

**R.C. Reddy IAS Study Circle**  
**TSPSC GROUP-1 SERVICES**  
**SECTIONAL TEST-6**  
**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA + INTERNATIONAL**  
**RELATIONS AND**  
**EVENTS AND POLICIES OF TS**

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**1. D**

E-commerce platforms have two types of business models :

- Marketplace model: Platform operators facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers and can fulfill the orders by handling logistics, deliveries and returns. For example, Amazon and Flipkart. Hence, statement (2) is NOT correct.
- Inventory model: Allows online retailers to own inventory and directly sell to consumers through their own platform. For example, Big basket. Hence, statement (1) is NOT correct.
- The process of e-commerce enables sellers to come closer to customers that lead to increased productivity and perfect competition. The customer can also choose between different sellers and buy the most relevant products as per requirements, preferences, and budget. Moreover, customers now have access to virtual stores 24/7.
- e-Commerce also leads to significant transaction cost reduction for consumers.
- e-commerce has emerged as one of the fast-growing trade channels available for the cross-border trade of goods and services.
- It provides a wider reach and reception across the global market, with minimum investments.

**2. D**

Inland water transport (IWT) refers to the transportation of people, goods, and materials via waterways such as rivers, canals, lakes, and other navigable bodies of water that are located within a country's boundaries.

- o IWT is the most economical mode of transportation, especially for bulk cargo like coal, iron ore, cement, food grains and fertilizer. Presently, it remains underutilized at a share of 2% in India's modal mix.
- o The inland waterways can play a crucial role in realising Prime Minister's vision of making India a zero-carbon emission country by 2070.
- o Government intends to increase the share of Inland Water Transport (IWT) to 5% as per Maritime India Vision (MIV)-2030.

Hence, Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

**3. B**

The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) is published by the World Bank that measures the competence and performance of the logistics sector of a nation. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.

It measures the quality of logistics services, trade- and transport-related infrastructure, and border controls. The index is used as a mechanism for analyzing the logistics performance of countries against each other.

The LPI 2023 acknowledges comparisons across 139 countries. In the year 2023 LPI for the first time measured the pace of trade with indicators derived from the statistical tracking shipments. It focuses

on the six parameters: Customs, Infrastructure, Timeliness, Ease of Arranging Shipments, Quality of Logistics Services, and Tracking & Tracing.

Hence, Statement 2 is correct.

In the year 2022, the Prime Minister launched the National Logistics Policy (NLP) to assure rapid last-mile delivery, forward and backward linkages and transport-related challenges, save time and money of the manufacturing sector and ensure desired pace in the logistics sector of India. India was ranked 44th on the index in 2018.

India has climbed six places on the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index (LPI) 2023, now ranking 38th in the 139 countries index, subsequently due to investments in both soft and hard infrastructure as well as technology. Hence, Statement 3 is not correct.

**4. D**

Nationalization of Banks targeted in expansion of Bank branches to rural areas and improving the overall coverage of Banks in villages and providing them access to institutional credit. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.

The RRBs are entrusted to cater to the needs of the rural people in the backward regions and bring financial inclusion at the primary level. The main objective of the RRBs is to provide credit and other banking facilities to the small, marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, small artisans, etc. Hence, Statement 2 is correct.

The main objective of the SHG-Bank Linkage programme has been financial inclusion by extending outreach to poor households in rural areas, making available credit services at their doorstep with easy and self-managed access to formal financial services on a sustainable basis and in a cost effective manner. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.

The Lead Bank Scheme was launched in 1969. It's designed to provide banking and credit to rural areas. The Scheme follows the 'Service Area Approach.' A specific Bank services each area. Hence, Statement 4 is correct.

**5. C**

Statement 4 is incorrect: The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has initiated Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs).

Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC)

- A new subcomponent under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) called Affordable Rental Housing Complexes ( ARHC) was launched in 2020-May (under Atma-Nirbhar initiative). ARHCs will be implemented by Private and Public agencies as Concessionaire/ Entity.
- Urban migrants for ARHCs means a person or groups of people/ families of EWS/ LIG categories, who take a conscious decision to move away or relocate from their village / towns to other cities/ towns temporarily or permanently, for seeking employ- ment opportunities/ education/ health visits etc.
- They may include labor, urban poor (street vendors, rickshaw pullers, other service providers etc.), industrial workers, and migrants working with market / trade associations, educational / health institutions, hospitality sector, long term tourists / visitors, students or any other persons of such category.

**6. D**

- In FY22-23, India recorded the highest ever export of 1.73MMT of fisheries and fisheries products.
- India is the 3rd largest fish producing country with around 8% share in global fish production. Globally, India stands 2nd in aquaculture production and is one of the top shrimp producing and exporting nations. Hence the statement 3 is not correct.

- Till 2000, marine fish production dominated India's total fish production. However due to practice of science-based fisheries, inland fisheries in India have seen a turnaround and presently contribute ~70 % of total fish production. Hence statement 1 is correct.
- 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route in pisciculture and aquaculture sector in India.
- Although inland fisheries and aquaculture have grown, the government took various measures to realize its full potential:
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY)
- National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Disease (NSPAAD)
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)
- Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facilities to fish producing farmers.
- 100% FDI under the automatic route in the pisciculture and aquaculture sector in India.

Hence statement 2 is correct.

## 7. B

The Fiscal Responsibility Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 was enacted with the aim of ensuring fiscal discipline, transparency and accountability in government spending.

- o The act requires the government to ensure intergenerational equity and a long term macro-economic stability by achieving sufficient revenue surplus. Hence, statement (1) is correct.
- o The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 contains several provisions regarding fiscal consolidation, including the following:

**Fiscal Deficit Targets:** The act requires the government to reduce its fiscal deficit to a specified target over a period.

**Elimination of Revenue Deficit:** The act requires the government to eliminate its revenue deficit, which is the excess of government's total expenditure over its total revenue. Hence, statement (2) is correct.

**Medium-term Fiscal Strategy:** The act requires the government to formulate and implement a medium-term fiscal strategy, which outlines the government's plans for reducing its fiscal deficit over a period of three years.

The Act binds the Central Government to take appropriate measures for increasing revenue or for reducing the expenditure, whenever there is either shortfall in revenue or excess of expenditure over the prescribed levels during any period in a financial year. But it does not impose penalties on the government for non-compliance with the provision of the act. Hence, statement (3) is NOT correct.

## 8. C

- o FTP 2023 sets a \$2 trillion target for exports of goods and services by 2030 with a shift from incentives to remission and entitlement-based regime. Hence, statement (1) is NOT correct.
- o An amnesty scheme for one-time settlement of default in export obligation, a push towards e-commerce exports, and incentives to exports that are paid for by rupee. Hence, statement (2) is correct.

Schemes of duty exemption such as advance authorisation, Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) will continue.

Four new towns of export excellence Faridabad for apparel, Moradabad for handicrafts, Mirzapur for handmade carpets and Varanasi for handloom and handicraft have been declared. Hence, statement (3) is correct.

Green technology products will be now eligible for reduced export obligation requirement under the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme.

Policy for export of dual use items under Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies (SCOMET) has been consolidated at one place in the trade policy.

There will be focus on simplifying policies to facilitate export of dual use high end goods/technology such as UAV/ drones, cryogenic tanks, certain chemicals etc.

The FTP benefits are extended for rupee realizations through special Vostro accounts. Hence, statement (4) is correct.

**9. B**

- Statement 1 is incorrect: The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) focuses on unlocking the capital from non-strategic underperforming government-owned assets rather than just the strategic assets. Its aim is to reinvest these funds into new infrastructure projects, enhancing the economic utility of these assets.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: NMP envisages an aggregate monetisation potential of 6 lakh crore. This is expected to be achieved through the leasing of core assets of the Central government in diverse sectors such as roads, railways, power, and more over a four-year period (FY 2022-25). The aim is to enhance the efficiency of the assets and generate funds for further development projects.
- Statement 3 is correct: NMP is an innovative initiative designed to rejuvenate the economy by tapping into the potential of underutilised public assets. By doing so, it aims to create employment opportunities, generate funds for new infrastructure projects, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the Indian economy.

**10. B**

- In February 2020, the government made PMFBY voluntary for farmers while previously it was mandatory for the farmers to take insurance cover under the scheme.

Calculation of MSP

- While recommending price policy of various commodities under its mandate, the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices keeps in mind the various Terms of Reference (ToR). Accordingly, it analyses:
- National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) is the only source of enrolment for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), on which farmer applications from various designated sources including banks/ financial institutions are entered.
- Demand and supply;
- cost of production;
- price trends in the market, both domestic and international;
- inter-crop price parity;
- terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture;
- a minimum of 50 percent as the margin over cost of production; and
- likely implications of MSP consumers of that product.
- It may be noted that cost of production is an important factor that goes as an input in determination of MSP, but it is certainly not the only factor that determines MSP.

**11. B**

- The government is working on a digital 'stack' of agricultural datasets, with its core as land records.
- Applications built over the stack will provide farmers with recommendations on which seeds to buy, and best practices to maximize their yield, along with updates on weather, agricultural credit, insurance and more.

- This will also help increase farmers' income and improve the efficiency of the agricultural sector, the government has said.
- As a collection of digital databases, AgriStack would have some core features including a unique farmer identity number for each farmer, and some building blocks such as data on weather, the newest science and research on agriculture, agricultural commodity prices in India and abroad, information and access to central government schemes, agricultural regulations and permissions.
- AgriStack is billed as the underlying platform (like Android or iOS) over which apps like Kisan Suvidha and others will run.
- The overall objective is that India moves to precision farming--the use of all agricultural inputs in a specific, measured quantity for high yields.

**12. B**

- The term 'Industry 4.0' was coined by the German government in 2011.
- The fourth industrial revolution, 4IR or Industry 4.0 embodies the rapid change in technology, industry, and society in the 21st century. There are six design principles for industry 4.0 which are: (i) interoperability, (ii) visualization, (iii) decentralization, (iv) real-time capability, (v) service orientation, and (vi) modularity
- Additive manufacturing, Internet of Things, Cyber Physical Systems, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality and data analytics are some of the technologies associated with Industry 4.0. With the help of these technologies, the industry will enable data-driven decisions.

**13. C**

- Statement 1 is correct: The FI-Index is a comprehensive index that incorporates details of various financial sectors, including banking, investments, insurance, postal, and pension sectors. It was developed by the RBI in consultation with the government and sectoral regulators to provide a holistic view of financial inclusion.
- The FI-Index assigns different weights to its parameters: Access (35%), Usage (45%), and Quality (20%). These weights reflect the importance of each parameter in assessing overall financial inclusion.
- Statement 2 is correct: The primary aim of the FI-Index is to measure and capture the extent of financial inclusion in India. It evaluates financial inclusion through three main parameters: Access, Usage, and Quality of financial services. These parameters reflect the ease of access to financial services, the extent of their usage, and the quality of services provided.
- Statement 3 is correct: Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) aimed to enhance financial inclusion by providing every household access to basic banking services, insurance, credit, and pension facilities, fostering economic empowerment.

**14. C**

- Statement 2 is incorrect: Transactions can be both person to person (P2P) and person to merchant (P2M).
- Statement 5 is incorrect: E-Rupee will be a bearer instrument i.e., whoever is holding the e-Rupee will be assumed to be the owner at any given point of time.
- Unlike our savings in commercial banks which rely on the bank's promise to fulfil, CBDCs are recognized by law and backed by Central Bank which cannot go bankrupt.
- For example, if a commercial bank collapses, then our savings could potentially be wiped out, but this would not be the case with CBDCs, which we can hold on to our own in digital form and could be as trusted as cash. CBDCs would be as convenient as payment apps and it also benefits from the same blockchain technology (Distributed Ledger Technology) which supports crypto currency.

- E-rupees will be issued in the same denominations as paper currency and coins, and will be distributed through the intermediaries, that are banks.

**15. A**

- Statement 2 is incorrect: According to the 5th National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data, the percentage of Indian women suffering from anaemia has declined in 2020 in comparison to 2015.

National Family Health Survey - 4 & 5

- Anaemia is a condition in which a person has a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells or quantity of haemoglobin, which reduces the capacity of their blood to carry oxygen and can lead to a number of health problems, and even death. It is considered a severe public health problem if more than 40% of the population is diagnosed with anemia.
- The indicator Children under 5 years who are underweight (weight-for-age) is one of the composite indicators for child malnutrition.
- As per recently released data of the first round of National Family Health Survey-5, conducted in 2019-20, the rate of malnutrition in the country has increased as compared to the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16).
- In most of the 22 states and UTs covered by NFHS 5, there has been a reversal: the percentage of under-five children who are reported to be stunted has increased. Sikkim was noted to have the lowest child stunting rate.

**16. B**

- Statement 3 is incorrect: Under the NPS, the government does not provide any guaranteed pension. Instead, OPS provides a guaranteed pension that is based on the individual's last drawn salary and the number of years of service.
- Statement 5 is incorrect: Under OPS, employees are not required to contribute to their pensions. In NPS, those employed by the government contribute 10 percent of their basic salary to NPS, while their employers contribute up to 14 percent.

**17. C**

- Pair 1 is incorrectly matched: The 11th five-year plan (2007 - 2012) aims to achieve inclusive growth, improve the quality of life for the citizens of the state and contribute to the larger national goals of socioeconomic development. It did not focus on strengthening capital markets as a part of inclusive growth whereas it mainly concentrated on eradicating poverty, providing employment opportunities, promoting education and health care, and increasing agricultural productivity as part of inclusive growth.
- Pair 2 is correctly matched: The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) had its focus on poverty alleviation and self-reliance. The popular rhetoric of poverty alleviation was sensationalised by the government to the extent of launching a fresh plan, i.e., the Twenty-point Programme (1975) with a marginal importance being given to the objective of 'growth with stability' (one of the major objectives of the Fourth Plan).
- Pair 3 is correctly matched: The Second Five Year Plan period was 1956-61. The strategy of growth laid emphasis on rapid industrialisation with a focus on heavy industries and capital goods. The plan was developed by Professor Mahalanobis. Due to the assumption of a closed economy, shortages of food and capital were felt during this Plan.
- Pair 4 is correctly matched: The third five-year plan (1961-1966) focused was to make India a self-reliant and self-generating economy because it was felt that the Indian government was present at the take-off stage. Based on the experiences from the first two plans agriculture was given top priority to support exports and industry

- Pair 5 is correctly matched: The seventh five-year plan (1985- 1990) emphasized rapid growth in food-grains production, increased employment opportunities, and productivity within the framework of basic tenants of planning. For the first-time the private sector gets priority over the public sector. The plan was very successful; the economy recorded a 6% growth rate against the targeted 5%.

**18. B**

- PM Vishwakarma, a Central Sector Scheme, was launched on 17 th September, 2023 by the Prime Minister to provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools. Hence, statement (1) is correct.
- The scheme is designed to uplift traditional artisans and craftspeople engaged in various occupations like blacksmithing, goldsmithing, pottery, carpentry, and sculpting, with a focus on preserving cultural heritage and integrating them into the formal economy and global value chains. Hence, statement (2) is NOT correct.

Benefits

- Under this scheme, the artisans and craftspeople will be provided recognition through a PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.
- Under the scheme a loan upto 3 lakh Rupee will be given to the trainee. Hence, statement (3) is correct.
- The scheme will further provide craftsmen with methods of skill upgradation involving basic and advanced training, a toolkit incentive of Rs.15,000 and incentives for digital transactions, and marketing support.
- Under the scheme, there will be two types of skilling programmes -- Basic and Advanced and a stipend of Rs 500 per day will also be provided to beneficiaries while undergoing skills training.

**19. B**

- SAMRIDH (Startup Accelerator Programme of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development and Growth) Scheme: Launched in 2021, it aims to support existing and upcoming accelerators to select further and accelerate potential software product-based startups to scale. A total of 300 startups are to be supported under the SAMRIDH Scheme. So, pair 1 is not correctly matched.
- GENESIS (Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups): It was launched in 2023 by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) as an umbrella program Digital India-GENESIS. It aims to discover, support, grow and make successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. It emphasizes collaborative engagement among startups, government and corporates for promoting digitization based on the principles of inclusivity, accessibility and affordability, leading to growth in employment and economic outputs. So, pair 2 is correctly matched.
- TIDE 2.0 Scheme (Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs Scheme): It was initiated in 2019 to promote tech entrepreneurship through financial and technical support to incubators engaged in supporting ICT startups using emerging technologies such as IoT, AI, Blockchain, Robotics, etc. It is being implemented through 51 incubators through a three-tiered structure. It has an objective to promote incubation activities (support functions, mentorship and resources) at institutes of higher learning and premier R&D organizations. The scheme is expected to provide incubation support to approximately 2,000 tech startups with an overall outlay of Rs 264 crore for five years. So, pair 3 is correctly matched.
- NAMASTE: It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE). It envisages the safety and dignity of sanitation workers in urban India. It aims to create an enabling ecosystem that recognizes sanitation workers as one of the key contributors in the operations and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure. It also aims to provide sustainable

livelihood and enhance occupational safety through capacity building and improved access to safety gear and machines. So, pair 4 is not correctly matched.

So, only two of the above pairs are correctly matched.

**20. A**

- Option a is correct: Antardrishti is a new financial inclusion dashboard.

Antardrishti

- RBI launched a financial dashboard named 'Antardrishti'.
- The dashboard would, as its name suggests, provide the necessary knowledge to evaluate and track the development of financial inclusion by recording relevant data.
- This tool will also make it possible to assess the degree of financial exclusion at a local level across the nation so that such places may be addressed.
- The Reserve Bank has been supporting financial inclusion by implementing a number of policy initiatives and the launch of Antardrishti is another step in this direction.

**21. C**

Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi Scheme

- 'Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi' Scheme was launched by the Union Minister for Women and Child Development to improve the nutritional status and educational outcomes of pre-primary school children.
- The scheme recognizes the inter linkages between nutrition and education and aims to address both aspects together.

**22. C**

- The CITIIS 2.0 aims to support competitively selected projects promoting circular economy with a focus on integrated waste management at the city level, climate-oriented reform actions at the state level, and institutional strengthening and knowledge dissemination at the national level.
- Launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in May 2023, it was conceived by the Ministry in partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), the European Union (EU), and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).
- The CITIIS 2.0 program will supplement the Government's climate actions through its on-going national programs (National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, AMRUT 2.0, Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 and Smart Cities Mission), and contribute positively to India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and COP26 commitments.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: The CITIIS 2.0 program will run for four years, i.e., from 2023 till 2027. The cities will have to apply to the government and will be shortlisted by a panel for final approval.

**23. C**

- Statement 4 is incorrect: The CCPA is a central authority and does not operate at the state level. It works independently of state consumer dispute redressal commissions.
- However, it may coordinate and collaborate with state authorities to resolve consumer complaints and ensure effective implementation of consumer protection laws.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is indeed a statutory body established under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. It was established to promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers in India.



- The CCPA is responsible for promoting, protecting, and enforcing the rights of consumers across India. Its primary objective is to ensure fair practices in the market, prevent unfair trade practices, and take action against misleading advertisements and false claims made by companies.
- The CCPA has been granted extensive powers to investigate complaints, conduct inquiries, and take suo motu action against unfair trade practices. It can initiate class action suits on behalf of consumers and has the authority to order recalls, refunds, or replacements of goods or services found to be defective or unfair.
- The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is being constituted under Section 10(1) of The Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

**24. B**

- Option (b) is correct: The G20 EMPOWER initiative aims to accelerate women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector through collaboration between G20 business leaders and governments. It is in line with India's women-led development agenda.

G20 EMPOWER initiative

- In line with the Centre's flagship Digital India programme, the Union minister for women and child development, Smriti Irani launched G20 EMPOWER Tech Equity Digital Inclusion Platform.
- The G20 Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER) is an alliance of G20 business leaders and governments that aims to accelerate women's leadership and empowerment in the private sector.
- The G20 EMPOWER 2023 under India's presidency aims to take forward India's women-led development agenda.

**25. C**

- Statement 3 is incorrect: An employee who does not have a Universal Account Number or EPF Member account number prior is eligible for the benefit.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)

- Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) was announced as a part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 package to boost the economy, increase the employment generation in post COVID recovery phase and to incentivize creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during COVID-19 pandemic.
- This scheme, being implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), reduces the financial burden of the employers of various sectors/industries and encourages them to hire more workers.

**26. B**

- Option b is correct: National Waterway 1 (NW-1) is the Ganga River, and a significant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed between the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and Amazon.
- The MoU aims to promote cargo movement and transportation of customer shipments via inland waterways, specifically the Ganga River.
- National Waterway 1: NW1 starts from Allahabad to Haldia with a distance of 1620 km.
- The NW1 runs through the Ganges, Bhagirathi and Hooghly river system with fixed terminals at Haldia, Farakka and Patna and floating terminals at most of the riverside cities like Kolkata, Bhagalpur, Varanasi and Allahabad.
- It will be the longest National Waterway in India.

**27. C**

- Sugar production in Maharashtra, the country's leading producing state of the sweetener, rose to 73.8 lakh tonnes during October-January of the ongoing marketing year, from 72.9 lakh tonnes in the year-ago.
- Production in Uttar Pradesh, the country's second largest producing state, rose marginally to 51 lakh tonnes, as against 50.3 lakh tonnes, while in Karnataka - the country's third largest producing state - the output rose to 39.4 lakh tonnes, as against 38.8 lakh tonnes in the said period.
- Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are the leading producers of this crop. In the southern states, the yield level of sugarcane is high. Its yield is low in northern India.
- The chart below shows the value of sugar exports from India in US Dollars and Rupees (2017-18 to 2022- 23), increasing year-on-year, except in the 2021-22 period.

**28. C**

Coverage and Eligibility:

- All Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), registered with the UDYAM registration portal (of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises - MoMSME), will be eligible to participate in the MSME Competitive (LEAN) Scheme and avail related benefits/incentives.
- The Scheme is also open to the Common Facilities Centres (CFCs) under SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) and Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSECDP) Schemes.

To support the MSMEs, the government will contribute 90% of the implementation cost for handholding and consultancy fees. There will be an additional contribution of 5% for the MSMEs which are part of the SFURTI clusters, owned by women/SCs/STs, and located in NER (North-Eastern region).

MSME Competitive (LEAN) Scheme can be attained in THREE Levels, after registering and taking the Lean Pledge

**29. C**

- Option c is correct: Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor at Sahibabad RapidX station in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh was inaugurated by the PM in March 2024 as India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).

**30. A**

- Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) is a system for ensuring that pharmaceutical products are consistently produced and controlled according to quality standards. It is designed to minimize the risks involved in any pharmaceutical production that cannot be eliminated through testing the final product.
- GMP covers all aspects of production; from the starting materials, premises and equipment to the training and personal hygiene of staff. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has established detailed guidelines for GMP.
- Schedule M of India's Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 prescribes the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for pharmaceutical products.

Therefore, option A is the correct answer.

**31. A**

- The concept of unity malls was presented in the budget of 2023-24.

- Statement 1 is correct: Unity malls would focus on the promotion and sale of the state's own "ODOPs (One District, One Product), GI products and other handicraft products, and for providing space for such products of all other states.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: The Unity Mall will not only feature 'One District One Product' offerings but also showcase an extensive range of local handicrafts and provide exhibition spaces for state emporiums.

**32. A**

- In a joint effort, the Ministry of Power and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy have announced the launch of a new National Mission called "Mission on Advanced and High-Impact Research (MAHIR)." Hence, statement (3) is NOT correct.
- This initiative aims to identify and develop emerging technologies in the global power sector and take up indigenous development of relevant technologies. Hence, statement (1) is NOT correct.
- It aligns with national priorities such as achieving Net Zero emissions, supporting initiatives like Make in India and Start-up India, and contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence, statement (2) is correct.
- MAHIR will establish a two-tier structure comprising a Technical Scoping Committee (TSC) and an Apex Committee.
- The TSC, led by the Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority, will identify emerging research areas globally, recommend potential technologies, and monitor approved research projects.
- The Apex Committee, chaired by the Union Minister for Power & New and Renewable Energy, will deliberate on technology and product development, approve research proposals, and explore international collaborations.
- The Mission has initially identified eight areas for research, including alternatives to Lithium-Ion storage batteries, modifying electric cookers for Indian cooking methods, green hydrogen for mobility, carbon capture, geo-thermal energy, solid-state refrigeration, nanotechnology for EV batteries, and indigenous CRGO technology.

**33. A**

- Statement 2 is incorrect: The Smart India Hackathon is organized by the HRD/ Ministry of Education of India since 2017 onwards.

Scheme for Facilitating Start-Ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP)

- Under the scheme, Fee was borne by the Office of the Controller General of Patents Designs and Trademarks, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
- To further encourage the IP facilitators to provide quality services to startups in order to increase the number of IP applications filed by startups, the scheme has now been revised and facilitation fees has been notably increased by at least 100%.
- To protect and promote Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of startups and to encourage innovation and creativity among them, the Government of India had launched a scheme for facilitating start-ups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) in 2016.
- The scheme facilitated startups in filing and processing of their patent, design or trademark application through the assistance of IP facilitators.
- The Smart India Hackathon is organized by the HRD/ Ministry of Education of India since 2017 onwards. Since 2019, College students are asked to give innovative ideas to solve the challenges faced by public sector organizations, industries and even NGOs, 36 hours software development competition, 5 days hardware development competition etc.

**34. C**

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy launched Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY) on 20.09.2016 to provide Solar Street Lighting for public use in select districts of identified states. Statement 1 is incorrect:
- Under the scheme, SSL with LED capacity of 12 W will be provided as per MNRE norms in the identified states. While the total cost of the scheme is Rs 583 crore, the estimated cost per light is Rs 25,000.
- The Phase I (Sept 2016-March 2018) covered the rural, semi-urban and urban areas that face less than 50% grid connectivity in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha.
- Phase -II (Dec 2018- April 2020) included Parliament Constituencies of the states covered in AJAY Phase-I, Hill States/UTs, North-Eastern States, Island UTs and aspirational district not covered in above mentioned States/UTs.
- These solar lights were installed on major roads, markets and public conveniences in remote areas.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: The MNRE will provide 75% of the cost of street lights and remaining 25% will come from Member of Parliament Local Area Development funds (MPLADS).
- Statement 3 correct: Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) is implementing Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY).

**35. B**

- Statement 2 is incorrect: It provides collateral-free loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.

Supplementary Notes PM-MUDRA yojana (PMMY)

- To create an inclusive, sustainable and value-based entrepreneurial culture, the PM-Mudra yojana (PMMY) provides refinance support to micro businesses. It does not lend directly to the micro entrepreneurs, but through Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.
- It provides collateral-free loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/ micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.
- Under the aegis of PMMY, MUDRA loans are classified into 3 categories namely 'Shishu', 'Kishore' and 'Tarun' to signify the stage of growth / development and funding needs of the beneficiary micro unit / entrepreneur and also provide a reference point for the next phase of graduation / growth. The 3 types of loans under MUDRA are:
  - Shishu: covering loans upto Rs. 50,000
  - Kishor: covering loans above Rs.50,000/and upto Rs. 5 lakh.
  - Tarun: covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh

**36. C**

Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers Scheme (SHREYAS)

- The main objective of the schemes is Educational Empowerment of OBC & EBC students by providing fellowship (financial assistance) to obtain quality higher education.
- The time period of the scheme is from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- The Scheme comprises following 2 components that includes:
  1. National Fellowship for OBC students
  2. Dr. Ambedkar Scheme of Interest Subsidy on Educational Loans for Overseas Studies for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Backward Classes (EBCs).

National Fellowship for OBC students

- It provides financial assistance to the OBC students in obtaining quality higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil and Ph.D.
- It aims to provide 1000 Junior Research Fellowships per year to undertake advanced studies and research leading to M.Phil. /Ph.D. Degrees for the students who have qualified in the following tests:
  1. National Eligibility Test - Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC (for Humanities/Social Sciences)
  2. UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-JRF Joint Test (for Sciences)
    - The scheme covers all universities/institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
    - It is implemented by the UGC itself on the pattern of the scheme of UGC Fellowships being awarded to research students pursuing M.Phil. and Ph.D.
    - National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation under the ministry of education implements the scheme.
    - Dr. Ambedkar Scheme of Interest Subsidy on Educational Loans for Overseas Studies for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) & Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) - A Central Sector Scheme.
    - It aims to provide interest subsidy to OBCs and EBCs students on the interest payable for the Education Loans for overseas studies to pursue approved courses of studies abroad at Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. level.
    - The scheme is implemented through the Canara Bank (the Nodal bank for the scheme).
    - The interest Subsidy shall be linked with the existing Educational Loan Scheme of Indian Banks Association (IBA) and restricted to students enrolled for courses at Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. level.
    - Under the scheme, 100% interest payable by the students availing the education loans of the IBA for the period of moratorium is provided.
    - 50% of the total financial assistance is reserved for women candidates.

### 37. D

Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR)

- Recently PM announced that the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, a virtual repository of DPIs will be put to use soon.
- The Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository is an initiative of the Indian G20 Presidency.
- The GDPIR is designed to be a resource for key lessons and knowledge available from G20 members and guest countries, enabling easy discoverability.
- It is aimed at addressing the existing knowledge gap around the right practices to design, build, and deploy population scale DPI (Digital public infrastructure).
- The repository will include a stack of applications, which countries can use, customise or modify, according to their jurisdictions.
- The Global DPIR include:
  - Aadhar
  - United payment interface (UPI)
  - Digilocker
  - UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance)
  - eSanjeevani

- API Setu
- Co-WIN platform
- Government e Marketplace (GeM)
- DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure For Knowledge Sharing)
- e-Hospital platform
- Poshan Tracker
- Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

**38. B**

Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) that focuses on 11 critical interventions for PVGT.
- The PM-JANMAN will focus on 11 critical interventions through nine ministries, including the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- It aids to ensure last-mile welfare scheme delivery.
- 75 communities located in 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been categorised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- The scheme aims to provide pucca houses, piped water supply and roads for PVGT.
- The basic facilities includes Road and telecom connectivity, electricity, safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- The Ministry of Ayush will set up Ayush Wellness Centre as per existing norms and Ayush facilities will be extended to PVTG habitations through mobile medical units.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will facilitate skill and vocational training in PVTG habitations, multi-purpose centers and hostels as per suitable skills of these communities.

**39. B**

Status of GI Tagged products

- 17 products across various sectors were awarded the GI tag.
- The GI Tag is valid for ten years.
- Every State in India has at least one GI Tag. Tamil Nadu has the maximum number of GI tagged products, followed by Uttar Pradesh.
- The products in the GI registry fall under five major categories such as Agriculture, Foodstuff, Handicrafts, Manufactured products, and natural products.
- Handicraft goods have received the highest number of GI among different categories of goods. This is followed by agricultural products especially fruit crops. Mango, citrus and banana have bagged the highest number of GI tags.
- The first product in India to be accorded with GI tag was Darjeeling Tea in the year 2004-05.
- A total 504 items from different parts of the country have had the tag so far since 2004.

**40. B**

Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM- AJAY)

- Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM- AJAY) is a merged scheme of 3 Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely:

1. Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY),
2. Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP)
3. Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)
  - Aimed at reducing poverty of the SC communities, the scheme works to improve socio-economic development indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and services in the SC-dominated villages.
  - It is implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

#### 41. C

##### Gold Hydrogen

- It is also known as white hydrogen.
- It refers to naturally occurring hydrogen found underground, akin to oil and natural gas.
- The reserves of such gold hydrogen in various locations, such as the Lorraine coal basin in north-eastern France, which contains an estimated 250 million tonnes of the gas.
- The discovery of smaller gold hydrogen reservoirs in Spain, across Europe, and in countries like Mali, Namibia, Brazil, and the U.S. has suggested that this resource could be available worldwide.
- Currently, over 95% of the world's H<sub>2</sub> is produced from natural gas using the steam methane reforming (SMR) process and is called 'grey hydrogen'.
- If CO<sub>2</sub> emitted as a by-product in 'grey hydrogen' production is captured and stored or used in some way without being released into atmosphere, then the hydrogen is known as 'blue hydrogen'.
- Rather than from fossil fuels, countries have begun to produce H<sub>2</sub> gas from water using renewable energy-based electricity. The H<sub>2</sub> gas produced in this 'electrolysis' process is called green hydrogen as it emits no carbon as a by-product.

#### 42. D

##### Ministry of External Affairs' development assistance for 2024-25

- MEA's total development assistance to various countries and regions such as Latin America and Eurasia has been pegged at Rs 4,883 crore.
- The ministry allocated a total of Rs 22,154 crore for the 2024-25 fiscal in the Interim budget as against last year's outlay of Rs 18,050 crore.
- In line with India's Neighbourhood First policy, the largest share of aid portfolio for 2024-25 went to Bhutan with an allocation of Rs 2,068 crore as against Rs 2,400 crore in 2023-24.
- Nepal would be provided Rs 700 crore against Rs 650 crore in 2023-24.
- The assistance to the Maldives has been kept at Rs 600 crore as against Rs 770 crore in 2023-24, despite recent strain in the bilateral ties.
- The allocation for Chabahar Port has also been maintained at Rs 100 crore, underlining India's focus on connectivity projects with Iran.
- In continuation with India's special relationship with the people of Afghanistan, a budgetary aid of Rs 200 crore has been set aside.
- In 2023-24, it was Rs 220 crore.
- An amount of Rs 120 crore will be provided to Bangladesh against Rs 130 crore in 2023-24.
- Sri Lanka will get development aid worth Rs 75 crore (up from Rs 60 crore in 2023-24).
- Mauritius to receive Rs 370 crore (up from Rs 330 crore), while for Myanmar it is at Rs 250 crore (down from Rs 370 cr in 2023-24).

**43. D**

**ADVANTAG(I)GE INDIA**

- The Microsoft recently announced ADVANTAG(I)GE INDIA, which aims to train two million Indians with AI skills by 2025.
- ADVANTAG(I)GE INDIA intends to push India's AI transformation and empower its workforce for jobs in the future.
- It is an initiative to equip 2 million people in India with artificial intelligence (AI) skills by 2025.
- It is part of Microsoft's wider Skills for Jobs initiative, which aligns with the company's responsible AI principles.
- The goal of ADVANTA(I)GE INDIA is to bridge the gap in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities by training individuals while also focusing on rural areas to ensure AI-induced progress is more inclusive.
- Training will be given through partnerships with the government, non-profit firms, and businesses across the country.
- It is a significant step towards democratising access to AI skills across the nation and reflects Microsoft's deep commitment to enabling inclusive growth with technology.
- Microsoft has partnered with India's Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship as well as 10 state governments to provide basic and advanced training in AI to 500,000 students and job seekers.

**44. B**

**State of India's Digital Economy (SIDE) Report, 2024**

- India is 3rd largest digitalized country among G20 nations.
- The report is released by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
- The report is based on a new approach to measure digitalization by recognizing the scale of the network and depth of use of technology at the economy wide level to arrive at its conclusions.
- Other established global indices that focus entirely on the average users are:
  1. E-Government Development Index (EGDI) of the United Nations
  2. Network Readiness Index (NRI) of Harvard University
  3. ICT Development Index (IDI) of International Telecommunication Union
- The ranking is based on a 5 pillar Connect, Harness, Innovate, Protect and Sustain (CHIPS) framework that measures the entire spectrum of digital transformation.
- India is the third largest digitized country in the world after the US and China.
- However, at the level of individual users, India is ranked 12th in terms of digitalization among the G20 countries.

**45. C**

**National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP)**

- NCTP recently conducted a meeting to address matters concerning the transgender community.
- The National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP) is a statutory body established in 2020 under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and took force in 2020.
- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment is the ex-officio chairperson of the council.
- A Member of National Council, other than ex officio member, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of his nomination.



- The NCTP's responsibilities include:
  1. Advising the government on policy matters affecting transgender, intersex and GIESC (Gender Identity/Expression and Sex Characteristics) identities.
  2. Protecting the rights of transgender people.
  3. It works under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

**46. A**

- The India Employment Report 2024 was unveiled by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD) recently.
- The report is the third in a series by the Institute for Human Development on labor and employment issues.
- It focuses on youth employment, education and skills and analyzes data from National Sample Surveys, Periodic Labor Force Surveys, and other sources from 2000 to 2023.
- According to the report, female labor market participation rate showed significant improvement since 2019, especially in rural areas. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- It examines changes in economic, labor market, educational and skills scenarios over two decades.
- The report highlights long-term deterioration in labor force participation and unemployment rates until 2019, followed by improvement. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- Overall improvements in employment conditions between 2005 and 2022, although halted and reversed after 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The slow transition from agriculture to non-farm employment has stagnated or reversed after 2018-19, with a rise in agricultural employment. Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.

**47. A**

- Recently, NITI Aayog launched the 'Vocal for Local' program under the Aspirational Blocks Programme to promote grassroots entrepreneurship and self-reliance.
- The 'Vocal for Local' is an initiative which aims to promote grassroots entrepreneurship and self-reliance in India.
- The initiative primarily focuses on encouraging the production and consumption of local indigenous products, thereby empowering micro enterprises in Aspirational Blocks. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- A dedicated window has been established on the GeM portal under the brand name 'Aakanksha' to facilitate the procurement and promotion of products from Aspirational Blocks. Technical and operational support is provided for various aspects including e-commerce onboarding, financial/digital literacy, document- tation/ certification and skill enhancement. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.

**48. B**

- Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the PM-SURAJ portal for credit support to entrepreneurs from disadvantaged sections of society.
- The PM-SURAJ (Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan Evam Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan) Portal is a national online platform unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The portal serves as a platform to extend credit assistance to one lakh entrepreneurs belonging to disadvantaged communities, aiming to promote entrepreneurship and self-reliance among them. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.
- With a specific focus on Scheduled Castes, backward classes and Safai Mitras, the PM-SURAJ portal ensures the inclusive participation of these groups in economic development initiatives.

- Apart from credit support, the portal facilitates the distribution of Ayushman health cards and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to Safai Mitras, enhancing their access to healthcare services and ensuring safety at work.
- The launch of PM-SURAJ underscores the government's unwavering commitment to "Vanchiton Ko Variyata," demonstrating prioritization of historically underserved communities for targeted development efforts. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

**49. C**

- The PM virtually inaugurated India's inaugural domestically produced hydrogen fuel cell ferry. The vessel, constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), is designated for service in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- It is a 24-meter-long catamaran design and can accommodate up to 50 passengers in its air-conditioned area. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- This hydrogen fuel cell-powered vessel operates without conventional batteries. It houses five hydrogen cylinders capable of carrying 40kg of hydrogen, facilitating eight hours of operation.
- Hydrogen fuel cells generate electricity by harnessing the chemical energy stored in hydrogen, emitting only pure water as a byproduct.
- The vessel aligns with the 'Harit Nauka' initiative by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, aiming for a greener transition in inland water transportation. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

**50. D**

- India's real GDP is anticipated to experience a growth of 7.3% in the fiscal year 2023-24. In the fiscal year 2024-25, the projected fiscal deficit is 5.1% of the GDP. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.
- Over the period from 2014 to 2023, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow reached USD 596 billion, doubling the inflow recorded between 2005 and 2014. Hence statement 3 is incorrect.
- The government has identified key priority areas, focusing on the upliftment of marginalized sections. Notably, there has been an 11.1% increase in the capital expenditure outlay, amounting to Rs 11,11,111 crore. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.

**51. C**

All statements are correct: NBFID has been set up as a corporate body with authorised share capital of 1 lakh crore rupees. Its shares may be held by:

1. Central Government
2. Multilateral Institutions
3. Sovereign Wealth Funds
4. Pension Funds
5. Insurers
6. Financial Institutions,
7. Banks
8. Any other institution prescribed by the central government. Initially, the central government will own 100% shares of the institution which may subsequently be reduced up to 26%.

NBFID will have both financial as well as developmental objectives:

- Financial objectives: to directly or indirectly lend, invest, or attract investments for infrastructure projects entirely or partly in India. The Central government will prescribe the sectors to be covered under the infrastructure domain.

- Developmental objectives include facilitating the development of the market for bonds, loans, and derivatives for infrastructure financing.

Functions of NBFID include:

- (i) extending loans and advances for infrastructure projects,
- (ii) taking over or refinancing such existing loans,
- (iii) attracting investment from private sector investors and institutional investors for infrastructure projects,
- (iv) organising and facilitating foreign participation in infrastructure projects,
- (v) facilitating negotiations with various government authorities for dispute resolution in the field of infrastructure financing, and
- (vi) providing consultancy services in infrastructure financing.

**52. B**

On December 6, 2023, the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) initiated an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project. The project uses a type of software system that helps organizations automate and manage core business processes for optimal performance.

TSRTC uses ERP:

- It became first corporation in India to have implemented ERP project, focusing on improving operational efficiency and providing enhanced services to passengers.
- This centralized integrated solution project enables effective management of revenues and timely actions for cost control.
- It provides Data Integrity, Centralized Data Availability, Data Security, Optimum Manpower Utilization and enables faster range in intelligent decision-making.

**53. B**

- Telangana School Education Department sanctioned the installation of grid solar electrical power connections in government run schools.
- This initiative will not only aid schools in harnessing green energy but also earn revenue by selling the excess energy to discoms.
- The Telangana State Renewable Energy Development Corporation Limited has been asked to design, supply and commission solar power connections via tendering.
- The expenditure of the project will be met from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)'s Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for the financial year 2023-24.
- Earlier, a total of 1521 schools in 11 districts were empowered with solar energy under the "Mana Ooru Mana Badi" programme.

**54. A**

Mahalakshmi Free Bus Travel Scheme

- This initiative will be rolled out by the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).
- The free bus travel is applicable on City Ordinary buses, Expresses, Metro Express and Pallevelugu buses from 9th December 2023.
- Only the residents of Telangana are eligible to avail the service.
- There is no limit on the travel distance for women.

- The scheme is applicable within the state border limits, beyond the state limits the charges as per the distance would be levied.

**55. D**

Rajiv Gandhi Aarogyasri scheme

- It is a flagship scheme of all health initiatives of the state Government with a mission to provide quality health care to the poor.
- The aim of the Government is to achieve "Health for All" to facilitate the effective implementation of the scheme, the state Government has set up the Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Care Trust.
- At present an amount of 5 lakhs is being given under the scheme, from now it will be raised to 10 lakhs.

**56. B**

- Recognizing the importance of the financial support to the farmers for meeting the basic input costs in cultivation, the Government launched the Rythu Bandhu Scheme in 2018.
- The scheme provides financial support of Rs. 10,000/- per acre per year (5000 twice i.e., Karif and Rabi) to the landowning farmers in the State. This assistance is comparatively higher than the amounts disbursed in other States.
- Moreover, the Government has extended the scheme to all land-owning farmers irrespective of the landholding size.
- As part of the news reports, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is likely to modify the Rythu Bandhu limiting it to cultivated land only and the changes may come into force from the next agricultural season.

**57. A**

- Telangana Health Minister stated that the health department would rework the Journalist Health Scheme ensuring access to quality medical services to media persons in the State.
- The scheme is intended to benefit serving working and retired journalists of the State.
- Aarogyasri Health Care Trust will implement the Scheme under the supervision of State Government.

Financial coverage:

- The total cost of the Journalists Health Scheme shall be borne by the Government and no contribution will be collected from them.
- There shall be no upper limit and the total cost of treatment for the enlisted therapies will be covered under the Scheme.

**58. D**

- In December 2023, the Telangana State Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TSNAB)'s Director, Sandeep Shandilya, said that it will procure drug detection kits shortly and use them to nail the drug consumers.
- The director of TSNAB stated that, these detection kits will be used for field detection during raids and searches.
- This equipment's detect drugs in nanogram concentration.
- Only saliva (swab) is needed to run the test.
- The department will focus on educational institutions firms, film and IT industry, bars and pubs, rave parties, resorts etc.

**59. C**

- The Telangana Electric Vehicle and Energy Storage Policy 2020-2030 was launched in order to promote clean technology and high-density energy storage solutions and to create a shift to a cleaner transportation as Electric Vehicles are the future of mobility.
- The policy has earmarked a separate fund for supporting Startups for doing research and innovation in EV & Battery technologies called as T-Fund.
- It offered 100% exemption of road tax and registration fees for first 2 lakh electric two wheelers and 5000 electric cars purchased and registered within the State.

**60. A**

- Digital Employment Exchange of Telangana (DEET) is an initiative of Telangana government, inviting applications for various jobs in private entities.
- DEET eliminates the hurdles leading to a friction-free interaction between job seekers and job providers.
- It offers opportunities for both private and government jobs.
- Powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) tech stack, the results obtained are highly relevant matching the requirements set forth by both the jobseekers and employers.
- It is powered by Workruit, and job seekers can download, register, and create a profile on DEET application (mobile).
- A first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, the Digital Exchange Employment of Telangana (DEET) was launched on August 26, 2019.

**61. C**

Indiramma Housing scheme

- The scheme offers financial aid of Rs.5 lakh to individuals who possess their own land and are capable of constructing a house.
- Eligibility for the scheme extends to all applicants registered under the Praja Palana special drive.
- The scheme will be rolled out in phases to benefit homeless eligible individuals across the state, with a focus on avoiding past mistakes in housing construction.
- The assistance package includes Rs.5 lakh for house construction on owned land, while landless and homeless individuals will receive the same amount along with a housing plot.
- Various house models and designs will be provided, with special emphasis on incorporating kitchen and toilet facilities into new dwelling designs to aid house construction.

**62. D**

Mahila Shakti Scheme

- Under this new scheme which is likely to be launched soon, the government will provide zero-interest loans to SHG members, along with regular reimbursement of interest every six months.
- Loans taken by SHG members will be waived off in case of their death due to accidents or natural causes.
- A special loan insurance scheme is implemented for this purpose. Life insurance facilities of Rs 5 lakh will be provided to about 63.86 lakh women in SHGs.
- the government has allocated Rs. 5,000 crore in loans to 5,000 villages across the State in the first year. Additionally, plans are underway to establish special 'mini-industrial parks' in each Assembly constituency, catering specifically to women entrepreneurs.
- The efforts are underway to identify the interests of women and provide tailored skill training programmes, with an emphasis on economic empowerment and employment generation. Initiatives

such as sewing uniforms for students and police, manufacturing sanitary napkins, and deploying mini-solar units are in the pipeline.

**63. C**

- Telangana Police have successfully trained eagles to pull down rogue drones, marking a significant development in security measures.
- The eagles are planned to be utilized for VVIP visits and public meetings, adding another layer of security to Telangana Police's operations.
- The initiative to train eagles for drone interception began in July 2020, with the approval of funds from the Home department.
- Telangana Police's eagle squad is the first and only one in India and the second in the world after the Netherlands.

**64. B**

- Telangana Chief Minister recently launched the Travel Safe (T-Safe) service, aimed at improving women's safety during travel.
- T-Safe is India's first ride monitoring service by the police, designed to enhance safety for women, children, and vulnerable groups across the state.
- The service does not require a smartphone or app download; individuals can avail it by dialing 100 and selecting option 8 in the IVR, initiating ride monitoring by the T-Safe team.
- T-Safe was launched alongside the announcement of the Mahila Shakthi Policy, serving as a pivotal tool in empowering women and ensuring their security during travel.
- Automated alerts are sent at regular intervals, and failure to respond triggers immediate police response, enhancing user safety.

**65. A**

- Telangana Chief Minister A launched the 'Rythu Nestham' program in Telangana.
- The program aims to connect farmers with agriculture experts through videoconferences from 2,601 'Rythu Vedikas' (farmer centres).
- Farmers will receive suggestions on crop cultivation and advanced farming techniques from agriculture experts through these videoconferences.
- The program provides a platform for direct interaction between agriculture experts and farmers to understand challenges at the field level.
- The government will support farmers by providing seeds, fertilisers, and assistance in selling their crops.
- Video conference units are being set up in 110 assembly constituencies in the first phase.
- The program is implemented with the help of Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, and the government has sanctioned Rs 97 crore for it.

**66. A**

- The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has initiated the Basti Action Plan to address sanitation concerns in the city.
- The primary objective is to ensure door-to-door collection of municipal solid waste and eliminate garbage vulnerable points (GVPs).
- The weekly plan involves collaboration between sanitation and Urban Community Development (UCD) staff, self-help group (SHG) members, and colony residents.

- Activities include weekly basti meetings to discuss goals, identification and counselling of households not tagged to Swachh Auto Tippers (SATs), awareness rallies, motivational programs, and rangoli competitions to enhance community participation.
- UCD officials will dedicate Saturdays to understanding the sanitary challenges faced by vendors in colonies and finding solutions.

**67. D**

- Telangana has established seven new Cyber Crime Police Stations (CCPS) to address the growing challenges posed by cybercrime within the state.
- These stations will primarily focus on handling cybercrime cases involving financial losses amounting to Rs 1 lakh and above.
- Six of the new CCPS stations are strategically located within the commissionerate limits of Nizamabad, Ramagundam, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, and Siddipet, aiming to improve accessibility and response time to cybercrime incidents across various regions.
- The seventh CCPS station, situated at the Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TSCSB) headquarters in Hyderabad, holds statewide jurisdiction and will address complex cybercrimes with implications for national security or those involving international connections.

**68. D**

The Telangana has made a paradigm shift in the school education sector by launching various program and initiatives.

Mana Ooru Mana Badi:

- Launched on 8 March 2022.
- Under the initiative, the schools were given a facelift under 12 components including,
- Toilets with running water facility, electrification, drinking water supply, furniture, painting of entire schools, green chalkboard, compound walls, kitchen sheds, new classrooms in place of dilapidated ones, and dining halls in high schools.

Chelimi:

- It is an initiative to prepare students in life skills (social and emotional) and they thought how to face life challenges and handle pressure, stress and failure.
- Skills like arts, theatre and storytelling.

Ankuram:

- To instil an entrepreneurship mind-set and bring out innovative business ideas among students, this business innovator programme was launched in the government run schools.

**69. C**

- School students of Telangana will now get a unique Permanent Education Number (PEN), which will stay with them until the completion of their education.
- Permanent Education Number (PEN):
- It is a 11-digit unique number, act as Unique Identification number across all education platforms.
- Learning stages includes pre-primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary, graduate, post-graduate, research and up skilling as well.
- PEN will be printed on SSC hall tickets and memos in addition to hall ticket numbers from the academic year 2023-24 for the students under all managements in the state.
- It will stay along with students until completion of education.

**70. A**

- The start-up incubator T-Hub launched the 12th cohort of its flagship Lab32 accelerator program in collaboration with Hexagon, a global leader in sensor, software and autonomous solutions.

Lab32:

- Lab32 is 100 days long, goal-based market readiness program for Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Ready and Market Ready Start-ups to refine their Product-Market Fit (PMF) and Go-To-Market (GMT) strategy.
- The Lab32 launched in 2018, empowered 265 start-ups until now.
- Focus sectors are start-ups from the B2B (Business-to-Business) revenue model.

**71. B**

Chief Ministers Breakfast scheme

- Having identified that many school going children are malnourished and come to school without breakfast, it decided by the state government of Telangana to provide breakfast in government schools.
- It is applicable to all students from class 1 to 10 in all government schools, including the aided, model, and madrasas run by the Education department.
- The primary objective of the Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme is to provide students with not only quality education but also a nutritious start to their day.
- In urban areas, the job has entrusted to the Akshaya Patra Foundation while self-help groups will prepare in rural areas.

**72. A (Statement II is wrong)**

Targets

- Establish Telangana as the global hub for Product Development, Engineering and R&D by 2026
- Increase total direct employment to a 10 Lakh IT Sector jobs by 2026
- Double annual IT/ITeS Sector exports to Rs. 3 Lakh Cr. by 2026.

For Electronics

- To generate employment of 3 Lakhs by 2026 in the Electronics sector, out of which 75,000 is targeted to be from the EV & ESS sector.
- To attract Rs. 75,000 Cr. of total investments in the Electronics sector, of which Rs. 25,000 Cr. is targeted from the EV & ESS (e-vehicle and energy storage system) sector.

**73. D**

Telangana Cool Roof Policy 2023-28:

- It aims to make the state more thermally comfortable and heat-resilient by reducing the impact of the urban heat island effect and heat stress, and also to bring down energy consumption.
- Cool roofs are now mandatory for all government as well as commercial buildings irrespective of their site area or built-up area.
- Compliance with the policy is mandatory for the issuance of occupancy certificates.
- A cool roof is mandatory for residential buildings that have a plot area of 600 sq yards or more.
- For those with a plot area of 600 sq yards or less, it is optional.

**74. C**

T-Chits:

- It is a revolutionary way of administering the registered Chit fund business in the state of Telangana.



- It is a blockchain-based chit fund administration system.
- The state government, through its Registration & Stamps Department has partnered with T-Hub startup ChitMonks to launch T-Chits.
- ChitMonks works with registered Chit Fund companies to make investing in chit funds credible and rewarding to the subscribers.
- It brings the complete foreman organizations in the state and the registrars onto an immutable, smart contract enabled, highly secure Blockchain system.

**75. B**

- In January 2024, the TS CM announced the state's decision to institute "Gaddar Awards" in place of the Nandi Awards.
- Previously awarded in undivided Andhra Pradesh, the Nandi Awards recognized excellence in Telugu cinema, theater, and television.
- Gaddar Awards pay homage to the revered revolutionary singer of Telangana, Gaddar, who passed away in August 2023.
- Awarded annually on January 31st coinciding with Gaddar Jayanti.
- It aims to recognize and celebrate artistic excellence specific to Telangana's cultural landscape.

**76. A**

- In a recent initiative, Gram panchayats took over Mission Bhagiratha village water supply.
- The State government has placed the operation and maintenance of the water supply system in the villages under the purview of gram panchayats.
- It has issued a GO directing the gram panchayats to maintain the intra-village water supply system from overhead service reservoir (OHSR) to household connection.
- The government has also tasked the gram panchayats with operations such as chlorination and cleaning of OHSRs, issue of new tap connections, and repairs to pipelines.

**77. D**

- The Telangana government, under the leadership of CM A. Revanth Reddy, has decided to change the state's abbreviation from 'TS' to 'TG'.
- This decision aims to replace 'TS' with 'TG' in official documents and gazettes of the Union government.
- The Cabinet also decided to change Telangana Talli statue to reflect the sentiments of Telangana people.
- It decided to adopt Andesri's "Jai Jai Ho Telangana" as the state song and to design a new state emblem in consultation with all stakeholders.

**78. A**

Musi rejuvenation: Govt to prepare simulation model for hydraulics.

- In a step towards rejuvenation and conservation of the Musi river, the state government, in February 2023, took a decision for preparing simulation model for hydraulics of the river from the downstream point of Osman Sagar reservoir to Outer Ring Road (ORR) East near and from Himayat Sagar reservoir downstream point to confluence point at Babu Ghat under Musi Riverfront Development Project.
- Through the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Ltd (MRDCL), the government is now working on reviving the entire river ecosystem.

**79. A**

- To accelerate the adoption of green skills amongst the college youth in the State, the Information Technology, Electronics & Communications department has recently signed an MoU with the 1M1B Foundation to set up the Green Skills Academy.
- The partnership aims at training 1 million youths by 2030 with the top 10 youth given an opportunity every year to showcase their work at the annual 1M1B summit at the United Nations in New York.
- The training will be imparted through Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK).

**80. C**

- Located in Peddapalli district, Telangana, the TSTPS is a joint venture between the Ministry of Power (MoP) and the Telangana government.
- Phase-I comprises two 800 MW units, with Unit-1 commencing commercial operations in September 2023.
- Unit-2's successful trial operation marks the completion of Phase-I, paving the way for its official commercial launch soon.
- This phase is expected to meet 85% of Telangana's energy needs, significantly reducing dependence on other sources.

**81. A**

- The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation topped the table for new constructions as per the data released online by TS-bPASS.
- Ts- bPASS is a website that streamlines and simplifies the process of obtaining building approvals in the State.
- Since the launch of the online portal in November 2022 to January 2024, GHMC has approved 33,445 new constructions, the highest of all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Telangana.

**82. D**

- The Telangana government has formed a committee to improve its ecotourism policy.
- This committee, led by Forest Minister Konda Surekha, will identify areas with ecotourism potential, both within forests and on private land in eco-sensitive zones.

The committee's goals include:

- Developing a comprehensive ecotourism policy
- Identifying suitable locations
- Public-private partnerships
- Attracting investment
- Wildlife tourism

**83. A**

- Recently, Telangana Government halts subsidy for certain vehicles such as cars and other taxi vehicles under T-PRIDE (Telangana State Programme for Rapid Incubation of Dalit Entrepreneurs) scheme because it was brought to the notice of the government that more people have applied for cars and other taxi vehicles than for setting up industries.
- Scheme was initiated in 2015 to promote self-employment among SC, ST, and disabled individuals. Male beneficiaries are eligible for 35% subsidy, while women are eligible for 45% subsidy to start small-scale industries or purchase vehicles.
- Subsidy discontinued for vehicles after scheme review; priority shifted to industrial establishment.

**84. D**

- In line with the revised guidelines of the National Biodiversity Act and international agreements like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Telangana State Biodiversity Board (TSBDB) released 'Telangana State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (TSBSAP) 2023-2030.
- The action plan was formulated in collaboration with the Centre for Innovations in Public Systems (CIPS), Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI).
- It also includes measures for promoting the conservation of biodiversity through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private sector units. The action plan also explores the scope of Public-Private Partnerships.

**85. D**

- TS-GlobalLinker is an all-in-one digital platform designed to empower Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Telangana.
- It was launched by the Telangana government in 2019
- The platform provides a comprehensive suite of resources and services to help MSMEs grow and succeed.
- E-commerce store: MSMEs can set up an e-commerce store to sell their products and services online.

**86. D**

- The Girijan Seva Scheme is a comprehensive welfare scheme launched by the Government of Telangana in 2014 to uplift the socio-economic status of the tribal communities in the state.
- The scheme provides financial assistance for various purposes, including education, healthcare, housing, and livelihood activities.
- The scheme promotes and preserves tribal culture and heritage through various initiatives, including cultural festivals, language preservation programs, and support for tribal artisans.
- It aims to alleviate poverty and improve the living standards of tribal communities.

**87. D**

- A first-of-its-kind scheme in the country, Amma Kosam will enable women to get various healthcare services after giving birth to their child. The scheme will focus on various health parameters of women like their mental health, infections and complications for one year after delivering the child.
- While the govt is set to continue 'KCR Kits', renamed Mother And Child Scheme, under which a one-time usage kit is given to the child and mother, in the new scheme post-delivery complications which women may develop will be followed up.

**88. D**

- For close monitoring of urban planning-related activities in Telangana, the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) has planned a web-based GIS portal for setting up GIS Hub in the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) office, Hyderabad.
- The establishment of GIS Hub will be taken up under AMRUT 2.0 scheme in the Office of DTCP for close monitoring of urban planning related activities in Telangana.

The broad objectives of the envisaged GIS Hub include

- Conduct QA/QC of existing dispersed geo-spatial data and unify them after filtering and retaining data that is consistent and accurate.
- Determine requirements for fresh tasking of data capture to complete the database as on data and to develop web-based GIS platform for publishing data for intra-departmental and inter-departmental coordination, and to the public, with necessary security and control.

**89. D**

- The 'Gruha Jyothi' program provides free electricity to eligible households consuming under 200 units.
- It is applicable to all Food Security Card (white ration card) holders or marginalized families.
- Implementation: Implemented by Discoms under the Energy Department.
- The scheme has a budget allocation of Rs 2418 crores.
- Subsidy Management: To cover the subsidy cost, state DISCOMS or power suppliers will send subsidy details to the state government by the 20th of each month.

**90. C**

Telangana Police's 'Operation Smile-X'

- Conducted between January 1 and 31
- It's Objective is to rescue vulnerable children and prevent child trafficking and exploitation
- Total 3478 Children were Rescued out of which 405 are Girls.
- The operation targeted various locations where vulnerable children are often found, including Railway stations, Bus stations, Religious places, Traffic junctions, Mechanic shops, Brick industries, Building construction areas, Shops, Tea stalls, Footpaths.

**91. C**

- The 19th Centre of WEF's 4th Industrial Revolution Network (4IR) will be set up in Hyderabad. A decision to this was taken at the recent World Economic Forum's annual conference in Davos in a meeting of CM Revanth Reddy with the President of the Forum
- The proposed centre will also be the first centre with a focus on health tech and life sciences and will act as a 'Life Sciences' Hot Spot' in the entire Asia. The not-for-profit, autonomous center is expected to take lead in formulation of policies pertaining to healthcare and their implementation.

**92. B**

Cheyutha Scheme

- The Cheyutha scheme, launched on December 9th by the Chief Minister, aims to provide free medical and healthcare up to Rs.10 lakh to economically backward sections in Telangana.
- The scheme's key features:
- It has three components:
- Monthly 4000 Rs pension.
- 2.5 lakh insurance for cab, auto, and food delivery drivers.
- To provide free medical and healthcare up to Rs. 10 lakh
- As of now only the third component is launched.
- Financial Coverage - Rs. 10 lakh per family
- Implemented Under - Rajiv Arogyasri initiative
- Target Beneficiaries
- Economically backward sections (90.10 lakh families below poverty line)
- Treatment Coverage
- Free corporate medical treatment in empanelled hospitals
- 1,672 different medical packages
- 21 Speciality Services

**93. C**

- "HAYAT International Excellence Framework Award' for jeevandan initiative :
- Telangana's pioneering organ donation program, Jeevandan, continues to garner acclaim for its noteworthy accomplishments.
- Launched in 2013, Jeevandan has since made remarkable strides in the field of organ allocation and transplantation.
- This recognition underscores the profound impact of the Jeevandan initiative in promoting organ donation, facilitating life-saving transplants, and fostering a culture of generosity and altruism within the community.

**94. B**

- Telangana Government has entered into an MoU with 3AI, a platform dedicated to AI & Analytics leaders and professionals.
- The primary aim of this collaboration is to position Hyderabad and Telangana as a global hub for Information Technology (IT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) development and innovation.
- The MoU involves cooperation between the IT, Electronics & Communications (ITE&C) Department of Telangana and 3AI.
- The Telangana government and Tata Technologies have signed an MoU to upgrade 65 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) into Advanced Technical Skill Training Centers.

**95. B**

- Statement 3 is incorrect: EEZs is the distance up to which a coastal nation has jurisdiction over the ocean, including both living and non-living resources. It generally goes to 200 nautical miles or 230 miles (around 370 km) beyond a nation's territorial sea.

Forum for India-Pacific Cooperation (FIPIC)

Islands

- FIPIC was launched during PM Modi's visit to Fiji in November 2014. It includes 14 island countries - Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu - that are located in the Pacific Ocean, to the northeast of Australia.
- Despite their relatively small size and considerable distance from India, many of these islands have large exclusive economic zones (EEZs). EEZs is the distance up to which a coastal nation has jurisdiction over the ocean, including both living and nonliving resources.
- It generally goes to 200 nautical miles or 230 miles (around 370 km) beyond a nation's territorial sea.
- The 3rd Summit of the Forum was recently held.

**96. B**

- Option (b) is correct: The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) quantifies biases against women, capturing people's attitudes on women's roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity.

UN Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI)

- The UNDP recently released the Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) report.
- The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) report is released by the UN Development Programme.
- The report is focussed on looking at the progress women rights and issues have made in the past ten years.
- Among both men and women, "biased gender social norms are prevalent worldwide: almost 90% of people have at least one bias" of the seven biases analysed, the report said.

- The report noted that prejudices remain "deeply embedded" in society along with cultural bias and pressures that hinder women's empowerment.
- These prejudices "are widespread among men and women suggesting that these biases are deeply embedded and influences both men and women to similar degrees.
- Biased gender social norms continue to impede progress towards achieving gender equality and violate human rights, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Despite global efforts and campaigns advocating for women's rights, a significant percentage of people still hold biased beliefs against women.
- The UNDP's 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) provides insights into the persistence of these biases and their impact on various aspects of women's lives.

**97. C**

- Both statements are correct

African Union (AU)

- The African Union (AU) is a regional intergovernmental organisation that replaced the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
- The African Union (AU) is a continental organization consisting of 55 member states in Africa.
- It was established on May 26, 2001, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the goal of promoting unity, solidarity, and cooperation among African nations.
- The organisation's main goal is to promote and accelerate the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent.
- It also focuses on encouraging international cooperation, protecting human rights and promoting and defending common African positions on key issues.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been pushing for the African Union - a continental body comprising 55 member states - to join the G20.

**98. A**

- Statement 2 is incorrect: Initially, the US-India Renewable Energy Technology Action Platform (RETAP) will focus on green hydrogen, wind energy, and energy storage and explore geothermal energy, tidal energy and other emerging technologies as mutually determined.

US-India Renewable Energy Technology Action Platform (RETAP)

- The US Department of Energy (DOE) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India launched the new US-India Renewable Energy Technology Action Platform (RETAP) under the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP).
- The RETAP has been established to take bilateral collaboration further with a result-oriented, time-bound technology focus and accelerate the clean energy transition.
- DOE and MNRE have outlined an initial work plan for RETAP collaboration.
- Initially, it will focus on green hydrogen, wind energy, and energy storage and explore geothermal energy, tidal energy and other emerging technologies as mutually determined.
- The Ministerial meeting of the U.S.-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) was held between the Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the U.S. Energy Secretary in New Delhi.

**99. A**

- Option (a) is correct: The Abraham Accords, signed in 2020, primarily focus on economic cooperation and normalization of diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab nations in the Middle East

Abraham Accords

- The Abraham Accords are a series of historic agreements signed in 2020 that established diplomatic normalization and economic cooperation between Israel and several Arab nations in the Middle East.
- The key countries involved in these accords include Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Sudan, and later, Morocco.
- The Abraham Accords marked a significant shift in Middle Eastern diplomacy as they were aimed at improving relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours.
- These agreements included the establishment of diplomatic missions, the exchange of ambassadors, and cooperation in various fields such as trade, tourism, technology, and security.
- Recently, Three years of Abraham Accord completion has been observed.

#### 100. C

All statements are correct

- BSA is a unique Forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.
- All three countries are developing, pluralistic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nations.
- The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia on 6 June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.
- India is the current IBSA Chair. Five IBSA Leadership Summits have been held so far. The 5th IBSA Summit was held in Pretoria on 18 October 2011.
- India was the IBSA Chair under the theme "Democracy for Demography and Development" in 2021. Brazil assumed on March 2, 2023, the rotating presidency of the India, Brazil, South Africa Dialogue Forum - IBSA.
- Recently, the External Affairs Minister of India has joined a meeting held with counterparts from Brazil, Bahrain and South Africa on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly

#### 101. C

- Option (c) is correct: The L.69 Group is composed of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific. However, Europe is not represented in this group.

L.69 Group

- The L.69 Group is a group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific.
- They form a major bloc that is united by the common cause of achieving the lasting and comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council.
- The group currently has 42 countries as its members.
- A high-level meeting of members of the L.69 group and other invited like-minded countries on 'Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the UN Security Council' was held on the margins of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly.

#### 102. C

- Option c is correct: This initiative aims to promote capacity building and training programs to share India's development experiences and best practices with countries in the Global South.

India-UN Capacity Building Initiative

- India and the United Nations launched a joint capacity building initiative for the Global South.

- The "India-UN Capacity Building Initiative" aims to share India's development experiences, best practices and expertise with partner countries in the Global South through capacity building and training programs.
- The initiative was announced at an event titled "India-UN for the Global South Delivering for Development" in New York on 23 September in the presence of the External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar.
- India and the United Nations recently launched a joint capacity-building initiative called the "India-UN Capacity Building Initiative," designed to foster growth and development in the Global South.

**103. B**

- Pair 1 is correctly matched: The Aegean continental shelf constitutes a dispute between Türkiye and Greece in the absence of a delimitation agreement between the two countries.
- Pair 2 is incorrectly matched: The Senkaku Islands dispute, or Diaoyu Islands dispute, is a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu Islands in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan.
- Pair 3 is correctly matched: The Spratly Islands dispute is an ongoing territorial dispute between China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei in Southern Pacific Ocean.
- Pair 4 is incorrectly matched: The Gaza Strip is a densely populated Palestinian enclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea that is controlled by Hamas, a militant group that the U.S. and the European Union consider a terrorist organization.
- Israel began bombing Gaza after a Hamas attack that left more than 1,400 Israelis dead.

**104. D**

- Option (d) is correct: India launched Operation Ajay to bring back Indians from Israel as the conflict escalated with Israel retaliating against Hamas's attack.

Operation Ajay

- As the Israel-Hamas conflict intensifies, governments around the world are scurrying to bring home their citizens who are caught up in the fighting or trying to flee the conflict region.
- India also declared that it has launched Operation Ajay to evacuate its citizens from Israel.
- Israel has declared war against Hamas and set up a war cabinet while Hamas said it is ready for a long-drawn conflict.
- India being a strategic partner of Israel condemned the Hamas attack and PM Modi expressed solidarity with Israel.
- As soon as the conflict broke out, the external affairs minister alerted Indians in Israel to exercise caution. The ministry came up with a helpline number and on the 5th day of the conflict, India launched Operation Ajay.
- India is preparing to save its people amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. The country is launching a new mission known as Operation Ajay to help its citizens return home from Israel.

**105. D**

- The Trade and Technology Council (TTC) is a transatlantic political body which serves as a diplomatic forum to coordinate technology and trade policy between the United States (US) and European Union (EU).
- The early agenda focused primarily on US-EU cooperation in technology, strategic sectors, market access, trade, democratic values and rule of law in the digital world, supply chain resilience, and the global trade order. India is not a member of this organisation. So, pair 1 is correctly matched.



- The Quad Semiconductor Supply Chain Initiative is a partnership between the governments of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India to promote the development of a resilient and secure semiconductor supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region. So, pair 2 is correctly matched.
- In 2021, the US proposed the formation of the Chip 4 Alliance, a strategic alliance that includes South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. Overall, the intention of the alliance is to restructure the global supply chain such that it is less reliant on China, with a particular focus on the following goals: Geographically diversify manufacturing capacity away from China; Protect the intellectual property of companies from member nations; Coordinate uniform export controls with regard to China; Encourage favourable distribution terms among friendly nations. India is not a member of this group. So, pair 3 is correctly matched.
- The World Semiconductor Council (WSC) is an international forum that brings together industry leaders to address issues of global concern to the semiconductor industry. It is comprised of the Semiconductor Industry Associations (SIAs) of the United States, Korea, Japan, Europe, China and Chinese Taipei. Indian semiconductor industry associations are not members of this organisation. So, pair 4 is correctly matched.

**106. A**

- Operation Interflex is a part of the United Kingdom's (UK) commitment of £2.3 billion for military aid and support to Ukraine.
- Under it, the UK and other countries including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, and Netherlands are training Ukraine's military.
- Operation Interflex aims to teach weapon handling, range activity, marksmanship, fieldcraft basics, field tactics, battle casualty drills, counter explosives, the laws of armed conflict, first aid, and cyber security awareness.
- "Flex" in Operation Interflex refers to flexible manufacturing processes. It involves the ability of a manufacturing system to quickly adapt to changes in product demand, design, and production requirements, thereby enhancing overall operational flexibility. Hence, option (a) is correct.

**107. A**

- Recently India was inducted into US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) to be resilient in critical mineral supply.
- Minerals security Partnership (MSP) is also known as the Critical Minerals Alliance.
- MSP aims to catalyse public and private investment in critical mineral supply chains globally.
- It also aims to weaken China's grip on supplies of critical minerals worldwide.
- It is a US-led collaboration of 14 countries including India.
- Besides the US, the MSP includes Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, UK, the European Commission, Italy and India. This excludes China, a P5 country.
- It focuses on critical minerals that are inputs for electric vehicles and advanced batteries.
- A critical mineral is a mineral resource that is essential to the economy and has high economic vulnerability and high global supply chain risk.
- Countries develop their own list of critical minerals depending on the importance of particular minerals in the industrial sector and the strategic assessment of supply risks.
- Critical minerals have a supply chain at risk of disruption.
- It could focus on the supply chains of minerals such as cobalt, nickel, lithium and also the 17 "rare earth" minerals.
- Cobalt, nickel and lithium are required for batteries used in electric vehicles.

**108. B (only pairs 1 and 2 are correct)**

Wildfires and heatwaves

- Wildfires and heat waves have been raging across the Northern Hemisphere in the month of July, even as many countries across Europe, Asia and northern America have been experiencing record-high temperatures.
- Spain - Has been bearing the brunt of wildfires, particularly in the Canary Islands where 4,000 people fled and forced others to wear face masks.
- Syria - The fires in Latakia raged for five days before rescuers could control it.
- Turkey - The seaside town of Kemer was affected by wildfire.
- In the western coastal province of Izmir, towns of Kinik and Odemis were also affected by wildfires.
- Greece - Wildfires which were initially confined to the islands of Rhodes and Corfu spread towards the mainland with the city of Volos facing a large brunt of the crisis.
- Italy - Is facing extreme weather events that are occurring in both the northern and southern regions of the country.
- The Palermo airport in Sicily has been closed down due to raging wildfires.
- Sardinia and Calabria have also reported dozens of fires while evacuations were ordered.
- In the north, Lombardy is being battered by severe storms that have already killed a woman and a sixteen-year-old girl.
- Croatia - In the country's south along the Adriatic Sea coast, a wildfire was raging a few kilometers from the renowned walled town of Dubrovnik.

**109. D**

BRICS

- In the recently concluded 15th BRICS summit the Bloc have agreed to expand the Bloc by adding 6 new countries.
- BRICS Expansion: This expansion introduces 5 new members to BRICS viz. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates
- Argentina's new President, Javier Milei, has withdrawn the country from its planned entry into the expanding Brics club of nations.

**110. D**

Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)

- On the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to create the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor which will be funded by PGII.
- The Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) is a joint initiative of G7 to fund infrastructure projects across the world.
- PGII is a developmental initiative aimed at narrowing the infrastructure gap in developing countries as well as help towards accelerating progress on SDGs globally.
- It has announced several projects in Indonesia, among other countries, on clean energy, telecommunications, etc.
- Its recent project is the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor.

India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- The IMEC is envisioned as a network of transport corridors, including railway lines and sea lanes that is expected to aid economic growth through integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf and Europe.

- The IMEC comprises an Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Gulf region and a Northern Corridor connecting the Gulf region to Europe.
- It is seen as a counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

### 111. C

#### Five Eyes Alliance

- The Five Eyes Alliance has recently informed the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about the Indian government's possible involvement in the killing of Nijjar, a Canadian citizen.
- In 1946, Five Eyes Alliance was formed between 5 anglophone countries and their security agencies that includes:
  1. The USA (NSA)
  2. The UK (GCHQ)
  3. Australia (ASD)
  4. Canada (CSEC)
  5. New Zealand (GCSB)
- It is a Secret agreements that allow secretive intelligence agencies in in the alliance countries to spy on the world.
- The alliance comprises series of bilateral agreements on surveillance and intelligence-sharing.
- The United Kingdom-United States Communication Intelligence Act (UKUSA Agreement) is the foundation of the Five Eyes alliance.
- Though these arrangements are commonly referred UKUSA agreement, the documents underpinning the Five Eyes alliance are numerous, intricate and secret.
- Intelligence-sharing agreements have now expanded beyond the Five Eyes to include other states such as:
  1. 9 Eyes - The Five Eyes, with the addition of Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Norway.
  2. 14 Eyes - The 9 Eyes, with the addition of Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Sweden.
  3. 41 Eyes - All of the above, with the addition of the allied coalition in Afghanistan.

### 112. D

#### Moscow Format

- Kazan meet makes no headway on equal rights in Afghanistan.
- The Moscow format is one of the several dialogue platforms on Afghanistan, which began before the Taliban takeover of Kabul.
- It consists of Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and India.
- As part of its initiatives to encourage a peaceful conclusion to the violence and instability in Afghanistan, the Russian government initially started it in 2017.
- The key objective of the Moscow format of consultations is to facilitate the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan to establish peace.
- The Kazan Declaration resulted from the fifth regional consultation on Afghanistan, known as the Moscow Format, which took place in Kazan, Russia.
- The Kazan Declaration underscores the call for the Afghan authorities to create conditions that improve the well-being of the Afghan people, deter further migration, and facilitate the return of refugees.

### 113. B

#### A to Zero ASEAN Summit

- The A to Zero ASEAN Summit was recently held at Malaysia to Accelerate Net Zero Pathways across Asia.
- AtoZero, or Accelerate to Net Zero, is a new series of events.
- The events brings together key decision makers and change makers to comprehensively explore pathways, policies and business opportunities that will catalyse an acceleration of net zero pathways.
- The summit was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- India was represented by Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) at the summit.
- IREDA advocated for Research and Innovation to drive Green Hydrogen Growth.
- Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change is responsible for achieving net zero targets in India.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)

- IREDA is a Mini Ratna Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- IREDA is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987.
- It aims to promote, develop and extend financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation.
- It has been notified as a "Public Financial Institution" under section 4 'A' of the Companies Act, 1956 and registered as Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) with Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

#### 114. D

SIMBEX

- It is a bilateral naval exercise between India and Singapore.
- The 30th Edition of the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX), 2023 was held in the southern parts of the South China Sea.

SAMPRITI

- It is a joint army exercise between India and Bangladesh.
- 11th edition (SAMPRITI-XI) of annual joint military exercise was held at Meghalaya, India.

CHAKRAVAT

- CHAKRAVAT is an Annual Joint HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) Exercise.
- The exercise involves multi agency participation.
- The 2023 edition would further synergise efforts at the national level among all stakeholders, as well as witness participation from 8 countries of the Indian Ocean Region.
- The exercise has been conducted by the Indian Army, Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) in rotation since 2016.
- The 2022 edition of the exercise was conducted at Agra by IAF.
- The 2023 edition of the exercise is being hosted by the Indian Navy at Goa in the month of October.

#### 115. C

- Operation Kaveri that brought back several thousand Indian citizens from conflict-torn Sudan.
- Operation Ganga - Is an operation executed by the Indian government to rescue Indians in the war hit Ukraine.
- Operation Devi Shakti - Evacuation of Indians and Afghans and shipment of humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan.

**116. D**

- Hamas - Is an Islamist militant movement and one of the Palestinian territories' two major political parties.
- It governs more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, known for its armed resistance to Israel.
- Hezbollah - Is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon.
- It was founded during the 15-year Lebanese Civil War.
- Fatah - Is the main pillar of the Palestinian national movement within the Palestine Liberation Organization.
- It has been politically crushed and seen sagging popularity in recent years, which has given a boost to Hamas.
- Houthis - They are a large clan belonging to the Zaidi Shia sect, with roots in Yemen.
- The Houthi movement, officially called Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), began in the 1990s against the dictatorship of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

**117. C**

## Bletchley Declaration

- In the AI Safety Summit 2023, India signed the Bletchley Declaration that addresses the risks of AI.
- Bletchley Declaration calls for Responsible AI development by reducing the risks posed by frontier AI.
- India was among the 28 countries that signed the Bletchley Declaration in the AI Safety Summit hosted by the UK government.
- It is the world's first declaration for the responsible AI development.
- The declaration sets out a 2 pronged agenda focused on:
  1. Identifying risks of shared concern, building a scientific understanding of them.
  2. Developing cross-country policies to mitigate these risks.
  3. It encourages transparency and accountability from actors developing frontier AI technology concerning their plans to measure, monitor, and mitigate potentially harmful capabilities.

**118. B**

## Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

- The recently concluded negotiations of IPEF agreement on "fair economy" dealing with corruption would give a big support to India's efforts to bring back proceeds of crime and corruption parked overseas.
- The IPEF was launched in Tokyo in May 2022.
- The 14 members of the IPEF include India, US, Australia, Brunei, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
- They account for 40% of the world economic output and 28% of trade.
- This framework will advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness for our economies.
- The IPEF partners aim to contribute to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region.
- The 4 pillars of the framework includes
  1. Trade
  2. Supply Chains

3. Clean Energy, Decarbonization and Infrastructure
4. Tax and Anti-Corruption
  - India joined 3 pillars except the trade pillar.
  - The IPEF is designed to be flexible that the IPEF partners are not required to join all four pillars.
  - It seeks to address the vulnerabilities and disruption in supply chains would not in any way take away the country's sovereign rights to impose export restrictions on products or change tariffs.
  - Under the IPEF Fair Economy Agreement members have resolved to cooperate for combating corruption and seizing proceeds of crime.
  - The fair economy agreement deals with the following:
    - Exchange of information for tax purposes,
    - Sharing of financial intelligence,
    - Cooperation on investigation, prosecution of transnational anti-corruption cases and
    - Countering the financing of terrorism.
  - The supply chain resilience agreement was signed by IPEF member countries.
  - Through this agreement the countries have committed to work closely to ensure that supply chains of the signatories work smoothly and to help among themselves in case of any disruption or crisis.

**119. A**

- Recently, Leo Varadkar announced his resignation as Ireland's Prime Minister and leader of the Fine Gael party, citing "personal and political" reasons.
- Ireland is an island nation in the North Atlantic Ocean, located in northwest Europe.
- Dublin is the capital of Ireland.
- Ireland is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the West, the Irish Sea to the East and the Celtic Sea (to the South).
- It shares its only land border with Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, to the northeast.
- The highest point in Ireland is Carrauntoohil, which is located in the Macgillycuddy's Reeks mountain range in County Kerry.
- The major rivers in Ireland include the Shannon, Barrow, Suir, Blackwater and Nore. Ireland has significant mineral resources including zinc, lead, silver, gypsum and limestone, with zinc and lead being the most economically important. Hence, option (a) is correct.

**120. D**

- The Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) was set up by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) in 2022 to address urgent and critical global issues pertaining to interlinked crises in food security, energy and finance and to coordinate a global response.
- It is a high-level political leadership that ensures getting ahead of the immense inter-connected challenges and implements a coordinated global response to the ongoing crises.
- The GCRG will help decision-makers to mobilize solutions and develop strategies to help countries address the interlinked crisis. So, statements 1 and 2 are correct.
- India has joined the Champions Group of the Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG). The decision to join the Group reflects India's increasing global leadership and commitment to addressing contemporary global challenges.
- India's participation will further boost the efforts of the United Nations in finding result-oriented solutions to developmental issues that impact the world, particularly developing countries. So, statement 3 is correct.

- The UN Deputy-Secretary-General leads the Steering Committee of the GCRG. Within the Group, three work streams on Food, Energy and Finance will collate data and generate analysis, policy recommendations and solutions to support decision-making and advocacy for consideration of the Steering Committee.
- It is overseen by the Champions Group comprising representatives of Bangladesh, Barbados, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia and Senegal.

**121. A**

Triton Island:

- Triton stands as a key island in the Paracels, positioned equidistantly from Vietnam's coast and China's Hainan island province.
- It is a disputed territory among Vietnam, Taiwan and China.
- Its location in the South China Sea increases its strategic importance due to proximity to shipping lanes and international waters.
- It has recently become a matter of contention as satellite images from the region indicate that China is constructing an airstrip on this island.
- Having gained control of the Paracels from Vietnam in a brief naval conflict in 1974, China's efforts on Triton echo similar development on seven artificial islands in the nearby Spratly group, featuring airstrips, docks and military installations.

**122. B**

- Port of Vukovar, in the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar, is the only Croatian river port on the Danube.
- It was developed during the twentieth century. It is one of the largest ports in Central Europe and the largest river port of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. So, pair 1 is correctly matched.
- Izmail Port is a multidisciplinary port located in the waters of the Kiliia River estuary of the Danube. It is an important transport hub of Ukraine. So, pair 2 is correctly matched.
- Reni Port is a port located on the left bank of the Danube River. It is an important transport hub of Ukraine, where the work of river, sea, road, and rail transport is closely intertwined. So, pair 3 is not correctly matched.
- Port of Constanta is located in Constanta, Romania, on the western coast of the Black Sea, 332 km from the Bosphorus Strait and 157 km from the Sulina Branch, through which the Danube River flows into the sea. So, pair 4 is not correctly matched.

**123. D**

- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), has been re-elected as External Auditor of the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva for a four-year term from 2024 to 2027.
- CAG had held this position in WHO for a four-year term from 2019 to 2023. This is the second major international audit assignment for the CAG this year following his selection for the post of External Auditor (2024-2027) of International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva earlier this year in March 2023.
- Besides WHO, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India is currently the External Auditor of Food and Agriculture Organization (2020-2025), International Atomic Energy Agency (2022-2027), Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (2021-2023) and Inter Parliamentary Union (2020- 2022).
- CAG is a Member of the UN Panel of External Auditors. He is also a member of the Governing Boards of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI).

- CAG chairs the INTOSAI Knowledge Sharing Committee, its Working Group on IT Audit, and the Compliance Audit Sub-Committee.

**124. B**

- Statement 1 is correct: The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue involves the foreign and defense ministers of both India and Australia.
- Statement 2 is correct: The dialogue aims to strengthen strategic and defense cooperation between the two countries.
- Statement 3 is incorrect: The 2+2 dialogue is not necessarily an annual event; the frequency may vary based on the strategic needs and diplomatic priorities of both nations.

India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

- The India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is a high-level diplomatic mechanism that allows the foreign and defense ministers of both countries to meet and discuss strategic issues.
- The dialogue is a part of efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation, especially in the areas of defense and security.
- The discussions cover a range of issues, including regional security, counterterrorism, cyber threats, and maritime security.
- The 2+2 format reflects the growing strategic partnership between India and Australia and underscores the importance of collaboration in addressing shared challenges.

**125. C**

- India-Middle East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC) was announced on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in New Delhi when a memorandum of understanding was signed between the European Union and seven countries, namely India, the US, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), France, Germany, and Italy.
- The IMEC will consist of two corridors- the East Corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the Northern Corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe.
- The corridor will include a shipping route connecting the ports on the west coast of India in Mundra (Gujarat), Kandla (Gujarat), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).
- In the Middle East, at least five ports have been shortlisted to be connected to the Indian ports, which include Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as Dammam and Ras Al Khair ports in Saudi Arabia.
- Thus, except for Syria and Iraq, all the five countries are connected via the ship-to-rail network under the initiative of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. So, Option (c) is correct.

**126. B**

- Lachin Corridor is the Corridor connecting the crisis hit Azerbaijan held Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and the rest of the world.
- The Corridor is subjected to frequent blockade from Azerbaijan in its conflict with Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia.
- Nagorno-Karabakh is recognized globally as part of Azerbaijan.
- Still, it has been controlled by its population of about 120,000 ethnic Armenians since a war that coincided with the breakup of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 90s.
- Azerbaijan recaptured large swathes of Nagorno-Karabakh in a 2020 war and ever since has exerted pressure by restricting access to Armenia through the Lachin corridor.
- Recently, Azerbaijan's government and separatist Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh appeared to strike a deal reopening the Lachin corridor. So, Option (b) is correct.

**127. D**



- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental organization tasked with monitoring countries and organizations suspected of fraudulent financial practices, such as money laundering, funding terrorist groups, or financing weapons of mass destruction.
- If the FATF identifies significant deficiencies in a country's financial dealings or guidelines, the offending country may be placed by the FATF into one of two warning categories.
- The first, informally known as the "grey list".
- The second category, informally known as the "black list".
- According to the FATF, the countries that are currently on the grey list are- Barbados, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Croatia, Gibraltar, Haiti, Jamaica, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, The United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and Yemen.
- Recently, Nicaragua and Pakistan were the two countries to get out of the FATF gray list.
- Thus, no countries given above are listed under the grey list of FATF post-Israel-Palestinian war. So, Option (d) is correct.

**128. D**

- Recently, The first edition of Upnext India 2023 was inaugurated at Apparel House, Gurugram.
- The Upnext India 2023 is a Reverse buyer-seller meet that provides a platform for Indian Apparel manufacturers to meet with Japanese buyers and trading companies.
- In Upnext India 2023, Indian exhibitors showcased garments to prominent Japanese buyers. This event is significant because it leverages the duty-free access granted to India's ready-made garments under the Indo-Japan CEPA, potentially boosting Indian garment exports to Japan.
- Up next India 2023 is organized by Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) and supported by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry under the Market Access Initiative (MAI) Scheme. this trade show include:
- Better utilization of the Indo-Japan CEPA agreement.
- Promote brand India and enhance Japanese investments in this sector.

So, Option (d) is correct.

**129. C**

- Beijing Accord is the agreement negotiated in Beijing to restore relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, signaling at least a temporary reordering of the usual alliances and rivalries.
- Iran and Saudi Arabia had reached an agreement with China playing the role of mediator and facilitator.
- Saudi Arabia and Iran have agreed to revive two key agreements they concluded during an earlier phase of positive bilateral relations.
- One is a 1998 agreement on economic, trade and investment cooperation; the other is an agreement on internal security cooperation, concluded in 2001, which covered organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.
- The two countries also agreed to resume diplomatic relations and exchange of ambassadors.
- These relations were severed by Saudi Arabia in 1988 in the aftermath of violent incidents in Mecca by Iranian pilgrims.
- The importance of the peace accord also lies in this bringing together the leading Shia country, Iran, and the leading Sunni country, Saudi Arabia.
- This bridging of the sectarian fault line could have a major impact on regional equations. So, Option (c) is correct.

**130. A**

- Po River is the longest river in Italy. The river runs approximately 652 km from its source in the Cottian Alps in Piedmont to its mouth at the Adriatic Sea near Venice.
- The river is a crucial transportation artery for Italy and serves as an important source of irrigation for agriculture in the Po Valley.
- Throughout its middle and lower courses, the Po describes many meanders, which have left oxbows (circular lakes). Its drainage basin forms Italy's widest and most fertile plain. So, Option (a) is correct

**131. C**

- India and France commemorated their 25-year strategic partnership by unveiling the "Horizon 2047" roadmap.
- The roadmap focuses on defense, space, nuclear energy, climate change, education, and people-to-people connections.
- It emphasizes collaboration in digital public infrastructure, critical technology, defense cooperation, civil nuclear cooperation, and space cooperation.
- Bilateral trade between India and France reached US\$13.4 billion in goods and US\$6.3 billion in services in 2021. France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India, with over 1,000 French companies operating in the country.
- Indian companies have also invested in France, particularly in IT services, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology.

So, Option (c) is correct.

**132. D**

- C+C5 stands for China plus Central Asia. It's a group made up of China and the five Central Asian republics: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan. Hence, option (d) is correct.
- In April 2023, China convened an online meeting of trade ministers from the C+C5 group. It was the latest in a series of diplomatic engagements by China with the region since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**133. A**

World Governments Summit

- India with the Turkiye and Qatar was the guests of honour at the World Government Summit 2024.
- World Governments Summit in its various activities, explores the agenda of the next generation of governments, focusing on harnessing innovation and technology to solve universal challenges facing humanity.
- It is an initiative of the World Governments Summit Organization.
- World Governments Summit Organization is a global, neutral, non-profit organization dedicated to shaping the future of governments.
- The World Governments Summit, 2024 was recently held in Dubai.
- Since its inception in 2013, the Summit has championed the mission of shaping future governments and creating a better future for humanity.
- In 2024, the World Governments Summit will take place under the theme of 'Shaping Future Governments'.
- It enables governments to identify innovative solutions for future challenges and further rippling to inspire and empower the next generation of governments.

**134. D**

Places in news

- Rafah - Rafah is a Palestinian city in the southern Gaza Strip.
- It is the capital of the Rafah Governorate.
- Sinai - Sinai/Sinai Peninsula is located in Egypt.
- It is the only part of the country that is located in Asia.
- It is between the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the south, and is a land bridge between Asia and Africa.
- Belgorod - It is a city that is the administrative center of Belgorod Oblast, Russia.
- It is located on the Seversky Donets River, north of the border with Ukraine.
- Angostura - The current name of the city is Ciudad Bolívar, Venezuela.
- It along with St. Thomas de Guyana is the capital of Venezuela's southeastern Bolivar State.
- It lies at the spot where the Orinoco River narrows to about 1 mile.

**135. B**

- The historic sea route between India and Sri Lanka has been revived with the launch of a passenger ferry service connecting Nagapattinam (India) and Kankesanthurai (Sri Lanka), approx. 110 Km distance, with the aim of strengthening bilateral relations, promoting tourism, and boosting local trade.
- India-Sri Lanka ferry service has been restarted after 40 years from Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu to Kankesanthurai in Jaffna, Northern Sri Lanka.

**136. B**

- World Local Production Forum is a regular global platform that encourages discussions and partnerships aimed at strengthening sustainable, quality, eco-friendly local production and technology transfer.
- It is a platform created at the initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) with the aim of increasing access to medicines and other health technologies.
- It provides Member States and the global community with a regular platform to shape strategies, galvanize collective action, and foster partnerships on sustainable local production to improve timely and equitable access to quality assured health products.

**137. A**

- Statement 1 is correct. Established in 1951, IOM is part of the United Nations System and stands as the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration
- Statement 2 is incorrect. According to the National Statistical Office's report on "Migration in India, 2020-2021," the migration rate in urban areas was actually higher than in rural areas during the period from July 2020 to June 2023.
- Statement 3 is incorrect. India became an IOM Member State on 18 June 2008. Since then, IOM in India has implemented several projects in various areas, including counter-trafficking, labour migration, and migrant assistance.

**138 B**

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris on 30th November 2015.
- The secretariat of ISA is located in Gurugram, India.
- ISA is an alliance of more than 120 countries which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- Additionally, the membership was opened to all member countries of the United Nations.

- The primary objective of ISA is to collectively work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil-based fuels.

**139. A**

- Recently, the European Parliament adopted the Nature Restoration Law to restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030.
- The Nature Restoration Law: It is seen as a significant step towards restoring Europe's natural habitats, 81% of which are classed as being in poor health. It aims to restore ecosystems, habitats, and species across the EU's land and sea areas to enable the long-term recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature.
- It also seeks to contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and adaptation objectives and meet international commitments.

**140. B**

- The US President was in Belfast to mark 25 years of the Good Friday Agreement, the deal that ended 3 decades of bloodshed.

Good Friday Agreement:

- It was signed on April 10, 1998 at Belfast, the capital city and principal port of Northern Ireland, which was a significant milestone in the history of Ireland.
- It is also known as the Belfast Agreement.
- It ended more than three decades of bloody conflict, known as the 'Troubles'.

The agreement had two parts:

- A 'multi-party agreement' between Northern Ireland's major parties, and;
- An agreement between the governments of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- The economic integration and soft borders between the two Irelands were one of the key aspects.

**141. C**

Both the Statements are correct:

Paris Club

- The Paris Club is an informal group of mostly western creditor countries.
- It grew from a 1956 meeting in Paris between Argentina and its public creditors.
- Its objective is to find sustainable debt-relief solutions for countries unable to repay their bilateral loans.
- The members of the Paris Club are also members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- Members: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.
- Since its inception, the Paris Club has reached 478 agreements with 102 different debtor countries, with a total treated debt of \$614 billion.
- The Paris Club operates on the principles of consensus and solidarity and any agreement reached with the debtor country applies equally to all Paris Club creditors.
- The club used to be a dominant bilateral lender in the last century, but its importance has diminished with the emergence of China as the world's largest bilateral lender.
- In the case of Sri Lanka, China, Japan, and India are the largest bilateral creditors, with Japan being a member of the Paris Club.

**142. A**

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD):

- It is a regional intergovernmental organisation established in 1983.
- It is working to make the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region greener, more inclusive, and climate resilient.
- ICIMOD is based in Kathmandu, Nepal and works in and for its eight regional member countries.
- It works to improve the lives and livelihoods of men, women, and children of the HKH and protect mountain environments and cultures.
- It has officially launched its new Strategy 2030 and is excited to begin implementation in January 2023.
- In line with this strategy, their fifth Medium-Term Action Plan - or MTAP V - details how they will deliver on their commitments.

**143. D**

The Article IV Consultations:

- An Article IV Consultation is a regular discussion held between the IMF and its member countries, typically once a year.
- It's essentially a health check of the country's economy, aiming to:
- Assess the overall economic situation
- Identify potential risks and vulnerabilities and
- Provide policy advice

**144. A**

Initiative for Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)

- The iCET was launched by India and the United States in May 2022.
- Aim: To position the two countries as trusted technology partners by building technology value chains and supporting the co-development and co-production of items.
- It also aims to address regulatory restrictions, export controls and mobility barriers through a standing mechanism
- Areas of cooperation: It aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in critical and emerging technologies such as Quantum computing, Semiconductors, 5G and 6G wireless infrastructure, and Civilian space projects such as lunar exploration.

**145. C**

- Recently, India is close to signing an agreement with the United States under which the process for the return of stolen antiquities will be hugely simplified.
- Instead of India having to prove that the item in question belongs to it, the US will automatically offer it for return after adopting the Cultural Property Agreement (CPA).
- The United States has 25 active bilateral cultural property agreements, including with Afghanistan, China, Cambodia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan and Turkey.
- The US and India are continuing negotiations for a Cultural Property Agreement which would help to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property from India and enhance cooperation on the protection and lawful exchange of cultural property.
- UNESCO convention of 1970 encourages signatory parties to voluntarily return those artifacts belonging to other countries that have been taken there because of colonial plunder or because of post-colonial misappropriation like smuggling, theft etc.

- The return and restitution of cultural property is central to the Convention and its duty is not only to remember but to fundamentally safeguard the identity of peoples and promote peaceful societies whereby the spirit of solidarity will be strengthened.
- Thus, the 1970 Convention is fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

**146. B**

Established on July 28, 2020, the Lublin Triangle is a regional alliance of three European countries - Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine - for strengthening mutual military, cultural, economic and political cooperation and supporting Ukraine's integration into the European Union and NATO.

**147. C**

- Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America have announced a security alliance for partnership in undersea military systems.
- The three countries announced the creation of an enhanced trilateral security partnership called AUKUS (an acronym for Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.).
- AUKUS is intended to strengthen the ability of each government to support security and defense interests, building on longstanding and ongoing bilateral ties.
- It will promote deeper information sharing and technology sharing and foster deeper integration of security and defense-related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains. So, Option (c) is correct.

**148. A**

- Summit for Democracy' was an initiative of the US President (not the United Nations General Assembly) and hosted in December 2021.
- Following this Summit, a "Year of Action" was proposed with events and dialogues on themes related to Democracy.
- The Summit also developed two platforms - 'Focal Groups' and 'Democracy Cohorts' to facilitate participation in the Year of Action.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) hosted the 3rd International Conference on the theme 'Inclusive Elections and Elections Integrity' in a virtual format.
- It is leading the Cohort on Elections Integrity, which was established as a follow-up to the 'Summit for Democracy' held virtually in December 2021.

**149. C**

- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a multi stakeholder platform bringing together representatives from various groups, considering all to be at par to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet.
- India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) brings together all stakeholders in the Global Internet governance ecosystem, including government, industry, civil society, academia - as equal participants of the larger Internet Governance discourse. So, Statement 1 is correct.
- The India Internet Governance Forum is an initiative associated with the UN Internet Governance Forum (UN IGF).
- The IGF facilitates a common understanding of how to maximise Internet opportunities and address risks and challenges that may arise.
- The Indian chapter of the United Nations IGF, called India IGF or IIGF, was created in 2021, and is supported by a 14-member multi-stakeholder Committee(s) representing Govern- ment, Civil Society, Industries, Technical community, Think Tanks, Industry Associations, etc
- After successfully convening the first two edition of the IIGF in 2021 and 2022, the third edition of the IIGF is being conducted under the overarching theme "Moving Forward - Calibrating Bharat's Digital Agenda". So, Statements 2 and 3 are correct.

**150. B**

- The US and 10 other nations issued the Anti-Spyware Declaration, which is the first-ever declaration that recognizes the threat posed by the misuse of commercial spyware.
- Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States all recognize the threat posed by the misuse of commercial spyware and the need for strict domestic and international controls on the proliferation and use of spyware technology through the Anti-Spyware Declaration. So, Statements 1 and 2 are correct.
- India is not a part of the Anti-Spyware Declarations. Due to the fact that many countries' intelligence and law enforcement agencies require such tools to combat terrorism, organized crime, and drug lords, nations have been unwilling to take a firm stance against spyware up until now. So, Statement 3 is not correct.



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