

## 30 Nov 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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#### Category: HEALTH

#### 1. **Omicron poses very high global risk: WHO**

##### Context:

- In light of the increasing case numbers of the **Omicron coronavirus variant**, the World Health Organization (WHO) has come out with its advisory on the new variant.
  - Omicron was first reported from South Africa and has since spread to more than a dozen countries. A few countries have begun imposing travel restrictions in a bid to counter the threat of spread of the new variant.

For detailed information on the Omicron variant refer to the following article:

[CNA dated Nov 29, 2021: Understanding the new variant of the virus](#)

##### Details:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the **heavily mutated Omicron coronavirus variant** is likely to spread internationally and poses a **very high risk of infection surges**.
- The impact is likely to be more severe on vulnerable populations, particularly in countries with low vaccination coverage.
- WHO has urged all the nations to **accelerate vaccination of high-priority groups** and device plans to tackle any surge in infections from the new variant.

##### Proposed international agreement on preventing future pandemics:

- The assembly of Health Ministers under the WHO framework is expected to soon launch negotiations on an international agreement on preventing future pandemics.

- The agreement will work towards **preventing, detecting, preparing for and controlling a pandemic**.
  - The new agreement would cover issues such as sharing of data and genome sequences of emerging viruses as part of a fully functioning **global surveillance system**.
  - It would also ensure **sharing of support** in emergencies including finance and ensure the **equitable use and distribution of available medical resources** including any potential vaccines derived from research.
- The agreement is expected to be finalized by May 2024.

## 2. Per capita out-of-pocket health expenditure sees decline: report

### Context:

- Fifth edition of the **National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates for India for 2017-18** has been released by Health Secretary.
  - The NHA report is produced by National Health Systems Resource Centre.

### Details:

#### Reduced Out-of-pocket expenditure:

- **Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) as a share of total health expenditure** and the per capita OOPE has come down.
  - As a share of total health expenditure, the OOPE has come down to 48.8% in 2017-18 from 64.2% in 2013-14.
- The decrease in OOPE can be attributed to the **increase in utilisation and reduction in cost of services in Government health facilities** and also the **increase in social security expenditure on health** in the form of health insurance programme and medical reimbursements made to Government employees.

#### Increased government expenditure on health:

- The report notes an **increase in the share of Government health expenditure in the total GDP of the country**. It has increased from 1.15% in 2013-14- **1.35% in 2017-18**. This has helped increase the per capita Government health expenditure as well.
- Additionally, the share of Government Health Expenditure in total health expenditure has also increased over time. From being 28.6% in 2013-14, it has now increased to 40.8% in 2017-18.

## Category: POLITY

### 1. A National Court of Appeal?

#### Context:

- Recently, the Chief Justice of India urged the Government to seriously consider Attorney General's suggestion to restructure the **judiciary** to include four **National Courts of Appeals**.
  - The National Court of Appeal (NCA) would act as an **intermediate forum between the Supreme Court and the various High Courts of India**.
- In this context, the article analyzes arguments both in favour of and against the setting up of the National Courts of Appeals.

#### Background:

## Working of the Supreme Court:

- Broadly, the Constitution prescribes to the Supreme Court two types of jurisdiction: an **original jurisdiction** and an **appellate jurisdiction**. India's Supreme Court acts as a final court of appeal.
- Notably, judges of the Supreme Court are having to spend a lot of time on deciding on the admissibility of fresh cases. Being tasked with the filtering process is a waste of the time, experience and wisdom of a Supreme Court judge. This process also drastically reduces the time available with these judges to take up the admitted cases. Owing to **time and volume constraints**, the **quality of judgments could suffer**.
- There seems to be a **relative paucity of Constitution Benches** to decide major questions of law. Also cases of importance are being dealt with by just a couple of judges, for lack of Constitution Benches.
  - Larger Benches bring more judicial thinking to an issue, a balancing of different points of view and greater authority to the ruling of the court.
  - **Article 145(3) of the Constitution** mandates a minimum of five judges for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of constitutional law.
- The **immense workload on the Supreme Court** could impede its mandate to function not just as an appellate court tasked with checking if the lower court has erred but also the unique mandate of the Supreme Court to focus on examining questions of law of general public importance and settling questions of constitutional significance.

## Arguments in favour:

- The NCA, which would be headquartered in New Delhi, and which would have different regional benches, would relieve the Supreme Court of the weight of hearing regular civil and criminal appeals. The appellate body would be able to **reduce the number of appeals the Supreme Court deals with**.
- The installation of Appellate Courts would help **ease the burden of the Supreme Court and thus help reduce pendency**.
- The setting up of appellate courts in different parts of the country would make the higher judiciary accessible to citizens from remote locations as well. Hence it would **help improve access to justice**.
  - A vastly disproportionate percentage of appeals to the Supreme Court come from Delhi and its neighbouring States indicating that the Supreme Court seems out of reach for people from other areas.
- The intermediate courts of appeal with senior judges can **ensure adequate time and consideration for each case**.
- It would allow the Supreme Court to decide the weighty issues under the Constitution and other laws, with appropriate judge strength, and give the judges the time and opportunity to do their best in such cases.

## Arguments against:

- The installation of an appellate court could be impractical.
- Some experts point out that the **installation of an appellate court would only add another layer of judiciary to the existing structure**. Instead they argue for strengthening of the existing lower judiciary in terms of ensuring adequate human resources and infrastructure.

## C. GS 3 Related

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## E. Editorials

### Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

#### 1. A launch window for India as a space start-up hub

##### Context

This article discusses the entry of private players in the space field to take the next leap for mankind and democratise space usage to build commercial value.

##### What is the Space Race?

- The space race was a series of technological experiments between the United States and the Soviet Union in order to demonstrate dominance in spaceflight.
- The Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, kicking off the epic space race of the twentieth century.
- It turned out to be a metaphor for the whole [Cold War](#) between the capitalist US and the socialist Soviet Union.
- It sprang from the Cold War of the mid-twentieth century, a severe worldwide battle that pitted the ideas of capitalism and communism against one another.

##### Significance of Private Players in Space:

- Mature space agencies, such as the United States' National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), China's China National Space Administration (CNSA), and Russia's Roscosmos (Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities), seek assistance from private players such as Boeing, SpaceX, and Blue Origin for complex operations that go beyond manufacturing support, such as sending crew and supplies to the [International Space Station](#).
- With innovation and innovative technology, these businesses have revolutionised the space sector by lowering prices and turnaround time.

##### Challenges of Private Players in Space Field:

1. **Brain Drain:** Significant aspect to throw light on is the extensive brain drain in India, which has increased by 85% since 2005.
2. **Loopholes in Policies:** Brain drain might be connected to policy bottlenecks that make it difficult for private space companies and entrepreneurs to acquire investors, making it almost impossible to operate in India.
3. **Lack of Private Participation:** The absence of a framework to give openness and clarity in rules is one of the reasons for the lack of independent private participation in space.
4. **Issues with Liabilities and Space Insurance:** Another critical feature of space law is insurance and indemnity clarity, namely who or which organisation assumes obligation in the event of a mistake. There is a cap on responsibility and the financial damages that must be paid in some Western nations with a developed commercial space sector. In reality, under Australian space legislation, space operators are required to carry insurance for up to AUD\$100 million.
5. **As a part of the system:** Many private businesses are already active in equipment and frame fabrication, using either outsourced specs or leased licences. NASA and the CNSA allocate a portion of their annual

budgets to private players for this reason. Until 2018, SpaceX was a member of 30 NASA missions, receiving approximately \$12 billion in contracts.

## India and the Space Race:

- **India as a Very Marginal Player**
- The space economy is a \$440 billion worldwide industry, with India accounting for **less than 2% of the total**.
- Despite the fact that India is a prominent space-faring country with end-to-end capability for manufacturing satellites, developing enhanced launch vehicles, and deploying interplanetary missions, this is the case.
- The space race has significant consequences for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in India's space sector and is a viable endeavour for global investors.
- **Indian Space Agencies:**
- The Indian government established a new organisation called as [IN-SPACe \(Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre\)](#).
  - It is a “single window nodal agency” set up to promote the commercialisation of Indian space operations.
- The agency supports the entry of Non-Government Private Entities (NGPEs) in the Indian space industry as a complement to the Indian Space Research Organisation ([ISRO](#)).
  - The agency will also promote the quick onboarding of private sector companies by encouraging policies in a conducive regulatory environment and generating synergies through previously existing essential infrastructure.
- **Indian Potential in the Space Sector:**
- India is presently on the verge of developing a space ecosystem, and with ISRO as the leading agency, India may now flourish as a global space start-up powerhouse.
- The sector is in its infancy, and the opportunities to establish a viable company strategy are endless.
- Already, over 350 start-ups, like AgniKul Cosmos, Skyroot Technologies, Dhruva Space, and Pixxel, have laid the groundwork for home-grown technologies with a viable economic unit.
- However, in order to sustain the development engine, investors must see the industry as the next “new-age” boom, and ISRO must transition from a supporter to a facilitator.
- To guarantee that the sky is not the limit, investor trust must be boosted, and unambiguous rules must be set.

## Way Forward

- Ensuring investor confidence needs to be pumped up and for the same, clear laws need to be defined.
- Breaking activities down into multiple sections, each to address specific parts of the value chain and in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty.
- Dividing activities further into upstream and downstream space blocks.



- Providing a solid foundation to products/services developed by the non-governmental and private sectors within the value chain.
- Creating value, Indian space private companies need to generate their intellectual property for an independent product or service.

## Category: ECONOMY

### 1. The three farm laws were never a solution

#### Context

This article highlights the concerns with the three [farm laws](#) that the Union Government seeks to repeal.

#### Background: –

- The Farm Laws Repeal Bill includes the Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act (ECA), 2020.
- Each of the three statutes aimed to reduce barriers to purchasers’ ability to store, contract, and acquire agricultural goods.

#### Concerns with Farm Laws:

- The most concerning part of these legislation was the manner in which they were crafted and passed. Even today, nothing is known about who drafted these laws or who was consulted before they were enacted as ordinances.
- These were enacted in haste by voice vote in Parliament, in what experts consider to be a breach of established processes.
- The long history of debate over agricultural market reform only helps to highlight the three legislation’s divergence from such a tradition.
- Another major issue is that, to the degree that these Acts allow for the centralisation of authority to affect the running of trade zones, this would favour the consolidation of large corporations, a tendency that is already visible internationally.
- The Acts rig the system in favour of corporates who will now utilise this flexibility to obtain control over supply chains at the expense of farmers.

#### Centre-State agri-relations: APMC Act

- The APMC Bypass Act mandated that States can only regulate, via their respective [APMCs](#), designated physical premises called the ‘market yards’.
- Via this Act, the Centre essentially wrested control of market areas outside these yards, now called ‘trade areas’, from the States.
- The APMC Bypass Act particularly hurt States that had the most deregulated systems. A State that had no APMC Act suddenly found that all deregulated areas within the State would now come under the Centre’s regulatory ambit and control.
- According to the APMC Bypass Act, states can only govern specified physical locations known as “market yards” through their local APMCs.
- The Centre effectively wrested authority of market areas outside these yards, now known as ‘trading zones,’ from the States by this Act.

- A state with no APMC Act suddenly discovered that all deregulated regions inside the state would now fall under the regulatory purview and jurisdiction of the Centre.
- This is when private players that have previously operated freely in a deregulated environment are subjected to the restrictions of a capricious Centre.

### Concerns during Pandemic

- Investigation on COVID-19 lockdown management in the agricultural sector revealed that the Centre was always a step behind, providing relief measures for agricultural marketing reactively rather than proactively.
- States, on the other hand, provided a more rapid, appropriate, and agile reaction to the COVID-19 lockdown on agriculture.

### Digital consolidation route

- The Government of India has negotiated agreements with several businesses to develop data stacks that offer restricted access to “data from the federated Farmers’ database” for specified locations.
- A “trade” zone under full central government control might provide big business with a digital data consolidation way to control supply chains.

### Way Forward:

1. States must return to basics and implement the recommendations made by several expert panels for agriculture market reform.
2. Local governments must focus on actual change and action.
3. States should be better positioned to internalise and adapt to a wide range of institutional, socioeconomic, and agro climatic situations.
4. For robust and durable solutions, there should be a deliberate approach that incorporates local issues.
5. In the short term, the Centre should focus on providing a stable and predictable policy environment for imports and exports, the operation of national commodity exchanges and futures markets, and providing inclusive platforms for discussions on State-level market reform.
6. It effectively undermined the capacity of states to control the character and functioning of agricultural markets by exempting private participants from any State law in agricultural marketing.
7. Such a transfer of regulatory authority from the states to the centre may be justified in theory if there was consistent proof that the centre was better educated and prepared to control agricultural markets.

## Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

### 1. The many challenges before trade unions

#### Context

The article highlights the challenges before trade unions in comparison to the repeal of the farm laws.

#### Details:

#### Significant factors responsible for the farmers’ victory (repeal of farm laws):

- Staying power, unwavering solidarity, political legitimacy, social prominence, and the ability to inflict harm on opponents all play a role in achieving favourable outcomes for the agitators in industrial or social confrontations.
- All of these circumstances characterised the farmers’ agitation.



- The demonstrations had political validity since the administration approved the three laws without consulting farmers' organisations and without referring the measures to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC).

### **Problems with the Codes**

1. The **Labour Codes** were approved with little debate and discussion because the Opposition parties boycotted the Lok Sabha at the time.
2. Contrary to the government's assertions, trade unions, particularly the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), chastised the Central government for failing to have proper discussions with them on the Codes.
3. The lack of meaningful interaction runs counter to the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention of 1976, which India adopted in February 1978.
4. Many sections in the Labour Codes rob workers of hard-won labour rights.
5. The drafting is poor and incomplete, and it is an insult to the country's collective legal and industrial relations intelligence.
6. The government made adjustments to significant disputed sections (hire and fire, contract labour) that were not supported by strong empirical data.
7. The government has watered down beneficial clauses (such as standing orders and inspections) and made issues overly complicated (industrial tribunal, minimum wages).
8. The act of keeping existing thresholds even after many decades (provident fund, medical insurance) and the act of liberalising thresholds pertaining to significant legal features (contract labour, hiring and fire, standing orders) will exacerbate informalization of the workforce.
9. Many substantive and procedural provisions have been left to the rule-making procedures, resulting in significant divergences as states construct various regulations on the same issue. These will cause havoc in the management of labour relations.

### **Why strikes are unsuccessful in comparison to Farmers' Agitation?**

1. The Central Trade Unions (CTUs) are split by their political allegiance. Again, hundreds of enterprise-based unions with little political awareness do not necessarily back the CTUs' agitations.
2. The alleged strikes resulted in symbolic actions of nominal discussions with the CTUs by the administrations of the United Progressive Alliance or the National Democratic Alliance. The reform mandate was never dead.
3. Though the CTUs have long been successful in preventing national labour law reforms, significant legislative and inspection reforms have occurred at the regional level. Furthermore, with the government's covert assistance, firms have been able to gain labour flexibility that was previously unavailable to them under official legislation. As a result, even if the Labour Codes are abolished, they will have less impact.
4. Despite the fact that there are around 400 million unorganised and informal employees, they are dispersed and not organised in a cohesive manner to mount major political opposition and demand labour market security.
5. Industrial workers, unlike farmers, cannot organise longer and larger strikes because they would lose their employment and pay.
6. Global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the **International Monetary Fund** support and even advocate for a broader labour reform agenda that includes privatisation, flexible labour markets, and so on.

### **Conclusion:**

In light of these facts, unions must devise agitational techniques to harm the government's and economy's political image and prospects. They can also utilise the option of legally contesting the Codes, as has been done in the case of gig workers. The delay in adopting the Codes as a result of severe economic conditions or maybe owing to political causes might be a temporary consolation, if it exists at all.

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. Boosting green hydrogen

#### Context

The article highlights the significance of Green Hydrogen for India in light of India's carbon emissions promise made at Glasgow COP26.

#### Background:

- The Prime Minister recently stated that India's goal is to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.
- The declaration was bolstered by the country's solar accomplishments since 2015.
- India is the only major economy whose policies and actions are on pace to restrict world average temperature rise to less than 2°C over pre-industrial levels, as stipulated in the [Paris Agreement](#).
- To reduce reliance on fossil fuels and make better use of India's solar capacity, the synergy between renewable energy and green hydrogen must be harnessed.

#### Green Hydrogen

- **What is Green Hydrogen?**
- Green hydrogen is hydrogen produced using a technology that produces no greenhouse emissions (such as carbon dioxide or methane).
- The hydrogen created by splitting water using power from solar plants or wind turbines is the greatest example of green hydrogen.
- **Need for Green Hydrogen**
- The Government of India is advocating for the use of green hydrogen in the production of fertilisers and the refining of petroleum.
- Eventually, any company would be supposed to rely on hydrogen for all of its energy needs.
- Carbon has traditionally been employed to suck up oxygen, resulting in carbon dioxide emissions, although hydrogen can also accomplish the job.
- **Government Measures**
- The government aims to make it necessary for companies (initially fertilisers and oil refining) to utilise green hydrogen for a set percentage of their overall energy needs.
- According to a recent Business Standard report, the government may implement a [Production-Linked Incentive \(PLI\)](#) plan for the manufacture of electrolyzers used in the production of green hydrogen.

#### How is Green Hydrogen Produced?

- Several major economies that are enacting legislation to limit carbon emissions are also catalysing worldwide efforts toward green hydrogen transitions.
- To produce hydrogen by electrolysis a low-carbon energy source is required. Depending on the technique of generation, the hydrogen is designated with a colour.
- While hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources is green, it is blue when the carbon produced by the process is caught and stored without being released into the atmosphere.
- When the carbon is not collected, the hydrogen produced is labelled grey.
- Almost 70% of the money necessary to create green hydrogen via electrolysis goes into creating renewable energy.

### **Significance of Green Hydrogen For India**

- Hydrogen is an important weapon in India's fight against climate change since it boosts renewable energy's long-term energy storage capacities.
- It is also the most promising way to decarbonize industries such as cement, steel, and refineries.
- By mid-century, hydrogen can provide the most cost-effective decarbonization option for more than a fifth of total energy consumption, making it a key answer for meeting the 1.5°C climate target.
- India can minimise its carbon footprint and cut its yearly import bill by creating a hydrogen value chain that includes production technologies, storage, transportation and distribution, infrastructure, etc.

### **What are the Challenges?**

1. If you consider that the electrolysis of water using renewable energy is now the low-hanging fruit, the big hurdle is 'cost.'
2. To reduce prices, the cost of the electrolyser should decrease, which is a function of scale—the lower the cost, the more hydrogen plants are built.
3. Another issue is the electrolyser efficiency, or how much power it takes to create one kilogramme of hydrogen. It is now 55 kWhr per kilogramme of hydrogen.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Government financing and long-term strategies that encourage private investment while adhering to standards and a progressive compliance framework are required to enhance green hydrogen production.
2. Hydrogen's cross-sectoral potential should be leveraged based on the cost and simplicity of adoption of each area.
3. As part of near-term aims, a few critical industries with minimal transition costs, such as refineries, fertilisers, and natural gas, could be compelled to utilise hydrogen to save costs.
4. Steel, cement, and road mobility needs should be legislated as part of medium-term targets.
5. Heavy-duty vehicles should be eligible for both state and federal subsidies. In the long run, green hydrogen should be mandatory in shipping, aircraft, energy storage, and solutions for power outages.
6. Enforcing time-bound mid- and long-term regulations would encourage the private sector to invest more in green hydrogen, giving it the necessary push in its early phases.
7. India should replace 8.5 percent of its grey hydrogen production with green hydrogen in order to lessen its reliance on imported ammonia.
8. By the end of the decade, it should seek to create 4-6 million tonnes of green hydrogen per year and export at least 2 million tonnes.
9. India has already taken the first step, with the Indian Oil Corporation issuing a global tender to build two green hydrogen-producing facilities at its refineries in Mathura and Panipat.

Also read: [National Hydrogen Energy Mission](#)

### Conclusion:

Hydrogen is the most environmentally friendly fuel, and it should play a key part in India's net-zero objectives. With its plentiful and low-cost solar energy, India has an advantage in capturing these investments and leading worldwide efforts to shift to green hydrogen.

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. A Rs.1 bounty on giant African snails

#### African Giant Snails:

- African Giant snail species have been a significant **cause of pest issues** around the world.
- It feeds voraciously and is a **vector for plant pathogens**, causing severe damage to agricultural crops and native plants.
- It competes with native snail taxa and **spreads human disease**.

#### Context:

- A novel initiative to eliminate the threat posed by the highly invasive African giant snails is being undertaken in Kerala under which a group of volunteers purchase the African giant snails at nominal rates from people and eliminate en masse using a saline lotion.

### 2. NGO seeks case against Musk's Starlink

#### Starlink:

- Starlink is a **satellite internet constellation** operated by SpaceX.
- The constellation consists of mass-produced small satellites in **low Earth orbit (LEO)**, which communicates with designated ground transceivers.

#### Context:

- NGO Telecom Watchdog has written to the Department of Telecom (DoT) seeking a criminal case to be filed against Starlink.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Onus of contraception still on women, NFHS-5 figures show

- The latest National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) notes the **inequity in terms of family planning method adoption between men and women in India**.
- While male sterilisation continues to remain comparatively lower, **female sterilisation continues to be on the rise**.
  - Female sterilisation has gone up for the entire country from 36% in NFHS-4 (2015-16) to 37.9% in NFHS-5.
  - Male sterilisation's share in family planning methods has always been extremely low, despite the fact that it's safer, quicker and easier.
- This is indicative of the **mentality that family planning is the sole responsibility of women**.

## 2. India offers support to Africa to fight variant

- As Africa continues to grapple with the **new coronavirus variant Omicron**, India has stated it stands ready to support the affected countries in the African continent by **supplying vaccines, life-saving drugs and test kits**.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has indicated that it could supply vaccines either through COVAX facility or bilaterally.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to suspension of the Members of Parliament:

1. The MPs can be suspended by the President on the recommendation of the presiding officer of the house.
2. The MPs can only be suspended for their conduct in the ongoing session of the Parliament.

Choose the correct statements:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 & 2
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The presiding officer (**NOT President**) is permitted to suspend a member of Parliament (MP). The Speaker of the Lok Sabha has the authority to force a Member to resign from the House or to suspend him or her. The Rajya Sabha Chairman, unlike the Speaker, does not have the authority to suspend a member. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- The act of 'naming' such a member opens the door for a motion to be introduced in that House requesting that the member thus 'named' be "suspended from the service (of the House) for a time not exceeding the remainder of the session." **Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**

Q2. Consider the following statements with regards to 'Office of Profit' in India:

1. There is a clear statement in the Indian Constitution under Articles 102(1)(a) and 191(1)(a), that an MP or MLA is not allowed to hold any office of profit as this would fetch them financial gains and benefits.
2. It doesn't apply when an individual holds two executive positions simultaneously.
3. The office of profit concept has been adopted from the British Parliamentary model.

Choose the correct statements:

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only

- d. All of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- According to Articles 102(1)(a) and 191(1)(a) of the Constitution, an MP or MLA is prohibited from holding a profit-making post since it places them in a position to profit financially. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- Articles 102 and 191 also safeguard a legislator who holds a government position if the office in issue is protected from disqualification by law. The provision does not apply to the executive. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- The notion of the office of profit was derived from the British Parliamentary model and is in line with the English Act of Settlement 1701. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**

**Q3. The drainage path of Krishna River doesn't include which of the following states?**

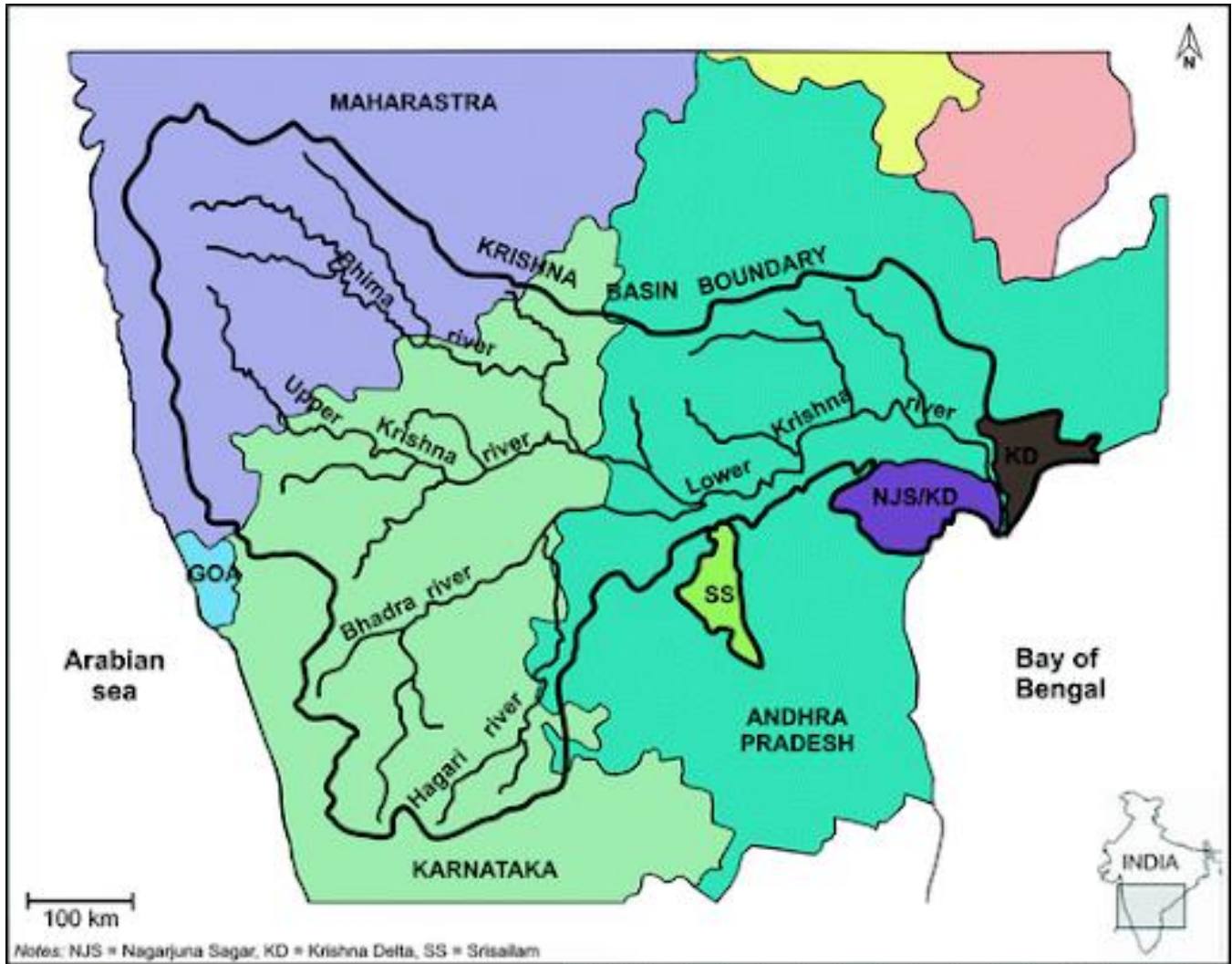
- a. Tamil Nadu
- b. Maharashtra
- c. Karnataka
- d. Telangana

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- The Krishna is the second largest eastward draining interstate river basin in Peninsular India covering large areas in the States of **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.**
- **Hence Option A is correct.**





Source: Springerlink

Q4. Which of the following is correct with regards to the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), as per the RBI?

- a. CBDC is the legal tender issued by a global authority in a digital form
- b. CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form
- c. CBDC is RBI's attempt to launch its own cryptocurrency to rival the existing ones
- d. None of the above

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) suggested revisions to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, allowing it to introduce a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- The CBDC is a digital form of fiat currency that can be traded using blockchain-backed wallets and is governed by the central bank.

- It differs from decentralised virtual currencies and crypto assets, which are not issued by the government and do not have the status of 'legal tender.'
- CBDCs allow users to perform domestic and cross-border transactions without the involvement of a third party or a bank.
- **Hence Option B is correct.**

Q5. In the context of which one of the following are the terms 'pyrolysis and plasma gasification' mentioned?

- Extraction of rare earth elements
- Natural gas extraction technologies
- Hydrogen fuel-based automobiles
- Waste-to-energy technologies

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- **Pyrolysis** is the chemical decomposition of organic compounds in the absence of oxygen.
- **Plasma gasification** is a high-temperature thermal process that uses plasma to transform organic materials into a syngas (synthesis gas) largely composed of hydrogen and carbon monoxide.
- Pyrolysis transforms organic materials into a solid residue including ash and carbon, as well as minor amounts of liquid and gases.
- While plasma gasification is used commercially as a waste-to-energy system, converting municipal solid trash, tyres, hazardous waste, and sewage sludge into synthesis gas (syngas), which contains hydrogen and carbon monoxide and this may be used to create electricity.
- **Hence Option D is correct.**

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India currently stands on the cusp of building a space ecosystem and with ISRO being the guiding body, India can now evolve as a space startup hub for the world. Evaluate. (250 words; 15 marks) GS III (Economy and S&T)
2. Hydrogen is the most promising solution to decarbonise sectors like cement, steel, and refineries. The National Hydrogen Mission and the green hydrogen sector will give India a quantum jump in meeting our climate targets. Examine. (250 words; 15 marks) GS III (E&E)