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GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Reservation on quota

- The Madras High Court has declared the Tamil Nadu government law **providing separate reservation** of 10.5% of jobs in public services and seats in educational institutions for the Vanniyar community as being
 - The concerned state government law had provided for an **internal reservation among the backward communities itself**. It had divided the 'Most Backward Classes/Denotified Communities' category into three parts and 10.5% of the Backward community seats were specified as exclusive to the Vanniyakula Kshatriya and its various sub-castes.

Reasons for the court's judgment:

- The Bench ruled that the Act was unconstitutional mainly on the ground that the **Assembly had no legislative competence to pass the law on the date of the enactment**. The 102nd Amendment to the Constitution was in force in February 2021 according to which only the President was empowered to notify the backward classes list for each State. This observation was upheld by the Supreme Court in the **Maratha reservation case**.
- Also the bench held that the separate reservation for one caste **amounted to discrimination against all the other castes in the same MBC category**.
- The bench also noted that the State had **no quantifiable data to show the relative backwardness of the Vanniyars** as compared to the other MBCs to justify the exclusive treatment for the community. In the absence of such quantifiable data the bench held that the legislation seemed based solely on the ground of caste and hence **goes against well grounded principles set out for affirmative action in the Indian Constitution**.
- The judgment also notes that any law making changes to the distribution of quotas under various categories would require an amendment to the State's 1994 Act protecting the overall reservation level. As that Act contains quotas allotted to the SC, ST, BC and MBC/DNC categories, any change would require an amendment to that law, as well as the President's assent. These steps have not been taken up while passing the concerned state law.

2. 'China more active now at Chumbi Valley'

The Department of Defense (DoD) has presented to the United States Congress its annual report 2021 on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Details:

- The Department of Defense has delivered to the United States Congress its report on military events involving the People's Republic of China (PRC).
- According to the assessment, China has continued to take incremental and tactical efforts to assert its claims near the Line of Actual Control.
- China is boosting its connection and depth in the Chumbi Valley, which is near to India's crucial and sensitive Siliguri corridor.

About Siliguri Corridor: -

- The Siliguri corridor is a swath of terrain that borders Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- It's a strip of territory that connects the northeast to the rest of the country.
- The demographics, as well as the associated difficulties of radicalization and separatist aspirations, might be detrimental to India's security interests.

3. Reopening Nepal-India border

It was after much lobbying and pressure that on 21 September, the Nepalese government decided to re-open the Nepal-India border that was sealed from March 2020 to control the spread of COVID-19.

- Accordingly, the local authorities at the Raxaul-Birgunj border point re-opened the border on 1st October by unlocking the gates and allowing the Indian citizens, apart from the tourists, to enter into the Nepalese territory.
- Reciprocating the decision of the Nepalese government on the issue of re-opening the Nepal-India border, the Indian government also re-opened the border except for few.
- To ensure the safety of the people from the COVID-19, the local border authorities have made a provision whereby both the Nepalese and Indian citizens would have to produce a COVID-19 negative report within 72 hours while entering into Nepal through the land border.

Repercussions of sealed borders

Before this, never had the 1753-kilometre long border between the two countries been closed.

- The tourism sector contributes as much as 8 percent to Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), apart from generating direct and indirect employment opportunities for over 1.05 million people. So, the entire Nepalese economy was affected when the Indo-Nepal border was closed. Moreover, the local market centred along the border areas were also severely as it heavily relied on the cross-border movement of people.
- Since millions of Nepalese, especially from the hilly regions, are employed in India, they suffered most during the coronavirus period. Many of those people were held up in India and vice-versa after the border closure. In the chaos, there were cases of deaths after they were denied to cross the border.
- To add to the misery, some people in Nepal fenced three kilometres of the border unilaterally between pillar 435/1 to 439/4 with a barbed wire closer to the "No Man's Land" in Parsa district of Nepal with the sole intention of creating a rift in the traditional relations between the people of the two countries. Because of construction, the border inhabitants of Nepal and India who often needed to cross over the border for social, cultural, and economic reasons faced insurmountable problems.
- Many people in Nepal and India chose to cross the border through the non-conventional routes which added more risks of the spread of coronavirus from one country to the other.
- Besides, the unauthorised trade along the Nepal-India border also surged, which ultimately resulted in the loss of government revenue.

The Way Forward

1. Instead of placing restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles at the Nepal-India border, the governments of the two countries should **establish joint health desks at the main border points** to ascertain the cases of coronavirus, including in Raxaul-Birgung, allowing only those citizens to cross the border who tested negative.
2. **Allow unrestricted cross-border movement:** To enhance the growing bonds of socio-economic and cultural relations between Nepal and India, it is essential to review the arrangement of the cross-border movement of private vehicles between the two countries.
 - The Nepalese authorities at the customs points allow the Indian private vehicles to enter into Nepal for which they have to pay certain charges on a per diem basis at the border points.
 - On the other hand, the Nepalese people are required to get prior permission from the Indian embassy in Kathmandu or its Consulate General Office in Birgunj if they have to enter India with vehicles bearing Nepali number plates.

- No such permission is required for the Indian people from the Nepalese embassy in New Delhi if they have to enter Nepal with Indian number plates.
- Such an anomaly in the cross-border movement of vehicles is in fact against the letter and spirit of the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty between Nepal and India.

4. Solution in sight for A.P.-Odisha water dispute

Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has scheduled a meeting with Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik to resolve the water conflict.

Details:

- Andhra Pradesh and Odisha states are at dispute over the Vamsadhara Phase-II project in Srikakulam district and the jurisdiction of Kotia villages in Vizianagaram district.
- The Vamsadhara Water Disputes Tribunal has ruled in Andhra Pradesh's favour.
- However, the area under Odisha's jurisdiction for the building of the **Neradi barrage** has yet to be acquired.

5. 'Govt. can't be adversary when citizens' rights are under threat'

In the Pegasus case, the Supreme Court emphasised that the government cannot take an "adversarial attitude" when people's basic rights are threatened.

Details:

Observations in Pegasus Order: -

- The Supreme Court referred to the wisdom of Justice H.R. Khanna's reasoning in the **Kesavananda Bharati case verdict from 1973** in its Pegasus order.
 - According to Justice Khanna, the basic responsibility of judges is to "uphold the Constitution and the laws without fear or favour."
- The Pegasus order refers to the court's **2011 decision in the Ram Jethmalani case**.

- It recommended that, rather than obstructing petitioners, the government should disclose information and assist them in “better articulating” their case.
- In procedures under Article 32, both the petitioner and the state must be the court’s eyes and ears.
- The court’s determination to preserve fundamental rights in the Pegasus order resonates with its **decision in the COVID-19 case**.
 - In that decision, the court refused to be a “silent spectator” when government actions violated citizens’ fundamental rights.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

6. The Sun lights up aurorae in high-latitude countries

The Indian scientists had predicted a magnetic storm will arrive at the Earth in the early hours of November 4.

Details:

- A solar flare on the Sun generated a magnetic storm of enough amplitude to cause stunning aurora displays in high-latitude and polar locations.
- This prediction was based on models developed by them as well as data from NASA’s observatories.
- **Aurora** : - Aurora are the coloured bands of light seen in the North and South poles.
- **Sunspots** : - The solar magnetic cycle that works in the deep interior of the Sun creates regions that rise to the surface and appear like dark spots. These are the sunspots.

Solar flares

- Solar flares are very energetic events that occur within sunspots.
- The energy contained in the Sun’s magnetic structures is turned into light and heat energy during a solar flare.
- Coronal Mass Ejection(CME) occurs when solar flares force heated plasma to be expelled from the Sun, resulting in a solar storm.

Impact of the Solar Flares

- Sharp increase in transverse magnetic fields, density, and plasma wind velocity.
- The flares can have an impact on Earth-bound items and life.

- Coronal mass ejections can disrupt electrical systems as well as oil pipelines and deep-sea cables.
- They may also produce beautiful auroras in high-latitude and polar regions.

7. Panel blames sudden low winds for noxious Delhi air

The expert sub-committee tasked with recommending pollution control measures under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) has released the report.

Details:

- **Observations of the Subcommittee Report:**
 - The terrible air quality that seized the Delhi National Capital Region following Deepavali was mostly caused by unexpected low winds.
 - A shift in wind direction increased the burden of pollution from stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana.
- **Concerns with the Report of sub-committee: -**
 - The committee opted to disregard a scientific report issued by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
 - The significance of crackers, biomass burning, and unfavourable meteorological conditions in raising the AQI to severe levels has been overlooked.
 - In light of the ongoing concerns, the subcommittee recommends no additional steps.

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. All India Judicial Service

Context: The central government is preparing to give a fresh push to the establishment of an All India Judicial Service (AIJS) on the lines of the central civil services.

What is the proposed All India Judicial Service (AIJS)?

- The AIJS is a reform push to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states.
- In the same way that the Union Public Service Commission conducts a central recruitment process and assigns successful candidates to cadres, judges of the lower judiciary are proposed to be recruited centrally and assigned to states.

How are district judges currently recruited?

- Articles 233 and 234 of the Constitution of India deal with the appointment of district judges, and place it in the domain of the states.
- The selection process is conducted by the State Public Service Commissions and the concerned High Court, since High Courts exercise jurisdiction over the subordinate judiciary in the state. Panels of High Court judges interview candidates after the exam and select them for appointment.
- All judges of the lower judiciary up to the level of district judge are selected through the Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) exam. PCS(J) is commonly referred to as the judicial services exam.

Why has the AIJS been proposed?

- The idea of a centralised judicial service was first mooted in the Law Commission's 1958 'Report on Reforms on Judicial Administration'.
- The idea was to ensure an efficient subordinate judiciary, to address structural issues such as varying pay and remuneration across states, to fill vacancies faster, and to ensure standard training across states.
- A statutory or constitutional body such as the UPSC to conduct a standard, centralised exam to recruit and train judges was discussed.
- The idea was proposed again in the Law Commission Report of 1978, which discussed delays and arrears of cases in the lower courts.
- In 2006, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 15th Report backed the idea of a pan-Indian judicial service, and also prepared a draft Bill.

What is the judiciary's view on the AIJS?

- In 1992, the Supreme Court in *All India Judges' Assn. (1) v. Union of India* directed the Centre to set up an AIJS. In a 1993 review of the judgment, however, the court left the Centre at liberty to take the initiative on the issue.
- In 2017, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of the issue of appointment of district judges, and mooted a "Central Selection Mechanism".
- Senior advocate Arvind Datar, who was appointed amicus curiae by the court, recommended conducting a common examination instead of separate

state exams. Based on the merit list, High Courts would then hold interviews and appoint judges.

What is the opposition to the AIJS?

- A centralised recruitment process is seen as an **affront to federalism** and an encroachment on the powers of states granted by the Constitution. This is the main contention of several states, which have also argued that central recruitment would not be able to address the unique concerns that individual states may have.
- Language and representation, for example, are key concerns highlighted by states. Judicial business is conducted in regional languages, which could be affected by central recruitment.
- Also, reservations based on caste, and even for rural candidates or linguistic minorities in the state, could be diluted in a central test, it has been argued.
- The opposition is also based on the constitutional concept of the separation of powers. A central test could give the executive a foot in the door for the appointment of district judges, and dilute the say that High Courts have in the process.
- Additionally, legal experts have argued that the creation of AIJS will not address the structural issues plaguing the lower judiciary.
- The issue of different scales of pay and remuneration has been addressed by the Supreme Court in the 1993 All India Judges Association case by bringing in uniformity across states.
- Experts argue that increasing pay across the board and ensuring that a fraction of High Court judges are picked from the lower judiciary, may help better than a central exam to attract quality talent.

Why is the government seeking to revive the idea of AIJS?

- The government has targeted the reform of lower judiciary in its effort to improve India's **Ease of Doing Business** ranking, as efficient dispute resolution is one of the key indices in determining the rank.
- AIJS is considered by the government as a step in the direction of ensuring an **efficient lower judiciary**.
- The government has countered the opposition by states, saying that if a central mechanism can work for administrative services – IAS officers learn the language required for their cadre – it can work for judicial services too.

2. Why is Delhi holding an NSA meet on Afghanistan?

- Indian National Security Adviser will be hosting a meeting of NSAs from China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the Afghanistan issue.
 - Pakistan NSA has rejected the invitation for participation and China has not yet confirmed its participation.

Agenda of the meeting:

- The meeting will discuss Afghanistan's future and is expected to seek a **common understanding of how to approach the Taliban regime**, especially on seeking an inclusive government in Afghanistan, with rights for women and minorities.
- The meeting will also discuss on how to **deal with security threats emanating from the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan**- Increase in terror groups operating within Afghanistan, increase in drug trafficking, the possible inflow of refugees due to the humanitarian crisis.

Significance for India:

- The NSA meeting is an attempt to **find a solution to the Afghanistan crisis** from the region itself. Finding a peaceful solution to the Afghanistan issue is in India's interests as well given the regional influence of the Afghanistan developments.
- Previously, most discussion formats on Afghanistan have not included India, mostly due to Pakistan's opposition to inclusion of India. The NSA meeting in Delhi will **seek to project India as a necessary and integral part of the Afghan dialogue**.
- Also the meeting offers India an opportunity to re-enforce its claims as a "boundary neighbour", given that Afghanistan abuts Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Despite India's opposition to the Taliban regime replacing the democratically elected government in Afghanistan, India has been engaging with Taliban at various levels recently. India also seeks to remain an important figure in Afghanistan's future as a development, aid and trade partner and a builder of connectivity infrastructure with its involvement in Chabahar port project, Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. The NSA meeting will **help India understand the stance of other countries in the region and recalibrate its approach towards the Afghan issue**.

3. Age determination of juvenile offenders shall be completed in 15 days: HC

The Delhi High Court has ordered that the procedure of determining the age of a juvenile be completed within 15 days of the filing of documents.

Details:

- According to the Delhi High Court, the Investigating Officer must ensure that the Ossification test for the juvenile is done and filed with the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) within 15 days.
- The JJB must guarantee that the juvenile's age determination process is completed within 15 days after the submission of papers.

Who is Juvenile?

- The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 addresses children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection.
- According to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015, any person who is less than eighteen years of age is considered a Juvenile.

Juvenile Justice Board (JJB)

- Juveniles accused of or imprisoned for committing a crime are brought before the JJB constituted under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015.
- The JJB is made up of a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class, as well as two Social Workers, one of whom must be a woman.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology, Environment

4. How has RBI tweaked Prompt Corrective Action norms for banks?

Context:

- The Reserve Bank of India recently issued a notification **revising norms for commercial banks to be placed under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.**
 - The new framework takes effect from January 1, 2022.

Prompt Corrective Action:

- The PCA framework was first notified in December 2002. Several banks have been placed under the framework since then.
- The objective of the framework is to **enable supervisory intervention** at appropriate time and require the supervised entity to initiate and **implement remedial measures in a timely manner** so as to restore its financial health.
- The PCA framework is envisaged as also a tool to **ensure effective market discipline**.
- Banks would be evaluated on the basis of **capital, asset quality, profitability and leverage**.
- The PCA framework has different risk thresholds with increasing restrictions on banks if they are unable to arrest their financial deterioration. **RBI can impose curbs on dividend distribution/remittance of profits, branch expansion and on capital expenditure**.
- In 2021, UCO Bank, IDBI Bank and Indian Overseas Bank exited the framework on improved performance. **Only Central Bank of India remains under the PCA framework now.**

Details:

- **The new revision removes return on assets as an indicator** to qualify for PCA. Hence Capital, Asset Quality and Leverage will be the key areas for monitoring in the revised framework. Indicators to be tracked for Capital, Asset Quality and Leverage would be **CRAR/ Common Equity Tier I Ratio, Net NPA Ratio and Tier I Leverage Ratio**
- The new version **excludes Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks** in addition to the Regional Rural Banks from the purview of the PCA framework.
- The PCA Framework would **apply to all banks operating in India including foreign banks** operating through branches or subsidiaries based on breach of risk thresholds of identified indicators.
- As per the new framework, **the exit of bank from the PCA would be based on four continuous quarterly results** of the Audited Annual Financial Statement apart from Supervisory Comfort of RBI, including an assessment on sustainability of profitability of the bank.

5. Where does India stand on methane emissions?

Context:

- **Global Methane Pledge and Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use** have been two of the most prominent outcomes so far of the ongoing UN Climate Change Conference (the 26th Conference of Parties-COP26) in Glasgow.

Global Methane pledge:

- The Global Methane pledge first announced in September by the US and EU is essentially an agreement to reduce global methane emissions.
- One of the central aims of this agreement is to **cut down methane emissions by up to 30 per cent from 2020 levels by the year 2030**.
- At least 90 countries have signed the Global Methane Pledge.

Significance:

- Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with **Global Warming Potential (GWP) of around 20-25 (for a 100-year timeframe GWP)**. According to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, methane accounts for about half of the 1.0 degrees Celsius net rise in global average temperature since the pre-industrial era.
- **Methane is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere**, after carbon dioxide, and accounting for about 20 percent of global emissions.
 - In the last two centuries, methane concentrations in the atmosphere have more than doubled.
- Methane has a **much shorter atmospheric lifetime** (12 years as compared to centuries for CO₂).
- Notably as per a report of the IEA, more than 75 per cent of methane emissions can be mitigated with the technology that exists today, and that up to 40 per cent of this can be done at no additional costs.
- Thus rapidly reducing methane emissions is regarded as the single most effective strategy to reduce global warming in the near term and keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.

Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use:

- The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, initiated by the United Kingdom aims to **halt deforestation and land degradation by 2030**.

- The Glasgow declaration is a **successor to the 2014 New York Declaration for Forests** that sought to reduce emissions from deforestation by 15%-20% by 2020 and end it by 2030.
- The pledge includes **\$19 bn of public and private funds** to invest in protecting and restoring forests.
- The pledge aims to ensure that natural forests aren't cleared out for commercial plantations. It also aims to halt industrial logging. The declaration also seeks to strengthen the rights of indigenous tribes and communities to forestland.
- The Glasgow Declaration has been signed by 133 countries, which represent 90% of the globe's forested land.

Significance:

- Deforestation has increased over the years and is **responsible for about 20% of the total carbon emissions.**

India's stance:

- Notably **India has stayed away from both the methane pledge and the forest conservation declaration at Glasgow.**
- **India is the third largest emitter of methane**, primarily because of the size of its rural economy and by virtue of having the largest cattle population. It was not sure about committing to steep methane emissions.
- India has **independent plans to reduce methane emissions.** India plans to deploy technology and capture methane that can be used as a source of energy. It plans to adopt a national strategy to increase biogas production and reduce methane emissions.
- India has been unhappy with the wording of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use that suggests **not meeting the obligations under the pledge could also mean restrictions in international trade.** India's line of argument has been that trade and climate action should not be related as trade falls under the ambit of the World Trade Organization.
- India is also considering **changes to its forest conservation laws** that seek to encourage commercial tree plantation as well as **infrastructure development in forestland** to meet its development goals. These initiatives might seem contradictory to the proposed provisions of the forest declaration at Glasgow.

Recommendations:

- **Sources of methane can be harnessed for energy.** This has the **dual advantage** of mitigating methane emission while also reducing dependence on other energy sources.

- The **lack of incentives and efficient energy markets** act as major impediments to harnessing methane as a source of energy. The government should focus on these aspects to mainstream methane capture and usage.

6. October witnessed highest power shortage in country in over 5 years

Context:

India recorded a power supply shortage of 1,201 million units in October 2021.

Details:

- The power supply constraint is the worst in 5.5 years as a result of a scarcity of coal inventories at thermal units.
- At the same time, power demand had increased by more than 24%.

Coal in India:

- Coal accounts for 70% of the country's electricity generation.
- The ash level in Indian coal is high while the sulphur concentration is low.
- It may be categorised into three varieties based on its carbon content:
 - **Anthracite:** It is the coal with 80 to 95% carbon content found in small quantities in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - **Bituminous:** It has a 60 to 80% carbon content and is found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
 - **Lignite** carries 40 to 55% carbon content and is found in Rajasthan, Lakhimpur (Assam) and Tamil Nadu.
 - **Peat** is a coal with low calorific value and less than 40% carbon content.

Prelims Practice Questions

1. The 'West Bank', a landlocked territory often seen in news, is bordered by?

1. Jordan to the East
2. Egypt to the South and West
3. Syria to the North

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A 1 only
B 3 only
C 2 and 3 only
D 1, 2 and 3

Answer : A

Explanation

- West Bank is a landlocked territory, bordered by **Jordan to the east and Israel to the south, west and north.**

Hence, answer A is correct.

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Asiatic lion is naturally found in India only.
2. Double-humped camel is naturally found in India only.
3. One-horned rhinoceros is naturally found in India only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- Nearly all wild lions live in sub-Saharan Africa, but one small population of Asiatic lions exists in India's Gir Forest. Asiatic lions and African lions are subspecies of the same species. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- The Bactrian camel is a large, even-toed ungulate native to the steppes of Central Asia. The Bactrian camel has two humps on its back, in contrast to the single-humped dromedary camel. Its population of two million exists mainly in the domesticated form. A small number of feral Bactrian camels still roam in Kazakhstan and the Nubra Valley in India. **Hence, Statement 2 is not correct.**
- The greater one-horned rhino lives in northern India and southern Nepal, in riverine (floodplain) grasslands and adjacent woodland. **Hence, Statement 3 is not correct.**

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Kameng river is a transboundary river that originates in the Tibet plateau.
2. Kameng river is one of the major tributaries of the Brahmaputra River.
3. The Dafla Hills are located east of the Kameng river.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A 1 only
- B 2 only
- C 2 and 3 only
- D 1, 2 and 3

Answer :C

Explanation

- **Kameng River** originates in Tawang district from the glacial lake below snow-capped Gori Chen mountain on the **India-Tibet border**.
 - Kameng is **not a transboundary river**. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
 - It flows through Bhalukpong circle of West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh and Sonitpur District of Assam.

- It becomes a braided river in its lower reaches and is **one of the major tributaries of the Brahmaputra River. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - It joins Brahmaputra river at Tezpur, just east of the Kolia Bhomora Setu bridge, Assam.
- Tributaries: Tippi, Tenga, Bichom and Dirang Chu.
- It forms the boundary between East Kameng District and West Kameng Districts.
 - It also forms the boundary between the Sessa and Eaglenest sanctuaries to its west (Arunachal Pradesh) and the Pakke tiger reserve to the east (Arunachal Pradesh).
 - The **Dafla Hills** are **east** and the Aka Hills are located west of the Kameng River. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

4 Which of the following is the theme for Goa Maritime Conclave 2021?

- a. Maritime Security and Emerging non-traditional threats: A case for proactive role for IOR Navies
- b. Common Maritime Priorities in IOR and need for Regional Maritime Strategy
- c. Addressing Regional Maritime Challenges
- d. None of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Indian Navy's outreach initiative is the Goa Maritime Conclave. It focuses on providing a multinational platform for maritime security practitioners and academics in order to generate outcome-oriented maritime.
- The theme of the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) is "*Maritime security and emerging non-traditional threats: a case for a proactive role for IOR Navies*".

5. Consider the following statements with regards to the Air Quality Index:

1. It measures a total of 10 major air pollutants.
2. AQI reading from 401-500 is considered as 'severe'.
3. PM 2.5 refers to the concentration of microscopic particles less than 2.5 microns in radius.

Which of these statements are incorrect?

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Air Quality is measured using a metric called Air Quality Index (AQI). AQI keeps a tab on **8 major air pollutants** in the atmosphere. **Hence Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- The 8 major air pollutants measured by AQI are:
 - a. Particulate Matter (PM10)
 - b. Particulate Matter (PM2.5)
 - c. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)
 - d. Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)
 - e. Carbon Monoxide (CO)
 - f. Ozone (O₃)
 - g. Ammonia (NH₃)
 - h. Lead (Pb)
- An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered “good”, 51 and 100 “satisfactory”, 101 and 200 “moderate”, 201 and 300 “poor”, 301 and 400 “very poor”, and **401 and 500 “severe”**. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- PM 2.5 refers to the concentration of microscopic particles less than 2.5 microns in **diameter (NOT Radius)**. **Hence Statement 3 is incorrect.**

6. As per the 2015 JCPOA deal between Iran and P5+1 nations, Iran was not meant to enrich Uranium above _____, while enriched Uranium above _____ can be used for nuclear weapons.

- a. 5.83%, 90%
- b. 3.67%, 80%
- c. 3.67%, 90%
- d. 5.83%, 80%

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Recently, Iran's atomic agency disclosed that its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium has reached over 210 kilograms.
- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA is a nuclear deal between Iran and the World Powers.
- According to the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran was not meant to enrich **uranium above 3.67%**. Enriched uranium **above 90% can be used for nuclear weapons**.
- This deal promises Iran economic incentives in exchange for limits on its nuclear programme, and is meant to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. The anti-defection law works best as an insurance against violation of the people's mandate for a party, but it cannot be made a tool to stifle all dissent. Discuss. (250 words)

Approach

- Introduce briefly the anti-defection law.
- State the need for anti-defection law and its criticism related to stifling dissents and freedom of expression.
- Give a conclusion

2Q. Health and nutrition not only play a vital role in making human life dynamic, capable and prosperous, but it also has the potential to empower, develop and strengthen the nation. Discuss. (250 words)

Approach

- Mention the significance of Health and Nutrition.
- Describe briefly why health and nutrition is a challenge for developing countries like India.
- Enumerate some steps taken by the government in this regard.
- Conclude by stating how health and nutrition can contribute to the overall development of a country.

