

14 Feb 2023: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis



**Sustainable development and
climate change are two sides of
the same coin**

- Ban Ki Moon



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I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**A. GS 1 Related**

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022

Syllabus: Conservation

Prelims: Geological Survey of India and Archeological Survey of India

Mains: Draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill - salient features, significance and various associated concerns.

Context

The country's geo-sciences and palaeontology experts have raised concerns over the Draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022 as they believe that the Bill vests powers entirely in the hands of the [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](https://www.gsi.gov.in/).

Draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022

- As a signatory to the UNESCO Convention on Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, India was required to formulate legislation for protecting and preserving the geo-heritage of the country.
- In this context, the Union Ministry of Mines has formulated a draft of the Geoheritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022.
- The Bill aims to provide for the declaration, preservation, protection and maintenance of geo-heritage sites and geo-relics of national importance for geological studies, research and spreading awareness about such sites.

- Geo-heritage sites are those sites that are of rare and unique geological and geomorphologic significance having geomorphological, mineralogical, petrological, paleontological, and stratigraphic significance.
- Geo-relics are those relics or materials of geological significance or of national and international interest such as various minerals, meteorites, etc.
- The protection under the Bill also extends to caves, fossils, sedimentary rocks, natural rock sculptures, natural structures, etc.
- The draft Bill further notes that the deterioration of such material of geo-heritage and geo-relics significance will result in harmful impoverishment of the natural heritage of the Indian subcontinent that showcases unique geological characteristics of outstanding universal value.

Salient features of the draft Bill

- The draft Bill empowers the Union Government to declare a geo-heritage site to be of national importance.
 - While declaring such sites, the Union Government is required to provide two months' notice and consider objections before the declaration.
- The Bill has further empowered the Union Government to acquire an area under a geo-heritage site under the provisions of the **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013**.
- Both the Union Government as well as GSI are required to undertake measures to preserve and maintain every geo-heritage site and are authorised to inspect, survey, collect measurements and samples, undertake exploration operations, examine documents, etc.
- The Bill prohibits the construction, reconstruction, repair, or renovation of any building within the geo-heritage site area except for the purpose of conservation and maintenance of the geo-heritage site or if such construction is essential to the public.
- The Bill further provides penalties for destruction, removal, defacement, and misuse of geo-heritage sites and geo-relics.
- The powers accorded to GSI:
 - Identifying and declaring sites as having “geo-heritage” value.
 - Take possession of relics that rest in private hands.
 - Prohibit construction about 100 metres around geo-heritage sites.
 - Impose penalties against vandalism, defacement, and violations of directives of a site.

Associated concerns

- Experts, despite welcoming a geo-heritage bill, believe that instead of providing all authority to the Director General of GSI, there must be provisions to form a wider committee of experts from a range of institutions.
- Experts opine that by extending powers entirely to the hands of GSI, the Bill has neglected the interests and difficulties faced by researchers who actually undertake field studies.

- Furthermore, according to experts, the GSI is not equipped to manage such tasks of geo-heritage conservation, as it is mainly a research body.
 - They believe that the [Archeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) is more experienced in the conservation, preservation, and restoration of artefacts and sites.
- The new Bill also empowers the Union government to denotify existing geo-heritage sites without any provision for public consultation if the Government believes that such sites are no longer of national importance.
- The Bill fails to provide for collaborations with other departments and also dilutes the powers of the State Governments which are currently managing most of the geo-heritage monuments.

***Nut graf:** The geo-diversity of the Indian subcontinent is said to be 4.5 billion years old and records some of the world's most significant geological events which are required to be preserved and protected for geological studies, and research purposes. In this regard, the formulation of a draft Bill for the conservation of such sites is a welcome move, but various concerns associated with the Bill must be well addressed before passing it as legislation.*

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. Hill or city, urban planning cannot be an afterthought

Syllabus: GS-3, Disaster Management and Urban planning.

Mains: Urban planning for hilly regions and flood management.

Background Details:

- A tunnel boring machine in Joshimath (Uttarakhand) accidentally hit an aquifer. As a result, 800 litres of water per second was lost. Such a huge amount of water is sufficient to sustain the daily needs of almost 30 lakh people.
- Gradually, groundwater sources in the region began drying up even as the water flow never stopped. Moreover, Joshimath does not have a robust system to manage water resources and large-scale use of the soak-pit mechanism further increases the chances of land sinking.
- It is argued that the ongoing infrastructure projects (the Tapovan Vishnugad dam and the Helang-Marwari bypass road) would further worsen the situation.

Also read: [Joshimath Land Subsidence](#)

Issues in hilly urban regions:

- The frequency of incidents of land subsidence in hilly urban regions of India is increasing.
- It is estimated that around 12.6% of the land area in the country is prone to [landslides](#), particularly in Sikkim, West Bengal, and Uttarakhand.
- As per the National Institute of Disaster Management and the National Landslide Risk Management Strategy (2019), urban policy is making the situation worse.
- Construction activity in the Himalayas and the Western Ghats bypassing the local geological and environmental factors adds to slope instability. Additionally, tunnel construction further weakens the rock formation.
- Consequently, landslide vulnerability increases exponentially.

Measures for hilly urban regions:

- The first step in improving urban resilience is acquiring credible data.
 - In this regard, the [Geological Survey of India](#) has conducted a national mapping exercise with each centimetre denoting 0.5 km.
- The landslide risk should be mapped at the granular level. The urban policymakers should complement it with additional local details.
- Large infrastructure should not be expanded in areas of high landslide risk, the carrying capacity of the region should be adhered to and human interventions should be reduced.
- Any construction activity should be assessed in terms of soil and slope suitability by geologists.

CASE STUDY 1

Aizwal (Mizoram) is built on a steep slope and lies in the 'Seismic Zone V'. An earthquake with a magnitude greater than 7 on the Richter scale can potentially trigger more than 1000 landslides and cause large-scale damages. However, the city has developed a landslide action plan and established City's Landslide Policy Committee. The committee is cross-disciplinary in nature and involves civic societies and students.

CASE STUDY 2

The Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Gangtok (Sikkim) has helped in setting up a real-time landslide monitoring and early warning system. It assesses the impact of rainfall infiltration, water flow, and slope instability.

Floods:

- There is a rising risk of floods in many regions of the country due to the increasing intensity of seasonal rainfall. Some of the examples of floods in the past few years are Dombivali, Maharashtra (August 2019); Panjim Flood, Goa (July 2021); etc.
- Poor urban planning, lack of concern for natural hazards, and the climate change impact are the major factors behind increasing incidents of urban flooding.
- The UN [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) report of March 2022 highlighted the risk faced by Kolkata due to the rise in sea levels. In Delhi, 9350 household lives in Yamuna floodplains and are vulnerable to floods.

For more information on floods, read here: [Floods - Definition, Causes & Impact](#)

Measures to deal with floods:

- Indian cities should be flood-proofed. Urban planners should avoid filling up water bodies, canals, and drains.
- Sewerage and stormwater drain networks should be improved. Moreover, existing sewerage networks should be reworked and expanded to enable wastewater drainage in low-lying urban geographies.
- Overflowing rivers should be de-silted.
- Expenditure on flood-resilient architecture like river embankments, flood shelters, and flood warning systems should be increased.
- “Blue infra” areas should be protected.
 - “Blue infra” are places that act as natural sponges for absorbing surface runoff, allowing groundwater to be recharged.
- Urban authorities should invest in identifying flooding hotspots and flood risk maps.

Way Ahead:

- Cities should involve environmental planning and expand natural open spaces.
- Urban planning should incorporate the impact of climate change and extreme weather. It should periodically assess and update disaster risk and preparedness.
- A multi-generational process with a disaster management framework in place should be in place in each and every city of the country.

Also read: [Urban Planning and Development in India](#)

Nut Graf: *As the incidents of land subsidence, landslides, and floods are increasing, especially in urban India, it is time to review urban planning. Cities should assess the impacts of climate change and geological factors before taking up any new infrastructure projects.*

Category: INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

1. Honour of office

Syllabus: GS-2, Appointment to various constitutional posts.

Mains: Appointment of Governor and associated concerns.

Prelims: Governor

Context: Appointment of new Governors by the Centre.

Details:

- The Governors and the Lieutenant-Governors of several States and Union Territory were appointed and shuffled by the Centre on 12th February 2023.
- The legitimacy of a nominated Governor in a democracy was hotly debated in the [Constituent Assembly](#) after Independence.
- It was decided (in the Constituent Assembly) that the nomination of the Governor will continue and he/she would act as a dynamic link between the Centre and the State.

For more information on Governors, read here: [Governor - Appointment, Term, Functions & Discretion](#)

Associated concerns:

- It is argued that the Governors in the last few years in some states like Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal played a political role and caused some controversies.
- The recent appointments of a former judge of the Supreme Court and a former Indian Army commander have raised concerns about the roles and relationships of the military and the judiciary with the political executive.
- This has further highlighted the issue of the political executive's eagerness to control judicial appointments by selectively delaying or accelerating the appointments recommended by the [collegium](#).
- It is often argued that the overreach of Governors can disturb the Centre-State relationship and question democracy.
- It is also said that giving the post-retirement opportunity (as a Governor) to authorities that are required to stay away from politics in their current roles/jobs would lower the dignity of existing and future offices.

Also read: [UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis Jan 23rd, 2023](#)

Nut Graf: *The Governor-State government relationships in various states have raised concerns about the legitimacy of the Governor's office. The recent appointment of former judges and former army commanders in the post of Governors has again brought to limelight the issue. It is suggested that to maintain the legitimacy and dignity of the office such precedents should not be set for the future.*

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Not a pipe dream

Syllabus: *GS-2, Government policies and interventions.*

Mains: *Jal Jeevan Mission and associated concerns.*

Prelims: *Jal Jeevan Mission.*

Context: Increased budget outlay for Jal Jeevan Mission.

Details:

- The aim of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is to provide functional piped water to every rural household by 2024.
 - A fully functional tap water connection means a household gets at least 55 litres of potable water per capita per day throughout the year.
- The Budget 2023-24 has allotted approximately ₹69684 crores for the scheme. It is a 27% increase as compared to the revised estimates of 2022 (₹54808 crores).
- However, it is argued that out of the targeted 19.3 crore rural households, only 3.2 crores had piped water in August 2019. And the JJM dashboard on the official website of the Ministry of Jal Shakti shows that around 11 crore households (57% of the targeted beneficiaries) have access to tap water (as on February 2023).
- With just 12 months remaining, it would be difficult to ensure that the remaining 47% is also covered.
- The state-wise details of the scheme:
 - The states which have reported 100% coverage of eligible households with piped water are Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, and Telangana.
 - Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have coverage of nearly 97%.
 - Apart from the above, only 10 more states have reached 60% coverage.
 - Large and populous states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have reported only 30% coverage. Madhya Pradesh has covered around 47% of the targeted beneficiaries.

Associated Concerns:

- It is suggested that despite having a tap connection, village households depend on their local groundwater resources because of the inadequate quality of supplied tap water.
- According to a sample survey of nearly 3 lakh eligible households (commissioned by the Ministry of Water Resources) only three-fourths reported that water was provided seven days a week. It was also found that on average water was supplied for only three hours a day.
- More than 90% of institutions (Anganwadis and schools) reported access to tap water. However, many of them complained about the high levels of chlorine apart from bacterial contamination.
- It is also found that the current statistics are based on self-reporting and not certified by a third party.
- Some states like Bihar have highlighted that most of their connections were provided through state funds instead of JJM.

Way Ahead:

- Instead of aiming for a numerical target, the government should focus on ensuring the quality and consistency of tap water adoption in rural areas.
- Moreover, the Centre should also help states with the lowest adoption and largest population, instead of focusing on states that are close to the finishing line.

Also read: [AIR Spotlight - Jal Jeevan Mission: Har Ghar Jal](#)

Nut Graf: *Jal Jeevan Mission has very well recognized that functional tap water is a basic necessity that must be provided to all households. However, with only one year left to achieve its target, a lot of gaps need to be filled apart from ensuring the quality and consistency of permanent tap water.*

F. Prelims Facts

1. Aadi Mahotsav festival

Syllabus: *GS-1, Indian Society*

Prelims: *Aadi Mahotsav festival and TRIFED*

Context

The Prime Minister of India will inaugurate the Aadi Mahotsav festival at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in New Delhi on the 16th of February 2023.

Aadi Mahotsav festival

- Aadi Mahotsav festival is a celebration of the spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine, and Commerce.
- The Aadi Mahotsav festival is a flagship event of the [Tribal Co-Operative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. \(TRIFED\)](#).
- Aadi Mahotsav is the National Tribal Craft Expo which provides a platform for the tribal population of the country to showcase their products and help them connect with the mainstream populations.
 - Thus, Aadi Mahotsav plays a key role in establishing a direct connection between the tribal communities and a direct market in large metro cities and State capitals.
- Various tribal art and crafts exhibited at Aadi Mahotsav include handlooms, paintings, jewellery, cane and bamboo, pottery, food, natural products, tribal cuisine, etc.

G. Tidbits

1. Top court upholds constitution of J&K delimitation panel

- The Supreme Court dismissed a petition challenging the constitution of the Jammu & Kashmir Delimitation Commission.
- According to the Supreme Court Bench, Articles 2 and 3 of the Indian Constitution empowers the Parliament to create new States and UTs based on which the two new UTs namely J&K and Ladakh have been created.
 - Further, the J&K Reorganisation Act besides creating the two new UTs has also assigned the role of readjustment of constituencies to the [Delimitation Commission](#) under the Delimitation Act, 2002.
- The Supreme Court Bench also noted that legislations made under Article 3 of the Constitution can always provide for readjustment of the constituencies in the newly constituted States or UTs through a Delimitation Commission and therefore there is no illegality associated with the establishment of the J&K Delimitation Commission.
- However, various J&K parties have expressed displeasure over the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss a petition challenging the establishment of the J&K Delimitation Commission.

For more details, watch the following video:

2. Retail inflation rises to 3-month high of 6.52% in January

Tracking Retail inflation

RBI has set a target to keep inflation at around 4%, allowing +/-2% change.

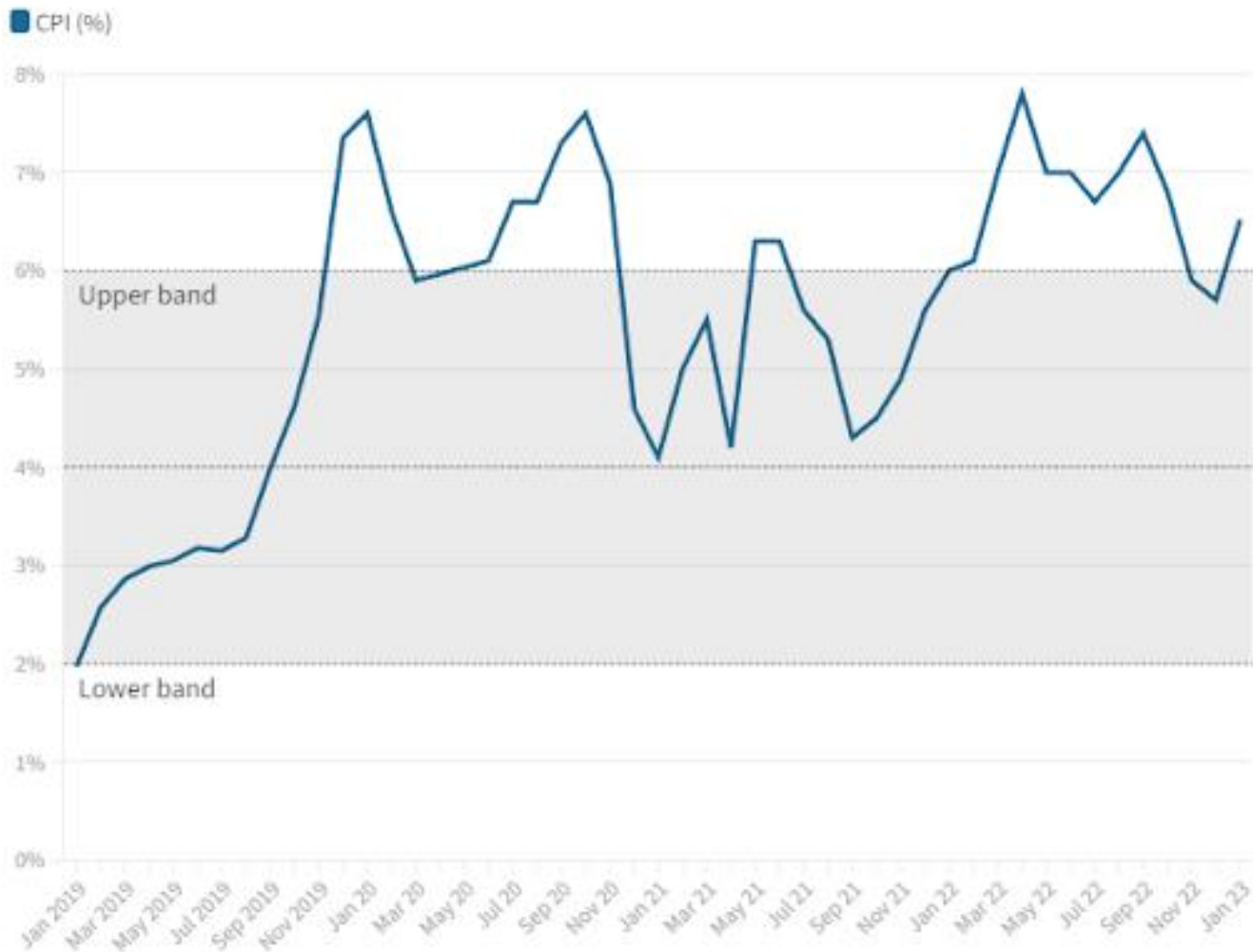


Image Source: The Hindu

- According to data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's retail [inflation](#) once again increased to 6.52% in January 2023 after a two-month streak below the 6% mark mainly due to an increase in food inflation driven by higher prices of cereals and products.
 - The retail inflation based on the Combined Price Index (Combined) had reduced to 5.72% in December 2022.
 - Also, the Combined food price inflation (CFPI) increased to 5.94% in January 2023 as compared to 4.19% in December 2022 and 5.43% in the year-ago period.
- Further, rural inflation has overtaken urban inflation in recent months as it increased from 6.05% in December 2022 to 6.85% in January 2023.
 - And, urban consumers have experienced a retail price rise of 6% in January 2023 as compared to 5.4% in December 2022.

- Economists believe that the higher-than-expected increase in January's prices may continue for a few more months on account of ongoing pass-through of higher input costs by producers, amidst robust demand for services and may force the RBI to consider yet another rate hike in its next monetary policy review.
- According to the latest data, Telangana recorded the highest inflation in January at 8.6% among the major States which was followed by Andhra Pradesh (8.25%), Madhya Pradesh (8.13%), Uttar Pradesh (7.45%) and Haryana (7.05%).
- Furthermore, the core inflation which includes non-food and non-fuel components also remained sticky at 6.1% in January 2023 which indicates pricing power from the suppliers and manufacturers.

3. Foreign Secretary Kwatra meets Nepal PM in Kathmandu

- India's Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra met Nepal's new Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' in Kathmandu which marked the first high-level interaction between the two countries since the new government took charge in Nepal in December 2022.
- A wide range of aspects such as power sector cooperation, trade, transit, education, culture, healthcare and connectivity infrastructure with respect to the Nepal-India relations were said to have been discussed during the meeting.
- It is said that issues such as increasing development assistance to Nepal, increasing Indian investment, resolving challenges associated with connectivity, and bilateral trade were also discussed.
- Further, the Foreign Minister of Nepal urged the Indian Foreign Secretary to provide an international air route for the effective operation of the newly opened Gautam Buddha International Airport (Siddharthanagar) and Pokhara International Airport (Pokhara, Gandaki Province).

Read more about - [India-Nepal Relations](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statements are true about the UDAN Scheme? (Level – Moderate)

1. It is a regional connectivity scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
2. It aims to provide connectivity to only the unserved airports of the country.
3. The scheme has a provision to increase international connectivity as well.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, “Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik” or UDAN Scheme is a regional connectivity scheme spearheaded by the Civil Aviation Ministry.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The Scheme aims to develop smaller regional airports to allow common citizens easier access to aviation services and operationalization and development of hundreds of underserved or unserved airports in the country is one of the primary objectives.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, International UDAN is an extension of the domestic UDAN scheme which aims to enhance air connectivity from certain States of the country with selected international destinations to promote socio-economic growth.

Q2. Identify the correct statements: (Level – Easy)

- 1. Retail inflation data is released by the National Statistical Office.
- 2. Core inflation includes inflation in only the food and fuel sectors.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct**, Retail inflation data in India is released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, Core inflation includes **non-food and non-fuel components**.

Q3. Which of the following is/are constitutional bodies? (Level – Moderate)

- 1. National Commission for Women
- 2. National Commission for Scheduled Castes

3. National Commission for Backward Classes

Options:

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The National Commission for Women is a **statutory body** set up in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
- The National Commission for Scheduled Castes is an Indian constitutional body established with a view to providing safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes.
 - **Article 338** of the Indian Constitution deals with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.
- The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was initially constituted as a statutory body under the provisions of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
 - However, NCBC has been accorded constitutional status through the **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2018**.

Q4. Which of the following are correctly matched? (Level – Moderate)

IP	Protects:
1. Copyright	Literary and Artistic work
2. Patent	Invention
3. Trademark	Goods or services of an enterprise

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **Pair 1 is correct,** The Indian Copyright Laws protect literary works, musical works, dramatic works, artistic works, sound recordings and cinematography.
- **Pair 2 is correct,** Inventions are protected by patents.
- **Pair 3 is correct,** Trademarks distinguish the goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings.

Q5. In case of which one of the following biogeochemical cycles, the weathering of rocks is the main source of release of nutrients to enter the cycle? (Level – Easy) PYQ 2021

- a. Carbon Cycle
- b. Nitrogen Cycle
- c. Phosphorous Cycle
- d. Sulphur Cycle

Answer: c

Explanation:

- In the Phosphorous Cycle, phosphorus moves through the hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere.
- Phosphorous is extracted by the weathering of rocks.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Examine the controversy surrounding the delimitation exercise in J&K in detail. (15 marks, 250 words) [GS-2, Polity]
2. Critically evaluate the draft Geo-heritage Sites and Geo-relics (Preservation and Maintenance) Bill, 2022. (15 marks, 250 words) [GS-3, Environment]