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Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Eastern Economic Forum and India

Syllabus: *Bilateral, Regional & Global Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests*

Mains: *Significance of EEF to India*

Context: Recently, Russia hosted the seventh [Eastern Economic Forum](#) (EEF) in Vladivostok.

Introduction:

- The EEF is an annual international forum that takes place in Vladivostok, Russia.
- It was established in 2015 for the purpose of encouraging investment in the Russian Far East.
- It serves as a platform for the discussion of crucial global issues regarding the economy, regional integration, and the development of new industrial and technological sectors.
- Over the years, it has emerged as an international platform for discussing the strategy for developing political, economic and cultural ties between Russia and the Asia Pacific.
- The coming together of countries like Myanmar, Armenia, Russia, and China seems like the forming of an anti-sanctions group in the international order.
- Agreements signed at the EEF increased from 217 in 2017 to 380 agreements in 2021, worth 3.6 trillion roubles.
- As of 2022, almost 2,729 investment projects are being planned in the region. The agreements focus on infrastructure, transportation projects, mineral excavations, construction, industry and agriculture.

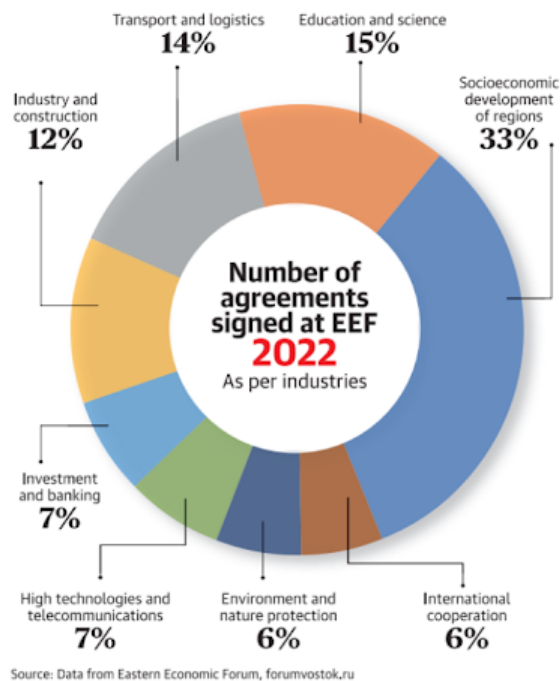


Image Source: The Hindu

Key Players in EEF:

- Main objective of the Seventh Eastern Economic Forum was connecting the Far East with the Asia Pacific region.

China and EEF:

- China, as the biggest investor in the region, sees potential in promoting its [Belt and Road Initiative](#) and the Polar Sea Route in Russia's Far East (RFE).
- 90% of the total investments in the region are from China.
- Due to economic pressures caused by the Ukraine conflict, Russia needs Chinese investments now more than ever.
- Russia-China shares a 4000-kilometre-long border, and Trans-Siberian railways enable them for functional trade and sharing of resources with some infrastructural assistance.
- Both have invested in a fund to develop RFE and northeastern China by connecting the cities of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe via a 1,080-metre bridge, supplying natural gas, and a rail bridge connecting the cities of Nizhneleninskoye and Tongjiang.

South Korea and EEF:

- South Korea has invested in the manufacturing of electrical equipment, shipbuilding projects,

agricultural production, gas-liquefying plants and fisheries.

- In 2017, the Export-Import Bank of Korea and the Far East Development Fund announced their intention to inject \$2 billion into the RFE.

Japan and EEF:

- Japan has invested \$16 billion in the region through 21 projects in 2017.
- Japan has identified 08 areas of economic cooperation and pushed private businesses to invest in the development of the RFE.
- Japan depends on oil and gas resources from Russia after the 2011 Fukushima disaster which led the Japanese government to pull out of nuclear energy.
- Given similar climatic conditions, RFE can be a potential market for Japanese agro-technologies.
- The trade relations between Russia and Japan are hindered by the Kuril Islands dispute as they are claimed by both countries.

India and EEF:

- India aims to establish a strong inter-state interaction with Russia through the EEF.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed India's readiness in expanding trade, connectivity and investments in Russia during the recent Forum.
- The RFE has many petroleum resources which are of great interest to India
- There are also plans to connect the port of Chennai with Vladivostok, the largest city in the Russian Far East which would provide an alternative sea route with respect to the Suez Canal.
- India is keen to deepen its cooperation in energy, pharmaceuticals, maritime connectivity, healthcare, tourism, the diamond industry and the Arctic.
- In 2019, India also offered a \$1 billion line of credit to develop infrastructure in the region.
- Business representatives of Gujarat and the Republic of Sakha have launched agreements in the diamond and pharmaceuticals industry.

Russian Far East:

- The Russian Far East stretches from Lake Baikal, the world's largest freshwater lake, to the Pacific Ocean and comprises roughly a third of Russia's territory.
- The area is rich with natural resources such as fish, oil, natural gas, wood, diamonds and other minerals which contribute to 5% of Russia's GDP.
- Procuring and supplying these resources is an issue due to the lack of population in the area and the unavailability of personnel.
- The RFE is geographically placed at a strategic location which acts as a gateway into Asian trading routes.

EEF V/S Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

- The U.S.-led [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity \(IPEF\)](#) and the EEF are very different based on their geographic coverage and partnership with the host countries.
- India has invested substantially in EEF despite the current international conditions. At the same time, India has given its confirmation and acceptance to three of the four pillars in the IPEF.
- The IPEF presents a great opportunity for India to act in the Asia-Pacific region, without being part of other regional groupings such as the China-led [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership](#).
- The IPEF partners act as new sources of raw materials and other essential products, reducing India's reliance on China for raw materials.

***Nut Graf:** EEF operates within the framework of the Russian agenda regarding the development of the Far East and its integration into the global economy. It gains significance, especially during the ongoing conflict with Ukraine and subsequent international sanctions.*

Category: POLITY

1. Retirement Age Of Judges

Syllabus: Judiciary

Mains: Judicial Independence

Context: Advocates bodies, including the Bar Council of India (BCI), are demanding to raise the retirement age of judges of the [Supreme Court](#) and High Courts.

Introduction:

- The Bar Council of India after holding joint meetings with the State Bar Councils and Office Bearers of the High Court Bar Associations came to the conclusion that the age superannuation of the judges should be increased.
- They demanded amendments to raise the age of High Court judges from 62 to 65 and that of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 years.
- They intend to communicate their resolution to the Prime Minister and the Union Law Minister.
- The Union Minister for Law and Justice told the Parliament that there is no proposal to increase the retirement age of Supreme Court and High Court judges.

Background:

- The National Commission to review the working of the Constitution, 2002 recommended raising

the retirement age of the Judges of both the Supreme Court and High Court.

- The Constitution (114th Amendment) Bill was introduced in 2010 to increase the retirement age of High Court judges to 65. However, it was not taken up for consideration in Parliament and lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.
- Several Supreme Court Judges have also recommended increasing the retirement age of judges in the higher judiciary to decrease the pendency of cases.
- Attorney General of India K. K. Venugopal has publicly voiced his support for it on various occasions.

Constitutional Provisions:

- The age of retirement for Supreme Court judges is 65 under Article 124(2) of the Indian Constitution.
- As per Article 217(1) of the Constitution, High Court judges retire at 62.
- The retirement age of High Court judges was fixed at 60 by the [Constituent Assembly](#), which was later increased to 62 by a constitutional amendment in 1963.

Need for a raise in the retirement age:

- The judge-population ratio in India is among the lowest in the world at 19.66 judges per million people.
- India is also facing a very high number of pending cases. The total number of pending cases in the Supreme Court of India is 71,411 as on August 2, 2022.
- This will also make post-retirement assignments unattractive and strengthen the independence of the judiciary to sustain democracy.

Global Practices:

- In the United States, a judge of the Supreme Court holds office till his/her death.
- In Norway, Australia, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Ireland, the prescribed retirement age is 70 years.
- In Germany, it is 68 years.
- The retirement age is 75 years in Canada.

Nut Graf: *The Indian judiciary is a sui generis model, having its peculiarities and challenges. The idea of increasing the age of retirement for judges has been mooted for years as a solution for dealing with the mounting pendency of cases and judicial vacancies. Enshrining the retirement age of judges in the Constitution is a safeguard for protecting judicial independence.*

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: POLITY

1. Parliamentary business and an essential pit stop

Syllabus: *Parliament - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.*

Prelims: *Facts about Parliamentary Committees and Parliamentary Standing Committees*

Mains: *The significance of Parliamentary Standing Committees in policy-making, issues associated with them and key recommendations*

Context: Important bills were referred to the **Parliamentary Standing Committees** for detailed scrutiny in the recently concluded monsoon session.

Background

- In the monsoon session of the Parliament which was adjourned sine die on August 8, 2022, the **Competition (Amendment) Bill** and the **Electricity (Amendment) Bill** were referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committees for detailed analysis.
- The government in the past has been wary of referring the bills to the Standing Committees as it felt that the process was time-consuming and counterproductive.
- Further, in recent times there have been several delays in the proceedings of the Parliament due to disruptions.
 - The recent monsoon session of Parliament reflects the same with the Lok Sabha's productivity being just 47% and the Rajya Sabha's being only 42%.
- The share of Bills that have been referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSC), during the 14th (2004-2009), 15th (2009-2014) and 16th Lok Sabhas (2014-2019) regimes has been 60%, 71% and 27%, respectively.
 - The substantial reduction in the share during the 16th Lok Sabha was mainly in the second half of its session when the Government pushed several big-ticket reforms through when the Opposition was adamant to prevent these reforms in the backdrop of the 2019 elections.

Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees (DRSC)

- There are a total of 24 DRSCs in the Parliament with 8 under Rajya Sabha and 16 under [Lok Sabha](#).
- DRSCs are duly constituted by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, jointly.
- DRSCs consist of members from both houses of the Parliament. Each DRSC consists of 31 Members with 21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha.
- DRSCs are mandated to examine various legislations referred to them, the budget proposals of different Ministries, and to involve in policy thinking on the vision, mission and future direction of the Ministries concerned.

Parliament v/s Committees

- Despite there being no obligation on the part of the Government to accept to refer all the legislation to the DRSCs it is believed that sending a Bill to the DRSC has been largely beneficial in the process of lawmaking.
- The Bills that are passed without the scrutiny of such committees are often criticised as not being examined or analysed fully and that the decisions have been taken by the bureaucracy unilaterally ignoring the inputs from other key stakeholders.
 - **Example:** The controversy associated with the three [Farm Bills](#).
- Experts believe that scrutiny of the Bills by the committees is more advantageous for the Government than the Opposition as the discussions in the committee and in Parliament take place differently.
 - The committee meetings are said to be held in a friendly and cordial setting as compared to meetings in the Parliament.
- The discussions held in the committees help add value to the content of the legislation, and usually, consensus would be reached between the Members of different parties.
- Also, the Bills that have been scrutinised by the committees will foster ownership of such bills by the members of the committee from both the ruling and the Opposition parties.
- The Governments should not be hesitant to refer Bills to these committees, as most of these committees will have members from the ruling party in the majority and the final decision is always through the process of voting.

Recommendations

The author of the article who is a former Indian Administrative Service officer and a former Secretary-General of the Rajya Sabha recommends various changes to the procedures for consideration of Bills for Committees, which include:

- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha are empowered to refer Bills to a DRSC of Parliament and are often influenced by several political and administrative factors.
 - To negate such unruly influences the **process of reference of Bills to the committees can be made a mandatory or an automatic process.**
 - Exemptions can be provided with the specific approval of the Speaker/Chairman after detailed reasoning.
 - Hence the prerogative of the House to refer the Bills to the Committee, through an amendment, would, of course, remain unaffected.
- Efforts must be undertaken to **ensure that all the discussions in the Parliamentary Standing Committee must be frank and free** by making sure that **no whip of the party** would apply to them.
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee can be given a **fixed timeline** to put forth its recommendations and present its report and such timelines can be fixed by the Speaker/Chairman.
 - The Speaker/Chairman should have the right to fix a time limit and such limits can also be stringent at times.
 - It can also be provided that if the committee fails to submit its report/recommendation within the timeline, the Bill can be put up before the House concerned directly to avoid delays.
- To improve the quality of assessments and examinations in the committees, a provision must be introduced to **invite the experts from the respective fields** who bring in domain knowledge and expertise which help make key decisions in line with the latest trends in that field.
- There is usually enough time to convene committee meetings in the parliamentary committees between the two sessions.
 - However, there is some negligence among the members in this respect, and they try to push through these pieces of legislation when the next session is announced.
 - Hence, it is crucial for the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to keep a check on such behaviour.
- During the meetings on budget proposals by the ministries, the committees should also make suggestions for the Ministry about the prospects of new initiatives and the potential of people-centric measures.

***Nut graf:** In the wake of the existing hesitance of both Government as well as the Opposition to refer Bills to the Standing Committees of Parliament, promoting the trust of parliamentarians in the relevance and significance of the system of the committees is of paramount importance.*

1. Climate action that runs on cooperative federalism

Syllabus: *Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation*

Mains: *Significance of Cooperative Federalism in undertaking Climate actions*

Context: India's recent procurement of over 5,450 electric buses and a vision to have over 50,000 e-buses operating in the country by 2030.

Details

- The recent developments in the procurement of e-buses are said to be a result of close collaborations between the Union and State governments.
- The shared aim of the governments both at the Union and State levels is to rapidly electrify a key pillar of India's public transportation.
- The latest efforts by the governments have provided a platform for a new business model for e-buses.
- Further development on this platform has the ability to reduce air pollution in cities and fuel import bills, enhance the balance sheets of State transport companies, and boost domestic manufacturing which helps in employment generation.

State-owned buses in India

- At present, there are nearly 1,40,000 registered public buses operating on India's roads, with most of them having faulty engines that release harmful emissions into the atmosphere.
- Out of the total number of buses, at least 40,000 of them are at the end of their lifespan and are to be taken off the roads immediately.
- However, the poor state of State transport undertakings which own most of these buses is making it difficult to take bold decisions.
- The State transport undertakings are incurring huge losses because they play a crucial social function by providing subsidised fares to crores of commuters every day.
- The State transport undertakings also face the challenges of fragmented demand and high prices when they go to the market to buy buses.
- Further, as the State governments control subjects like transit, urban governance and pollution control it has become difficult to introduce or implement nationwide actions.

Significance of Cooperative Federalism - Case study of procurement of 5,450 e-buses

- In the context of the tender for 5,450 buses for five major cities namely Kolkata, Delhi,

Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Surat, the respective expertise, strengths and needs of Union Ministries and States helped the process significantly and ensured successful outcomes.

- **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)** which is a nodal agency for clean, affordable and reliable energy of the Union government, acted as the programme manager in the effort of procurement of e-buses considering the State-led demand and customisation.
- Effective coordination between various ministries of the Union and State governments helped to standardise the demand and helped to discover the best prices.
 - Based on the cost-per-kilometre basis, the prices discovered through the close collaborations were 40% lower than diesel and 34% less than CNG (without factoring in the subsidy through [FAME-II](#)).
- In the backdrop of a surge in the prices of fuel and the existing energy security challenges due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the shift to EVs ([electric vehicles](#)) gains much more significance.
- The success of this development has been attributed to three key factors namely collaboration, pace and transparency.
 - **Collaboration:** The tender was based on a fully consultative process and had contributions from a wide range of participants.
 - **Pace:** A sense of shared urgency was seen in the case of this collaboration, which forced the bureaucracy to work in a time-bound manner.
 - **Transparency:** Transparency is said to be the most resilient quality of this collaborative effort as there was complete clarity about the objectives which promoted mutual trust.

Know more about - [Cooperative Federalism](#)

Centralisation and its associated issues

- Excessive centralisation can have a large number of challenges and also violates the federal principles mentioned in the Constitution.
- Different regions in the country's States vary differently in terms of their vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and decentralised decision-making and local governance play a key role in addressing these issues.
 - Hence the urban local bodies and gram panchayats are regarded as the “**heart of climate action**”.
- However, in a few circumstances when the country as a whole requires to take action, centralised programmes and actions can help bring about architectural transformations as the States lack the financial ability and also other required resources.

Way forward

- Despite increased efforts in recent times, work still needs to be done to enable the electrification of mass mobility in India.
- India's efforts to shift towards clean public transportation will require various measures such as

ramping up manufacturing capacity, boosting domestic battery production, developing charging infrastructure, and capacity building of State transport undertakings to enhance their finances and structures.

- The ambition of the country now is to increase its demand and deploy over 50,000 buses in about 40 cities across the country. This requires continuing the spirit of true inter-ministerial and Union-State collaboration.
- The combined strength of the Union and the State governments can help make large strides to enhance the transit, the quality of life and progress towards national climate goals and set a remarkable example for the rest of the world to follow.

***Nut graf:** Cooperative federalism with close collaboration between the Union and State governments acts as a key to fulfilling the goals of green and inclusive economic development.*

Category: ECONOMY

1. Should India choose manufacturing over services?

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

***Mains:** Critical evaluation of the industrial policy to promote manufacturing over services*

Context: Debate on the government's policies towards promoting the manufacturing sector through subsidies, and on its relative importance as compared to the services sector.

Background

- Raghuram Rajan, the former Governor of the RBI recently questioned the Union government's [production-linked incentive \(PLI\) scheme](#) and argued that it works against the interests of Indian consumers.
- This has revived the debate on the Indian government choosing the manufacturing sector over the services sector.

Can the government focus on promoting any particular sector?

Views against the promotion of a particular sector

- A few experts feel that it is difficult for the state bureaucracy to understand and anticipate which sectors will do better in order to promote it.
- Promotion of any one particular sector must be avoided as it is difficult to forecast the future.
- Even in India's history, the decisions of the most respected policymakers have been proved

wrong when it comes to favouring a particular sector.

- While private firms and entrepreneurs can take risks and speculate which sectors would do well in the long run, it is not feasible for state bureaucracies to make such speculative decisions as they lack the knowledge and expertise.
- Further, there are agencies such as the [Central Bureau of Investigation](#) and the Enforcement Directorate which would investigate and take action in case the speculation goes wrong. This discourages the officials from taking risks.
- Experts feel that it is the job of the government to create a broad enabling environment for all the sectors and the task of speculation is to be left to the private sector.
- It is important for the government to consider the state's capacity, bureaucratic capacity, the incentives of policymakers and the capabilities of policymakers before undertaking such strategies.

Arguments for the promotion of a particular sector

- Based on the history of development in developing countries and industrialised countries, strategic interventions or industrial policies of the governments which supported a particular sector have yielded positive outcomes in the past.
- Countries across the world in the past have made attempts to pick the winners and better performers through their industrial policies.
- Certain experts feel that prioritising and promoting certain sectors that have desirable features like the higher potential for job creation and greater industrialisation is a good step.
- Experts also feel that the incentivisation of sectors is crucial to attracting investments that play an important role in reviving the economy.
- Countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, China and Vietnam have all witnessed strategic interventions by the state which have helped them become manufacturing powerhouses and have significant current account surpluses.

The need for prioritising the manufacturing sector

- In India, the services sector has performed very well over the years and now the services sector accounts for over 50% of the GDP of the country.
 - However, the sector has failed to create enough jobs in a consistent manner.
 - This has increased the burden and stress on the agriculture sector as it continues to employ over 45% of the total workforce of the country accounting for just over 15% of GDP.
- There is a need to create more job opportunities in the manufacturing and production sector to reduce the burden on the agriculture sector.
- The manufacturing sector has a large potential to create a large number of direct and indirect jobs.
- Further, the manufacturing sector has the highest backward and forward linkages which are

significant to create higher productivity jobs.

Significance of PLI Schemes

- Despite the risk of leading to cronyism (the practice of partiality in awarding jobs and other advantages to friends or trusted allies), subsidies when linked to performance discourage discretionary policies.
- The main objective of such schemes is to provide a certain percentage of incentive if the industry performs better than the previous years.
- Through this incentive system, most of its objectives can be met sans major challenges by introducing a third-party verification mechanism, tightening the condition to include aspects such as export performance, competitiveness and innovation.
- The sectors which are being promoted and prioritised by the government through the PLI Schemes include a few sunrise sectors, such as the semiconductor industry, which are highly import-dependent.
 - Such industries are selected based on their potential to create new industries and reduce import dependence and high spillovers or linkages to other sectors.

Nut graf: As the government has focused its policy on promoting the manufacturing sector in the country by introducing various PLI Schemes, the debate over such efforts to promote the manufacturing sector over the services sector has come under the spotlight.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin)

Syllabus: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections

Prelims: Government Schemes

Context: The Union Ministry of Rural Development has recently come up with a set of penalties that the State governments will have to bear for any further delay in the completion of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin).

Background:

- Several states such as West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam are far behind their targets.
- The scheme started in April 2016 with a target of constructing 2.95 crore houses by March 2022 which was postponed to March 2024 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The penalty clause is introduced to ensure that the States pay more attention to the programme.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin):

- Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) in 2016 towards achieving the objective of [“Housing for All”](#) by 2022.
- The Union Ministry of Rural Development under the scheme aims to provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutchha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
- People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex-servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities are the beneficiaries of the scheme.
- The cost of unit assistance is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio of 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.
- Under the scheme, the government has set itself a target of 2.95 crore houses. This number was deduced from the Socio-Economic Caste Survey, 2011.
- As per the statistics available with the Union Ministry of Rural Development, until August 2022, 2.02 crore houses have been constructed.

2. Compensatory afforestation

Syllabus: Environment and Degradation

Prelims: EIA and CAMPA fund

Context: The Union Environment Ministry is planning to allow compensatory afforestation (CA) for development projects executed in Delhi in the neighbouring States due to a shortage of land in Delhi.

Background:

- The issue of shortage in land for CA was flagged by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to the Ministry in March 2022 and in May 2021.
- Compensatory afforestation on degraded forest land in neighbouring States can be done only after relaxation in the guidelines issued under the [Forest Conservation Act, 1980](#).

Compensatory Afforestation:

- Compensatory Afforestation, according to Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, has to be carried out for diversion of forest land or deemed forest land for non-forest purposes, while the purpose of CA is to compensate for the loss of “land by land” and loss of “trees by trees”.
- According to the Act, CA has to be raised on suitable non-forest land, which is equal to the area proposed for diversion, at the cost to be paid by the user agency.

- Simultaneously, the Act also states that in cases where non-forest land is available but to a lesser extent, CA can be carried out on degraded land which is twice the extent of the forest area that is being diverted.
- Improper implementation of CA had led to the setting up of the Compensatory Afforestation Planning and Management Authority ([CAMPA](#)).

G. Tidbits

1. World Ozone Day 2022

- World Ozone Day 2022 or [International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer](#) is celebrated every year on September 16.
- In December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly designated September 16 as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, commemorating the date of the signing of the [Montreal Protocol](#) on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, in 1987.
- The UN Environment Programme observed the first International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer on September 16th, 1995.
- The theme for World Ozone Day 2022 is 'Global Cooperation Protecting Life on Earth'.



Image Source: UNEP

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G): (Level-Medium)

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of Housing.
2. The identification of beneficiaries under PMAY-G is based on the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)-2011.
3. The cost of unit (house) assistance is to be shared between central and state governments in the ratio of 60:40 for all areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is incorrect**, The Union Ministry of Rural Development implements Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin.
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-urban is implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Statement 02 is correct**, The identification of beneficiaries under PMAY-G is based on the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)-2011 and due verification by the respective Gram Sabhas and completion of an Appellate Process.
- **Statement 03 is incorrect**, The cost of unit assistance is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio of 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.

Q2. Who among the following are considered as Tanjore Quartet? (Level-Difficult)

1. Chinnayya
2. Nikaran
3. Ponnayya
4. Sendhaamarai
5. Shivanandam

6. Vadivelu

Options:

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- b) 2, 3, 5 and 6 only
- c) 1, 3, 5 and 6 only
- d) 1, 2, 4 and 5 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Tanjore (Thanjavur) brothers, also known as the “Tanjore Quartet” are Ponnayya, Chinnayya, Shivanandam, and Vadivelu.
- They formalised [Bharatanatyam](#) into a meticulous art form in the 19th century.
- They studied Bharatanatyam under their grandfather, Gangaimudu, and their father, Subbarayan.
- They also trained in Carnatic music for seven years under the guidance of Muthuswami Dikshitar.
- They mastered the art of primaeval Bharatanatyam and eventually evolved it into its present-day format by codifying its steps and rhythm patterns.
- They performed in the court of Serfoji II of the Maratha dynasty who ruled Thanjavur from 1798 to 1832.
- They were also responsible for making Brihadisvara Temple a hub that brought musicians and dancers together.
- The Tanjore Quartet also brought light to a number of other dance styles, including those from the Travancore and Mysore kingdoms.

Q3. Many foreign travellers visited and left a valuable account of the Vijayanagar Empire. Who among the following did not visit the empire? (Level-Difficult)

- a) Abdur Razzaq
- b) Domingo Paes
- c) François Bernier
- d) Niccolo De Conti

Answer: c

Explanation:

- François Bernier was a French physician and traveller. He was in India from 1656-1668 and visited India during the reign of Shah Jahan.

- He was a physician to Prince Dara Shikoh and later was attached to the court of Aurangzeb.

Q4. Nedyathuruthu island recently seen in news is in the State/UT of (Level-Difficult)

- a) Karnataka
- b) Kerala
- c) Lakshadweep
- d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: b

Explanation:

- Nedyathuruthu island is in [Vembanad Lake](#), Kerala.
- The demolition of the illegally constructed villas of Kapico Resorts Pvt. Ltd on Nedyathuruthu island began recently, 32 months after the Supreme Court's order.
- The high-end resort was constructed on a backwater island in Alappuzha and violated coastal and environmental regulations.

Q5. With reference to the Indian economy, consider the following statements: (Level-Difficult) (PYQ-2022)

1. A share of the household financial savings goes towards government borrowings.
2. Dated securities issued at market-related rates in auctions form a large component of internal debt.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 01 is correct**, Household financial savings refer to currency, bank deposits, debt securities, mutual funds, pension funds, insurance, and investments in small savings schemes.
 - The total of these savings is referred to as gross household financial savings.
 - Deposits with banks are the single largest form of households' financial assets, followed by insurance funds, mutual funds and currency.
 - A share of household financial savings goes to government borrowings, as part of public

accounts of India.

- **Statement 02 is correct**, Dated Government Securities are government securities or bonds which are long-term, the tenor ranging from 5 years to 30 years.
 - Dated securities issued at market-related rates comprise a large share of internal debt.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Considering the large number of pending cases in the courts in India, discuss the merits and demerits of the idea of increasing the retirement age of judges in the country. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)
2. Cooperative federalism has the potential to solve a plethora of underlying problems for both, the centre and the states in India. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Polity)

