

29 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Need to help boys disclose sexual abuse, say activists

Context:

The government informed the Parliament that the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) will for the first time collect gender disaggregated data on sexual assaults against children.

Concern:

- The activists say that for this to be a success, a lot will have to be done to ensure boys or transgender children open up about sexual abuse.
- The NCRB started the exercise of collecting data for crimes under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, 2012 (POCSO), against girls, boys and transgender children in 2018, according to the forms sent that year to States for collection of data. The last annual report on crime statistics was made public in 2017 for the year 2016.
- Social activists rue the delay in making this important information public.

Details:

- Earlier cases did not make a referral to the gender of the victim. Hence, to refine the data now, States are being implored to ensure that a distinction in terms of gender can be made between a male victim and a female victim, so that better rehabilitation and other support facilities is given to that victim.
- The need for gender-disaggregated data was felt following a nationwide study in 2007, which showed that the number of boys who were victims of sexual abuse was slightly more than those of girls. Up to the age of 13-14 years, boys and girls are equally vulnerable and maybe boys are more vulnerable because of the myth that they are not abused.
- The Study on Child Abuse in 2007, commissioned by the government, surveyed 12,447 children in 13 States and found that 53.22% of them had faced one or more forms of sexual abuse. Of these, 52.94% were boys and 47.06% were girls. Only 5.69% of the victims had reported being sexually assaulted and most children did not report the matter to anyone.
- The activists opine that the reluctance among children, especially boys, to disclose sexual abuse shows that the government needs to cover a lot of ground before the NCRB exercise can yield the desired results.

Conclusion:

- The government must focus on ensuring a congenial environment for boys to disclose sexual assault and erode into the social constructs which deter boys from doing so.
- The government must avoid focussing exclusively on the girl child every time it talks about sexual violence. It must recognise in its messaging that all children, including transgender children, are vulnerable to sexual abuse.
- Though the gender-wise data collection on victims of sexual abuse is a welcome move, the government has to release the crime reports since 2017.

B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Karnataka Speaker disqualifies 14 more rebel MLAs till end of Assembly term

Context:

14 more rebel MLAs have been disqualified by the Karnataka Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar, bringing the total of disqualified MLAs 17 - till the end of the Assembly term.

Background:

- A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi in order had given the assembly speaker the freedom to decide on the resignation of the 15 MLAs within such time- frame as considered appropriate by him after they approached the court.
- It had also ruled that the rebel MLAs cannot be compelled to attend the assembly proceedings.

Details:

- The decision comes a day ahead of the trust vote.
- Of the 225 MLAs in the assembly, 17 have been disqualified under the anti-defection law. This has reduced the strength of the House to 208.
- Now the simple majority is 105, which is equal to the strength of BJP in the house.
- In addition to this, the party has the support of one independent MLA, taking their strength to 106.

The coalition government recently polled strength of 99.

- It was said that the new government has sought to pass the Finance Bill as the vote on account of the previous government ends on July 31.

Anti-defection law:

- The Anti-defection law was passed by parliament in 1985 and reinforced in 2002.
- The 52nd Amendment to the Constitution included the 10th Schedule which set out the procedure by which legislators may be disqualified, popularly known as the Anti-defection law.
- The law aims at preventing politicians from frequently shuffling between political parties.
- The law disallows MPs/ MLAs to switch parties after elections.
- Speaker/ chairman of the house is the authority to decide on defection cases.

Legislators may be disqualified on following grounds:

- A Member of Parliament or State Legislature is deemed to have defected if he/she either voluntarily resigned from his/her party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote.
- When a member abstains vote in the House contrary to any direction of such party.
- If the independent members join a political party.
- Nominated members should choose to join a party within six months. After 6 months, they are treated as an independent member or a party member.

Exceptions under the law:

- Under the circumstance where 2/3rd of the legislators of a party decide to merge into another party, neither the members who decide to merge, nor the ones who stay with the original party will face disqualification.
- A split in a political party won't be considered a defection if a complete political party merges with another political party.
- Any person elected as speaker or chairman could resign from his party, and rejoin the party if he demitted that post.
- The law initially permitted splitting of parties, but that has now been outlawed.

2. Naga register will shield State from outsiders, says Dy. CM

Context:

- The Nagaland government has initiated a move to compile a Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN).
- It is its own version of citizenship register, only for indigenous communities of the state.

Background:

- The official notification on RIIN has not mentioned a cut-off date to compile the proposed register.
- The authorities in Nagaland have till date issued indigenous inhabitant certificates using December 1, 1963 as the cut-off date.
- Nagaland was inaugurated as India's 16th State on this date following the '16-point agreement' between the government of India and the Naga People's Convention on July 26, 1960.

Details:

- It will be based on an extensive survey and will involve official records of indigenous residents from rural and urban wards.

- RIIN would be prepared under the supervision of the district administration.
- Based on the adjudication and verification, a list of indigenous inhabitants will be finalised and each person will be given a unique ID.
- Once the RIIN process is completed, there would be no fresh issue of indigenous inhabitant certificates. Only newborn babies born to the indigenous inhabitants of Nagaland will be issued the unique identity.
- The RIIN process would be in line with Inner Line Permit (ILP), which is already in force in the state.
 - ILP is an official travel document required by Indian citizens residing outside certain protected states while entering them.
 - The ILP is issued by the Government of India and is obligatory for all those who reside outside the protected states.
 - With the ILP, the government aims to regulate movement to certain areas located near the international border of India.
- The RIIN is often called a variant of Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC). The only difference is the exclusion from the list will not make the people "illegal or Stateless."

Issues:

- The NSCN(IM), which signed a framework agreement with the Centre for finding a solution to the decades-old Naga problem, has opposed the RIIN.
- It has called the list a bid to divide and undermine the inherent rights of the Nagas, besides diluting the peace process approaching a final settlement.
- The NSCN(IM) has been fighting for Nagalim or 'Greater Nagaland' by bringing the Naga-dominated areas in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh under Nagaland, thus uniting 1.2 million Nagas.
- It has also demanded a separate flag and a constitution for the Nagas.
- The Centre has ruled out any division of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

Challenges:

- The cut-off date for the exercise has not been finalised. According to the 1977 notification, the indigenous inhabitant certificate should be issued to only those who had settled in Nagaland or had bought a property before 1963. While some opine that the cut-off date should be 1963 or 1977, cut-off date has not been decided.
- The compilation of RIIN also involves the complexities of deciding claims in respect of children of non-Naga fathers as well as non-Naga children adopted by Naga parents.
- The NSCN(IM) sees the RIIN process as being contradictory to the inherent rights of the Nagas.
- Unless otherwise officially clarified, the RIIN proposal may require large numbers of non-indigenous inhabitants to obtain an ILP to carry out day-to-day activities.
- There is the limitation of non-issuance of domicile certificates or permanent residence certificates to a large number of non-Naga, non-indigenous inhabitants. This could also make the RIIN task even more difficult for the Nagaland government.

3. 'Vishaka rules must apply to judiciary'

Context:

Former chief justice of Delhi High Court, Justice A.P. Shah has asserted that there is a need to engage in how the Vishaka guidelines, which deal with sexual harassment in the workplace, should be made applicable to the judiciary.

Sexual harassment allegations raised by a Supreme Court employee against Chief Justice of India:

- The complainant, a permanent employee of the Supreme Court, was removed from her post on the flimsy allegation of her having taken a half-day casual leave, and protesting against her seating arrangement.
- An unusual hearing was held later on, without a petition having been moved.
- In what was termed as a “Matter of Great Public Importance Touching Upon the Independence of the Judiciary”, the person holding the highest judicial office in the land - CJI sat as a judge in his own cause, violating the principles of Natural Justice.
- Three judges attended that hearing, but the order that emerged was surprisingly signed only by two out of those three, with the Chief Justice choosing to abstain.
- The former chief justice termed the process of inquiry conducted by the Justice S.A. Bobde Committee into the allegations as questionable.
- The complainant had withdrawn from the inquiry.
- Shortly after, the panel concluded that the allegations against the CJI were without substance.
- Justice Shah said conspiracy rumours came even as the allegations were denied from various quarters of the Supreme Court officialdom.

Details:

- The comments came from Justice A.P. Shah while delivering the 27th Rosalind Wilson Memorial Lecture on the subject ‘Judging the Judges, Need for transparency and accountability’.
- It was said that the immediate trigger for his choice of subject for the speech was the sexual harassment allegations raised by a Supreme Court employee against Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.
- On the in-house mechanism dealing with complaints against judges, Justice Shah said it has no statutory basis and certainly no constitutional blessing.
- He suggested that a permanent disciplinary committee with a secretariat be set up at the central level to deal with complaints against judges, and the government should have no part in this.
- He recommended that any accountability mechanism must apply to all judges, regardless of status or rank. And that the law and the procedure must also engage with how the Vishakha guidelines could be made applicable to the judiciary, the extent to which the right to information is allowed, and so on.
- Justice Shah called for a new and more detailed code of conduct guiding judicial behaviour and a streamlined process for regular performance evaluation of judges.

Vishakha Guidelines:

- The Vishaka guidelines were laid down by the Supreme Court in Vishakha and others v State of Rajasthan judgment in 1997.
- This was to look into matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
- It imposes three key obligations on employing institutions - prohibition, prevention, and redressal.
- The institutions are mandated to establish a Complaints Committee.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Govt. must convince industry of RCEP's benefits: Australia

Context:

Australia is leading diplomats from various countries involved in the negotiations for the 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement to convince India to commit

to the deal by the end of the year.

RCEP:

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is a proposed free trade agreement between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) including Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and six Free Trade Agreement(FTA) partners of the ASEAN like Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.
- The RCEP is regarded as a substitute for the Trans-Pacific Partnership set up by the US.
- RCEP was set up in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.
- The scope of RCEP includes include trade in goods, competition, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property and investments, and dispute settling mechanisms.
- The ASEAN will be in total control of the RCEP set up.
- When inked, it would become the world's biggest free trade pact. This is because the 16 nations account for a total GDP of about \$50 trillion and house close to 3.5 billion people.

Why does RCEP matter for the world?

- Billed as the world's biggest trade agreement, the RCEP of 10 ASEAN countries with its six free trade agreement (FTA) partners India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea could well change the face of global trade as we know it. The RCEP includes countries that make up 45% of the world's population with 33% of its GDP, and at least 28% of all trade in the world today.
- If the RCEP is concluded, as ASEAN countries that are driving it hope it will be, by the end of this year, it will bring stability to an otherwise unpredictable world market.
- The worry is that it could also make world trade less flexible, putting members into a quasi-bloc with China at the helm.
- Most RCEP members also conduct substantial trade with the United States, and the U.S.-China trade war may force many of them to take sides, causing a geopolitical rift within the group even before it is fully formed.

Why has it taken so long to negotiate RCEP?

- The main stumbling blocks for the RCEP are the India-China trade relationship, as well as some concerns from Australia and New Zealand on labour and environmental protections.
- While much has been agreed on, and all countries remain committed to concluding the RCEP agreement, the last-mile will only be crossed when all those concerns are met.
- In May 2019, China proposed a plan to conclude the negotiations without the naysayers, i.e. take the ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) into the agreement, while leaving space for India, Australia and New Zealand to join later. But the move was opposed by most in the grouping.
- As one ASEAN diplomat put it, given the size of India's market there is "no point without India in RCEP".
- For India, too, there are many reasons to stay in the deal. Apart from giving up the first mover's advantage, India would give up the chance to frame the grouping's rules and investment standards if it fails to join the RCEP at this stage.
- Staying out would also run counter to the Narendra Modi government's plans to ramp up its engagement with ASEAN countries through the "Act East" policy, as well as its hopes for maritime cooperation in the India-Pacific.

What are India's concerns?

- India's chief concern with the RCEP is the fact that it needs to protect its economy from the flooding of cheap imports from China.

- Of all the countries in the RCEP, India is the only one not involved in any bilateral or multilateral negotiations for an FTA with China, and the worry for the government and industry is that an FTA within the RCEP will just become a cover for duty free trade into India for Chinese goods.
- China wants zero tariffs for over 90 per cent tariff lines however, which could see low-cost “Made in China” goods kill locally manufactured goods.
- Several industry groups have already petitioned the government not to go ahead with the RCEP, including manufacturers of steel and aluminium, copper, pharmaceuticals and textile, which will be the worst hit in such a scenario.
- As a result, the government has been cautious about moving ahead.
- India has asked for strict “Rules of Origin” markings on all goods, so they don’t come in through a third country.
- In addition, India wants to ensure the free flow of services (manpower) to RCEP countries as well, but has faced an uphill task as most countries tighten their immigration laws.



C. GS3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Himalayan States demand green bonus

Context:

The Himalayan States came together at a conclave here to demand a separate Ministry to deal with problems

endemic to them and a green bonus in recognition of their contribution to environment conservation.

Details:

- Mussoorie was host to the 'Himalayan Conclave'. Ten out of 11 States took part in the conclave.
- The conclave was held to deliberate on issues like conservation of the Himalayan ecology, biodiversity and the cultural heritage.
- The twin demands formed part of a common agenda of the Himalayan States which was handed over to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the end of the conclave.
- It is for the first time that the Himalayan States have come on a single platform to take a unanimous stand on the issue of green bonus and demanded a separate Ministry to deal with problems unique to them.
- Explaining the rationale behind the demand for a green bonus, it was said that most of the country's rivers originate in the Himalayas and therefore, the Himalayan States had to play the most significant role in the Prime Minister's water conservation initiative.
- It was said that it was necessary because the Himalayan States' contribution to environmental conservation was the biggest with all their green cover.
- The Himalayan States were also at a disadvantage because large swathes of land fell into eco-sensitive zones where all sorts of development activities could not be carried out.
- A green bonus thus was needed to compensate the Himalayan States for their disadvantages it was asserted.

After deliberations which, a "Mussoorie resolution" was passed at the conclave making a collective pledge to conserve and protect their rich cultural heritage, bio-diversity, glaciers, lakes, besides making their own contribution to the nation's prosperity.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Respecting reproductive choice

Context:

Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 was recently approved by the Cabinet, after having lapsed in December 2018 with the dissolution of Parliament.

Details:

- The bill bans and criminalises commercial surrogacy and only allows altruistic surrogacy.
- The Bill stipulates that a surrogate mother has to be a close relative of the intending couple.
- Also, the 228th Law Commission India Report on Commercial Surrogacy too strongly recommended prohibiting commercial surrogacy. However, it said that prohibition on vague moral grounds without a proper assessment of social ends and purposes which surrogacy can serve would be irrational.

Criticisms:

- The Bill excludes gay couples, single men and women, and unmarried couples who want a child.
- The legislation shows that the government is eager to impose a certain morality on others.
- The government overlooks the needs of many same sex couples and single parents.
- The legislation allows surrogacy only through a close relative. However, the Bill doesn't define 'close relative'.
- Moreover, the surrogate, the Bill says, should be married, aged 25 to 35, and should have at least one child. This further brings down the number of eligible surrogate mothers.

Way forward:

- Votaries of the ban have argued that commercial surrogacy is used for trafficking, and foreigners abandon children born through surrogates. Such violations should be addressed with an iron fist.
- The focus should be on the well-being of the surrogate. The intending couple should ensure financial enumeration, a sound insurance cover and regular health check-ups for the surrogate.
- The Health Ministry must rely upon or conducted studies on commercial surrogacy, and share it with the public. If it becomes law, the Surrogacy Bill could affect the chances of many couples in India who are desperate for children and whose only ray of hope is often commercial surrogacy.
- To impose a ban where better regulation may have sufficed will only take the entire process underground. Tightening regulations would respect the interests of infertile couples who might have a chance to have a child through surrogacy. That would also respect the woman's choice about how she wants to bear a child.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Ban or regulate? – On Cryptocurrencies

Context:

An inter-ministerial committee set up in November 2, 2017, headed by Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg submitted its report on legality of cryptocurrencies and blockchain to the Finance Ministry. The committee recommended that private cryptocurrencies be banned completely in India, while advocating a central bank-issued cryptocurrency.

Cryptocurrency:

A cryptocurrency (or crypto currency) is a digital asset designed to work as a medium of exchange that uses strong cryptography to secure financial transactions, control the creation of additional units, and verify the transfer of assets.

Details:

- The recommendation by the inter-ministerial committee does not come as a surprise.
- In his Budget speech in 2018, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said that the government doesn't consider them legal tender.
- The Reserve Bank of India has repeatedly warned the public of the risks associated with dealing with cryptocurrencies.

What are the problems with cryptocurrencies?

- An article by Bloomberg, citing data from blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis, said "speculation remains Bitcoin's primary use case".
- Its use in illegal online marketplaces that deal with drugs and child pornography has been well-

documented.

- There have been cases of consumers being defrauded, including in India.
- The report highlighted the fact that cryptocurrencies do not have any intrinsic value of their own and lack any of the attributes of a currency. That is, they neither act as a store of value nor are they a medium of exchange in themselves.
- The cryptocurrencies cannot serve the purpose of a currency. The private cryptocurrencies are inconsistent with the essential functions of money, hence private cryptocurrencies cannot replace fiat currencies.
- The report also highlighted mushrooming of cryptocurrencies almost invariably issued abroad and numerous people in India investing in these. It was also noted that all these cryptocurrencies have been created by non-sovereigns.
- Therefore, the Committee was of clear view that the private cryptocurrencies should not be allowed.
- Governments and economic regulators across the world are wary of private cryptocurrencies. As they need neither a central issuing authority nor a central validating agency for transactions, these currencies can exist and thrive outside the realm of authority and regulation.
- They are even deemed a threat to the official currency and monetary system.

Is banning cryptocurrencies is the most effective way to respond?

- The inter-ministerial committee believes it is, going so far as to draft a law that mandates a fine and imprisonment of up to 10 years for the offences of mining, generating, holding, selling, dealing in, transferring, disposing of, or issuing cryptocurrencies.
- But six of the seven jurisdictions that the report cites have not banned cryptocurrencies outright.
- Many of them, including Canada, Thailand, Russia and Japan, seem to be moving on the path of regulation, so that transactions are within the purview of anti-money laundering and prevention of terror laws.
- China, which India has taken a cue from, has gone for an outright ban.

The China example:

- In China, owing to the network-based nature of cryptocurrencies, after banning domestic crypto exchanges, many traders turned to overseas platforms to continue participating in crypto transactions.
- Trading in China is now low but not non-existent.

Considering this example it can be understood that an outright ban is not necessarily a superior choice to regulation, especially in a field driven by fast-paced technological innovations.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. History and the 5G dilemma

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in a dilemma whether to embrace Huawei and other Chinese purveyors of 5G-enabled telecommunications infrastructure, or to salvage the political relationship with the United States.
- As India looks to developing 5G technology, its quest in the 1980s for an American supercomputer offers lessons.

History:

- The dilemma is similar to the one faced by Rajiv Gandhi in the 1980s.
- Then, India had sought for itself a supercomputer from, among others, Japan. Instead, it was dealt a bad hand by the U.S., and made to settle eventually for an American machine that belonged to an older, slower generation of computers.
- The lessons from that moment in history are instructive, and Indian policymakers should pay heed to them.
- Long before the Japan – U.S.A rivalry reached a head, India had become its unfortunate casualty.
- Geopolitics induced by technology coincided with Rajiv Gandhi’s winning the 1984 general election by a landslide.
 - His early initiatives included the New Computer Policy (NCP) of 1984 and the Software (Exports) Policy of 1986, which resulted in a steep drop in the price of computers, and heralded a remarkable shift in the government’s attitude towards them.
 - However, to keep up with rapid, generational leaps in computing, India needed the assistance of nations that had made big strides in the sector.
 - Months after the NCP was passed, Reagan put India in a list of destinations that needed special “review” before exports of American technology could be cleared.
 - Rajiv Gandhi made a much publicised visit to Washington DC in 1985 to break the impasse. It resulted in the Technology Cooperation Agreement (TCA), a genuine, diplomatic success forged by the personal chemistry the young Prime Minister shared with Reagan.
 - The TCA eased regulations on technology exports, and it was during this visit that Rajiv Gandhi broached the possible purchase of a supercomputer.
 - India sought a supercomputer to forecast its monsoons better. Negotiations with the U.S. were however long and cumbersome, and an entire year passed by without any progress.
 - India eventually approached Japan, whose NEC Corporation was the only company outside the U.S. that could offer a supercomputer.
 - Reagan wanted to wean India away from its partnership with the Soviet Union on high technology, and rein in New Delhi’s progress on its nascent guided missile programme.
 - Therefore, the U.S. attached riders to the sale, placing intrusive safeguards and certification requirements that the supercomputer would be used by India only for civilian purposes.
 - With Japan making its reluctance known, India was held captive at the negotiating table by the U.S. The agreement finally inked was for the sale of a Cray XMP supercomputer a generation older to its latest variant.
- The Cray supercomputer sale is well-documented, but less storied is the American effort to dissuade Japan’s technology giants from the Indian market. By investing heavily in his political relationship with the U.S., Rajiv Gandhi unwittingly waded into Reagan’s technology trade war with Tokyo. It diminished his ability to negotiate autonomously with NEC.

Current Scenario:

- At the recently concluded G20 summit in Osaka, Mr. Modi suggested he was talking to his U.S. counterpart to collaborate and develop 5G technology for mutual benefit.
- The government has unwisely put all its cards on the table by stating that a few American vendors have the ability today to compete with a Huawei, Nokia or Ericsson.
- The Principal Scientific Adviser, K. VijayRaghavan, also the head of the high-level panel on 5G, openly called for the exclusion of Chinese players from national trials.

Conclusion:

- The U.S.-China technology rivalry is eminently political, one in which India should not take sides.
- If anything, New Delhi should take care to see history does not repeat itself.
- Much like the U.S.-Japan understanding on supercomputers, Osaka also saw the beginning of a U.S. rapprochement with China on technology trade: India must ensure whatever bilateral configuration that emerges from such talks does not restrict the sale of 5G equipment to others.

- India needs to make decisions coldly from the prism of economic self-interest.

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. PUNCH stands for Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere.
2. PUNCH Mission is focused on understanding the transition of particles from the Sun's outer corona to the solar wind that fills interplanetary space.

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:

PUNCH (Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere) is focused on understanding the transition of particles from the Sun's outer corona to the solar wind that fills interplanetary space. PUNCH will consist of a 'constellation' of four suitcase-sized microsats that will orbit the Earth in formation and study how the corona, which is the atmosphere of the Sun, connects with the interplanetary medium. The mission is expected to be launched in 2022.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Uranus has nine major moons.
2. Titania is its biggest among the major moons.

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:

Uranus has five major moons: Miranda, Ariel, Umbriel, Titania, and Oberon. They range in diameter from 472 km for Miranda to 1578 km for Titania.

Q3. Which of the following is a judicial writ issued as a command to an inferior court or ordering a person to perform a public or statutory duty?

- a. Mandamus
- b. Certiorari
- c. Habeas Corpus
- d. Quo Warranto

Answer: a

Explanation:

Mandamus is a judicial writ issued as a command to an inferior court or ordering a person to perform a public or statutory duty. This writ is a command issued by court to a public official, public body, corporation, inferior court, tribunal or government asking them to perform.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Mariana Trench is the deepest part of the world's oceans.
- 2. It is located in the western Pacific Ocean.

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:

Mariana Trench:

- Mariana Trench is the deepest part of the world's oceans.
- It is located in the western Pacific Ocean.
- The trench is not the part of the seafloor closest to the center of the Earth. This is because the Earth is not a perfect sphere; its radius is about 25 kilometres (16 mi) less at the poles than at the equator.
- The Mariana Trench is part of the Izu-Bonin-Mariana subduction system that forms the boundary between two tectonic plates.
- In this system, the western edge of one plate, the Pacific Plate, is subducted (i.e., thrust) beneath the smaller Mariana Plate that lies to the west.
- Crustal material at the western edge of the Pacific Plate is some of the oldest oceanic crust on earth (up to 170 million years old), and is, therefore, cooler and denser; hence its great height difference relative to the higher-riding (and younger) Mariana Plate.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

- 1. Given the gigantic in size and scope of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), India should not allow the deal to fail. Comment. What are India's concerns with respect to the deal.

(15 Marks, 250 Words)

2. Local reservations undermine the constitutional rights of individuals and discourage the private sector. Critically Analyse. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

