

19 Feb 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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B. GS 2 Related

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India, UAE sign major trade pact](#)

Syllabus: Bilateral agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Prelims: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

Mains: India-UAE Trade Pact; Significant for India

Context: India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a bilateral “comprehensive” trade pact.

India-UAE Trade Pact: –

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- The trade deal is set to benefit almost 90 per cent of trade — both exports and imports— between the two countries.
- The India-UAE CEPA would have strong anti-dumping measures.
- The trade deal has also provided a permanent safeguard mechanism to safeguard exporters and businesses from any unwarranted surge in volumes of any particular product.
- India has given duty concessions on gold exported from the UAE, while Indian exporters will attract zero percent duty on jewelry.

India-UAE Trade

- **Indian Exports:** India's major exports to the UAE include petroleum products, precious metals, stones, gems and jewellery, minerals, food items such as cereals, sugar, fruits and vegetables, tea, meat, and seafood, textiles, engineering and machinery products, and chemicals.
- **Indian Imports:** India's top imports from the UAE include petroleum and petroleum products, precious metals, stones, gems and jewellery, minerals, chemicals and wood and wood products.
- **UAE investments in India:** UAE's investments in India are concentrated mainly in five sectors: Services Sector (15.78%), Sea Transport (8.80%), Power (8.34%), Construction (Infrastructure) Activities (7.15%) and Construction Development: (7.08%). UAE is also investing in a post-Article 370 Jammu and Kashmir, thereby helping to strengthen India's position on Kashmir.

Why is this deal significant for India?

- **Boost to other FTAs:** The signing of the pact with the UAE would also help to step up India's proposed free trade agreements with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman.
- **Benefits to gems and jewellery sector:** The deal will push jewellery exports to UAE to the level of \$10 billion by 2023.
- **Greater Market for Indian Goods:** India hopes to gain greater market access in the UAE for items such as textiles & apparels, agriculture and processed food, electronics, gems & jewellery, chemicals & pharmaceuticals and engineering goods.
- **Reduced import duties:** The biggest advantage is that import duties will be brought down on all items exchanged between the two nations.
- **Duty free exports:** At least 80 percent of India's exports into the UAE will be duty free due to the free trade agreement.
- **Employment generation:** The agreement will also create 5 lakh jobs in India gems and jewelry, textiles, engineering, pharma and auto sectors, among others. In the UAE, the pact is expected to create over 1 lakh jobs in the next few years.

- **Wide coverage of Sectors:** CEPA is also likely to include areas such as digital trade, intellectual property rights, government procurement etc. The two sides are also strengthening their cooperation in new areas of renewable energy, start-ups, fintech, etc.
- **Strengthened Air bubble:** The Air Bubble agreed in August 2020 has helped several Indians to return back for employment and business. This deal will further strengthen this cooperation.

Nut Graf

The comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) with the UAE will have clauses to protect domestic industries but also to provide them a gateway to markets in West Asia and Africa. India-UAE CEPA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in both nations.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. SC for mediation among States to settle Krishna water dispute

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims: Krishna Water Dispute

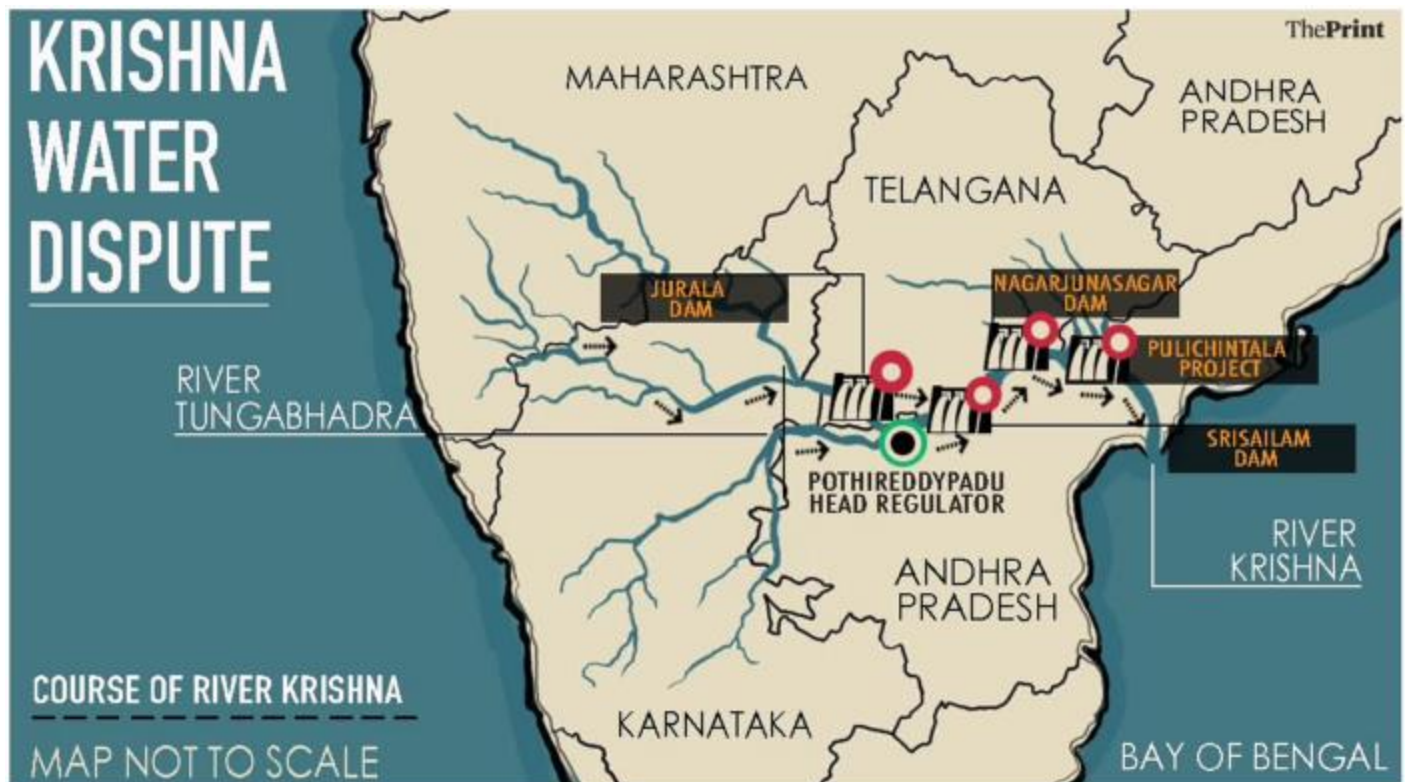
Mains: Krishna river dispute; Course of Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)

Context: The Supreme Court asked if the States of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka could amicably settle their quarrel over the allocation of the Krishna river water.

Background: Krishna water dispute

- The Supreme Court hearing was hearing the Krishna water dispute for the past two to three years.
- It has suggested 'mediation' to settle the enduring dispute over water-sharing between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- Telangana submitted that there was no information forthcoming from Karnataka for the past 14 years about how much Krishna River water it had diverted.
- In turn, Karnataka had argued that a lot of water was going to waste and there was a need to harness it for irrigation and to replenish dry regions.

What is the Krishna river dispute?



Source: ThePrint

- The Krishna is an east-flowing river that originates at Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra and merges with the Bay of Bengal.
- It flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- Together with its tributaries, it forms a vast basin that covers 33% of the total area of the four states.
- A dispute over the sharing of Krishna waters began with the erstwhile Hyderabad and Mysore states.
- Later it continued between successors Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Course of Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT): –

- **KWDT in 1969:** In 1969, the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT) was set up under the Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, 1956, and presented its report in 1973.
 - The report divided the 2060 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of Krishna water at 75 per cent dependability into three parts: 560 TMC for Maharashtra, 700 TMC for Karnataka and 800 TMC for Andhra Pradesh.
- **KWDT in 2004:** As new grievances arose between the states, the second KWDT was instituted in 2004.
 - It delivered its report in 2010 and made allocations of the Krishna water at 65 per cent dependability and for surplus flows as follows: 81 TMC for Maharashtra, 177 TMC for Karnataka, and 190 TMC for Andhra Pradesh.
 - Andhra Pradesh challenged it through a Special Leave Petition before the Supreme Court in 2011.

- **Extension of KWDT:**

- In 2014, Andhra Pradesh got bifurcated to form Telangana.
- Andhra Pradesh has since asked that Telangana be included as a separate party at the KWDT and that the allocation of Krishna waters be reworked among four states, instead of three.
- After the creation of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh in 2014, the Water Resources Ministry has been extending the duration of the KWDT.

- **Maharashtra and Karnataka Response:** Maharashtra and Karnataka are now resisting this move. They argued that Telangana was created following bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, allocation of water should be from Andhra Pradesh's share which was approved by the tribunal.

Know more about [Judges recusal from the Krishna river dispute](#)

Nut Graf

India is a federal democratic country gifted with many rivers that are the carriers of life-sustaining waters. The flowing river water across the state boundaries definitely constructs an efficient and impartial system for dispensing or allocating river flows is a significant, lawful and constitutional issue.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. I&B Ministry warns officials on data security

Syllabus: Challenges to internal security through communication networks

Prelims: National Information Security Policy Guidelines(NISPG); AES-256 Mechanism; Scientific Analysis Group (SAG)

Mains: Concerns of data security

Context: Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has given directives in order to protect data security of crucial information.

What is Data Security?

- Data security refers to the process of protecting data from unauthorized access and data corruption throughout its lifecycle.
- It includes data encryption, hashing, tokenization, and key management practices that protect data across all applications and platforms.

Orders given by the Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry

- The Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has prohibited the sharing of top secret or secret documents by its officials over the Internet.
- The Ministry has raised concern over violation of the Departmental Security instructions and the **National Information Security Policy Guidelines(NISPG)**.
 - NISPG has been prepared by MHA in the wake of expanding information security threat scenarios.

- It aims at improving information security posture of organizations possessing any information.
- It does not restrict organizations from adopting additional stringent practices over and above these guidelines.
- The order said that confidential and restricted information could be shared on the Internet via networks having a commercial **Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256-bit mechanism**.
 - AES-256 supports the largest bit size and is practically unbreakable by brute force based on current computing power, making it the strongest encryption standard.
- The Ministry has directed that top secret and secret documents be shared only in a closed network with the leased line connectivity where the **Scientific Analysis Group (SAG)** grade encryption mechanism is deployed.
 - Scientific Analysis Group (SAG) is working in the area of cryptology and information security.
 - The SAG functions under the Defense Research & Development Organization.
- The Ministry has recommended the use of government email facilities or government instant messaging platforms.
 - The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing's **Samvad** and the National Informatics Centre's **Sandesh** for communicating such information can be used.

Nut Graf

Witnessing massive violation of national communication security policy guidelines and instructions of the government by officials and to control leaks of classified information, a new communication security advisory has been issued by the intelligence structure.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India needs a refugee and asylum law

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics on India's interests

Mains: The need and significance of a refugee and asylum law in India

Context

A private member's bill in the Lok Sabha proposing the enactment of a Refugee and Asylum law was introduced.

Details

- The Bill lays down comprehensive criteria for recognising asylum seekers and refugees and prescribes specific rights and duties accruing from such status.
- It was proposed as a part of the international **principle of non-refoulement** which states that no country should send a person to a place where he/she may face persecution.

- The bill also upholds India's age-old traditions of asylum and hospitality to strangers.

Who are refugees?

- According to the internationally accepted definition, refugees are people who have fled their home countries and crossed an international border because of a well-founded fear of persecution in their home countries, on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.
- The people who cross borders in quest of economic betterment, or because they are fleeing poverty, anarchy or environmental disaster, do not qualify as refugees, as well as those who flee from their home country to another because of war, conflict or fear of persecution.

Read about the – [1951 UN Refugee Convention](#)

The need for a Refugee and Asylum Act

- **Recent acts of refoulement**
 - Recently the Government expelled two batches of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar in the face of a grave risk of persecution in their country.
 - The Government also attempted to do the same with Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar in Mizoram.
 - Currently, many Afghan students are stranded in India due to the Taliban takeover and have not had their visas renewed, and could face similar troubles.
- **No domestic refugee framework**
 - Though India has been and continues to be generous towards several persecuted communities, it is neither a signatory to the **1951 UN Refugee Convention**, nor does it have a domestic asylum framework.
- **Absence of Uniform law**
 - In the absence of a comprehensive law to deal with refugees, India lacks a clear vision or policy on refugee management.
 - Currently, we have laws such as the Foreigners Act, 1946, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Passports Act (1967), the Extradition Act, 1962, the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Foreigners Order, 1948. All of which club all foreign individuals together as “aliens”.
 - The problems of refugees are dealt with in an ad hoc manner, and like other foreigners, they always face the possibility of being deported.
- **Problem of Human trafficking**
 - Without access to basic services, jobs, livelihood opportunities along with the absence of a legal framework will make the refugees vulnerable to exploitation, especially human trafficking.

To read more about the issue, read the [CNA dated 10th April 2021](#)

Significance of the bill

- The Bill would act as a check on arbitrary action by the authorities.

- The right to seek asylum in India would be extended to all foreigners irrespective of their nationality, race, religion, or ethnicity.
- The National Commission for Asylum would be set up to receive and decide all the matters related to refugees and their problems
- The principle of non-refoulement would be upheld, with no exceptions (though there are provisions for exclusion, expulsion, and revocation of refugee status)
- The Bill, if enacted, will put India at the forefront of asylum management in the world.
- It will recognise India's long-standing and continuing commitment to humanitarian and democratic values while dealing with refugees.

Court's View

- In 1996, the Supreme Court of India held that the state has to protect all humans living in India, irrespective of nationality since the rights guaranteed by **Articles 14, 20 and 21** of the Constitution extend to all and are not just to Indian citizens.
- In NHRC vs State of Arunachal Pradesh case 1995, the Supreme Court stopped the forcible eviction of Chakma refugees who had entered Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Court also said that an application for asylum must be duly processed and the state cannot forcibly evict an asylum seeker until a decision is made on grant of asylum.

Conclusion

India, as a significant player in the emerging multipolar world, must build on the Supreme Court's vision and constitute a refugee law that would help uphold our traditional values and high standards of democracy.

Nut Graf

The problems of refugees worldwide demand global solidarity and international cooperation. India ought to be a leader in upholding refugee rights and formulate a National Asylum Law that will help achieve the government's aspiration of becoming a "Vishwaguru".

Category: EDUCATION

1. Revisit the terms of use for this scholastic ABC

Syllabus: *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education*

Mains: *The Academic Bank of Credits' (ABC) Scheme and challenges associated with its implementation.*

Context

A new initiative of 'Academic Bank of Credits' (ABC) in higher education, has been recently notified by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Background

- The **National Education Policy (NEP), 2020** has sought to revamp the higher education system in India to make education more student-centric and multi-disciplinary.

- A new initiative of 'Academic Bank of Credits' (ABC) has been notified in this regard to update the higher education landscape in India.

Academic Bank of Credits' (ABC) Scheme

- An undergraduate or postgraduate student can create an account in the ABC portal and store information of their completed courses and grades obtained.
- The grades are stored for five years.
- This would be helpful when a student needs to get back to education after a break or has to relocate to another city, they can easily 'carry' forward their completed credits.
- As multiple institutes are connected to the ABC portal, a student can be formally enrolled in one university but can choose to take up other courses from other universities and all of these would count towards the student's degree.
- The scheme is extended to include programs such as **SWAYAM** (initiated by the Government of India) or the **National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning** (NPTEL).
- The scheme will make education more flexible and interdisciplinary and offer a chance to enroll and learn from institutes such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) or the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER).

Challenges associated with the implementation of Scheme

- **No mention of the selection process**
 - ABC regulations say that the institute should allow up to 20% supernumerary seats for students enrolling through the ABC scheme.
 - This would mean 20 extra seats if there are 100 regular students. But if there are 500 applications through the ABC scheme wanting the course. There is no mention of the selection process.
- **Problems with the assessment process**
 - Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platforms such as SWAYAM and NPTEL are designed for large enrollments. So, even if a kind of assessment through Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)-based tests are designed.
 - There are debates on how MCQ tests can be an honest indicator of learning.
- **Problems with the NAAC accreditation**
 - The filtering criterion in the regulation is that higher education institutes should have obtained an 'A' grade or higher in the latest round of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation.
 - The NAAC process tries to measure 'excellence' in education through clerical statistics and bookkeeping.
 - Universities and colleges spend an undue amount of time preparing record books to 'prove' compliance with NAAC criteria, which their faculty could have spent on improving teaching.
 - This has resulted in several universities with different teaching and research quality all clubbed under 'A or higher' grade by NAAC.
- **Would impact the smaller institutions**

- The ABC scheme specifies that students can avail up to 70% of courses from other institutes while being enrolled in a particular college.
- If students avail these credits outside the parent college, they need not enroll for the corresponding in-house courses.
- As the number of teaching posts in higher education institutes is calculated based on student enrolment numbers, the discrepancies in the enrollment would affect the functioning of the small institutions as the students would choose to learn the same course from a faculty of IIT/IISER based on the brand name.

Conclusion

The scheme overall has the right intentions, but would probably work in a society with a more equitable distribution of resources. In India, with various problems such as the variation in the quality of education between institutions, contraction in the number of teaching posts and grade inflation, there is a need for revisiting the scheme.

Nut Graf

In India, where the quality of education varies drastically from one institute to another leading to academic and administrative issues that deteriorate the quality of degrees. The UGC must act expeditiously and come up with strategies to implement the scheme effectively.

F. Prelims Facts

1. New gecko from NE gets Army tag

Syllabus: Environment and Ecology: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims: About bent-toed gecko

Context: A team of herpetologists have recorded a new species of bent-toed gecko in Meghalaya.

- A **herpetologist** is someone who specializes in the study of reptiles and amphibians.

Gecko:

- Geckos are reptiles and are nocturnal.
- They are colorful lizards that have adapted to habitats from rainforests, to deserts, to cold mountain slopes.

About bent-toed gecko: –

- **Indian Army's bent-toed gecko**
 - **Scientific name:** *Cyrtodactylus exercitus* . *xercitus* in Latin means army.
 - **English name:** Indian Army's bent-toed gecko.
 - The name was given to honour the Army for its services to the country.
- **Siaha bent-toed gecko**
 - **Scientific name:** *Cyrtodactylus siahaensis*
 - **English name:** Siaha bent-toed gecko

- It is named after Mizoram's Siahia district where it was found. The suggested local name is Khotlia (which means bent-toed geckos in Mara ethnic language)
- **Cyrtodactylus lungleiensis:**
 - Cyrtodactylus lungleiensis is a new species of bent-toed gecko named after Mizoram's Lunglei town.
 - Cyrtodactylus lungleiensis have a bent toe, which resembles that of a bird's toe.
 - These bent-toe geckos reside only in the wild amid bushes, rocks and woods.

G. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Arrange the following hills from east to west:

1. Jaintia Hills
2. Sadar Hills
3. Garo Hills
4. Khasi Hills

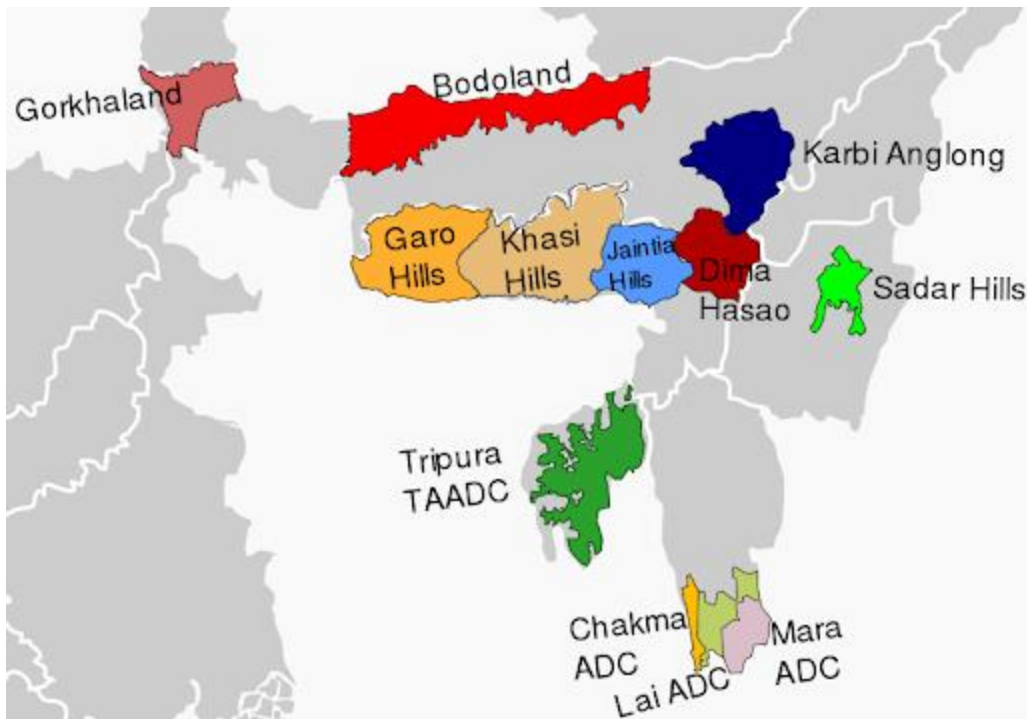
Options:

- a. 1-2-3-4
- b. 2-1-4-3
- c. 3-4-1-2
- d. 4-1-3-2

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Sadar Hills** is a geographic area in the state of Manipur in North East India.
- The Meghalaya plateau is subdivided into the Garo hills, the Khasi hills and the Jaintia hills named after the tribal groups inhabiting this region.
- An extension of this is also seen in the Karbi Anglong hills of Assam. Three hill ranges from east to west are the **Jaintia**, the **Khasi** and the **Garo** Hills.
- **Hence Option B is correct**



Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. The first municipal corporation in India was set up at Madras.
2. All the members of a municipality shall be elected directly by the people of the municipal area and the State Election Commission may provide the manner of election of the chairperson of a municipality.
3. The 73rd constitutional amendment act established the system of Urban Local Governments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Explanation:

- A Municipal Corporation is a local governing body for cities, towns and villages. The British East India Company set up the first Municipal Corporation in 1687-88, in **Madras. Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- All the members of a Municipality are to be directly elected by the people of the Municipal area and for the purpose of making the electorate. The manner of election of Chairpersons of municipalities has been left to be specified by the **State Legislature. Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**

- The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 has introduced a new Part IXA in the Constitution, which deals with Urban local bodies. It has given constitutional status to the municipalities and brought them under the justifiable part of the constitution. **Hence Statement 3 is not correct.**

Q3. With respect to First Information Report (FIR), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is not defined in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)
2. An FIR should contain an exhaustive account of the incident
3. An FIR that can be lodged in any police station irrespective of any territorial jurisdiction of the police station is called the Zero FIR

Options:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The term first information report (FIR) is not defined in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, or in any other law. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
 - It is defined in police regulations or rules, information recorded under Section 154 of CrPC is known as First Information Report (FIR).
- There are three important elements of an FIR:
 - the information must relate to the commission of a **cognizable offense**,
 - **'cognizable'** stands for 'a police officer may arrest without warrant';
 - **'non-cognizable'** stands for 'a police officer shall not be arrest without warrant'.
 - it should be given in writing or orally to the head of the police station and,
 - it must be written down and signed by the informant, and its key points should be recorded in a daily diary. Thus, FIR should not contain an exhaustive account of the incident. **Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**
- When a police station receives a complaint regarding an alleged offense that has been committed in the jurisdiction of another police station, it registers an FIR, and then transfers it to the concerned police station for further investigation. This is called a Zero FIR. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**
- **What if the police refuse to register an FIR?**
 - If any person is aggrieved by the refusal on the part of the officer in charge of a police station to register an FIR
 - Under Section 154(3) CrPC the person can send the complaint to the **Superintendent of Police/DCP concerned** who, if satisfied that such

information discloses the commission of a cognizable offense, will either investigate the case, or direct an investigation by a subordinate police officer.

- Under Section 156(3) CrPC before a **concerned court** which, if satisfied that a cognizable offense is made out from the complaint, will direct the police to register an FIR and conduct an investigation.

Q4. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect with respect to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)?

1. The Bank only finances sovereign governments directly, or projects backed by sovereign governments
2. IBRD offers its borrowers products to convert or swap their IBRD loans into their domestic currencies

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The IBRD calls itself a global development cooperative. It is the world's largest development bank. IBRD deals only with sovereign governments and not private players. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- IBRD offers innovative financial solutions, including financial products (loans, guarantees, and risk management products) and knowledge and advisory services (including on a reimbursable basis) to governments at the national and subnational levels. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 recommended granting voting rights to all women above the age of 21.
2. The Government of India Act of 1935 gave women reserved seats in the legislature.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Montague Chelmsford reforms of 1919 recommended the voting rights to women in limited numbers to be extended on the basis of property, tax or education. It did not recommend granting voting rights to all women above the age of 21. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- Government of India Act of 1935 extended the principle of communal representation by providing separate electorates for depressed classes (scheduled castes), women and labor (workers). Thus, women got reserved seats in the legislature. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Should the Judiciary revisit the doctrine of “rarest of rare cases” for awarding death penalty? Critically Examine. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. India has a long history of sheltering refugees and it is high time that a domestic law to protect the persecuted is in place. Discuss. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity and Governance]

