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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. A Chinese enclave in Sri Lanka?

Context:

- Recently, Sri Lanka passed the **Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill** despite wide opposition to it.

Details:

- The Colombo Port City Economic Commission Bill governs the **China-backed \$1.4 billion Colombo Port City project**.
 - The Colombo Port City is an artificial island that would be reclaimed from Colombo's seafront.
 - Being pitched as a "world-class city for South Asia", there is a proposal to develop an international financial hub in the island.
 - **The project is financed chiefly through Chinese investment** amounting to \$1.4 billion, via CHEC Port City Colombo, a unit of the State-owned China Communications Construction Company (CCCC). In return, the company will receive some portion of the developed land on a 99-year lease.

Domestic opposition to the project:

- The China-backed Colombo Port City project has been opposed by the Opposition and citizens of Sri Lanka.
 - Opponents to the project have warned against the creation of a "**Chinese enclave**" in Sri Lanka given the fact that the bill provides the Port City and the powerful Commission that will run it substantial "immunity" from Sri Lankan laws. This the opponents argues goes against Sri Lanka's sovereignty.
 - The bill also offers huge tax exemptions and other incentives for investors. This could adversely affect the already fragile finances of the island nation.
 - The Colombo Port City project has faced opposition from environmentalists and fisherfolk, who fear that the project would affect marine life and livelihoods.

- Trade unions have also opposed the project, contending that labour rights had no protection under the proposed framework

Concerns for India:

Location of the project:

- The Colombo Port City **strategic location adjacent to the Colombo Port**, the country's main harbour has raised suspicions of the Chinese intentions.
- This seems like an attempt of the Chinese to increase its presence and foothold in the Indian Ocean region, considered India's zone of influence. This seems to be a **continuation of the Chinese policy of encirclement of India.**

Increasing Chinese presence of the Chinese in Sri Lanka:

- The Colombo Port City would be the **third major port-related infrastructure project in Sri Lanka** where China has a significant stake. The other two include an 85% stake in the **Colombo International Container Terminals Ltd. (CICT) at the Colombo Port** and the **Hambantota Port** in the Southern Province, where China holds a 99-year lease.

Increasing alignment of Sri Lanka with China:

- The inclusion of **Sri Lanka as a partner in China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative**, would only push the strategically located island location of Sri Lanka into sphere of influence.

2. 114 killed in Burkina Faso attacks

Burkina Faso:

- **Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa** and is bordered by Mali to the northwest, Niger to the northeast, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and the Ivory Coast to the southwest.
- **Ouagadougou is the capital of Burkina Faso.**

Context:

- Suspected fundamentalists linked to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State have killed at least 114 civilians in Burkina Faso near the borders with Mali and Niger

3. The coming together of the powerful five

Context:

- In the light of **India gearing up to host 2021's BRICS summit**, the article analyses the potential of the grouping while also discussing the challenges being faced by the group.
 - BRICS is the acronym coined to associate five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Background:

History of BRICS:

- In 2006, leaders of the BRIC countries met in St. Petersburg, Russia, and the grouping was formalized.
- **In 2009 the first BRIC summit was held in Yekaterinburg.**
- South Africa was admitted in 2010 and attended the annual summit in 2011.

Challenges:

- The grouping is facing several challenges which have rendered the grouping ineffective in realizing its true potential.

Disputes between the member countries:

- There are **multiple economic, territorial, and political disputes** between the five constituent countries.
 - Border tension between India and China.

Economic underperformance:

- As against the original conception of BRICs as economies that would drive global economic growth in the future, **no member apart from China, have fulfilled their economic potential.**
 - South Africa's debt-laden economy and the negative current account have led to predictions of an economic collapse in the next decade.
 - Brazil's poor handling during the Covid-19 crisis has ranked it amongst the world's worst-affected countries, and its recovery is expected to be delayed.
 - India's economic slowdown has been a major concern.

Inherent divisions in the group:

- There is inherent differences between the members of the group with respect to the **economic clout and power they enjoy in the global institutions**.
 - China economic prowess remains unmatched in the group. While Russia and China enjoy higher per capita income indicative of economic development the other three members of the group have much lower per capita income levels.
 - Also given that **China and Russia are already members of the UN Security Council**, It remains to be seen how far they will go in advocating for the other BRICS members to be a part of a reformed Security Council.

Increasing alignment with the west:

- **India, Brazil and South Africa have equal, if not stronger, strategic ties with western powers as compared to the other two members** of the group- China and Russia.
- India's membership of the U.S.-India-Australia-Japan Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue (Quad) and India's increasing alignment with the U.S. has cast a shadow over the future of the BRICS.

Lack of common vision:

- **Disagreements between its members and lack of a common vision** are major concerns in the grouping.
 - China's decision to launch the trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative in 2017 was opposed by India, and even Russia did not join the BRI plan, although it has considerable infrastructure projects with China.

Significance:

Equitable world order:

- BRICS was envisaged as an alternate grouping of emerging economies that **challenge the post-War world order** and establish a more equitable world order.

Significant initiatives:

- BRICS has created the **New Development Bank (NDB)**, the **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement fund** to deal with liquidity crunches, and a **BRICS payment system** proposing to be an alternative to the SWIFT payment system.

Political alignment:

- While the economic was the major Planck of cooperation between the member countries, political alignment has also been observed in certain instances.
- They have called for **more inclusion in the multilateral world order**, decrying U.S.-Europe backed military interventions, and expressing independent stances on several world events.
 - The recent BRICS ministerial meeting came out with the first “standalone” joint statement on **reforming multilateral institutions**, including the UN and the UNSC, International Monetary Fund and World Bank and the World Trade Organization.
 - The BRICS ministerial meeting also came out with an important agreement to support negotiations at the WTO for the waiver of trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) for vaccines and medicines to tackle the Coronavirus pandemic. BRICS support at the WTO for the TRIPs waiver negotiations will be a boost for the effort.

4. New database for missing persons

- The **Interpol** has launched a **new global database named 'I-Familia'** to identify missing persons.
- This would make use of the DNA of relatives to identify missing persons or unidentified human remains around the world.

5. Tigress under observation found dead in Tadoba

- The **Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is located in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra state in India**. The reserve includes the Tadoba National Park and the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

6. Siltation affecting width of waterways in Mumbai: study

Context:

- A recent study based on satellite data has noted **rapid changes in the coastal ecosystem of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and the Konkan region.**

Details:

- The study notes the **siltation at the mouth of the rivers**, causing shrinking of width of creeks and waterways.
- The coastal inundation has led to the **loss of substantial area of waterways and agricultural land** and have been converted into mudflats or mangrove areas.
- This observation brings to light the critical impact of **coastal inundation due to rising sea levels.**

Concerns with respect to coastal inundation:

Increased vulnerability to flooding:

- The study predicts excessive flooding due to the altered coastal ecosystem.
- The shrinking creek will lead to **substantial decrease in the drainage capacity of the city** during monsoon, leading to excessive flooding. It will also become **more vulnerable to high tide water.**

Salt water ingress:

- **Incursion of saline water into the local aquifers** will further strain the already strained fresh water resources of the region.
- The salt water ingress will also **render the agricultural landscapes non cultivable.**

Conclusion:

- A **comprehensive plan for conservation and restoration of the ecosystem** should be undertaken urgently.

Additional information:

- The National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences has developed an Integrated Flood warning system, **i-flows**, for Mumbai for flood mitigation during monsoons and extreme events.

7. 'Bank NPAs set to rise, deposit growth outpacing credit flow'

- As per the Reserve Bank of India's assessment in its latest **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**, Gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratios of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) are expected to increase in the coming quarters. This despite the regulatory interventions providing relief to both borrowers and lenders.
- Notably the **credit growth has been on the decline while the deposit growth has quickened** pointing out to the deteriorating health of the financial sector.

8. U.S. delays tariffs against digital services tax

Context:

- The United States had recently announced a **25% tariff on \$2 billion of imports from six countries, namely India, Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.**
- The tariff was subsequently suspended for up to 180 days to give space for ongoing international tax negotiations to continue.

Details:

Imposition of the tariff as a retaliatory measure:

- The proposed tariff was aimed as a retaliatory measure against the concerned countries' imposition of a digital services tax impacting the tech corporations based in the U.S.
 - **The Finance Bill, 2021 of India** had introduced an amendment imposing a **2% digital service tax on trade and services** by non-resident e-commerce operators with a turnover of over ₹2 crore.
- A **"Section 301" investigation** initiated by the previous U.S. administration had found digital services taxes imposed by each of these countries to be discriminatory against U.S. tech firms.
 - Under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the Office of the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** enjoys a range of responsibilities and authority to investigate and take action to enforce U.S. national interests under trade agreements and respond to certain foreign trade practices.

Temporary suspension of the proposal:

- The Biden administration's move to temporarily suspend the proposal seems to be an attempt to hold up the threat of USTR sanctions while allowing some space for tax negotiations with the nations concerned.

Concerns:

Global concerns:

- The previous administrations use of Section 301 powers on China, had led to an **escalatory tariff war** and tectonic shifts in global supply chains leaving many economies in a weakened condition. The U.S.'s trade war with China had an adverse impact for the whole global economy.
- The global economy which has been severely impacted by the pandemic and are only limping back on a **feeble post-COVID-19 recovery**. A new trade war front could be damaging not only to them, but also to the broader global economy.

Indian concerns:

- Any move to abolish or reduce the digital services taxes in India will **dent the government's revenue prospects**.
 - India's digital service tax could yield approximately \$55 million annually.
- If the U.S. chooses to go ahead with its retaliatory tariffs, close to \$118 million of India's exports to the U.S. would be subject to it. This would **dent Indian products competitive pricing ability and subsequently reduce its trade competitiveness**.
 - The proposed tariff would impact 26 high value categories of goods, including basmati rice, cigarette paper, cultured pearls, semi-precious stones, certain gold and silver jewellery items and specific types of furniture products.

Way forward for India:

- **India will have to balance between the two prerogatives of avoiding getting into any escalating matrix of retaliatory taxation with the U.S** that would damage its economic recovery process while also ensuring that it does not yield on its **intent to tax global tech firms** which is not only the right thing to do but also an financial necessity for India.

9. G7 nations agree on uniform minimum corporate tax

Context:

- Finance Ministers from the **Group of Seven (G7) nations** have reached a landmark agreement in London setting a **global minimum corporate tax rate**.

Details:

- The Group of Seven nations have backed a **minimum global corporation tax rate of at least 15%**.
- They also seek to put in place measures to ensure that taxes are paid in the countries where businesses operate based on the **principle of 'Significant Economic Presence'**.

How would a global minimum tax work?

- The global minimum tax rate would **apply to overseas profits of a multinational**.
- The envisaged framework allows individual governments to set whatever local corporate tax rate they want.
- But if companies pay lower rates in a particular country, their **home governments could "top-up" their taxes to the minimum rate**, thus eliminating the advantage of shifting profits.

Reasons for the move:

- A global minimum corporate tax will allow the major economies to **discourage multinationals from shifting profits – and tax revenues – to low-tax countries**.
- This proposal from the major economies aims to reduce tax base erosion without putting their firms at a financial disadvantage, allowing competition on innovation, infrastructure and other attributes.

Significance:

Reduce tax base erosion:

- This measure will **help close cross-border tax loopholes** used by some of the world's biggest companies, thus will help **limit base erosion and profit sharing (BEPS)**.
- Increasingly, income from intangible sources such as drug patents, software and royalties on intellectual property has migrated to the low tax

jurisdictions, allowing companies to avoid paying higher taxes in their traditional home countries.

- As per some estimates, countries are losing \$427 billion every year to tax havens. **India suffers an annual loss of \$10.3 billion from global tax abuse.**

In tune with changed pattern of economy:

- This agreement marks a much necessary reform of the global tax system to make it fit for the **current global digital age** where **cross-border digital services are gaining prominence.**

End the so called race to the bottom and its negative consequences:

- The introduction of a global minimum corporate tax will contribute to ending the decades-long “**race to the bottom on corporate tax rates**”, in which countries have resorted to ultra-low tax rates and tax exemptions to lure multinationals companies to invest.
- Such measures have **cost such countries hundreds of billions of dollars** whereas the corporate entities have only grown richer.

Form the basis of a global pact:

- This landmark agreement could form the basis of a worldwide deal.
- **The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development** has been coordinating tax negotiations among 140 countries on **rules for taxing cross-border digital services and curbing tax base erosion, including a global corporate minimum tax.** The OECD and G20 countries aim to reach consensus on both by mid-year.

Move towards more equitable taxing rights:

- The agreement has committed to reaching an equitable solution on the allocation of taxing rights. It will focus on **protecting the interest of the market countries** by awarding such countries certain degree of taxing rights on the profits of the multinational enterprises.
- This will help ensure that MNCs would pay taxes where they operate and record their profits from based on the concept of ‘Significant Economic Presence’.

Challenges:

- Any final agreement could have major repercussions for low-tax countries and tax havens and is bound to be opposed by such countries.

- Though there seems to be broad agreement on the framework of a global minimum corporate tax, there continue to be **differences over the rate** of such a tax.
- The **inclusion of investment funds and real estate investment trusts** under such a system could also lead to some differences during the negotiations

10. Study points to pileup of biomedical waste

Context:

- The report titled, “**State of India’s Environment 2021,**” released by the Centre for Science and Environment.

Bio-medical waste:

- Bio-medical waste means “any solid and/or liquid waste including its container and any intermediate product, which is generated during the diagnosis, treatment or immunization of human beings or animals or research activities pertaining thereto or in the production or testing of biological or in health camps.

Categorization:

- **Under the existing rules by CPCB, biomedical waste is segregated into four categories.** While the yellow category is for waste that is classified as “highly infectious” – such as human, animal, anatomical, and soiled – red/orange is for contaminated recyclable waste generated from disposable items like tubing, bottles tubes, syringes.
- Sharp objects like needles, syringes with fixed needles are segregated into the white category and broken or discarded and contaminated glassware, including medicine vials are categorised into the blue category.

Details:

- The report notes that that **over two lakh kilograms of biomedical waste was generated each day in May 2021 by hospitals** in India dealing with COVID-19 patients.
 - India witnessed a deadly second wave of coronavirus pandemic in April and May.

Concerns:

- Biomedical waste poses hazard due to two principal reasons – the first is **infectivity** and other
- Biomedical waste is a threat to global public environmental health.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. CEM-Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative

- Recently, India and the UK have launched a new workstream to **promote industrial energy efficiency** under Clean Energy Ministerial's (CEM) **Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative (IDDI)**.
 - It is coordinated by **UNIDO (United Nations Development Industrial organisation)**.
- It was **launched** in the ongoing **12th CEM (CEM12) Meeting**, virtually **hosted by Chile**.

About 12th CEM Meeting

- **Objective:** To **infuse green technologies** and **stimulate demand** for low-carbon industrial material.
- **India is committed to cut emissions intensity** per unit of GDP by 33 to 35% by 2030.
- The commitment depends on **effective deployment of low carbon technologies** in Energy Intensive Sectors like Iron & Steel, Cement and Petrochemicals.

About Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM)

- It was established in **December 2009** at the **UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) CoP in Copenhagen**.
- **Purpose:**
 - To **promote** policies and programs that **advance clean energy technology**
 - To **share lessons learned** and best practices
 - To **encourage the transition** to a global clean energy economy.
- **Focus Areas**
 - **Improve energy efficiency** worldwide.

- **Enhance** clean energy supply.
- **Expand** clean energy access.
- **Members:**
 - **29 countries**
 - **India is also a member country.**

Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative (IDDI)

- - IDDI is **an initiative of CEM.**
 - It is a **global coalition of public and private organisations** who are working to stimulate demand for low carbon industrial materials.
- **Functions**
 - - To **standardise carbon assessments**
 - **Establish** ambitious public and private sector **procurement targets**
 - **Incentivise investment** into low-carbon product development and design industry guidelines.
- **Supporting Countries:**
 - The IDDI is co-led by the **UK and India**
 - Current members also include **Germany and Canada.**
- **Goals:**
 - **Encouraging** governments and the private sector to buy low carbon steel and cement.
 - **Sourcing and sharing** data for common standards and targets.

2. India to vote for Maldives in the election of the President of the UNGA

- **India will vote** in support of **Maldives** in the **election of the President** of the United Nations General Assembly (**UNGA**) that will be held on 7th June.

What you need to know about UNGA President

- The President is the **presiding officer** of the General Assembly.
- The **member nations** of the UNGA **vote** for the President on a **yearly basis**.
- The presidency **rotates annually** between the **five geographic groups:**
 - African
 - Asia-Pacific

- Eastern European
- Latin American and Caribbean
- Western European and other States.
- **No permanent member** of the United Nations Security Council **ever serves** as UNGA president.

Fun fact

- **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** (1900 - 1990) of India served as 8th President of the UNGA in 1953.
- She was **the First woman president** of UNGA.

3. Mali suspended from African Union

- The **African Union** suspended Mali's membership in response to the **military coup** and it **threatened Mali with sanctions** if a civilian-led government was not restored.
- West African regional bloc **Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS** had also **suspended Mali**.

About Mali

- Mali is a **landlocked country** in West Africa. **Capital:** Bamako.

About African Union

- It is a **continental union** consisting of **55 countries of Africa**.
 - In 2017, the AU admitted Morocco as a member state.
- The AU was announced in the **Sirte Declaration** in Sirte, Libya in 1999.
- It was **founded in 2001** in **Addis Ababa**, Ethiopia.
 - It was **launched in 2002** in Durban, South Africa.
 - The **AU's secretariat, the African Union Commission**, is based in **Addis Ababa**

India and AU

- India is a **member of the AU Partners Group (AUPG)**, which **meets periodically** in Addis Ababa.
- **India-Africa Forum Summit** was the first ever India-Africa Forum Summit, **participated** by the **Leaders** of 14 African countries and the **African Union Commission**.
 - It represented a turning point in the India- AU relations.

- The **Summit** adopted the **Delhi Declaration** and the **Africa-India Framework for Cooperation**, which constituted the **blueprint for cooperation** between **India and Africa** in the 21st century.

4. CEM-Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative

In news

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GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

5. K.P. Krishnan Expert Committee

- **Dr. K.P. Krishnan** headed the expert committee on **Variable Capital Company (VCC).**
 - It has submitted its report on the **feasibility of Variable Capital Companies** in the **International Financial Services Centres** in India.

Why was the committee set up?

- The IFSCA set up this Committee to **explore the potential for allowing** another legal structure, popularly known as a **VCC**, as an **additional option** through which asset managers could **pool the investors' funds.**
 - The VCC structure removes some of the key limitations of companies.
 - It provides for higher regulatory standards than those applicable to trusts.

Report of the committee

- The Committee **assessed the features of a VCC** or its equivalent, in other countries such as the UK, Singapore, Ireland and Luxembourg.
- The Committee **recommended the adoption of a VCC-like legal structure** for the purpose of conducting **fund management activity** in IFSCs
- The Committee recognized that the **legal framework governing entities** should provide **certainty and clarity** to investors.

6. NASA selects two missions to the planet Venus

- NASA has selected **two missions** to the **planet Venus**.

Details about the missions

- The missions are called **DAVINCI+** and **VERITAS**
- These will be launched between **2028 and 2030**.
- **DAVINCI+** is **'Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble gases, Chemistry, and Imaging'**
 - It is the **first US-led mission** to the planet's atmosphere **since 1978**.
 - It will try to understand **Venus' composition** to see how the planet formed and evolved.
 - It also consists of a **descent sphere** that will pass through the **planet's thick atmosphere** and make **observations** and take **measurements of noble gases** and other elements.
 - It will also try to return the first high resolution **photographs of a geological feature, tesserae**, that is unique to Venus. The presence of **tesseraes** may suggest that Venus has **tectonic plates** like Earth.
- The second mission called **VERITAS** is **'Venus Emissivity, Radio Science, InSAR, Topography, and Spectroscopy'**
 - It will **map the planet's surface** to determine its **geologic history** and understand the **reasons** why it developed so differently from Earth.

Prelims Practice Questions

1) SPAG9, sometimes seen in the news recently, is?

- a. Shoulder-fired propellant guided Missile
- b. India's First Indigenous Tumour Antigen
- c. Special Operations Force of Indian Army
- d. RNA-guided nuclease for genome editing

Answer : b

Explanation:

SPAG9

- India's first indigenous tumour antigen SPAG9 was discovered by Dr Anil Suri in 1998 who is heading the Cancer Research Program at NII.
- In a recent development, the SPAG9 antigen has received the trademark ASPAGNIITM.
- Currently, ASPAGNIITM is being used in dendritic cell (DC) based immunotherapy in cervical, ovarian cancer and will also be used in breast cancer.
- The ASPAGNIITM is a true example of translational cancer research and the Atmanirbhar Bharat spirit.
- It will eventually be helpful to patients in India and the world.
- This will be a real morale boost in affordable, personalised and indigenous products for cancer treatment.

Immunotherapy

- It is a new approach that exploits the body's inner capability to put up a fight against cancer.
- With this approach, either the immune system is given a boost, or the T cells are "trained" to identify recalcitrant cancer cells and kill them.
- In this personalised intervention, those patients expressing SPAG9 protein can be treated with DC-based vaccine approach.
- In DC-based vaccine, patient's cells called monocytes from their blood are collected and modified into what are called dendritic cells.
- These dendritic cells are primed with ASPAGNIITM and are injected back to the patient to help the 'fighter' cells, or T-cells, in the body to kill the cancer cells.

- DC-based immunotherapy is safe, affordable and can promote antitumor immune responses and prolonged survival of cancer patients.

2) Which of the following is the theme for World Environment Day, 2021?

- a. Air Pollution
- b. Time for Nature
- c. Beat Plastic Pollution
- d. Promotion of biofuels for better environment

Answer : d

Explanation:

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will participate in the World Environment Day event on 5th June 2021.
- The event is being jointly organized by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The theme for this year's event is '**Promotion of biofuels for better environment**'.

3) Rishiganga River originate from which of the following glaciers?

- a. Bandar Poonch glacier
- b. Nanda Devi glacier
- c. Alakapuri glacier
- d. Milam glacier

Answer : b

Explanation:

Rishiganga River

- It is a river in the Uttarakhand, springs from the Uttari Nanda Devi Glacier on the Nanda Devi Mountain.
- Continuing through the Nanda Devi National Park, it flows into the Dhauliganga River near the village Rini.

4. Project 75-I, recently seen in news, is related to -

- a. Construction of nuclear-powered submarines for the Indian Navy

- b. Procurement of Rafale fighter jets from France
- c. Export of Brahmos cruise missiles to Vietnam
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Recently, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), headed by Defence Minister has approved the issuance of a Request For Proposal (RFP) for the construction of six conventional submarines under Project-75I.
- The Project 75I-class submarine is a follow-on of the Project 75 Kalvari-class submarine for the Indian Navy.
- Under this project, the Indian Navy intends to acquire six diesel-electric submarines, which will also feature advanced air-independent propulsion systems to enable them to stay submerged for a longer duration and substantially increase their operational range.
- All six submarines are expected to be constructed in Indian shipyards.

5) Consider the following statements with respect to H10N3 Virus

1. It is a highly severe strain of bird flu with a high risk of spreading on a large scale.
2. It will have a little impact on birds but can be much more serious in people, similar to H7N9 strain.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are incorrect?

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

Answer : a

Explanation:

H10N3 Virus

- It is a low pathogenic or relatively less severe strain of the virus in poultry and the risk of it spreading on a large scale was very low
- According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the H10N3 flu appears to be rare in birds.

- The source of the patient's exposure to the H10N3 virus was not known, there was no indication of human-to-human transmission yet.
- The growing surveillance of avian influenza in the human population will result in more infections with bird flu viruses are being picked up.

6) Consider the following statements with respect to Defence Acquisition Council

1. It is the Defence Ministry's highest decision-making body for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions in India.
2. Indian Prime Minister is the Chairman of the Council.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

Answer : a

Explanation:

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), in its meeting held recently under the Chairmanship of Defence Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh has approved proposals concerning Capital Acquisitions of various equipment for modernisation and operational needs of the Armed Forces amounting to approx. Rs 6,000 crore.

Defence Acquisition Council

- It is the Defence Ministry's highest decision-making body for deciding on new policies and capital acquisitions for the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Indian Coast Guard.
- Union Minister for Defence is the Chairman of the Council.
- It was formed, after the Group of Ministers recommendations on 'Reforming the National Security System', in 2001, post Kargil War (1999).

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. The quality of service delivery in a public organisation can be improved by internal and external appraisal. Discuss (250 words)

Approach

- Introduce by briefly explaining the meaning of service delivery
- Divide the body of the answer in two parts. You may first describe internal checks such as citizen charter, sevottam model, etc. While in the second part the role of judiciary, media, social audits can be stated as external checks.
- Enlist the challenges pertaining to public service delivery.
- Conclude your answer suitably.

2Q. Farmers distress is an outcome of interplay of various factors, it can be tackled through a multipronged approach. Examine (250) Words

Approach

- Explain status and issues of Indian agriculture in the introduction para.
- Give reasons of farmers' distress.
- Suggest steps which can be taken to resolve the issue.