24 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Supreme Court extends Assam NRC final publication deadline to August 31

Context:

The Supreme Court has extended the deadline for publication of the final (NRC) for Assam from July 31 to August 31, 2019.

What is NRC?

- The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register of Indian citizens.

- The purpose of the NRC update (happening only for Assam) is to identify illegal immigrants in Assam, many of whom migrated to Assam from Bangladesh during the 1971 war with Pakistan.
- In Assam, the NRC was first prepared in 1951 -- the current exercise is a bid to update the 1951 register, and in the process, determine who is a legal Indian citizen based on a cut-off date: March 24, 1971.
- The process is undertaken by Registrar General of India and monitored by Supreme Court.

Read in-depth about NRC: National Register of Citizens

Background:

- Ahead of the August 31, 2019 date, two drafts (a partial and a complete) were published on January 1, 2018 and July 30, 2018 respectively.
- The final draft from last year excluded names of 40.7 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants who had applied.
- This was followed by an "additional draft exclusion list" published on June 26, 2019, where an additional one lakh names were dropped from those who had been included in the final July 30 draft list.
- These people had the option of contesting the exclusion by filing claims, and appearing in hearings.
- In Assam, the NRC was first prepared in 1951 — the current exercise is a bid to update the 1951 register, and in the process, determine who is a legal Indian citizen based on a cut-off date: March 24, 1971.
- Those people who entered the country before this date, and have admissible documents to prove so, are eligible to be included in the NRC, and thus enjoy rights as citizens of India.
- All those who are out will have to provide reason for their exclusion by appearing before a quasi-judicial body called the Foreigners' Tribunal.

Details:

- The NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela had requested an extension of the deadline in light of the recent floods that ravaged Assam.
- He had also sought time for his officials to write out the final orders.
- The Assam government and the Centre, too, had requested an extension based on a plea to carry out a sample re-verification of 20 per cent names in the districts bordering Bangladesh, and a 10 per cent re-verification in the remaining districts.
- The government's reasoning was that there had been many wrongful inclusions and exclusions in the updation of the NRC, and a re-verificaiton was needed to dispel doubts.
- However, in a report submitted by Hajela to the Court, he said that 27% (which accounts for 80 lakh names) re-verification had already happened during the hearings for fresh claims and objections.
- Based on this, the CJI-led Bench declined the government's re-verification plea on Tuesday, while allowing a month-long deadline extension.
- Both the Central and State government, in identical but separate applications to the court, said many names have been wrongly included and excluded from the draft NRC, and a sample reverification had become necessary to quell the "growing perception" that lakhs of illegal immigrants may have infiltrated the list, especially in districts bordering Bangladesh.

Concerns:

- The error percentage in the border districts is just over 7%, while in other districts the average is over 12%.
- It was opined that low error percentage in the border districts was suspicious, especially when over the years these areas had seen people cross the border illegally and settle down in the State, thus

spoiling the opportunity of the natives to make a life for themselves.

2. Kumaraswamy govt. loses trust vote

Context:

The 14-month Congress-JD(S) government in Karnataka collapsed, with Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy losing the confidence motion on the floor of the Assembly by six votes.

Background:

- The 2018 Assembly polls had thrown up a fractured mandate in Karnataka.
- The numerical strength of parties, in the House of 225, stood at 105 for BJP, 78 (Plus, one of Speaker) for Congress and 37 for JDS.
- The Congress and JDS had come together to form a coalition as a counter to the BJP.

What is trust vote?

- The Trust Vote or Confidence Vote is proposed by the party in power in order to demonstrate that it still enjoys the support of the majority of MLAs.
- A trust vote is a motion through which the government of the day seeks to know whether it still enjoys the confidence of parliament or Assembly.
- A trust vote is sought either during the first session if it is not clear whether a party or a grouping of parties command a majority in the house, or at any time during the five-year tenure of the house if it becomes apparent that the government of the day has lost its majority.
- This initiative is often looked upon as a strategy of the state government to pre-empt a no-confidence motion by the opposition parties.
- The government would be expected to resign if it loses a trust vote.

Details:

- In a House of 225 MLAs (including one nominated member) 20 MLAs were not present at the time of voting. The absentees included 15 rebel MLAs who have resigned – 12 from Congress and 3 from JD(S), 2 Congress MLAs who abstained due to health reasons, 2 Independents and the lone BSP MLA.
- The confidence motion was put to vote, six days after Mr. Kumaraswamy moved it and amid a heated debate on the issue of 15 resignations from the ruling parties.
- While 99 MLAs expressed confidence in the Kumaraswamy-led government, 105 opposed it.
- The speaker announced that the motion was defeated and adjourned the House sine die.
- He later tendered his resignation to Governor Vajubhai Vala.
- Following which BJP announced its decision to stake a claim to form a government in the state.

3. Centre usurping States' rights: MPs

Context:

The Lok Sabha on passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by a voice vote.

Details:

- The Bill seeks to weed out corruption and improve road safety.
- The Bill proposes a National Transportation Policy for ushering in guidelines on the transportation of goods and passengers.

- It was announced that the Ministry would end the system of road monitoring being undertaken by independent engineers and it would be carried out by an expert company.
- It was also told that 14,000 accident-prone black spots in the country were identified and Rs. 14,000 crore, raised from the ADB and World Bank, would be invested to rectify them with a view to control road accidents.
- An important feature of the Bill is that new vehicles will be registered at the dealer level and it will eventually remove buyers' interface with registration authorities.

New order
Key highlights of the Motor Vehicles Amendments Bill, 2019

- **Cashless treatment** likely of victims during golden hour
- **Minimum compensation** for hit-and-run cases hiked in case of death from ₹25,000 to ₹2 lakh, and, in case of grievous injury, from ₹12,500 to ₹50,000

Offences and penalties: The maximum penalty for driving under the influence of **alcohol** or drugs has been increased from ₹2,000 to ₹10,000

Compulsory insurance: The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India

Concerns:

The states are concerned that, the Centre is trying to take away the States' powers with certain provisions of the draft law. However, the Transport Minister said "It is up to the States if they want to make their transport system more modern and efficient. The Centre would not interfere with the States' working and only facilitate the implementation of the framework such as facilitating availability of foreign funds.

Category: HEALTH

1. 'Wide access to OTC drugs frees up govt. resources'

Context:

The government is in the process of finalising an OTC drug policy, which may bring more clarity on the drugs that a wider population can access.

Need for OTC drug policy:

- Self-medication is not new to India.
- A 2015 survey conducted by Lybrate among 20,000 people across 10 cities showed that 52% of people practised self-medication.
- But the country lacks a well-defined regulation for over the counter (OTC) medicines, important for patient safety.

Details:

- The Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI), a body of multinational drug companies, has worked with the government over the past one year by providing inputs to the draft of the OTC policy.
- The government has taken inputs from companies like Cipla, Glenmark, Sun Pharma and others who are not members of OPPI and is seriously considering taking them forward.

How will an OTC policy help?

- But an OTC policy will improve access to drugs that are okay to be sold as OTC and restrict access to other drugs.
- Besides antibiotic resistance, steroid use is also a big problem.
- When you widen access to OTC drugs, it automatically releases the government's time and resources, which can be focussed on drugs that need to be stringently prescribed.
- These drugs can be made easily accessible in small towns as well. The idea is to make sure that the right product rests in the right place.
- Society has learnt that OTC medicines are those that don't have major side effects but help improve health.
- Many countries have brought more products under the OTC category to focus on drugs that need to be strictly regulated.

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. IMF cuts India's growth forecast for 2019-20 to 7%

Context:

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut India's growth forecast for 2019-20 to 7% from its forecast in April of 7.3%.

Details:

- The IMF's World Economic Outlook July update also cut India's growth forecast in 2020-21 to 7.2% from the previous estimate of 7.5%.
- The forecast was revised owing to poor demand conditions.
- The downward revision of 0.3 percentage points for both years reflects a weaker-than-expected outlook for domestic demand.
- Latest cut in the forecast follows a series of cuts by the IMF in its previous updates.
- The 7% forecast for 2019-20, however, is in line with those made by the Reserve Bank of India, Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian and the Asian Development Bank.
- The broad-based slowdown in consumption and investment demand in India was partly a reflection of the uncertainties associated with the just concluded general elections in India, as well as tightening of borrowing conditions for small and medium enterprises.

Way forward:

- IMF said multilateral and national policy actions are vital to place global growth on a stronger footing.
- Along with a more accommodative monetary policy and fiscal policy of the Indian government, should remove some of the downside risks.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. UN climate envoy meets Javadekar

Context:

The meeting between United Nations Special Envoy on Climate Change, Luis Alfonso de Alba, and Union Environment and Forests Minister Prakash Javadekar discussed India's initiatives to meet its climate commitments.

Details:

- Ahead of the United Nations Climate Summit in New York in September, Mr. de Alba, appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as his climate envoy, is visiting several countries and urging leaders and businessmen to do more to ensure that global warming does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- The Secretary-General is exhorting countries and leaders to come with concrete plans at the meeting and not mere policy statements.
- The UN also announced a 'Clean Air Initiative' that calls on governments to achieve air quality that is safe for citizens and to align climate change and air pollution policies by 2030.

Initiatives in India:

- India is already taking a leadership position on achieving its Nationally Determined Contribution (or climate goals).
- India has created 80,000 MW of renewable power and set a target of achieving 175,000 MW by 2022.
- It has reduced energy intensity by 21%, was increasing forest cover and that the distribution of 70 million gas cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme had helped save trees, reduce pollution and improve health.

United Nations Climate Summit in New York:

- The Summit will bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, local authorities and other international organisations to develop ambitious solutions in six areas:
  - a global transition to renewable energy
  - sustainable and resilient infrastructures and cities
  - sustainable agriculture and management of forests and oceans
  - resilience and adaptation to climate impacts
  - alignment of public and private finance with a net zero economy.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. A bridge across the India-Pakistan abyss

The editorial throws light upon the possibilities of mechanism for broader conversations between India and Pakistan that the Kartarpur Corridor could provide.

India-Pakistan Relations:

- Ties between India and Pakistan are at their lowest in two decades.
- The Kargil war (1999), the Agra Summit (2001), the attack on Parliament (2001) and Operation Parakram (2001-02) meant a sustained period of deep hostilities, with diplomatic missions downgraded.
- Since 2015 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Lahore visit in the same year, the leaders of both countries have not met for talks.
- In mid-2018,the backchannel diplomacy between the National Security Advisers of both countries was called off by Pakistan
- In September 2018, India called off a planned meeting between the Foreign Ministers in New York.
- In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, India attacked terror targets in Pakistan which in turn sent fighter jets to the border.
- Subsequently, after India moved missiles and deployed submarines, Pakistan raised a full air alert and imposed an airspace ban.

Kartarpur Corridor – an exception:

- Despite the tensions between the two countries, talks on the Kartarpur corridor are still on.
- India's decision to embark on a course that will need regular and repeated India-Pakistan meetings is a breach of its otherwise firm "no talks without terror ending" policy.
- By agreeing to the Kartarpur corridor the government has made an exception from a matter concerning national policy for a matter of faith.
- Giving life to the wishes of so many will ensure political dividends in India.
- It is remarkable that the talks have continued through one of the most difficult years in the relationship. There have been three rounds of technical-level meetings to ensure both sides complete the infrastructure needed.

About Kartarpur Corridor:

- The Kartarpur shrine in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi is where Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, spent his final days. The shrine is highly revered by the Sikh community.
- The Kartarpur Corridor was first proposed in early 1999 by the prime ministers of Pakistan and India, Nawaz Sharif and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, respectively, as part of the Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy.
- In 2018, the foundation stone for the Kartarpur corridor was laid down on the Indian side.
- Two days later the foundation stone for the corridor was laid down on the Pakistani side.
- The corridor is intended to be completed before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November 2019.
- The Kartarpur shrine has one of the last copies of the original Guru Granth Sahib; there are some who believe that it contains not only the wisdom of the 10 Gurus but is itself the 11th and last Guru.

What are India's concerns with respect to the Kartarpur Corridor Project?

- India has made clear, its interest in the project for several decades. However, in the case of Pakistan, the reasons have not been as transparent.
- Military establishment's surprise backing has only raised doubts on whether Islamabad has an ulterior motive.
- India has also spelt out its apprehensions over Pakistan allowing separatist Khalistani groups, including those funded by groups based in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, to try

- and influence pilgrims.
- Of specific concern is the 'Referendum 2020' for a worldwide referendum on a separate Sikh state by the Sikhs for Justice Group (banned by India).
- The other irritant is the possible use of the corridor for drugs and arms movement.
- The terror threat by Pakistani Punjab-based anti-India groups such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad is also a constant concern.

Can Kartarpur Corridor help in easing tensions between the two countries?

- The Kartarpur Project could provide a mechanism for broader conversations between India and Pakistan.
- The template that Kartarpur has given both sides is also worth considering for the format of other bilateral negotiations.
- The obvious extension from this would be for having other faith-based corridors for Hindu, Muslim and Sikh pilgrims in both countries; this would be in addition to the list of 20 shrines (15 in Pakistan, five in India) that were negotiated under the 1974 Protocol on visits to Religious Shrines.
- It would be a travesty to waste the opportunity made possible by the Kartarpur corridor. Both the countries must make use of the Kartarpur template for other bilateral negotiations.

2. What suits Trump

Context:

In his meeting with the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the White House, Donald Trump offered to be a "mediator" between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. India opines that The U.S. President has violated diplomatic protocols in talking of mediation on Kashmir.

Details:

- India has clarified that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not request U.S. President Donald Trump to "mediate or arbitrate" on the Kashmir issue, as claimed by him.
- The External Affairs Minister has asserted that India remains committed to its policy of discussing all outstanding issues with Pakistan only bilaterally.
- In making the claim that has been roundly denied by India, Mr. Trump has breached several well-laid diplomatic protocols, including one against discussing privileged conversations with a leader, during a public conversation with another.

Concerns:

- Trump's comment that the U.S. successfully mediated for the release of captured fighter pilot Abhinandan by Pakistan may have even given him some hope that the U.S. could play a larger role on the Kashmir issue, and New Delhi would need to address that.
- A worrying proposition is that Mr. Trump took the line favoured by his Pakistani interlocutors on Kashmir as a way of enhancing his own plans for a pullout from Afghanistan with Pakistan's help on security and talks with the Taliban.
- The damage from Mr. Trump's words may not have a very lasting impact on India-U.S. ties. But, that from any rushed measures to force a resolution in Afghanistan will have far-reaching and lasting impact, including on India.

India's position on the issue:

- India has always opposed any suggestion of third-party mediation on Jammu and Kashmir;
- Both the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore declaration included India's and Pakistan's

commitment to resolving issues between them.

Way forward:

- It was the right thing for the MEA spokesperson to come out and clearly expose Trump's misunderstanding.
- It may be time for India to recognise that Mr. Trump's comments are a sign of new realities in international diplomacy, where leaders care less about niceties and more about open communication.
- The government should pursue the issue through diplomatic channels with the U.S. government.

Category: HEALTH

1. Faltering steps in the anti-AIDS march

Context:

UNAIDS - the Joint UN programme on AIDS, is facing one of the worst challenges afflicting the global AIDS response, with countries questioning its very relevance.

Details:

- The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, is expected to appoint a new executive director after the departure of Michel Sidibé in May 2019 on the recommendation of the programme coordinating board which manages the organisation.
- At such a crucial time, it is disturbing to hear voices questioning the relevance of UNAIDS for the global response.
- There are suggestions that AIDS should go back to the World Health Organisation (WHO) where it originally belonged to some 25 years ago. And that the new executive director should be equipped with an exit strategy to wind up the organisation.

Achievements of the Joint UN programme on AIDS:

- Since its establishment in 1994, UNAIDS has been able to successfully mobilise world opinion to mount an exceptional response to an epidemic which has consumed over 20 million lives with still no effective treatment or cure.
- The UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) 2001 was a game changer with the adoption of a political resolution that itself was exceptional in many ways.
- The creation of a Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the slashing of prices of AIDS drugs by Indian generics have brought treatment within the reach of many countries.
- Today about 22 million people are under antiretroviral therapy (ART) and preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV has become an achievable goal by 2020.
- The organisation has provided leadership to many countries which in 10 years (2001-2010) could halt the epidemic and reverse the trend.

Concerns:

- The organisation started to falter in its strategy, when it announced that the world was going to see the end of AIDS very soon.
  - o Regions such as eastern Europe and Central Asia and West Asia are nowhere near reaching that goal.
  - o Many countries such as Russia have been witnessing a raging epidemic among drug users and

men who have sex with men (MSM) communities.

- The political leadership in many countries have thought that AIDS is no more a challenge.
- It has been misunderstood that the AIDS epidemic can simply be treated away by saturating anti retroviral (ARV) coverage.
- UNAIDS seems to have ignored the fact that AIDS affects the poor, the marginalised and criminalised communities disproportionately as they face challenges in accessing the 'test and treat' programmes.
- The ever increasing number of young people who are joining the ranks of vulnerable populations do not get prevention messages like in the past.
- National programmes do not any more consider condoms, sexual education and drug harm reduction as central to the prevention of HIV transmission that results from unprotected sex and drug use.
- Funding for non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations working on prevention has virtually dried up.
- Country leadership of UNAIDS in many high-prevalence countries has been weakened. Senior country-level positions are, held by people who do not possess the core competence to constructively engage political leadership to undertake legal reforms and provide access to services to marginalised populations.
- Activism surrounding AIDS has suddenly diluted, especially in Africa, to further stigmatise and discriminate by enacting new laws that criminalise vulnerable sections of society.

Way forward:

- With 1.7 million new infections and one million deaths occurring every year, the world can't afford to lose the momentum.
- The commitment to end AIDS by 2030 is ambitious but not impossible to achieve.
- There is a need for a re-energised UNAIDS with a strong and fearless leadership from a person of high integrity and commitment along with a sincere effort to remove the deadwood from the organisation.
- The new executive director will have an unenviable task of not just restoring the credibility and relevance of the organisation but strengthening its presence at country level and making it more meaningful to the communities which look to it for leadership.
- The new executive director has to work relentlessly to place prevention of the epidemic and empowering communities at the centre of global response.
- Any thought of winding up UNAIDS or giving the mandate back to WHO would be suicidal at this moment.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Making the water-guzzling thermal plants accountable

The editorial talks about the need for making the Thermal power plants accountable for the consumption of water, shifting to a more aggressive renewable energy pathway in order to achieve its global climate targets.

Challenges:

- In the midst of a rainfall deficit, and millions facing an acute water shortage, it is important that India — which has only 4% of the world's renewable water resources but about 18% of the world's population — consumes water more sensibly.
- In India's pursuit of 100% electrification goal, the country's installed power capacity will need to be doubled.
- Even with the growth of renewable energy (RE), coal has been projected to be the backbone of the electricity sector till 2030 and beyond.

- Managing the electricity needs of a country that's already dealing with water scarcity will be a challenge.
- Thermal power plants (TPPs) consume significant amounts of water during the electricity generation process. Most of India's TPPs are located in water-stressed areas, and water shortages have led to electricity-generation disruptions and significant revenue losses to the economy.

Concerns:

- In December 2015, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a notification setting limits for water consumption by TPPs. However, the amended Environment Protection (EP) Rules codified in June 2018 ended up permitting TPPs to use more water than what was initially specified.
- The Environment Protection Act provides for a blanket penalty for contravention of any provisions of the Environment Protection Act or EP Rules: up to five years of imprisonment and/or up to Rs.1 lakh fine along with additional daily fines for continuing offences. However, the Act does not stipulate specific penalties for specific offences.

Way forward:

- The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) recently released the format for TPPs to report on their annual water consumption.
- The power plants were asked to specify both metered and un-metered usage, report on the source (like river, canal or sea), and state the percentage of deviation from the water norms, along with the reasons and the corrective measures undertaken.
- These guidelines can be strengthened by including other relevant inputs.
  - TPPs should disclose the amount of water consumed by them in previous years, so that a baseline for water consumption per TPP can be established, and subsequent reductions in water consumption can be quantified.
  - These reporting requirements must be added to the EP Rules, to accord the disclosure process greater transparency and enforceability.
  - TPPs should also be required to submit verifiable evidence to support and substantiate the disclosures.
  - The data supplied by TPPs should be placed in the public domain, so that the parameters disclosed can be studied in the context of region-specific water shortages, outages in the plants, and future research and analysis in this field.
- Relevant officials in charge of enforcement, across the Ministry and the CEA, should be identified, and their roles clearly defined.
- The implementation of these norms should include milestones and time-based targets, and periodic monitoring of the progress of TPPs in making improvements.
- In addition to reducing the stress caused by TPPs, shifting to a more aggressive RE pathway will help India achieve its global climate targets.

Conclusion:

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has taken a first step by issuing a notice to State governments on reducing water use for cleaning solar panels and to explore alternative mechanisms to ensure that solar panels remain efficient. India will need to balance the needs of its growing economy with its heightening water stress. Stringent implementation of standards for judicious water use by TPPs, combined with the promotion of Renewable Energy and energy efficiency, will offer pathways for achieving these goals.

F. Tidbits

1. Bengaluru goes live with facial biometrics-based air travel

- The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) rolled out a biometric-based self-boarding facility.
- The passengers had the option of boarding a flight without producing travel documents at each touch point.
- To avail this facility, a passenger has to enrol their ID, biometric data and flight details before entering the terminal.
- The passenger will be authenticated and verified at every touch point by biometric technology.
- The Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the operator of the KIA, is expected to deploy the paperless biometric system at over 350 passenger touch points in Terminal 1 with the final phase of the project.
- In the final stage, this technology will be integrated with the Digi Yatra Central Platform that is currently being architectured by the central government's Digi Yatra Foundation.

Privacy:

- The BIAL maintains that biometric data is used only for authentication and verification of passengers to assist the boarding process, and not for recognition.
- The process offers the highest degree of safety and security while ensuring stringent standards of safety.
- Passenger data will be deleted within a few hours of completion of air travel.
- Vision Box, the company that developed and installed One - ID biometric platform technology, is compliant with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which adopts privacy by design principles.

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The objective of the scheme is providing monetary and fiscal incentives for market creation and adoption of electric & hybrid technology vehicles in the country.
2. It is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

FAME -India [Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid & Electric Vehicles in India] scheme was formulated by the Department of Heavy Industry under the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, as a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020. The objective of the scheme is providing monetary and fiscal incentives for market creation and adoption of electric & hybrid technology

vehicles in the country. It is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020.

Q2. World Economic Outlook (WEO) is published by

a. International Monetary Fund
b. World Trade Organisation
c. World Bank
d. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Answer: a

Explanation:

World Economic Outlook (WEO) is published by International Monetary Fund.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Golden Crescent is the region spanning across Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.
2. It is an area of illicit opium production.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Explanation:

Golden Crescent is the region spanning across Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. Read more about Golden Crescent.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. (GROWTH)-India telescope is located in Ladakh.
2. It is India's first robotic telescope.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Explanation:

Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen (GROWTH)-Indi is a fully robotic telescope which has been funded by the Science and Engineering Board (SERB) of the Department of Science and

Technology. It began its operation at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) in Hanule in Ladakh.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Explain the factors responsible for the origin of ocean currents. How do they influence regional climates, fishing and navigation? (15 Marks, 250 Words)
2. The behaviour of the Indian monsoons has been changing due to humanizing landscapes. Discuss. (15 Marks, 250 Words)