONAL COUNCILS**

The main objectives of setting up of Zonal Councils are as under:

- Bringing out national integration;
- Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies;

- Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences; and
- Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects.

## **Topic: Bilateral Relations**

### **4. India-Pakistan ties may slide further: U.S. intelligence**

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-pak-ties-may-slide-further-us-intelligence/article18440222.ece>

#### **In news:**

#### **U.S. intelligence assessment of the security situation in the Indo-Pak.**

- The relations between India and Pakistan is likely to deteriorate further in 2017
- The easing of tension will depend on a sharp and sustained reduction of cross-border attacks by terrorist groups based in Pakistan and progress in the Pathankot investigation.
- Two major terrorist attacks in 2016 by militants crossing into India from Pakistan led to the slide in ties, and the “perceived lack of progress in Pakistan’s investigations into the January 2016 Pathankot cross-border attack” compounded it.
- Increasing numbers of fire-fights along the Line of Control, including the use of artillery and mortars, might exacerbate the risk of unintended escalation between these nuclear-armed neighbours
- India’s military **doctrine of cold start** that aims to launch low intensity operation into Pakistan, and Pakistan’s declared willingness to respond with tactical nuclear weapons have been under scrutiny of American security strategists for a while.
- Pakistan-based terrorist groups will present a sustained threat to U.S. interests in the region and continue to plan and conduct attacks in India and Afghanistan.
- The United States continues to aggressively target extremists in Pakistan and the surrounding region, including charities and other front groups used as vehicles to facilitate illicit terrorist activities.

#### **Basic Information:**

**Cold Start** is a military doctrine developed by the Indian Armed Forces for use in a possible war with Pakistan. It involves the various branches of India's military conducting offensive operations as part of unified battle groups. The Cold Start doctrine is intended to allow India's conventional forces to perform holding attacks in order to prevent a nuclear retaliation from Pakistan in case of a conflict.

## Topic: Health Issues

### 5. India's first uterus transplants soon

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/indias-first-uterus-transplants-soon/article18440147.ece>

#### In news:

- Two medical centres in Pune and Bengaluru are gearing up to perform the country's first uterus transplants.
- A uterus transplant is an extremely complex procedure that will enable women with absent or diseased uteruses to carry a pregnancy to term after a donor uterus is transplanted into them.
- While there is no debate that womb transplant will be a medical leap for Indian doctors, the question remains about the viability of the procedure.
- **Fact:** One in every 4,000 women in India is born without a uterus. There are about 4 lakh women with congenital absence of uterus all over the world.
- **Procedure:**
  - ✓ At first, a donor undergoes a surgery for the removal of her uterus.
  - ✓ Unlike other hysterectomies, blood vessels and vascular pedicels around the uterus have to be carefully preserved and then re-attached to the recipient.
  - ✓ After the transplant, the recipient is put on immunosuppressants so that her body does not reject the donor's organ.
  - ✓ She waits at least for a year before attempting a pregnancy as **an In Vitro Fertility (IVF)** procedure.
  - ✓ The woman's eggs are extracted much before the transplant and the embryos formed with her husband's sperms are frozen.
  - ✓ If the IVF cycles are successful, the woman conceives.
  - ✓ However, the delivery is carried out through a C-section and the transplanted uterus is removed after the delivery so that she does not have to be on immunosuppressants continuously.
  - ✓ The woman also faces a high risk of miscarriage and the babies have to be delivered pre-term.

## G.S.PAPER-3

## Topic: Economy

### 1. India to learn from London transport

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-learn-from-london-transport/article18440733.ece>

#### In news:

- MoU between Transport for London (TfL) and India's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways was signed.
- It involve sharing expertise on the mobility and efficiency of India's transportation systems, as well as around logistical issues such as planning and delivery.
- India is set to learn on the lessons from the strong public transport system in place in London — where over 1.3 billion journeys take place every year
- **Areas of focus:**
  - ✓ Ticketing, providing information, financing and infrastructure maintenance work, as well as promotion of the use of public transport.
  - ✓ Other areas of cooperation in the future were likely to include innovation around buses, including electric buses, and the use of water transport in urban centres.

## 2. GST to herald a new era in federalism: RBI

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/gst-to-herald-a-new-era-in-federalism-rbi/article18439670.ece>

**In news:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report on State finances.

- GST is likely to set a new course for cooperative federalism in India by strengthening Centre-State partnership.
- The successful implementation of GST would help boost revenue through easier tax administration, supported by user-friendly IT systems.
- GST is expected to reduce administrative costs for collection of tax revenue and improve revenue efficiency. Moreover, uniformity in tax rates and procedures across the country will economise on compliance cost.

## 3. Revised data shows IIP growing faster, WPI easing

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/revised-data-shows-iip-growing-faster-wpi-easing/article18439683.ece>

**In news:**

- The main change made to the two indices is that the base year has been shifted from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in order to make the data more contemporary and reflective of ground realities.
- The international recommendation is for a revision of these indices every five years
- The purpose of these changes is to align WPI with GDP and IIP, and hence the 2011-12 base year has been taken.
- The other change is that the **WPI will no longer incorporate indirect taxes, which means they will be insulated from policy changes.**  
Previously, the WPI was calculated on the basis of the base price plus excise duty minus any trade discount. The new formula removes the excise duty aspect.

## Topic: Cyber security

### 4. Cyberattacks using leaked NSA hacking tool affect 12 nations

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/cyberattacks-using-leaked-nsa-hacking-tool-affect-12-nations/article18443056.ece>

#### In news:

- An extensive cyberattack struck computers across a wide swath of Europe and Asia and strained the public health system in Britain, where doctors were blocked from patient files and emergency rooms were forced to divert patients.
- The attack involved **ransomware, a kind of malware that encrypts data and locks out the user.**
- According to security experts, it exploited a vulnerability that was discovered and developed by the National Security Agency.
- Hackers involved: The hacking tool was leaked by a group calling itself the **Shadow Brokers**, which has been dumping stolen NSA hacking tools online beginning last year.
- Among the many other institutions that were affected were hospitals and telecommunications companies across Europe, Russia, Asia and beyond.

**Ransomware** - simple ransomware may lock the system in a way which is not difficult for a knowledgeable person to reverse, and display a message requesting payment to unlock it. More advanced malware encrypts the victim's files, making them inaccessible, and demands a ransom payment to decrypt them.

## ARTICLE IN NEWS

### Article 13. Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the fundamental rights

(1) All laws in force in the territory of India immediately before the commencement of this Constitution, in so far as they are inconsistent with the provisions of this Part, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void

(2) The State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this Part and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of the contravention, be void

(3) In this article, unless the context otherwise requires law includes any Ordinance, order, bye law, rule, regulation, notification, custom or usages having in the territory of India the force of law; laws in force includes laws passed or made by Legislature or other competent authority in the territory of India before the commencement of this Constitution and not previously repealed, notwithstanding that any such law or any part thereof may not be then in operation either at all or in particular areas

(4) Nothing in this article shall apply to any amendment of this Constitution made under Article 368

#### **Article 14 Equality before law**

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India .

#### **Article 15 Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth**

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to

(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or

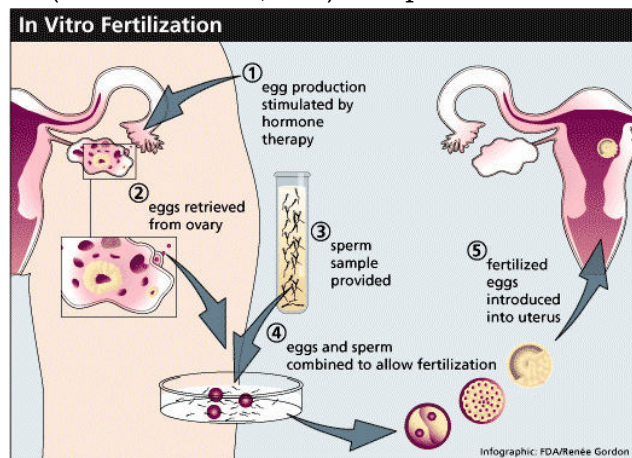
(b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause ( 2 ) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

## TOPICS IN NEWS

- **In vitro fertilisation : In vitro fertilisation** (or fertilization; IVF) is a process of fertilisation where an egg is combined with sperm outside the body, in vitro ("in glass"). The process involves monitoring and stimulating a woman's ovulatory process, removing an ovum or ova (egg or eggs) from the woman's ovaries and letting sperm fertilise them in a liquid in a laboratory. The fertilised egg (zygote) is cultured for 2–6 days in a growth medium and is then transferred to the same or another woman's uterus, with the intention of establishing a successful pregnancy.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Zonal council is
  - A. A Constitutional Body
  - B. A Statutory body
  - C. Constituted by an executive order.
  - D. None of the above

Correct answer: B  
Type: Polity  
Level: Easy  
Explanation: Zonal Councils have been established via the part III of the States Reorganization Act of 1956, they are statutory bodies.
2. Interstate council is
  - A. A Constitutional Body
  - B. A Statutory body
  - C. Constituted by an executive order.
  - D. None of the above

Correct answer: A  
Type: Polity  
Level: Easy  
Explanation: The Inter State Council is an Indian constitutional body set up on the basis of provisions in Article 263 of the Constitution of India.
3. Consider the following statements
  1. The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of Zonal Councils.

2. The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of two year at a time.

Choose the correct statement

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

Correct answer: A

Type: Polity

Level: Easy

Explanation: **Chairman** - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.

Vice Chairman - The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.

4. Which Ministry releases WPI?
- A. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
  - B. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
  - C. Ministry of Finance.
  - D. None of the above

Correct answer: A

Type: Economy

Level: easy

Explanation: Ministry of Commerce and Industry released WPI data.

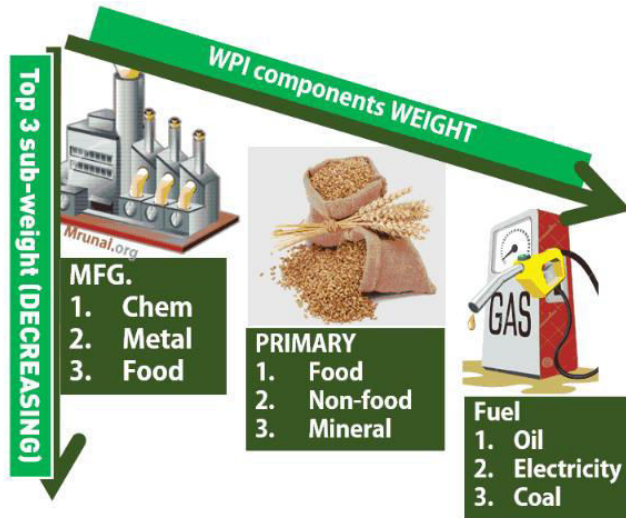
5. Which among the following has the highest weightage in the Whole sale price index?
- A. Manufactured products
  - B. Primary Articles
  - C. Fuel and power
  - D. Mineral products.

Correct answer: A

Type: Economy

Level: easy

Explanation:



- Economic Advisor, Lespeyer's formula, Base year 2004.

Three categories, in descending order of Weight	
WPI components	weight
Manufactured Products <b>Internal weight:</b> Chemical > metal > food	64.97
Primary Articles <b>Internal weight:</b> Food > Nonfood > Mineral	20.12
Fuel & Power <b>Internal weight:</b> Mineral oil > Electricity > Coal	14.91
total weight	100