

General Studies

Current Affair Test (February-2024)

1. Answer: (d)

Option d is correct.

- Recently, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023 was released by Transparency International.

About

- Transparency International is a global civil society organisation founded in 1993 and is based in Berlin, Germany.
- It ranks 180 countries and territories around the globe by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.

The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

2. Answer: (c)

Context: The President of India approved conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2023

Statement 1 and 2 are not correct: Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2023:

- These awards are given to a person for a meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person.
- The award is given in three categories, namely:
- Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak;
- Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak;
- Jeevan Raksha Padak;
- Persons of all walks of life are eligible for these awards.

Statement 3 is correct; The award can also be conferred posthumously.

The decoration of the award (medal, certificate and lump sum monetary allowance) is presented to the awardees in due course by the respective Union Ministries/Organizations/State Government.

3. Answer: (d)

In News : Tamil Nadu government handed over the 'Kottai Ameer Communal Harmony Award for 2024' to Mohammed Zubair (co-founder of Alt News) for peace efforts.

- The Kottai Ameer Communal Harmony Award: It was instituted by the Tamil Nadu government in 2000 to recognize outstanding services in building harmony.
- It is presented by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during the Republic Day Celebration every year.
- It is presented to a person belonging to Tamil Nadu for the outstanding services rendered to promote Communal Harmony.

4. Answer: (a)

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international

organization that was founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, a German economist.

- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and is known for its annual meeting in Davos, where global leaders from various sectors gather to discuss and collaborate on pressing economic and social issues.
- Some major reports published by WEF are:
- Fostering Effective Energy Transition report
- Global Competitiveness Report.
- Global Gender Gap Report.
- Global Risk Report.
- Future of Jobs Report.

5. Answer: (d)

Sixth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games:

- Venue: Four cities of Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Madurai, Trichy and Coimbatore from 19th to 31st January 2024.
 - Logo: Statue of Thiruvalluvar
 - Mascot: 'Veera Mangai' (brave woman) Velu Nachiyar
 - Rani Velu Nachiyar, the princess of Ramanathapuram was the first queen to fight against the British colonial power for freedom in India. She is known by Tamils as Veeramangai.
 - New developments:
 - Archery, athletics, badminton, and squash have been introduced in this edition.
- Silambam, a traditional sport of Tamil Nadu, is being introduced as a demo sport.

6. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is correct and Statement 2 is not correct.

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023, titled 'Beyond Basics', was released recently by Pratham NGO.
- ASER is a nationwide citizen-led household survey that provides a snapshot of the status of children's schooling and learning in rural India.
- The 2023 survey was conducted in 28 districts across 26 states, reaching a total of 34,745 youth in the age group 14-18 years.

Major Findings:

The report states that about 25% of this age group still cannot read a standard II-level text fluently in their regional language.

It stated that female students are less likely to be enrolled in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) stream (28.1%) than males (36.3%).

Close to 90% of all youth have a smartphone in the household and a majority of them use it for entertainment purposes with little knowledge about online safety.

7. Answer: (a)

World Economic Forum (WEF):

- It serves as a platform for global leaders to discuss and address pressing issues, fostering a spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility.
- It provides a global, impartial and not-for-profit platform for meaningful connection between stakeholders to establish trust, and build initiatives for cooperation and progress.

Reports by WEF:

- Global Gender Gap Report: It assesses the gender gap in various countries. The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes.
- In the 2022 report, India was ranked 135 out of 146 countries.
- The Global Risks Report: It explores some of the most severe risks we may face over the next decade, against a backdrop of rapid technological change, economic uncertainty, a warming planet and conflict.
- As cooperation comes under pressure, weakened economies and societies may only require the smallest shock to edge past the tipping point of resilience.
- Other reports include Global Competitiveness Report (GCR), Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, and Global Information Technology Report.

However, the Global Inequality Crisis Report is released by Oxfam International, and the Global Financial Stability Report is released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

8. Answer: (c)

Statement 1 is correct:

- Henley Passport Index: It is the original, authoritative ranking of all the world's passports.
- It is based on the visa free entry of passport holders for the number of destinations.
- It is the only one of its kind based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and enhanced by Henley & Partners' research team.

Statement 2 is correct:

- Indian passport ranked 80th spot in the Index of 2024, with access to 62 destinations.

It shares its rank with Uzbekistan.

9. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: Agave sisalana, commonly known as Sisal or Agave of Agavaceae family, are perennial succulents that grow best in hot and dry areas.

- Sisal is a hard fibre extracted from the leaves of sisal plants.

Statement 2 is correct: Uses: The main use of sisal fibre is for manufacturing of ropes and twines and other forms of cordage. Considerable amounts of fibre are also utilized for padding and upholstery and for mats as well as for bags and sacking.

10. Answer: (c)

The World Bank said, in its 'Global Economic Prospects' report for 2024, that global growth in 2024 is set to slow for a third year in a row, prolonging poverty and debilitating debt levels in many developing countries.

- Global GDP is likely to grow 2.4% in 2024, and it compares to 2.6% in 2023, 3.0% in 2022 and 6.2% in 2021. It forecasts 2025 global growth slightly higher at 2.7%.

Period between 2020-2024 saw weaker growth, in comparison to the periods of Global Financial Crisis (2008-2009), and the Asian Financial Crisis (late 1990).

11. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct and Statement 2 is not correct.

What is Geographical Indication (GI)?

- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- Geographical indications are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.

GI Tags and India

- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- The Act is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and TradeMarks- who is the Registrar of Geographical Indications.

The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years.

12. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct.

Similipal Kai chutney

- The chutney is made with red weaver ants, found in the forests of Mayurbhanj, including in the Similipal forests – Asia's second-largest biosphere.
- It is rich in medicinal and nutritional value, the chutney is believed to be a good source of nutrients like protein, calcium, zinc, vitamin B-12, iron, magnesium, potassium, etc.

Recently the product has got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

13. Answer: (d)

- Global Risk Report is released by the World Economic Forum (WEF)
- Global Financial Stability Report is released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- World Economic Outlook is released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

14. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct: E Ink displays are a special type of screen technology often used in e-readers like the Amazon Kindle.

- The technology was originally developed in the 1990s at MIT and is now owned by E Ink Corporation.
- Statement 2 is not correct: Unlike LCD and LED displays that use a backlight, E Ink displays reflect light – just like paper.
- This makes them easier on the eyes for long reading sessions.

15. Answer: (b)**E-cigarettes:**

- E-cigarettes are electronic devices designed to simulate the act of smoking tobacco cigarettes.
- They are also called “e-cigs,” “vapes,” “e-hookahs,” “vape pens,” and “Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).”
- Contain a heating element that vaporizes a liquid (e-liquid) which typically includes nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals.
- Come in various forms, including pens, mods, tanks, and pod systems.
- Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol produced by an e-cigarette.

16. Answer: (b)

- Pairs 1 and 4 are not correct.
- ISRO Centres & Units

17. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The US state of Alabama carried out the execution of a convicted murderer using nitrogen gas.

- In a nitrogen gas execution, the individual is confined within a sealed chamber.
- Nitrogen gas is introduced into the chamber, gradually replacing the oxygen.
- An inmate is deprived of oxygen until he/she breathes only nitrogen, causing asphyxiation.
- Lethal injection involves injecting drugs that sedate and kill the inmate, and has been the preferred method.

Statement 2 is not correct: Capital punishment is legal in India, and it is retained for certain types of heinous crimes.

- It is prescribed under the Indian Penal Code and other special laws.

18. Answer: (b)

You would be able to maintain your position relative to the Earth and the Sun without using much fuel.

Lagrange point 1:

- Lagrange points are named in honor of Italian-French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange.
- L1 stands for the first Lagrangian point — there are five such points, L1 to L5, associated with the motion of one astronomical body around another one, in Aditya missions’s case, Earth and the Sun.
- Of the five Lagrange points, three are unstable and two are stable. The unstable Lagrange points - labeled L1, L2 and L3 - lie along the line connecting the two large masses. The stable Lagrange points - L4 and L5 - form the apex of two equilateral triangles that have the large masses at their vertices. L4 leads the orbit of earth and L5 follows.

If one is at L1, then he would be able to maintain his position with minimal fuel usage, but would

need to perform regular course and attitude corrections due to the instability of L1.

- The L1 and L2 points are unstable on a time scale of approximately 23 days, which requires satellites orbiting these positions to undergo regular course and attitude corrections.
- He would not feel a stronger gravitational pull from the Sun, and he would always see the sunlit part of the Earth, as seen from the below figure.

19. Answer: (b)

The Central government has approved a new treatment regimen for leprosy, aiming to stop its transmission at the sub-national level by 2027.

Three-drug regimen:

- The WHO has recommended this treatment regimen in 2015.
- It consists of three drugs — dapsone, rifampicin and clofazimine. The combination is referred to as MDT (multidrug therapy). MDT kills the pathogen and cures the patient.
- This regimen is known as ‘Uniform MDT’, where a single three-pack kit can be given to all leprosy patients. This measure facilitates ease of administration.
- The duration of treatment is six months for PB and 12 months for MB cases.

20. Answer: (b)

Mars Ingenuity Helicopter: It is a small robotic chopper and the first aircraft to make a powered, controlled flight sent to Mars on an experimental basis.

- It has been called a ‘Wright Brothers moment’.
- It flies in Mars’ thin atmosphere, which isn’t conducive for flying.
- It operates autonomously.
- It uses solar power to charge its batteries and

relies on internal heaters to maintain operational temperatures during the cold Martian nights.

- It paves the way for future aerial explorers at Mars and, potentially, other space destinations.

21. Answer: (b)

The Mpemba effect is named after Tanzanian student Erasto Mpemba, who brought attention to this counterintuitive phenomenon in 1969.

- Aristotle, Francis Bacon, and René Descartes had noticed the effect centuries earlier.
- The effect is that hot water can freeze faster than cold water in similar conditions.

22. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not Correct and Statements 2 is correct.

What is Scrub typhus?

- It is an infectious disease caused by bacteria called *Orientia tsutsugamushi* and transmitted through infected mites (chiggers).
- Symptoms: It include fever, headache, body ache and sometimes a rash.
- In severe cases, the infection can lead to respiratory distress, brain and lung inflammation, kidney failure and multi-organ failure, ultimately resulting in death.
- Causes: Mites carrying the disease are generally found in the bush, jungle and paddy areas. Several factors, like exposure to farming, owning domestic animals, outdoor activities and sanitation, affect its prevalence.
- Diagnosis: Elisa test is used to diagnose the disease.

23. Answer: (a)

The World Economic Forum launched the AI Governance Alliance in 2023.

- It is a dedicated initiative focused on responsible generative artificial intelligence (AI).
- It is a union of industry leaders, governments, academic institutions, and civil society organizations to champion responsible global design and release of transparent and inclusive AI systems.

24. Answer: (b)

Recently, Japan became the fifth country in history to reach the moon when one of its spacecraft without astronauts successfully made a soft landing on the lunar surface recently.

- Japan follows the United States, the Soviet Union, China and India in reaching the moon.
- Japan's moon lander, Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM), was launched as planned and that data was being transmitted back to the earth.

Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM):

- SLIM is a lightweight spacecraft about the size of a passenger vehicle which was aiming to hit a very small target.
- While most previous probes have used landing zones about 10 kilometers (six miles) wide, SLIM was aiming at a target of just 100 meters (330 feet).

- The SLIM, equipped with a pad each on its five legs to cushion impact, was aiming to land near the Shioli crater, near a region covered in volcanic rock.

25. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct: Quantum technology is a rapidly advancing field that leverages the principles of quantum mechanics to develop new technologies with unprecedented capabilities.

- Quantum mechanics is the branch of physics that studies the behavior of particles at the quantum level, where classical physics no longer applies.
- Quantum technology harnesses the unique properties of quantum systems, such as superposition and entanglement, to perform tasks that were previously thought impossible or significantly enhance existing capabilities

26. Answer: (b)

About the first graphene centre:

- The first graphene centre in the country, India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG), has been established at Makers Village Kochi (Kerala).
- It was jointly established by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Union Government and Government of Kerala along with Tata Steel Ltd.
- Aim: To foster research and development, product innovation and capacity building in the area of graphene and 2D material systems.

27. Answer: (c)

Recently, China launched the Einstein Probe (EP), a new astronomical satellite, for the observation of cosmic phenomena like black holes, colliding neutron stars, and exploding stars.

About

- The probe is named after Einstein for his theory of general relativity on black holes and gravitational waves.
- The probe will be used to search for X-ray signals accompanying gravitational wave events around the celestial bodies and to pinpoint them.
- The Einstein Probe was launched using the "Long March-2C carrier rocket".
- The satellite is shaped like a lotus in full bloom. The lotus-inspired design incorporates 12 'petals' housing wide-field X-ray telescopes (WXT) and two 'stamens' containing follow-up X-ray telescopes (FXT).

International Collaboration

Einstein Probe is a collaboration led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) with the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics (MPE), Germany.

28. Answer: (c)

Argentina, Bolivia and Chile

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol

Li and atomic number 3. It is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal.

- Like all alkali metals, lithium is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in vacuum, inert atmosphere, or inert liquid such as purified kerosene or mineral oil.
- Chile, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and China contain most of the reserves discovered so far globally.
- Argentina, Bolivia and Chile are known as the 'Lithium Triangle' and contain 54% of the world's Lithium reserves.

29. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not correct and statement 2 is correct.

Advantages of LEDs

- Long Lifespan: LED bulbs can last up to 25,000 hours or more, which means less frequent replacements and reduced maintenance costs.
- LEDs have an extremely long lifespan relative to every other lighting technology (including fluorescent lights).
- Energy Efficiency: They convert a higher percentage of electrical energy into light, reducing energy waste and lowering electricity bills.
- LEDs can produce up to 300 lumen (amount of visible light emitted per second) versus incandescent bulbs' 16 lumen and fluorescent lamps' 70 lumen.

30. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: A stamp duty is essentially a government tax, which is levied to register documents, like an agreement or transaction paper between two or more parties, with the registrar.

- Duty to be Paid: Usually, the amount specified is fixed based on the document's nature or is charged at a certain percentage of the agreement value stated in the document.

Statement 3 is not correct: Legality: Stamp duties are accepted as valid evidence in a court of law.

- They are levied by the Centre but appropriated by the concerned states within their territories under Article 268 of the Constitution.

31. Answer: (d)

Market Infrastructure Institutions

- **What are the MIIs?**
 - ♦ Stock exchanges, depositories and clearing houses are all Market Infrastructure Institutions and constitute a key part of the nation's vital economic infrastructure.

Specific institutions in India that qualify as MIIs:

- ♦ Among stock exchanges:
 - ♦ The SEBI lists seven, including the BSE, the NSE, the Multi Commodity Exchange of India and the Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India. Hence option 1 is correct.
- **There are two depositories:**
 - ♦ Charged with the safekeeping of securities and

enabling their trading and transfer — that are tagged MIIs:

- ♦ The Central Depository Services Ltd. and the National Securities Depository Ltd. Hence option 2 is correct.

- **Clearing houses:**

- ♦ The regulator also lists seven clearing houses including the Multi Commodity Exchange Clearing Corporation. Hence option 3 is correct.

Clearing houses, for their part, help validate and finalise securities trades and ensure that both buyers and sellers honour their obligations.

32. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct.

Context

- India is expected to become the third-largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$5 trillion in the next three years.

India's growth trajectory

- India was the 10th largest economy in the world, with a GDP of \$1.9 trillion at current market prices, ten years ago.
- Currently India is the 5th largest economy with a GDP of \$3.7 trillion.
- India is expected to touch \$7 trillion by 2030 on the back of continued reforms.
- The government has set a goal of becoming a 'developed country' by 2047.

33. Answer: (d)

In News: Recently, the Purple Revolution was highlighted through Lavender Cultivation in Jammu & Kashmir in the Tableau of Republic Day (2024).

Statement 1 is not correct:

- The Purple Revolution (or Lavender Revolution): It refers to the significant growth of lavender cultivation in Jammu & Kashmir, India.
- This initiative is part of the Aroma Mission launched by the Union Ministry of Science & Technology.
- It aims to promote the indigenous aromatic crop-based agro economy. Statement 2 is not correct.
- It aims to increase the income of the farmers and promote lavender cultivation on a commercial scale.
- It offers attractive startup avenues and contributes to overall growth in the region.

34. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: Unicorn is a term used in the venture capital industry to describe a privately held startup company with a value of over \$1 billion.

- The term was coined to represent the rarity and uniqueness of such companies, much like the mythical creature.
- A decacorn is a company that has attained a valuation of more than \$ 10 Bn.

Statement 2 is correct: Bengaluru is India's unicorn capital with the largest number of unicorn headquarters followed by Delhi (NCR) and Mumbai.

35. Answer: (c)

About the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT):

- Private entity designs, builds, operates, and maintains the infrastructure asset for a specified concession period (usually 20-30 years).
- Revenue generated from the asset (tolls, user fees, etc.) belongs to the private entity during the concession period.
- After the concession period, the asset is transferred back to the government. Advantages:
- Distributes risks and responsibilities between the government and private sector.
- Leverages private sector efficiency and expertise.
- Reduces upfront government financial burden.
- **Challenges:**
 - ◆ Ensuring affordability of services to the public.
 - ◆ Potential for disputes over contract terms and performance.
 - ◆ Managing risks like traffic or revenue shortfalls.

36. Answer: (d)

Both the Statements are not correct.

About Punganur cows

- Native species: The Punganur is an indigenous breed native to the Punganur, taluka of Chittoor district in the Rayalaseema region of southern Andhra Pradesh.
- Body: They are a unique dwarf breed, considered the shortest humped cattle in the world.
- Color: Punganur cows can be white or gray, or of shades of light or dark brown.
- Horns: They have small, crescent-shaped horns of 10-15 cm length, which often curve backward and forward in male cattle and lateral and forward in female cattle of the breed. Females have slightly longer horns than the stumpier ones in males.

37. Answer: (c)

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38. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is not correct.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI)

- FPI consists of securities and other financial assets held by investors in another country.
- It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of a company's assets and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
- FPI holdings can include stocks, ADRs, GDRs, bonds, mutual funds, and exchange traded funds.
- It is different from Foreign direct investment (FDI), which is an ownership stake in a foreign company or project made by an investor, company, or government from another country.

39. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct: India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world.

- Gram is the most dominant pulse having a share of around 40 percent in the total production followed by Tur/Arhar at 15 to 20 percent and Urad/Black Matpe and Moong at around 8-10 percent each.
- The main regions with high productivity are Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal delta region, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, coastal and eastern Karnataka and some parts of Maharashtra.

40. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is not correct.

Indian Tea Industry

- India is the 2nd largest tea producer and largest black tea producer.
- Indian teas are exported to various destinations like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia etc. and is the 4th largest tea exporter in the World.
- The Indian tea Industry is employing 1.16 million workers directly and an equal number of people are associated with it indirectly.
- Assam grows about 55% of the teas produced in India. India's tea production has increased by 39% in 2022 from 2008.

41. Answer: (a)

In order to garner income for the government to finance social projects, tax is collected from individuals and corporations via direct tax and indirect tax.

- Direct tax is the tax that is paid directly to the government by the person or company on whom it is levied.
- Income tax, wealth tax, corporation tax, and property tax are some examples of direct tax.
- Indirect taxes are those that are collected by intermediaries from individuals and corporations who bear the burden of the tax and passed on to the government.
- Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an example of indirect tax.
- Custom Duty and Excise duty comes under Indirect Tax.

42. Answer: (b)

Group insolvency mechanism:

- Group insolvency mechanism is a legal framework designed to handle insolvency scenarios where multiple companies within a corporate group are financially distressed.
- It focuses on group-wide restructuring rather than individual company recovery.
- This framework addresses the complex interdependencies between these companies, preventing cascading failures and ensuring a more comprehensive and efficient resolution process.

Key Features:

- Consolidation of proceedings: Insolvency proceedings for different group companies can be consolidated or coordinated, ensuring efficiency and preventing contradictory outcomes.
- Cross-border aspects: The framework may address situations where group companies operate across different jurisdictions, facilitating international cooperation and asset tracing.
- Special administrators: Dedicated professionals with expertise in group structures may be appointed to oversee the insolvency process.

43. Answer: (c)

Both the Statements are correct. Conditions Required for Tea Production

- The tea plant grows well in tropical and subtropical climates. Tea bushes require a warm and moist frost-free climate all through the year.
- Soil: It requires deep and fertile well-drained soil, rich in humus and organic matter.
- Temperature: The average annual temperature for tea plants to grow well is in the range of 15-23°C.
- Precipitation: The rainfall needed is between 150-200 cm. Frequent showers evenly distributed over the year ensure continuous growth of tender leaves.
- Major tea producing states are Assam, hills of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Apart from these, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Tripura are also tea-producing states in the country.

44. Answer: (d)

In News : Global hedge funds sold more than bought equities for a third consecutive week .

- Hedge funds pool money from investors and invest in securities or other types of investments with the goal of getting positive returns.
- They are not regulated as heavily as mutual funds and generally have more leeway than mutual funds to pursue investments and strategies that may increase the risk of investment losses.

45. Answer: (c)

Statement 1 is correct:

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI): It was constituted as a non-statutory body through a resolution of the Government of India, and established as a statutory body in the year 1992 and the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- Functions: To protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Statement 2 is correct:

- Financial Markets Division, under the Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance) is primarily responsible for policy issues related to the development of the securities markets and matters incidental thereto.
- The division looks after the administrative matters of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT).

46. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct:

- First Advance Estimates (FAE): These are the GDP data released before the Union Budget is presented that provide the first complete picture of economic growth.
- These are presented at the end of the first week of January every year, and are only the first estimates of growth for that financial year, introduced in 2016-17.

Statement 2 is not correct:

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) will release the Second Advance Estimates by the end of February and the Provisional Estimates by the end of May.
- MoSPI will release the First, Second, and Third Revised Estimates of this year's GDP before settling on the final number, which is called the 'Actuals'.
- The GDP estimates continue to be revised as more and better data become available — and in the coming three years.

47. Answer: (b)

- Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure of the economic value generated by a sector, industry, or entity within a specific period.
- GVA represents the difference between the value of goods and services produced by an economic unit and the cost of inputs and raw materials used in the production process.

48. Answer: (a)

Nominal GDP vs Real GDP vs Potential GDP:

Nominal GDP:

- The total market value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a given year, measured in current prices.

- Example: If India produces \$2 trillion worth of goods and services in 2024, its nominal GDP is \$2 trillion.

Real GDP:

- Nominal GDP adjusted for inflation to reflect the actual volume of goods and services produced.
- Example: If inflation in 2024 is 5%, then India's real GDP would be approximately \$1.9 trillion and not \$2 trillion.

Potential GDP:

- The maximum sustainable output an economy can achieve with its current capital, labor, and technology, assuming full employment and efficiency.
- Example: If India's potential GDP is \$2.5 trillion in 2024, then it has a "GDP gap" of \$0.6 trillion.

49. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is incorrect.

Palm Oil

- It's an edible vegetable oil that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees, having the scientific name *Elaeis guineensis*.
- The oil palm tree is native to West and Central Africa. It also grows extensively in Malaysia and Indonesia.
- India is the largest importer of palm oil in Asia. India buys palm oil mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

50. Answer: (d)

In trade agreements, the negative listing approach is a method for defining market access commitments.

- Instead of listing sectors and sub-sectors where both countries agree to liberalize trade, only those sectors/sub-sectors with limitations or exclusions are explicitly listed under the negative list.
- All other sectors are assumed to be open to trade with the agreed-upon terms.

51. Answer: (c)

Article IV of the IMF's Articles of Agreement:

- The IMF holds bilateral discussions with members, usually every year.
- After collecting economic and financial information, the IMF discusses economic developments and policies with the officials of the country and it presents a report based on these findings.

52. Answer: (a)

In News : Startups have been planning for Reverse Flipping

- Reverse flipping' is used in business circles.
- It is a term used to describe the trend of overseas start-ups shifting their domicile to India and listing on Indian stock exchanges.
- Here, start-ups that once relocated their holding companies outside India are now considering a strategic move back to India,

The Economic Survey of 2022-23 acknowledged the

concept of reverse flipping and has listed possible measures such as simplifying the processes for tax holidays, taxation of ESOPs, capital flows and reducing layers of tax to accelerate the reverse flipping process.

53. Answer: (d)

About the Credit Information Companies (CICs):

- CICs are companies that collect public data, credit transactions and payment histories of individuals and companies regarding loans, credit cards, among others.
- Based on the collected data, CICs form a credit report and generate a score.
- Banks, non-banking financial institutions refer to the CIC's report and score to decide borrowers' creditworthiness before granting a loan or issuing a credit card.
- The credit score ranges between 350 to 850 and anything above 750 is considered as a good score.
- Licensed by: The Reserve Bank of India
- Governed by: The Credit Information Companies Regulation Act, 2005 and various other rules and regulations issued by the Reserve Bank of India.
- CICs are not allowed to act as lenders themselves. Their role is solely to gather and provide credit information to facilitate informed lending decisions by financial institutions.

54. Answer: (c)

Statement 1 is correct:

- Coal Controller Organisation (CCO): It is a subordinate Office of the Ministry of Coal, and Nodal Office for collection, compilation and dissemination of Coal Statistics in Government of India.
- It has offices in Kolkata and New Delhi, and field offices in Dhanbad, Ranchi, Bilaspur, Nagpur, Sambalpur and Kothagudem.
- The Kolkata office also looks after the coal mines under the NEC command area and renders assistance to Coal Controllers on various issues.

Statement 2 is correct:

• Functions of CCO:

- ♦ To issue directives for the purpose of declaration and maintenance of grades of coal of a seam mined in a colliery;
- ♦ To act as the appellate authority in case of dispute between consumers and owner arising out of declaration of grade of coal;
- Approval of Mining Plan and Mine Closure Plan, etc.

55. Answer: (d)

About coal production in India:

- The coal production in India has shot up to over 664 million tonnes during the financial year 2023- 24.
- It is a robust 12.29 percent increase over the corresponding figure of over 591 million tonnes for the same period of the previous year.

- The government aims to further increase production to reach 1 billion million tonnes by 2030.
- At the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the UNFCCC in November 2021, India announced that India will achieve the target of net zero emissions by 2070. But, it still relies heavily on coal to meet its energy demand.

56. Answer: (c)

- Coal production in India is expected to continue increasing in the near future. However, the long-term outlook for coal remains uncertain, with growing emphasis on clean energy transition and climate change mitigation.

About coal production in India:

- India has rich deposits of coal in the world. Total estimated reserves of coal as on 01-04-2022 were 361.41 billion tonnes.
- The top three states with highest coal reserves in India are Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, which accounts for approximately 69% of the total coal reserves in the country.
- India is the second largest producer and consumer of coal globally after China, surpassing the USA in 2022.
- Coal deposits in India generally contain high levels of ash (35-50%).

57. Answer: (d)

- Statement 1 is not correct: Tax-to-GDP ratio represents the size of a country's tax kitty relative to its GDP. It is a representation of the size of the government's tax revenue expressed as a percentage of the GDP. The higher the tax to GDP ratio the better the financial position the country will be in. The ratio represents that the government is able to finance its expenditure. A higher tax to GDP ratio means that the government is able to cast its fiscal net wide. It reduces a government's dependence on borrowings.
- Statement 2 is not correct: Developed nations typically have higher tax-to-GDP ratios than developing nations.

58. Answer: (b)

- Option 1 is not correct: Provisioning Coverage Ratio (PCR) is essentially the ratio of provisioning to gross non-performing assets and indicates the extent of funds a bank has kept aside to cover loan losses. Thus, the provisioning coverage ratio is the percentage of bad assets that the bank has to provide for (keep the money) from their own funds.
- Option 2 is correct: Public sector banks' provision coverage ratio -- which measures the provisioning for bad loans -- has gone up from less than 50 per cent in 2015 to 66.85 per cent as of September 2018, reflecting improvement in their financial health. Higher the PCR, lower is the unexposed part of the bad debts.

59. Answer: (b)

Immediate Step Taken by Government

- Pledging gold holdings to shore up forex reserves: With the foreign exchange reserves going below the critical \$1-billion mark, the Government decided to sell confiscated gold.
- Nearly 47 tonnes of gold was shipped off to destinations abroad in four tranches.
- This helped raise about \$400 million for the government.
- The entire operation, cloaked in secrecy, was conducted by State Bank of India.
- Devaluation of the Indian Rupee: To address the balance of payments crisis and improve export competitiveness, the government devalued the Indian rupee by about 20% against major foreign currencies. Hence, Statement 1 is not correct.

Reforms by Government of India

- Privatization: The government started privatizing state-owned enterprises to improve efficiency and competitiveness.
- This was a significant departure from the previous policy of state control in various sectors.
- Fiscal Reforms: Efforts were made to address the fiscal deficit by reducing government expenditure and increasing revenue generation.

60. Answer: (c)

About aromatic plants:

- Successful introduction of aromatic plants has been seen in Nabarangpur and Koraput districts of Odisha with the help of the Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) in Lucknow.
- The districts has recently introduced different aromatic plants such as,
 - ♦ menthol mint (the CIM Unnati variety),
 - ♦ rosemary (Hariyali variety),
 - ♦ patchouli (CIM Samarth),
 - ♦ damask roses (Ranisahiba),
 - ♦ chamomile, and
 - ♦ geraniums (CIM-Bharat).
- Aromatic plants are those that contain aromatic compounds, which are basically essential oils.
- These essential oils are odorous, volatile at room temperature, hydrophobic and highly concentrated compounds.
- They can be obtained from flowers, buds, seeds, leaves, twigs, bark, wood, fruits and roots.

61. Answer: (a)

Statement 1 is correct:

- Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs): These are government securities denominated in grams of gold, and are substitutes for holding physical gold.
- It was launched in November 2015.
- Objective: To reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings (to purchase of gold) into financial savings.

Statement 2 is not correct:

- Issuance: The Gold Bonds are issued as Government of India Stock under the Government Securities (GS) Act, 2006.
- These are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government of India.

62. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct.

News

- The US and eight other Western countries have suspended funding for the UNRWA.
- These countries together provided more than half of UNRWA's 2022 budget.

What is UNRWA?

- UNRWA stands for UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East.
- It was founded in 1949 after the Arab-Israeli war (1948).
- The UN agency operates in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as well as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.
- Currently, around 5.9 million Palestine refugees — most of them are descendants of original refugees — access the agency's services.
- UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, mostly from government donors.

63. Answer: (c)

Both the Statements are correct.

News: The military regimes in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger announced their immediate withdrawal from the West African bloc ECOWAS.

What is ECOWAS?

- It is a regional group established in 1975 through the Lagos Treaty – with a mandate of promoting economic integration among its members.
- Members: Earlier it had 15 members i.e. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo. Now there are only 12 members.

Headquarters: Abuja, Nigeria.

ECOWAS aims to have a single common currency and create a single, large trading bloc in areas of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, financial issues, and social and cultural matters.

64. Answer: (d)

Both the statements are not correct.

- WHO is the United Nations agency that connects nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health.
- It was founded in 1948.
- Headquarters: Geneva Switzerland.

65. Answer: (a)

The Baltic Sea is an arm of the North Atlantic Ocean. It is bound by the Scandinavian Peninsula, the mainland of Northern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Europe, and the Danish islands.

- Surrounded by countries: Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Finland and Sweden.

66. Answer: (d)

- After World War II, Germany was divided into zones controlled by the Allied powers (United States, United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union). Berlin, the capital, was also divided into sectors. In 1948, the Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin in an attempt to force the Allies out of the city. In response to the blockade, the Western Allies organized the Berlin Airlift, a massive humanitarian effort to supply West Berlin with food, fuel, and other essentials by air. By the end of the blockade, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had been established, partially in response to Soviet aggression.

67. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: The Group of 77 refers to the largest intergovernmental group of emerging countries in the United Nations.

- It was established in 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva.
- Statement 2 is correct: Charter: The Group of 77 is guided by the Charter of Algiers, which acts as its institutional structure.
- The Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 is convened at the beginning of the regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.

68. Answer: (b)

Pakistan and Afghanistan

- Torkham Crossing is a crucial border crossing that links Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its strategic location makes it a vital entry point for trade and connectivity between the two nations.
- The Border road is a key lifeline for a landlocked Afghanistan, linking the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar to Jalalabad, the main city in Nangarhar, and the route onwards to the capital Kabul.

69. Answer: (c)

All the Statements are Correct.

What is Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)?

- NAM is an alliance of developing nations that refuses to identify with any major superpower during the Cold War.

History: It has its origins in the 1955 Bandung

conference in Indonesia during which representatives from 29 Asian and African countries, including many newly independent states that had been colonized for years, discussed common concerns.

NAM was established and held its first conference in 1961 in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia.

Founders: The movement's founders are President Sukarno of Indonesia, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and President Josip Tito of Yugoslavia.

Secretariat: NAM does not have a permanent secretariat or a formal founding charter, act, or treaty. After the United Nations, NAM is the second-largest grouping of nations.

Members: Currently, NAM membership consists of 120 countries: 53 from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and two from Europe. It also includes the non-UN member state of Palestine, and 17 other observer countries.

70. Answer: (a)

In News : Turkey's parliament ratified Sweden's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership bid.

NATO was formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty.

- NATO's founding member countries were: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Its purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.

[Note : Greece joined NATO in 1952]

71. Answer: (a)

India and Myanmar:

- Both countries share a largely unfenced 1,643 km border, which goes through the states of Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km) and Mizoram (510 km).
- They also share a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.

72. Answer: (c)

Both the Statements are correct.

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- The IMEC is a planned economic corridor that aims to bolster economic development (manufacturing, food security, and supply chains) by fostering connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

Components of the IMEC

- The project would involve the building of a railway line across the Arabian Peninsula through

the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and develop shipping connectivity to India and Europe on either end of this corridor.

- The corridor could be further developed to transport energy through pipelines and data through an optical fiber link.
- The connectivity project will boost India's National Logistics Policy 2022.

73. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 is not correct and Statement 2 and 3 are correct. World Trade Organization (WTO). WTO is the international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries.

History: WTO was founded in 1995. It is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established in the wake of the Second World War.

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

Member: The WTO has 164 members. WTO's Ministerial Conference

The Ministerial Conference is the WTO's top decision-making body. It usually meets every two years.

All members of the WTO are involved in the Ministerial Conference and they can take decisions on all matters covered under any multilateral trade agreements.

74. Answer: (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966): Article 17 says that 'no one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home, and correspondence nor unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation'.

- India is a signatory and party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Statement 2 is correct: According to Article 51(c) of the Constitution (DPSP), international conventions must be respected unless they conflict with domestic laws.

75. Answer: (c)

In News : Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned to power in Bangladesh for a historic fourth straight term after her party, the Awami League, secured two-thirds of the seats in the national elections.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : Bangladesh, as India's immediate neighbour in the East, plays a crucial role in its strategic plans. Sharing 54 rivers and a 4,096-km border, the India-Bangladesh border is the longest land boundary India has with any of its neighbours.

- Bangladesh has emerged as India's largest trade partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade reaching \$18 billion in 2021-2022 from \$10.8 billion in 2020-21, though there was a dip in 2022-23 due to the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

- India is also the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh, with exports amounting to \$2 billion in Indian markets.

76. Answer: (d)

Zambia is a large, landlocked, resource-rich country with sparsely populated land in the centre of Southern Africa.

- Lusaka is the capital city of the Republic of Zambia. It shares its border with eight countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe) that expands its regional market for goods and services.

77. Answer: (c)

Both the Statements are correct.

News: External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar led the Indian delegation at the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kampala (the capital of Uganda). The theme of the 19th NAM summit was - "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence."

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- NAM was founded in 1961 by Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia and Yugoslavia with the view to advancing the interests of developing countries in the context of Cold War confrontation.
- At present, the NAM consists of 120 States which account for about 60% of the United Nations membership.

78. Answer: (d)

Option d is correct.

News: Pakistan has launched missile strikes into Iran under Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar (Death to Insurgents), following Iran's missile strikes in Pakistan.

About

- Baloch insurgency has been a source of tension, with the two countries accusing each other of harbouring and supporting terrorists.
- Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, both countries were firmly allied to the United States and in 1955, joined the Baghdad Pact, later known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).
- When Ayatollah Khomeini's ultra-conservative Shiite regime took power in Iran, Sunni-majority Pakistan was undergoing its own Islamisation under military dictator Gen Zia-ul-Haq — and the two countries found themselves at opposite ends of the sectarian divide.

79. Answer: (a)

'One China' Policy:

- It affirms Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. It acknowledges that there is 'One China' (1992 Consensus).
- Under this policy, any country that wants to establish political and diplomatic relations with

China must agree to adhere to this principle and not recognise Taiwan as an independent country.

- In practice, the 'One China' principle is a stabilisation mechanism that preserves the status quo over Taiwan's political status while allowing it to function as an independent economic, civic and administrative entity.

80. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct: Iran's Chabahar port is located on the Gulf of Oman and is the only oceanic port of the country.

- Geopolitical Significance: Chabahar Port is strategically located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. It provides India with direct sea access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan.
- India can bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan.

81. Answer: (d)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest Arab country of the Middle East.

- It is bordered by:
- Jordan and Iraq in the north and northeast;
- Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in the east;
- Oman in the southeast; and
- Yemen in the south.

82. Answer: (a)

India-Russia relations:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin recently had a conversation related to the "special and privileged strategic partnership" between the two countries.
- In 2000, both countries signed a "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership," which was upgraded to "special and privileged strategic partnership" in 2010.

83. Answer: (c)

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe.

- It is bordered by Poland to the north, Germany to the west, Austria to the south and Slovakia to the east.
- Its capital and largest city is Prague.

84. Answer: (a)

In News : Judges at the International Court of Justice opened two days of legal arguments in a case filed by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza war.

Statement 1 is correct : International Court of Justice(ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.

Statements 2 and 3 are not correct : It was established

by the United Nations Charter, which was signed in 1945 in San Francisco (United States), and began work in 1946 in the Peace Palace, The Hague (Netherlands).

- Its official languages are English and French.
- The International Court of Justice has no jurisdiction to try individuals accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- As it is not a criminal court, it does not have a prosecutor able to initiate proceedings.

85. Answer: (d)

Both the statements are not correct: The Panama Canal has a length of approximately 80 kilometers that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.

- Around six percent of all global maritime commerce passes through the Panama Canal, with the United States, China and Japan being the leading users.
- The canal was completed in 1914 by the United States.
- The US continued to control the canal and surrounding Panama Canal Zone until the Torrijos–Carter Treaties provided for its handover to Panama in 1977.
- After a period of joint American–Panamanian control, the canal was taken over by the Panamanian government in 1999. It is now managed and operated by the Panamanian government-owned Panama Canal Authority.

86. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct: About International Labour Organization

- It is an United Nations Agency established in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, and it became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
- It has 187 Member states.

It sets labour standards, develops policies and devises programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Major Reports: World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO), Global Wage Report, World Social Protection Report, World Employment and Social Outlook for Youth, World of Work Report.

87. Answer: (b)

In News: India signed bilateral cooperation agreements with the Czech Republic at the Vibrant Gujarat summit.

- The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe.
- It is bordered by Poland to the north, Germany to the west, Austria to the south and Slovakia to the east.

88. Answer: (a)

Pairs 1 and 2 are incorrectly matched : The ancient Palace of Aigai reopened after a 16-year absence.

- The city of Aigai was the ancient first capital of the Kingdom of Macedonia.

- It was discovered in the 19th century near Vergina, in northern Greece. Okinawa Prefecture is located in the eastern part of the Asian continent
- It is the southwestern most point of the Japanese archipelago.
- It is located between Taiwan and Kyushu, the southwestern-most of Japan's four main islands.

Pair 3 is correctly matched ; Belgorod Region is situated in the centre of the European part of Russia, on the southern and southeastern slopes of the Central Russian Upland.

89. Answer: (c)

India is naturally a maritime nation with a coast line of over 7500 kms.

- India's maritime boundaries is shared with seven countries —
- Pakistan
- Maldives
- Sri Lanka
- Indonesia
- Thailand
- Myanmar and
- Bangladesh.

90. Answer: (d)

A cargo ship carrying consignment from Chennai in Tamil Nadu, India to Mombasa in Kenya via Colombo, is most likely to traverse the waters of Maldives in the Indian Ocean.

91. Answer: (b)

The Red Sea is bordered by six countries:

- Eastern shore: Saudi Arabia and Yemen
- Western shore: Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti

92. Answer: (d)

Operation Prosperity Guardian:

- Operation Prosperity Guardian is a US-led, multinational military operation established in December 2023 to respond to Houthi-led attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

Objectives:

- To ensure the safety of maritime traffic in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb, and Gulf of Aden.
- To counter threats by Houthi forces against international maritime commerce.
- To de-escalate tensions in the region and promote stability.

93. Answer: (d)

Both the statements are not correct.

Mauritius

- Mauritius, is an island country in the Indian Ocean, located off the eastern coast of Africa. It is a part of the Mascarene Islands.
- Capital: Port Louis
- Major rivers: Grand River South East and Black River.
- Lake Vacoas, is one of the main reservoirs, and is the chief source of water.

94. Answer: (c)

Both the statements are correct.

Guyana

- Location: Guyana, is located in the northeastern corner of South America.
- Bordering Nations: Guyana is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, by Suriname (along the Courantyne River) to the east, by Brazil to the south and southwest, and by Venezuela to the west.
- Major rivers: Courantyne, Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo.
- Essequibo is the longest river in the country.
- Oil reserves: Guyana has gained significant salience in the oil & gas sector with the new discoveries of 11.2 billion barrels of oil equivalent, amounts to 18% of total global Oil & Gas discoveries.

95. Answer: (a)

Sikkim, West Bengal, and Bihar Shared Border

- Nepal shares a border of over 1,850 km with five Indian states - Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

96. Answer: (d)

About the UN Statistical Commission:

Established in: 1946

- It is the highest body of the global statistical system bringing together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world.
- It is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and serves as the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities.

Functions:

- Setting statistical standards: Establishing frameworks and guidelines to ensure consistency and comparability of global statistics.
- Promoting the Developing national statistical systems: Providing support and guidance to countries in strengthening their data collection and analysis capabilities.
- Coordinating statistical activities: Overseeing and harmonizing statistical work across UN agencies and international organizations.
- It does not directly conduct field operations like censuses or surveys.

97. Answer: (b)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: BRICS is an acronym that refers to a group of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

- Origin: As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the Leaders of Russia, India and China in St. Petersburg on the margins of the G8

Outreach Summit in 2006.

- The grouping was formalized during the 1st meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of UNGA in New York in 2006.
- The success of the meet led to the crystallisation of an annual summit under the aegis of BRIC.
- Initially, the grouping was termed BRIC as South Africa was inducted in 2010 and from there on it has been referred to as BRICS.

Statement 3 is not correct: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have joined BRICS as new full members.

- It was done as per the decision adopted by the 15th BRICS Summit in 2022.
- A proposal to admit six countries, including Argentina, into the bloc with effect from January 1.
- Argentina's new President announced withdrawing his country from becoming a member of the BRICS.

98. Answer: (c)

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99. Answer: (b)

Ministry of Earth Sciences

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

- INCOIS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and is a unit of the Earth System Science Organisation (ESSO).
- ESSO-INCOIS was established in 1999 under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and is located in Hyderabad.
- Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) is also housed in the INCOIS.

100. Answer: (b)

The Houthis are an armed group from a sub-sect of Yemen's Shia Muslim minority, the Zaidis.

- They take their name from the movement's founder, Hussein al Houthi.
- The group was formed in the 1990s to combat what they saw as the corruption of the then- president, Ali Abdullah Saleh.
- The Houthi rebels have been fighting a civil war since 2014 against Yemen's government. The government has been backed against the Houthis by a coalition of Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.