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B. GS 2 Related

Category: HEALTH

1. SC nixes plea seeking health warnings on liquor bottles

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

Mains: The need for concentrated efforts to address the problems of alcoholism in India.

Context

The Supreme Court refused to take up a plea that sought to regulate the production, distribution and consumption of liquor in New Delhi.

Background

- In order to raise public awareness of the negative effects of alcohol consumption, the petition asked the court to order the Delhi government to print health warnings on liquor bottles.
- The petitioner also said that unlike in the case of cigarettes, there are currently no cautionary labels or pictures depicting the danger caused by the consumption of liquor.
- In accordance with the spirit of **Article 21** and **Article 47** of the Constitution of India, the petitioner also asked the Supreme Court to issue directives to the Delhi government to conduct a "Health Impact Assessment" and an "[Environment Impact Assessment](#)" of the production, distribution, and consumption of intoxicating beverages and drugs.

Health Warning on Tobacco Product Packages:

- As per the rules laid down under the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA)**, the Union Health Ministry had notified mandatory display of health warnings covering about 85% of the principal display area on all tobacco products which has been in effect since September 1, 2018.
- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare also issued a new set of specific health warnings for all tobacco product packages in July 2022 by amending the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling Rules, 2008).
 - The Ministry added that all tobacco products manufactured or imported or packaged on or after December 1, 2022, shall display a new image with the textual health warning “Tobacco causes painful death”.
- Pictorial health warnings on tobacco products have become the most cost-effective tool for educating on the health risks of tobacco use.
 - This was supported by the data of the **Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2016-17** of the Union Health Ministry, according to which about 62% of cigarette smokers and 54% of bidi smokers shared that they had thought of quitting because of the 85% pictorial warnings on the packets.

Supreme Court’s Views

- The Supreme Court Bench led by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) held that the court did not want to intervene as this issue concerned policy and is best if it is left to the government.
- The CJI said that there are counter-thoughts about the issue as a few believe that drinks taken in a small measure are good for health, whereas, in the case of cigarettes, no one says that smoking in a small measure is good for health.
- Previously the apex court had also declined a petition asking for instructions to the union government to establish a national alcohol-prevention policy on the same grounds that it was a matter of ‘policy’.

Present Guidelines

- Alcoholic beverages are regulated under the **Food Safety Act**. However, there are no labelling regulations created under the Act.
- As per the [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India \(FSSAI\)](#) notification issued in 2018, alcoholic beverage manufacturers have to put labels with the warnings that include “Consumption of alcohol is injurious to health” and “Be safe: Don’t drink and drive”.
- Earlier the manufacturers used to follow the excise laws and standards set by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

Prevalence of Alcoholism in India:

- Alcohol causes about 3 million deaths across the world every year, according to the Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health-2018, released by the [World Health Organisation](#).
- Globally, it is responsible for 1% of the disease burden and the alcohol-linked disease burden is especially high in low-income and lower-middle-income countries.
- According to various studies, India was ranked as the 9th largest consumer of alcohol by volume in the world in 2020.
- Despite the average per adult intake of alcohol being considerably low in India as compared to other countries, heavy drinkers among the youth is a cause of concern.
 - According to studies, about 88% of Indians aged under 25 purchase or consume alcoholic beverages even though it is illegal.
- According to the 2019 Magnitude of Substance Use in India report of the Ministry of Social Justice, alcohol is the most common psychoactive substance used by Indians.
- This high number has been recorded despite the imposition of alcohol bans in some of the states in India and limitations on sales in other states.

***Nut graf:** Acknowledging that Article 21 of the Constitution puts an obligation on the State to preserve the life of the people, sustained and systematic efforts are required to regulate alcohol consumption in the country as it has a major bearing on public health and the overall quality of life of the society.*

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Tamil Nadu forest officials learn the ‘language of elephants’, thanks to calf rescue missions

Syllabus: Conservation

Mains: Importance of understanding the communication methods of Elephants and other animals for their conservation.

Context: Thanks to the various rescue missions in the recent past, the officials of the Tamil Nadu Forest Department are becoming more familiar with the ways of the elephant.

Background

- In the past year, three elephant calves that were separated in the Nilgiris district have been successfully reunited with their herds.
- The officials involved in such rescue missions feel that these rescue efforts have helped them to

understand the elephant's complex behaviour and social structures.

Details

- According to forest officials, multiple factors are responsible to determine if the operation to reunite a calf with its mother turns successful or not.
- Officials believe that the chances of a calf being reunited with its herd are higher if the calf was separated from its mother accidentally due to instances such as floods, or while escaping from a predator.
 - However, if the mother elephant has abandoned the calf due to its weakness, or other factors, then it would be almost impossible to reunite it with its herd.
- Forest Department officials have noticed that adult elephants can communicate over large distances using various **chemical signals from dung and urine** left behind by members of the group, and also by using **infrasonic communication**.

Infrasonic method of communication

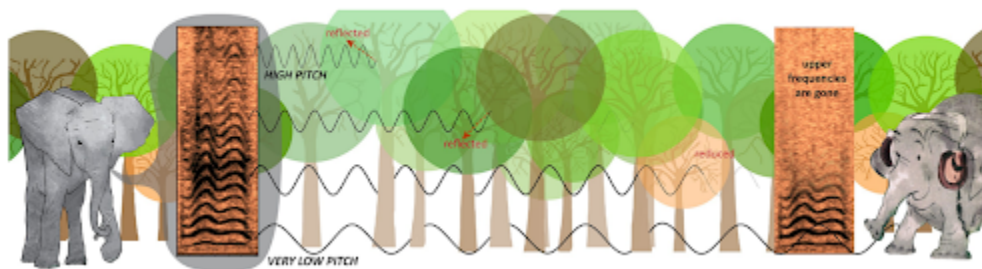


Image Source: elephantlisteningproject.org

- Adult elephants can communicate for distances over four to five km using infrasonic sound waves. This use of infrasonic communication by elephants was first discovered in the 1980s.
- These are **very low-frequency sounds**, with pitches below the range of human hearing.
- These infrasonic sound waves provide elephants with a private communication channel that plays an important role in their complex social life.
- According to various studies, elephants produce these sound waves by tensing and relaxing the muscles in their **larynx** (voice box).
- But the sensory organs of calves are not well developed to recognise these infrasonic waves and hence the mother elephant relies on visual and auditory cues from the calves to try and locate its lost calf, this requires the calf to be in close proximity to the mother.

Nut graf: Various animal species communicate using different signals, which include visual, auditory, sound-based, chemical, or touch-based and understanding the method used by animals to communicate can play a significant role in the conservation of such species.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The Global South's assertion in geopolitics

Syllabus: Effect of Policies & Politics of Developed & Developing Countries on India's Interests

Mains: Changing Geopolitics and its implications

Context: The rise of the global south in the international system is resulting in geopolitical changes and a push for competitive great power hegemony.

Background:

- The United States and China are leading with their goal of primacy in the international system.
- The U.S.'s national security documents advocate curbing China's rise, weakening Russia's capabilities, securing Europe behind U.S. leadership and building satellite alliances with countries which conform to U.S. interests and values.
- China began building counter-institutions with growth in its economic reach that widened during globalisation, which turned it from partner to competitor to threat to the western old order.

The Global South and Russia:

- The Global South has a new agency in a changing world, with several countries finding that neutrality and strategic autonomy have become a viable option.
- Russia, with its vast natural resources and military capability, has shown the capacity to assert its will in global geopolitics.
- The U.S. is using the ongoing [Russia-Ukraine conflict](#) for global primacy by gaining Europe's backing for re-militarising the region.
- The US sees the growing Sino-Russian strategic partnership 'without limits' as a threat to the west.
- Therefore, Western countries are blaming certain countries of the Global South, especially India, China and others for the failing sanctions against Russia in the context of the Ukraine war.

Global South and the ongoing conflict:

- Global South, with a few exceptions, wants a quick and negotiated end to the Russia -Ukraine conflict.
- All countries of the global south oppose the sanctions regime and advocate neutrality.
- ***The reasons for neutrality include:***
 - Russia is a major supplier of oil, fuel, fertilisers, wheat, commodities, and defence technology to many countries in the South.
 - Recent events, such as the West's rejection to give a one-time patent exception for the COVID-19 vaccine, have also not been helpful.
 - Media images of the way refugees from the South are treated in contrast to the welcome given to Ukrainian refugees have revealed the unsurprising racism.
 - Many South nations think they are unlikely to receive assistance from the West when they most need it. In these circumstances, the Global South does not perceive Russia as a threat.

Neutrality and Strategic Autonomy of Global South:

- China has alienated a number of nations, including Vietnam, Indonesia, India, and the Philippines, with its "grey zone" tactics, which include creeping expansionism and violating maritime zones in the South China Sea and elsewhere.
- The majority of the southern nations would prefer not to join security or military alliances with the West, as well as the Russian or Chinese sides.
- Southern countries, especially African countries that wish to relate to China or the US or Russia are showing signs of great autonomy in their policies to choose the particular form of relationship of their choice.
- There has been similar pushback from Latin America and the West Asian countries against the established old world order.
- Smaller states are balancing between regional powers — as Sri Lanka does between India and China. Whereas stronger countries such as India have used their leverage to negotiate with multiple sides.
 - In defiance of pressure from the West, India has increased its oil purchases from Russia. India and the U.S. have a military logistics exchange memorandum of agreement ([LEMOA](#)), while at the same time, India built the International North-South Transport Corridor, which connects Russia and India with three sanctioned states via central Asia and Iran.
 - It takes part in military drills like the RIMPAC, which is organised by the United States and is one of the biggest maritime exercises ever. It also sends a military force to the Vostok drills, which China, Russia, and the United States often perform together.
- Changing geopolitics have made the South countries more cautious with trade and economics.
- The fear of the U.S. strategy of freezing dollar reserves has made the South gradually find ways

of bypassing the dollar in bilateral trade by using local currencies.

- Currency swap arrangements are used by China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)+ 3 countries; India with Russia and 23 other countries.

Conclusion:

Multilateral institutions, ranging from BRICS and the African Union, to [ASEAN](#), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, have given the Global South new confidence. It might improve the world for itself if it raised common concerns about existential risks from climate change, ecological destruction, inequality, and rising militarization and worked in plural inclusive ways.

***Nut Graf:** The Global South has made a statement on its development, for better terms for trade for which it needs strategic autonomy. Many nations, including India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, and Malaysia, have developed into economic powerhouses despite having their own domestic issues and disparities. In these conditions, neutrality and strategic autonomy is a practical option.*

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. Growing Cases of Rabies in Kerala

***Syllabus:** Issues related to Health*

***Mains:** Zoonotic diseases in India*

Context: Recent death of a 12-year-old girl in Kerala has sharpened the focus on the rising number of [rabies](#) cases and the growing population of stray dogs in the state.

Background:

- As per Kerala State Health Department's data, the number of dog bite cases reported has gone up from 60,000 in 2013 to 2.2 lakh cases in 2021. This year, the cases have already crossed 2 lakh by the month of August.
- 21 rabies deaths have been reported from the State in 2022 so far.
- India accounts for more than one-third of the world's rabies deaths.
- Reports of stray dogs attacking pedestrians as well as motorists pour in regularly from different parts of the State.
- The State government has constituted a high-level committee to look into issues related to stray dogs.

Rise in Canine population and Rabies cases in Kerala:

- The number of dogs has been estimated at 11.2 lakh during the 20th Livestock Census, 2019, against 7.88 lakh a decade ago.
- The latest census has put the stray dog population at 2.89 lakh.

Reasons behind the rise:

- Disruption in the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme for dogs due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- When travel and social events were prohibited due to COVID, a lot of individuals bought pet dogs to break up the monotony of life which increased the community's likelihood of experiencing a dog bite.
- Dogs contract the virus from wild animals, particularly foxes. Such wild creatures are increasingly common in human habitations today. There is a chance of intermingling of foxes and dogs, which might have contributed to the virus's transmission.

Way Forward:

- The only way to safeguard both animals and people from the deadly disease is to fully immunise dogs within a community and develop herd immunity.
- The state of Kerala has established an action plan to eliminate rabies deaths in Kerala by 2025. As part of this strategy, the animal husbandry, local self-government, and health ministries will collaborate to implement the ABC programme and vaccinate dogs.
- Under the ABC programme, dogs are picked up from the streets for vaccination and sterilisation, and are kept under observation for a few days before being returned to the same place.
- Quality analysis of the vaccine must be conducted and also check for the possible mutation in the rabies virus.
- Pre-exposure vaccination or immunisation of the vulnerable population, such as children as almost 40% to 50% of those bitten by dogs are children.

***Nut Graf:** Even while a rise in the number of samples tested each year may possibly be contributing to the increased number of rabies-positive cases, the alarming figures are nevertheless a sign that the illness is making its way from animals to humans. Strict implementation of birth control measures can bring down the number, and vaccination drives can stop the spread of rabies.*

Category: ECONOMY**1. Currency pressure - The Federal Reserve's latest policy change**

Syllabus: Mobilisation of Resources

Mains: Monetary policy for inflation targeting

Context: Recently, the Rupee weakened past the 81-mark against the US dollar for the first time ever.

Introduction:

- In its continued commitment to contain inflation, the US Federal Reserve announced the interest rate increase, raising the benchmark borrowing rate by 0.75 percentage points.
- The Indian rupee fell through the 81-mark against the dollar for the first time ever.

Impact of increase in Federal reserve rate:

On India:

- The rupee has lost more than 8% of its value against the dollar so far in 2022.
- At a time when local demand is still trying to restore a stable post-pandemic footing, Indian businesses that depend on imported raw materials or services are finding it difficult to keep up with escalating expenses.
- The increased import costs will increase inflationary pressures in an economy already burdened by chronically high inflation and will make it more difficult for monetary policymakers to contain price increases.
- With the hike in Fed rates, the Foreign Portfolio Investors from emerging markets take out their money and invest in US bonds. This will strengthen the US currency against others.
- After three consecutive years of net investments, [Foreign Portfolio Investors](#) have sold \$20.6 billion of Indian equity and debt so far in 2022.
- Further sharp monetary tightening predicted by the Fed, of at least another 125 basis points, is only expected to increase outflows in the last quarter of this year.

Global level:

- This hike in interest rate by the US Federal Reserve negatively impacts global economic expansion, particularly as China struggles to recover from the effects of a real estate crisis and a lockdown-induced downturn.
- It makes countries such as India less attractive for the currency carry trade.
- Investors, particularly Foreign Portfolio Investors, frequently take out loans at lower interest rates in the US in terms of dollars and then convert those funds into rupees to invest in the bonds of nations like India in order to earn greater interest rates.

About interest rate hikes

- The main monetary policy instrument used by central banks to combat irregular spikes in

inflation is an increase in interest rates.

- As borrowing costs rise, people are less likely to spend money on products and services, and businesses are less likely to borrow money to grow, acquire new assets, or engage in new ventures.
- In the end, a decline in demand for products and services results in lower wages and other costs, which in turn helps to rein in inflationary trends.

***Nut Graf:** This hike in the US policy rate increase sends a negative message to developing market economies. India's [Monetary Policy Committee](#) in the coming weeks shall formulate policies to restore price stability without choking growth and by ensuring the rupee does not weaken too sharply.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Avalanche monitoring radar

***Syllabus:** GS-3; Science and Technology; Indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

***Prelims:** About Avalanche monitoring radar and Defence Geoinformatics and Research Establishment (DRGE)*

Avalanche monitoring Radar

- The first of its kind avalanche monitoring radar in India has been set up at an altitude of 15,000 feet in **North Sikkim**.
- The avalanche monitoring radar was made operational by the **Indian Army** and the **Defence Geoinformatics and Research Establishment (DGRE)**.
- The radar is equipped with capabilities to detect avalanches **within three seconds** of their trigger and will play a crucial role in saving the lives of troops and mitigating damage to property in high-altitude areas.
- The radar employs a series of **short microwave pulses**, which are scattered at the target and can permanently scan the targeted slope for avalanches and track the path and the size of the avalanche. The radar can also be used to detect landslides.
- The radar is said to be an **all-weather solution** as it can see through snow, fog and also at night. It can cover an area of over **two sq km** and negates the need to deploy additional instruments in dangerous avalanche-prone areas.
- The radar is also **linked to an alarm system**, enabling automatic control and warning measures. Images and videos of the event are automatically recorded for future analysis by experts.

Defence Geoinformatics and Research Establishment (DGRE)

- DGRE is a wing of the [Defence Research and Development Organisation \(DRDO\)](#) which works to provide cutting-edge terrain intelligent solutions to the Armed Forces.
- DGRE has its headquarters in **Chandigarh**.
- DRGE is an establishment formed with the merger of two premier DRDO labs namely the **Snow & Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE)**, Chandigarh and the **Defence Terrain Research Laboratory (DTRL)**, Delhi.
- DRGE is also involved in mapping, forecasting, monitoring, controlling and mitigating the impact of landslides and avalanches in the Indian Himalayas.
- DGRE has five **Research & Development Centres (RDCs)** at Manali, Delhi, Tejpur, Tawang and Lachung. DGRE also has three **Mountain Meteorological Centres (MMCs)** at Srinagar, Auli and Sasoma.

G. Tidbits

1. G4 countries highlight 'urgent need' for reform in UN Security Council

- The **Group of Four (G4)** nations consists of **India, Germany, Brazil and Japan**.
 - The key focus of the group is to bring about reforms in the [UN Security Council \(UNSC\)](#) and seek permanent membership for G4 members in UNSC.
- The G4 countries also reiterated the need for the representation of African countries in the permanent and non-permanent capacity of the UNSC.
- The G4 countries in their joint statement also urged immediate reforms of the UN decision-making bodies as the global issues are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected.
- The G4 ministers also raised concerns about the 76th Session of the [UN General Assembly](#) which failed to make any significant progress in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN), which has been constrained by a lack of transparency.

2. Quad signs agreement for disaster relief and assistance

- The Foreign Ministers of Quad grouping recently signed the **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) partnership in the Indo-Pacific** during a meeting hosted by the US on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.
 - The Partnership will act as a specialised platform for Quad partners to coordinate their disaster response operations in the Indo-Pacific region and was created to respond to the

- region's vulnerabilities.
- The mechanism will also improve their ability to perform HADR operations by increasing their capacity, capability, interoperability, and operational synergy.
 - The fundamental values of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality as outlined in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the provision of humanitarian aid will serve as the basis for response operations.
 - A request for international assistance is needed before Quad partners may act in coordination under the Partnership and all the humanitarian actions will be carried out by respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the affected state.

3. In Odisha's Nayagarh, a data-driven solution to child marriage

- Nayagarh, a district in Odisha has adopted a unique initiative of meticulously recording information on all adolescent girls in the district with an aim of eradicating child marriage.
- Acknowledging that child marriages in Nayagarh are still considered a part of their social life, the district administration launched the **Aliva programme** in January 2022.
 - Herein, the key information such as birth registration date, Aadhaar number, family details, and skill training can be found in registers named **Aliva**.
- Anganwadi workers have been entrusted with the task of identifying every adolescent girl in their jurisdiction and keeping tabs on them.
- As the State of Odisha aims to eradicate child marriage by 2030 as per its child marriage prevention strategy, the register has been useful for law enforcement agencies.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements: (Level – Medium)

1. At present only those who belong to Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism & Buddhism faiths are considered as Scheduled Castes
2. A person belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC) in a state will be deemed to be SC in another state to which he/ she migrates for the purpose of employment or education

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, At present only those who belong to Hindu, Sikhism & Buddhism faiths are considered as Dalits (Scheduled Castes), according to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950.
 - Individuals belonging to Jainism are not considered as Scheduled Castes
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Supreme Court has recently clarified that “a person belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) in a state **will not be deemed** to be SC or ST in another state to which he/ she migrates for the purpose of employment or education”

Q2. Sarda Act passed during the Pre-Independent period dealt with (Level – Easy)

- a) Child Marriage
- b) Domestic Violence
- c) Rights of inheritance
- d) Special Marriage

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Sharada Act which is also known as the **Child Marriage Restraint Act** is a legislative act passed in September 1929.
- The act fixed the marriageable age for girls at 14 years and 18 years for boys.
- To read more about - [Sharada Act](#)

Q3. With respect to Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, which of the following statements is/are correct? (Level – Difficult)

1. A “child” according to this act is a person who has not completed eighteen years of age.
2. All child marriages under all circumstances are void according to the act.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, As per the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, "child" means a person who,
 - If a male, has not completed **twenty-one years of age**
 - If a female, has not completed **eighteen years of age**
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Marriage of a minor child is considered to be void in certain circumstances, where a child, being a minor-
 - Is taken or enticed out of the keeping of the lawful guardian.
 - By force compelled, or by any deceitful means induced to go from any place.
 - Is sold for the purpose of marriage.

Q4. India's first avalanche-monitoring radar was installed in the state/UT of (Level – Easy)

- a) Himachal Pradesh
- b) Jammu and Kashmir
- c) Sikkim
- d) Uttarakhand

Answer: c

Explanation:

- India's first avalanche-monitoring radar has been installed in the state/UT of **Sikkim**.
- The avalanche-monitoring radar has been installed by the **Indian Army** and the **Defence Geoinformatics and Research Establishment (DGRE)** at an altitude of 15,000 feet in North Sikkim.

Q5. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to Pattachitra? (Level – Medium)

1. It is a picture painted on a piece of cloth
2. This form of art is closely related to the Manglagauri temple and its traditions in Bihar
3. The materials used in the paint are from vegetable, earth, and mineral sources

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Pattachitra art is a form of cloth-based scroll painting
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Pattachitra art is usually associated with the eastern states of India.
 - In Odisha, Pattachitra originated as a way to paint stories of God Jagannath.
 - In West Bengal, Pattachitras were used to depict stories of Goddess Durga and other mythological stories.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The materials used in the paint are from vegetable, earth, and mineral sources.
 - Black is made out of lampblack
 - Yellow from haritala stone
 - Red from shingle stone
 - White color is prepared from crushed, boiled, and filtered shells

Q6. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (Level – Difficult) PYQ (2022)

1. Monazite is a source of rare earths.
2. Monazite contains thorium.
3. Monazite occurs naturally in the entire Indian coastal sands in India.
4. In India, Government bodies only can process or export monazite.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Monazite is a source of rare earths such as cerium, lanthanum, others.
- **Statement 2 is correct**, Uranium and thorium are found in monazite
- **Statement 3 is not correct**, Monazite occurs naturally in the coastal sands of three districts of Tamil Nadu namely Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari
- **Statement 4 is correct**, In India, only **Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL)**, a wholly owned Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of India (GOI) under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has been permitted to produce and process monazite, and handle it for domestic use as well as for export.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Despite a series of efforts, the problem of human rabies remains a big challenge in India. What are the significant reasons behind this? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-3; Diseases)
2. Do you think that pictorial warnings on tobacco products discourage people from its consumption? Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS-2; Health)