

## 23 Apr 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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### B. GS 2 Related

#### Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [India extends duration of \\$400 mn currency swap](#)

*Syllabus: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

*Prelims: Currency swap Agreement*

*Mains: India-Sri Lanka Relations*

**Context:** India extended the duration of a \$400 million currency swap facility with Sri Lanka.

**Know more about [Sri Lankan Economy Crisis: Currency Swap & Line of Credit](#).**

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Stalin seeks PM help for coal; Maharashtra to import stocks

*Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.*

*Mains: Coal Crisis in India – Reasons and way forward*

**Context:**

- The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister wrote to the Prime Minister, requesting him to ensure adequate availability of coal for the power generation units in Tamil Nadu.
- Separately, Maharashtra's Deputy CM said the government planned to import some coal in order to cope with the electricity crisis in the State.

#### Coal Crisis in India:

- Coal stocks at more than 100 thermal power plants in India have fallen below 25% of the required stock, according to the latest data.
- The stock in more than 50 thermal plants has fallen below 10%, prompting states to seek additional coal supplies.
- Thermal power plants, which are mostly powered by coal, meet 70% of India's power demand.
- Nine thermal power plants with a combined capacity of 3.56 GW are currently non-functional.

**Know more about the [coal crisis in India](#) in the linked article.**

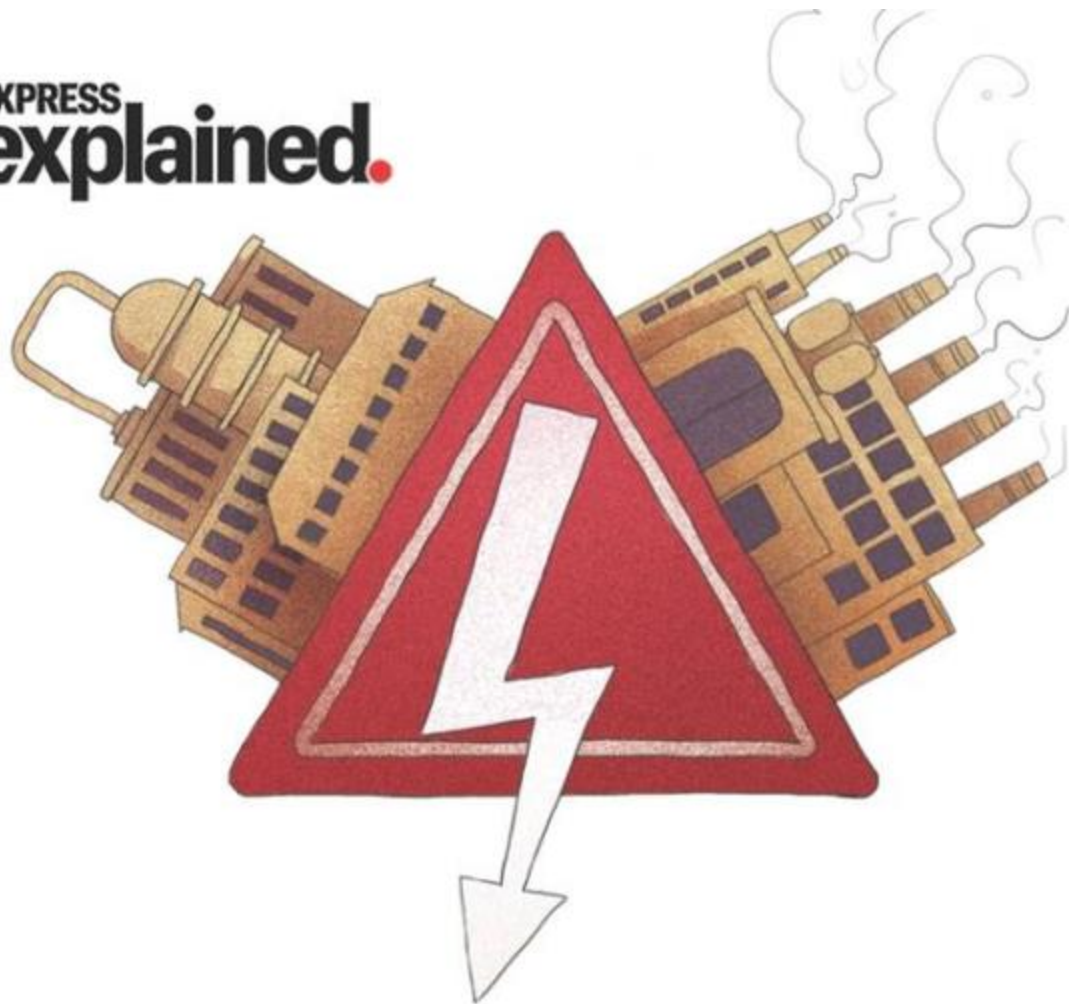
#### Reasons for coal shortage in India:

- **Rise in demand:** The primary cause of coal scarcity is rising power demand. During the months of April to October, there is a high demand for electricity, which frequently results in a power shortage. The higher demand for electricity can be attributed to heatwaves in several north Indian states.
- **Supply chain disruptions:** In 2021, due to shipping delays, India experienced a major coal shortage, with stocks plummeting to historic lows. The coal shortage has worsened as global coal prices have risen and supply has been disrupted mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Depletion of coal supplies:** This crisis has resulted from the depletion of coal supplies at thermal power plants, India's main source of electricity.

- **Russia-Ukraine crisis disturbed imports:** The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has exaggerated the coal shortage as the thermal power companies have been unable to obtain coal loads from Russia.

**Impact of coal shortage:**





## IMPACT OF THE SHORTAGE

- If industries face electricity shortages, it could delay India's economic reopening
- Some businesses might downscale production
- India's population and underdeveloped energy infrastructure will mean the power crisis could hit long and hard

#QUIXPLAINED

Source: Indian Express

**Measures Adopted by Government:**

- The Centre has allowed states to use up to 25% of their captive coal reserves to meet rising domestic demand. It also allows power plants to blend imported coal up to 10% of the time to reduce CIL's burden.
- In 2020, the Centre passed mining reforms to break CIL's monopoly on coal production in India. The following are the details:

| Law                                       | Important Provisions   |
|---|--|
| Mineral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2020        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendment to provide for the allocation of coal blocks for composite Prospecting License-cum-Mining Lease ("PL-cum-ML") to help in increasing the available inventory of coal/lignite blocks for auction.</li> <li>• FDI Policy in the <b>Coal Sector allowing 100% FDI</b> through automatic routes for sale of coal, coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure.</li> <li>• Provisions to remove the requirement of previous approval in cases where the allocation or reservation of coal/lignite block is made by the Central Government.</li> </ul> |
| Amendment in Mineral Concession Rule 1960 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration of Qualified Persons for Mining Plan preparation is no longer required.</li> <li>• Empowering block allocation to make minor changes in the mining plan and reducing the requirement of repeated approvals thus giving flexibility in operation.</li> <li>• An option is now available to the Coal Block to engage an Accredited Prospecting Agency for the conduct of prospecting operations and preparation of Geological Report (GR) with a view to expediting exploration, bringing technology and faster growth to the coal sector.</li> </ul>                    |

**Recommendations:**

- **Mining Rebound:** The government should focus on rebounding the mining operations amidst weather conditions such as flooding.
- **Prioritize Power Generation:** Government and industry should work to closely monitor stocks, and move to divert supplies away from industrial users to prioritize power generation.
- **Supply Controls:** Rationing domestic power supplies, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, may emerge as one of the easiest solutions.
- **Price Incentive:** Soaring power prices could potentially make it viable for some coastal plants to use high-cost imported coal. The government can provide price intensives to ease some of the burden on domestic miners.
- **Focus on Alternatives:**

- **Hydropower Generation:** The monsoon rains that result in flooding of coal mines can be utilized to boost hydro-power generation. Large hydroelectric projects on dams are India's major electricity source after coal.
- **Natural Gas:** There could be a larger role for natural gas to play, even with global prices currently surging. India has almost 25 gigawatts of gas-based generation capacity, though nearly 80% of that capacity remains unused because of the high prices of the fuel.

## Nut Graf

*India is staring at a power crisis as coal reserves in several states are quickly running out amid surging demand for electricity due to intense heat waves in several parts of the country. Acute coal shortages are triggering blackouts in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.*

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

### Category: INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE

#### 1. Art museums and the craft of democracy

*Syllabus: Salient aspects of Architecture*

*Mains: Significance of museums in promoting democratic values, concerns about the construction of new museums and key recommendations.*

#### Context

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya at Teen Murti Estate in New Delhi.

#### Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya

- The Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya or the Prime Ministers' Museum opened recently and is dedicated to all the former Prime Ministers of India.
- Teen Murti Bhawan, which was the residence of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and was converted into a memorial after his death, has been refurbished to house the Prime Ministers' Museum.

#### Plans to build museum through Central Vista Project

- The North and South Block buildings, which currently house the Prime Minister's Office and important ministries such as Home Affairs, Defence, Finance, and External Affairs, are being converted into India's largest museum.
- Also, a new museum on Raisina Hill will be inaugurated by 2026 and will "vividly demonstrate different aspects of India or Bharat that always existed in a cultural and spiritual sense even if historical exigencies have prevented the attainment of nationhood".
- Going by the current trend of museums, the narrative of museums will be mainly through augmented reality experiences, computerised kinetic sculptures, holograms, and smartphone applications.
- The present National Museum on Janpath will be disassembled and its collections will be shifted to a storage facility.



### Significance of Museums

- Construction of art museums started in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries alongside the rise of nations, colonial empires, and industrialisation.
- In the olden era, the primary purpose of a museum was to nurture patriotism and showcase triumph.
- Museums play a significant role in showcasing the aesthetic, social, and scientific achievements of the people of the past.
- The exhibition of items from the past can be used to compare and analyse the progress of civilisations.
- The emergent countries after decolonisation built museums to bolster their national narratives.

### Concerns over the recent plans of reconstructing the National Museum

- Critics opine that the new museum will be constructed without acknowledging India's cultural heritage and India's diversity including its conflicts.
- Experts feel that the plan to showcase a bold new India by developing a museum on Raisina Hill, without many of the historical artefacts, is a return to an older era where the museum nurtured nationalism and showcased triumph.
- There are also concerns about what may happen to the priceless collection of cultural artefacts, unparalleled in their value to the nation's heritage which are housed in the current National Museum.
- Also, there are no disclosures made on how the conservation of artefacts will be ensured during their shift.

### Recommendations

- **Maintain Transparency**
  - Since cultural heritage is a crucial matter of public memory, significant decisions affecting heritage require the highest degree of public transparency, disclosure, and consultation.
- **Display of the collection of the current National Museum**
  - The collections of the National Museum, at least the ones that can be safely displayed, should be displayed in the new museum.
  - Such a strategy can also promote accountability and make the work of administering a premier cultural institution transparent to a broad public.
- **Display of artefacts depicting interconnectedness between India and the rest of the world**
  - **Example:** Seals that highlight contacts between ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, coins and portraits to exhibit ties between Kushans and the nomadic clansmen of the Central Asian steppe, textiles and wood carvings narrating stories of traders moving between east Africa and Gujarat, calligraphy and miniature painting that depict contact between the Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman Empires.
  - By showcasing the connected history of India and the world, the new museum can aspire to help visitors become better-informed citizens.
- **Laboratory for the future**
  - A strategy of building the new museum as a laboratory for the future by making it a sustainable and multi-purpose building.

- This can help understand history better by provoking a reflection on the past and fostering fresh deliberations.

### Nut Graf

*It is important to make sure that the new museums are not haunted by the spectres of a colonial past and are able to meet the basic obligation of promoting democratic principles.*

## Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. Fishing for workable solutions in the Palk Bay

*Syllabus: India and its neighbourhood-relations*

*Prelims: International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), Bottom Trawling and Deep Sea Fishing*

*Mains: Issues between the Fishermen of India and Sri Lanka and the possible solutions.*

#### Context

The India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group (JWG) on fisheries met after about 15 months.

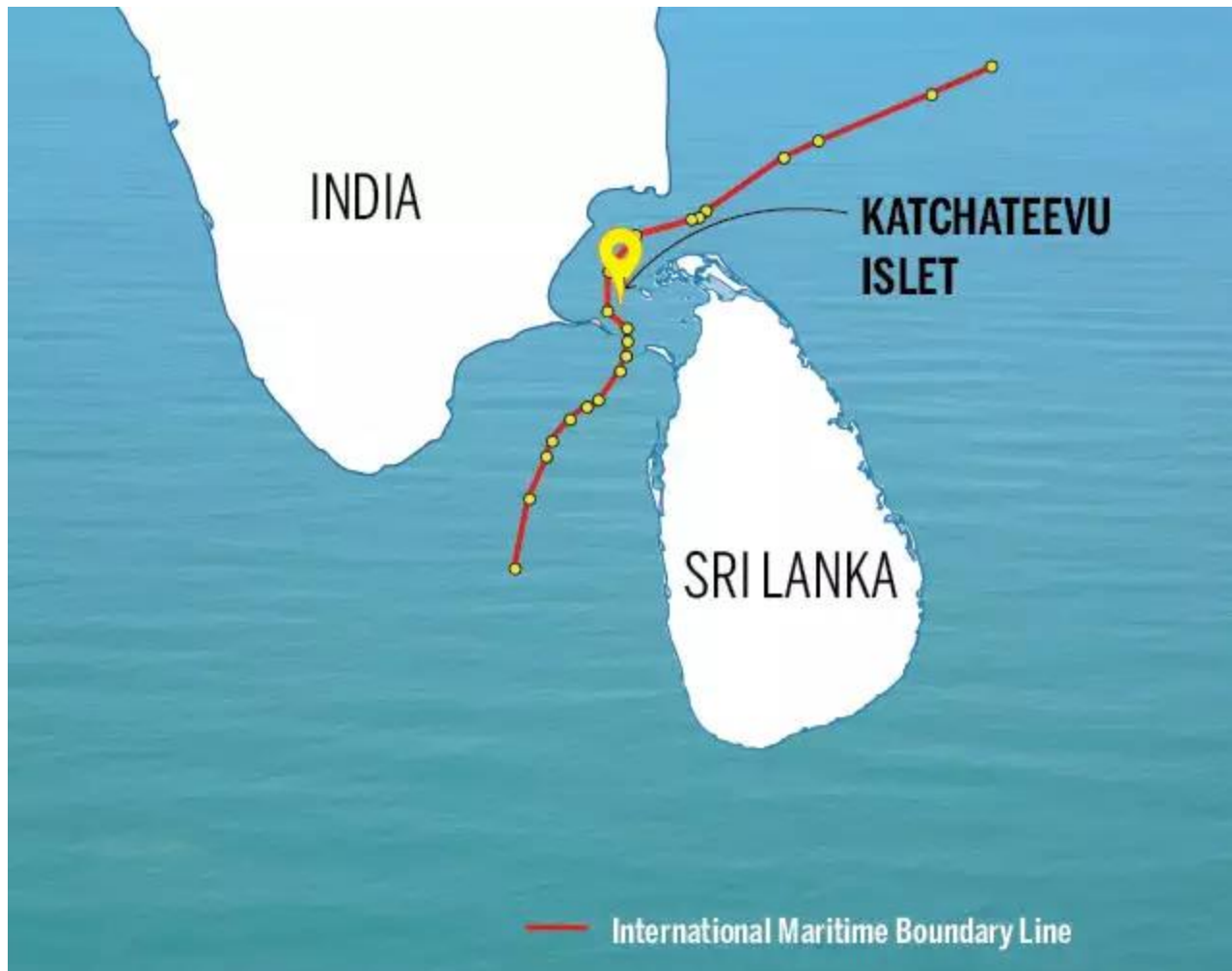
#### Background

- Before the recent discussions, a number of unforeseen events had taken place in Palk Bay which included the death of fishermen from both sides in mid-sea clashes.
- As a few fishermen from Tamil Nadu around Palk Bay continue to transgress the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), Sri Lankan authorities continue to arrest them and impound their boats.
- In February 2022, about 150 impounded boats were auctioned despite a bilateral arrangement on the matter.

### International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) between India and Sri Lanka

- IMBL is a conceptual demarcation of the country's water surface areas using physiographic or geopolitical criteria.
- In the 1970s treaties were signed between India and Sri Lanka to demarcate the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).
- The treaties resulted in making the Palk Strait a 'two-nation pond', under the relevant United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ([UNCLOS](#)) rules to the exclusion of all third nations.
- These agreements did not prevent the fishermen from fishing in these waters, as it is difficult for the fishermen to demarcate maritime boundaries. Hence the fishermen communities of both countries continue their fishing in the Palk Bay area resulting in clashes.





### Concerns of the Fishermen from India

- The fishermen of India experience genuine problems.
- The demarcation of IMBL has resulted in the lack of fishing areas.
- The distance between Dhanushkodi (Tamil Nadu) and the IMBL is 9 nautical miles (NM) and the distance between Devipattinam and the IMBL is 34 NM.
  - But, according to the Tamil Nadu Marine Fishing Regulation Act 1983, mechanised fishing boats can fish only beyond 3 NM from the coast, further reducing the area available for fishing.
- The area available for fishing under the Indian waters is abundant with rocks and coral reefs along with being shallow, thus affecting fishing.
- These are the reasons fishermen quote for crossing the IMBL.

### The Issue of Bottom Trawling:

- Apart from poaching in the territorial waters, the use of mechanised bottom trawlers has become a huge cause of concern.
- Bottom trawling is a fishing method that is indiscriminate in what it catches as it involves dragging a large fishing net with a wide mouth and enclosed end along the ocean floor.

- This method of fishing, which was once promoted by India, is now regarded as being extremely adverse to the marine ecology.
- Sri Lankan fishermen say that this method of fishing adversely affects them, who are also struggling due to the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

### Way Forward

- **Implementation of talks** – with the problem having been discussed by the JWG and various other meetings between the two countries, it is time to undertake steps and put an end to the issue.
- **Humanitarian and livelihood angles** – It is to be acknowledged that the issue has to be viewed from humanitarian and livelihood angles.
- **Fisher-level talks** – considering the common threads of language, culture and religion of the fishermen communities of both the countries should be involved in negotiations to resolve disputes peacefully.
- **Mutual understanding between the countries** – as India prepares a road map for the transition to deep sea fishing or alternative methods of fishing, Sri Lankans must understand the fact that this transition takes time and cannot happen abruptly and avoid any further clashes.
- **Deep sea fishing** – India should revisit its scheme on deep-sea fishing which helps the fishermen to take up deep-sea fishing without any reservation.
  - The revised scheme should absorb both the unit cost of long liners and the running cost.
  - The Union and the Tamil Nadu state governments must implement these changes to the [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana](#) which includes alternative livelihood mechanisms such as seaweed cultivation, open sea cage cultivation, and sea/ocean ranching.
- **Extending Compensations** – whenever there are genuine complaints of damage to their assets by the fishermen of either side, compensation must be extended to them by the country which has caused the damage.
- **Multi-stakeholder institutional mechanism** – the two countries must look for ways to set up a permanent multi-stakeholder institutional mechanism that regulates fishing in the area.

Read about – [India-Sri Lanka Relations](#)

### **Nut Graf**

*In the wake of continued disputes in the Palk Bay area over fisheries, the JWG's move to commence joint research on fisheries in the region is a welcome sign as it will lead to various solutions to make the area not just free from the troubles but also a model for collaborative endeavours in fishing.*

## **F. Prelims Facts**

### **1. India-U.K. defense, trade ties to get a booster shot**

**Syllabus:** GS-2: International Relations: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Prelims:** Open General Export License (OGEL)

**Context:**

- During the recent visit of the UK Prime Minister to India, the U.K. announced an Open General Export License (OGEL) for India.

**Open General Export License (OGEL):**

- The Open General License is a type of license that is used for government-issued export licenses for domestic suppliers.
- The items that will be exported from India are divided into three categories. There are three types of items: prohibited, restricted, and freely importable. These classifications are based on the products' nature and intended use.
- The U.K. will issue an Open General Export License (OGEL) to support greater defense and security collaboration in the coming decade.
- **Objective of OGEL:** The primary aim of the OEGL is to give a boost to defense exports in India. This will also improve the ease of doing business and imports and exports.
- **Benefit of OGEL:** The OGEL will reduce bureaucratic interference and shorten the delivery time for India's defense procurement. This is the first British OGEL in the Indo-Pacific region.

Know more about [India-UK Relations – Political, Bilateral & Trade.](#)

## 2. ISRO to conduct RLV landing experiment soon

*Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

*Prelims: Reusable Launch Vehicle – Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD)*

**Context:** The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is aiming to carry out a landing experiment (LEX), a critical component of the Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstration (RLV-TD) programme.

Know more about the [Reusable Launch Vehicle – Technology Demonstrator \(RLV-TD\)](#)

## 3. Rajnath rolls out schemes for defense start-ups

*Syllabus: GS3: Science and Technology: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology*

*Prelims: Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX)-Prime*

**Context:** Recently, the Defense Minister launched Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX) Prime.

**Innovations for Defense Excellence (iDEX)-Prime**

- The iDEX-Prime aims to support projects, requiring support beyond ₹1.5 crore up to ₹10 crore, to help the ever-growing start-ups in the defense sector.
- Know more about [Innovation for Defense Excellence.](#)

## G. Tidbits

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With respect to Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. He holds office for a period of five years or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
2. CAG audits all expenditures from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India.
3. CAG submits the audit reports relating to the accounts of the Center to the Parliament.

**Options: [Level – Medium]**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- **Article 148** of the Constitution of India establishes the authority of this office.
- The incumbent is appointed for a period of **6 years** or until attaining the age of 65 years whichever is earlier. **Hence statement 1 is not correct.**
- The CAG Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service (DPC) Act, was passed in the parliament in 1971.
- The duties and functions of the CAG as laid down by the Constitution are:
  - Auditing the accounts related to all expenditure drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India, consolidated fund of every state and consolidated fund of every union territory having a Legislative Assembly.
  - Audit of all expenditure from the Contingency Fund of India and the Public Account of India as well as the contingency funds and the public accounts of states. Hence statement 2 is correct
  - Audit of all trading, manufacturing, profit and loss accounts, balance sheets and other subsidiary accounts of any department of the Central Government and state governments.
  - Auditing the receipts and expenditure of the Government of India and each state to ensure that the rules and procedures in that regard are designed to secure an effective check on the assessment, collection and proper allocation of revenue.
  - Auditing the receipts and expenditure of the following: All bodies and authorities substantially financed from the Central or state revenues; Government companies; and Other corporations and bodies when so required by related laws.
  - Auditing all transactions of the Central and state governments related to debt, sinking funds, deposits, advances, suspense accounts and remittance business. He also audits receipts, stock accounts and others, with approval of the President, or when required by the President.
  - Auditing the accounts of any other authority when requested by the President or Governor. For example, the audit of local bodies.
  - Advising the President with regard to the prescription of the form in which the accounts of the Centre and the states shall be kept (Article 150).
  - Submitting audit reports relating to the accounts of the Central Government to the President, who shall, in turn, place them before both the Houses of Parliament (Article 151).

- Submitting audit reports relating to the accounts of a state government to the Governor, who shall, in turn, place them before the state legislature (Article 151).
- Ascertaining and certifying the net proceeds of any tax or duty (Article 279). The certificate is final. The 'net proceeds' means the proceeds of a tax or a duty minus the cost of collection.
- Acting as a guide of the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament. He compiles and maintains the accounts of state governments. In 1976, he was relieved of the responsibilities regarding the compilation and maintenance of accounts of the Government of India due to the separation of accounts from audit, through departmentalization of accounts. The CAG submits three audit reports to the President:
  - Audit Report on Appropriation Accounts
  - Audit Report on Finance Accounts
  - Audit Report on Public Undertakings

**Article 151** says that the reports of the CAG of India relating to the accounts of the Union shall be submitted to the **President (NOT the Centre)**, who shall cause them to be laid before each House of Parliament. **Hence statement 3 is not correct.**

**Q2. Kuril Islands is a dispute between [Level - Easy]**

- a. Russia and China
- b. China and Japan
- c. Japan and Russia
- d. China and Philippines

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

The Kuril Islands dispute, also known as the Northern Territories dispute in Japan, concerns the ownership of the four southernmost Kuril Islands by **Japan and the Russian Federation**.



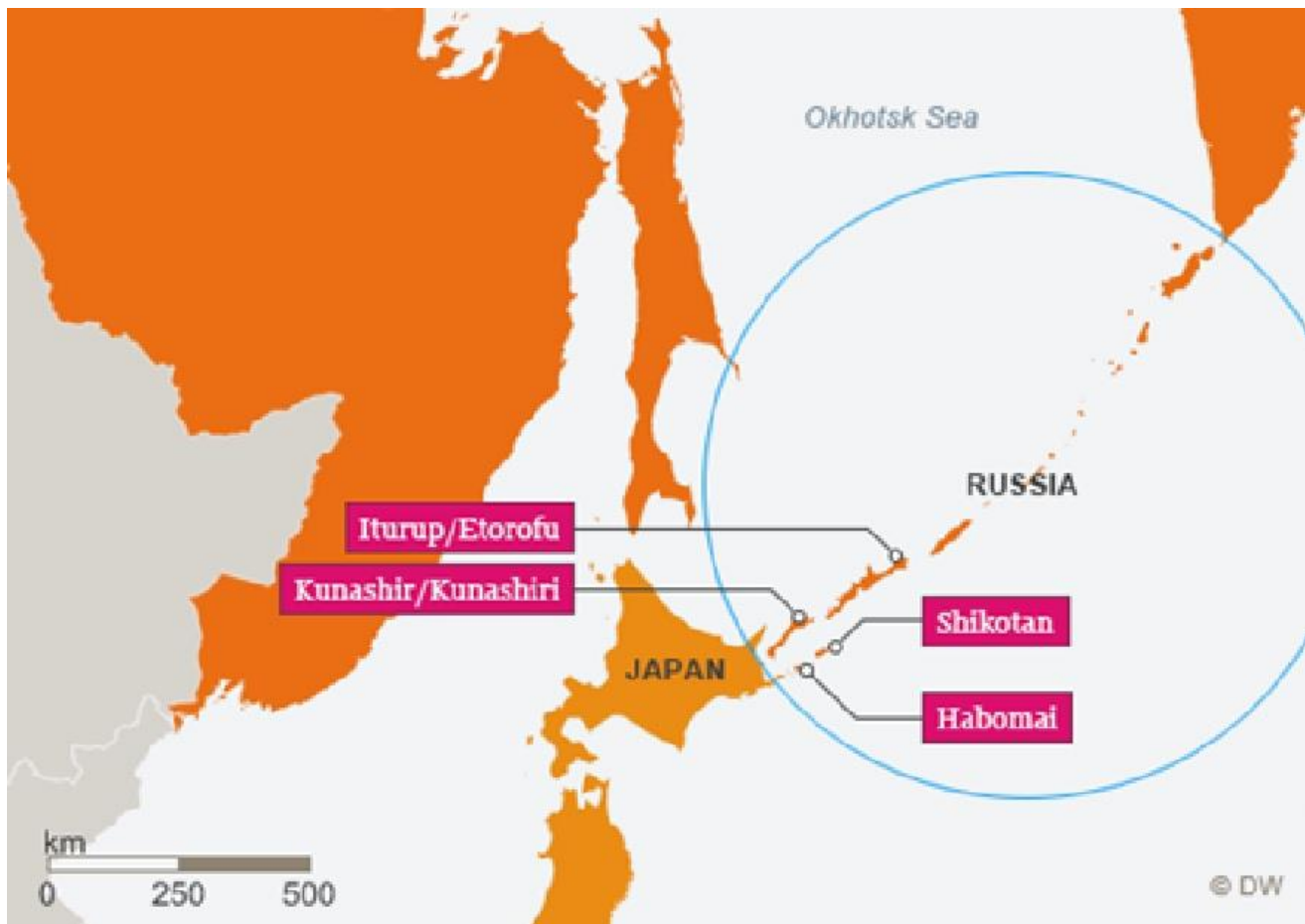


Image source: DW

Hence option C is correct.

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India):**

1. It was created by an executive resolution of the Government of India.
2. The Vice-Chairperson is appointed by the President and he enjoys the rank of a Cabinet Minister.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct? [Level – Easy]**

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**



- NITI Aayog is an executive body. In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Planning Commission's abolition and created NITI Aayog through an executive resolution. It is neither a constitutional body nor a statutory body. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- The NITI Aayog council comprises all the state Chief Ministers, along with the Chief Ministers of Delhi and Puducherry, Lieutenant Governors of all UTs, and **a vice-chairman nominated by the Prime Minister (NOT President).** **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**

**Q4. With respect to Agenda 21, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. It is a strategy for enhancing ocean and coastal "resilience".
2. It is a product of the Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**Options: [Level – Medium]**

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

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- Agenda 21 is an action plan concerning sustainable development, but it is non-binding.
- The Forest Principles is formally called 'Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests'. **Hence statement 1 is not correct**
- Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests were adopted by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992. **Hence statement 2 is correct**

**Q5. In the first quarter of seventeenth century, in which of the following was/were the factory/factories of the English East India Company located?**

1. Broach
2. Chicacole
3. Trichinopoly

**Select the correct answer using the code given below. [UPSC 2021] [Level – Medium]**

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

d. 2 and 3 only

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

The English East India Company had established factories in Surat, **Broach**, Ahmedabad, Agra, and Masulipatam by the first quarter of the 17th century.

No factories were located at Chicacole and Tichonopoly.

**Hence option a is correct.**

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Despite all the advances made in the field of renewable energy, India is still highly dependent on coal for its energy needs. Elaborate. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-3, Energy]
2. Rather than focusing on giving voting rights to the NRIs, the government's priority should be to ensure voting rights to domestic migrant labourers. Do you agree? Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)[GS-2, Polity]