



# Yojna IAS

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## OCT-NOV 2023

### WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**30/10/2023 TO 05/11/2023**

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# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS CONTENTS

S.No.	Topics	Pg No.
1.	SATELLITE INTERNET	1 - 3
2.	BRU REFUGEES	3 - 5
3.	JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES	5 - 7
4.	BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)	7 - 10
5.	CARBON NANO FLORETS	10 - 12
6.	LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTER PRACHAND	13 - 14
7.	CAYMAN ISLANDS	15 - 18
8.	GAZA STRIP AND RAFAH BORDER STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX (SFSI) 2023	18 - 20
9.	GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS	20 - 22



# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

### SATELLITE INTERNET

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Satellite Internet”. This topic has relevance in the “Science and Technology” section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*What is Satellite internet and its uses?*

**For Mains:**

*GS2: Science and Technology*

**Why in the news?**

Recently, Reliance Jio made a significant announcement, showcasing **India’s first satellite-powered gigabit internet service**. This breakthrough technology has the potential to deliver high-speed internet to remote and hard-to-reach regions within the country.

**Satellite Internet**

- Satellite internet technology is a form of internet access provided through communication satellites orbiting the Earth.
- It allows users to connect to the internet without relying on traditional terrestrial methods like cable or fibre optic connections.

**Working of Satellite Internet**

- An internet service provider (ISP) deploys satellites into orbit around the Earth.
- The ISP then relies on a signal transmitted through one of these satellites in either low-Earth or high-Earth orbit. A strategically placed receiver dish, situated with an unobstructed view of the sky, captures this signal.
- To establish a functional internet connection, a modem is connected to this receiver dish, translating the incoming signal.
- Traditional high-speed satellite internet methods often involve constellations of low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, which orbit the Earth at altitudes ranging from 250 to 2,000 kilometres.
- Communication between these satellites and the Earth takes place through the transmission of radio waves.

**Advantages:**

- **Global Coverage:** Satellite internet is not restricted by geographical barriers, making it an ideal solution for remote and rural areas where traditional broadband connections are unavailable.
- **High Speed:** While it may not match the speeds of fibre-optic or cable internet, satellite technology can deliver significantly faster internet than dial-up or DSL connections.
- **Quick Deployment:** Satellite internet can be deployed relatively quickly, making it a valuable solution in emergencies and for businesses in need of rapid connectivity.
- **Redundancy:** It can serve as a backup or redundant internet connection for businesses, ensuring connectivity even when terrestrial networks fail.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

- **Latency:** Due to the long distance data must travel between the Earth and satellites, satellite internet experiences higher latency than terrestrial connections, making it less suitable for time-sensitive applications like online gaming or Video conferencing.
- **Cost:** Satellite internet services are more expensive than traditional broadband, often involving equipment and installation costs.
- **Data Caps:** Many satellite internet plans come with data usage restrictions, which can be a limiting factor for heavy internet users.
- **Weather Interference:** Adverse weather conditions, such as heavy rain or snow, can disrupt satellite signals, leading to connectivity issues.

**More about the news:**

- At the recent India Mobile Congress, Reliance Jio unveiled its latest technological innovation, JioSpaceFiber.
- This advanced satellite internet technology, developed in partnership with SES, a Luxembourg-based satellite communications company, harnesses medium Earth orbit (MEO) satellites to provide internet connectivity.
- SES's O3v and o3b mPOWER networks form the foundation of this groundbreaking initiative, claiming to offer internet services comparable to traditional fibre connections from space.

**Sources:**

Reliance Jio demonstrates its satellite-based gigabit internet in India |  
Technology News – The Indian Express

**Q1. With reference to Satellite Internet Technology, consider the following statements:**

1. It allows users to connect to the internet without relying on cable or fibre optic connections.
2. Communication between these satellites and the Earth takes place through the transmission of infra-red waves.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None

**Answer: (a)**



**Q2. Consider the following:**

1. Global Coverage
2. Faster internet than broadband
3. Quick deployment
4. No effect of weather conditions

**How many of the abovementioned are advantages of Satellite Internet ?**

- (a) Only one  
(b) Only two  
(c) Only three  
(d) All four

**Answer: (b)**

**Q3. Discuss the significance and challenges of satellite internet technology with reference to India's recent development in this field.**

## **BRU REFUGEES**

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Bru refugees". This topic has relevance in the "Social Issues" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*Who are Bru refugees?*

**For Mains:**

*GS1: Society*

**Why in the news?**

For the first time, Bru refugees will not vote in Mizoram elections since they have been permanently settled in Tripura through a Central government-sponsored program.

**Bru Tribe**

- The Brus, also known as Reangs, are an indigenous community primarily residing in Northeast India, notably in **Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam**.
- In Tripura, they hold the status of a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**, a designation by the government for tribes facing heightened vulnerability within the tribal community.
- The Brus speak the Reang dialect of the Kokborok language, which is locally referred to as Kau Bru.
- Their Hojagiri folk dance is well-known all over the world. 'Buisu' is the most famous festival of the Reang tribes.

### Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)

- PVTG is a classification designed to identify tribal communities with heightened vulnerability within the broader tribal population.
- These groups exhibit specific characteristics, including:
  - Pre-Agricultural Technology
  - Stagnant or Declining Population
  - Extremely Low Literacy
  - Subsistence Economy
- These communities often reside in remote areas with limited infrastructure and administrative support.
- As of 2011, there are 75 PVTGs dispersed across 18 states and one Union Territory in India.

### Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis

- The crisis dates back to the late 1990s when violence and ethnic tensions between the Bru and the majority Mizos led to the displacement of thousands of Bru people from Mizoram state.
- The Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis has fueled since 1997, with over 40,000 Brus taking refuge in six camps in northern Tripura's Kanchanpur sub-division following ethnic violence in neighbouring Mizoram.
- These refugee camps were initially intended to be temporary, but due to the protracted nature of the crisis, the displaced population has remained in these camps for over two decades.

### Rehabilitation of Brus

- In June 2018, leaders of the Bru camps agreed with the Centre and the two state governments to enable repatriation to Mizoram. However, many camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement, citing concerns about their safety in Mizoram.
- Subsequently, a **quadripartite agreement** was inked in **January 2020**, involving the **Centre, the state governments of Tripura and Mizoram, and representatives of the Bru-Reang community**. This agreement was designed to **facilitate the permanent settlement of Bru refugees in Tripura**.
- According to the terms of this pact, each refugee family is entitled to receive a designated plot of land, a fixed deposit of Rs. 4 lakh, complimentary rations, and a monthly stipend of Rs. 5,000 for two years. Additionally, each family will receive Rs. 1.5 lakh for the construction of their houses.

**Sources:** For the first time, Bru refugees to have no participation in Mizoram Assembly polls – The Hindu

### Q1. With reference to Bru Tribe, consider the following statements:

1. They are an indigenous tribe primarily residing in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam.
2. Bihu is the most famous festival of the Reang tribes.
3. The recent agreement facilitated the permanent settlement of Bru refugees in Mizoram.

**Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

**Answer: (b)**

**Q2. Consider the following:**

1. Post- Agricultural Technology
2. Stagnant or Increasing Population
3. Extremely Low Literacy
4. Subsistence Economy

**How many of the characteristics of a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) are mentioned above?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**Answer: (b)**

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Jehovah's Witnesses". This topic has relevance in the Art and Culture section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*About Jehovah's Witnesses?*

**For Mains:**

*GS 1: Art and Culture*

*Jehovah's Witnesses in India?*

**Why in the news?**

**About Jehovah's Witnesses:**

- Jehovah's Witnesses are a Christian sect with distinct beliefs, differing from mainstream Christianity, particularly in their rejection of the Holy Trinity.

**Origins:**

- The origins of Jehovah's Witnesses can be traced back to a Bible Student movement initiated in the 1870s by American pastor Charles Taze Russell.
- Today, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is headquartered in Warwick, New York.

Aspect	Jehovah's Witnesses
STRUCTURE	
Clergy Class	They have no clergy class.

Financial Support	Elders, teachers, and missionaries are unsalaried. All activities are supported by anonymous donations. They do not tithe or collect money at their places of worship (Kingdom Halls).
Political Neutrality	They remain neutral with regard to politics and advocate peace, not participating in warfare.
Global Unity	They are globally united in their faith and Bible-based beliefs, with no social, ethnic, racial, or class divisions. They are not affiliated with any other religion, whether Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant.
<b>DOCTRINE</b>	
Belief in God	They believe in one true God, whose name is Jehovah.
Belief in Jesus	They do not believe that Jesus Christ is Almighty God or in the Trinity doctrine. They follow the teachings of Jesus and honor him as the Son of God.
Religious Symbols	They do not venerate the cross, nor do they use idols in their worship.
Belief in Hell	They do not believe in a fiery hell where all bad people go after death.
Eternal Life Belief	They believe that God will bless obedient mankind with perfect everlasting life in an earthly paradise.
Christianity Claim	Jehovah's Witnesses believe that they have successfully reestablished first-century Christianity, the form of Christianity that Jesus' apostles practiced.

### Practices and Festivals:

- Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate Christmas or Easter, as they view these festivals as influenced by Pagan traditions.
- Paganism refers to a group of contemporary religions rooted in reverence for nature and often linked to indigenous traditions.

### Evangelical Work:

- Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their evangelical work, emphasizing the importance of belief in Jesus Christ and the study of the Bible.
- They engage in door-to-door outreach to spread what they refer to as "The Truth."

### End-Times Belief:

- They believe that the end of the world is imminent and anticipate the Kingdom of God replacing human governments to fulfill God's purpose for the earth.

### Jehovah's Witnesses in India:

- Jehovah's Witnesses have had a presence in India since 1905.
- They established an office in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) in 1926 and obtained legal registration in 1978.

### Supreme Court Verdict:

- A significant legal case involving Jehovah's Witnesses in India was *Bijoe Emmanuel vs. State of Kerala*. In 1986, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of three children from the sect who refused to sing the National Anthem at their school.
- The court held that compelling them to participate violated their fundamental right to freedom of religion under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution.



**Q.1 Which of the following statements about Jehovah's Witnesses is/are correct?**

1. Jehovah's Witnesses originated in India in the 19th century.
2. They believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**ANSWER: D**

**Q.2 Consider the following statements about Jehovah's Witnesses:**

1. It is a sect of Judaism
2. They consider the Bible as their ultimate holy scripture.
3. They do not consider Jesus Christ as a God.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**ANSWER: B**

## BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)".  
This topic has relevance in the "International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

What is BRI?

What are its principles?

**For Mains:**

GS2: International Relations

**Why in the news?**

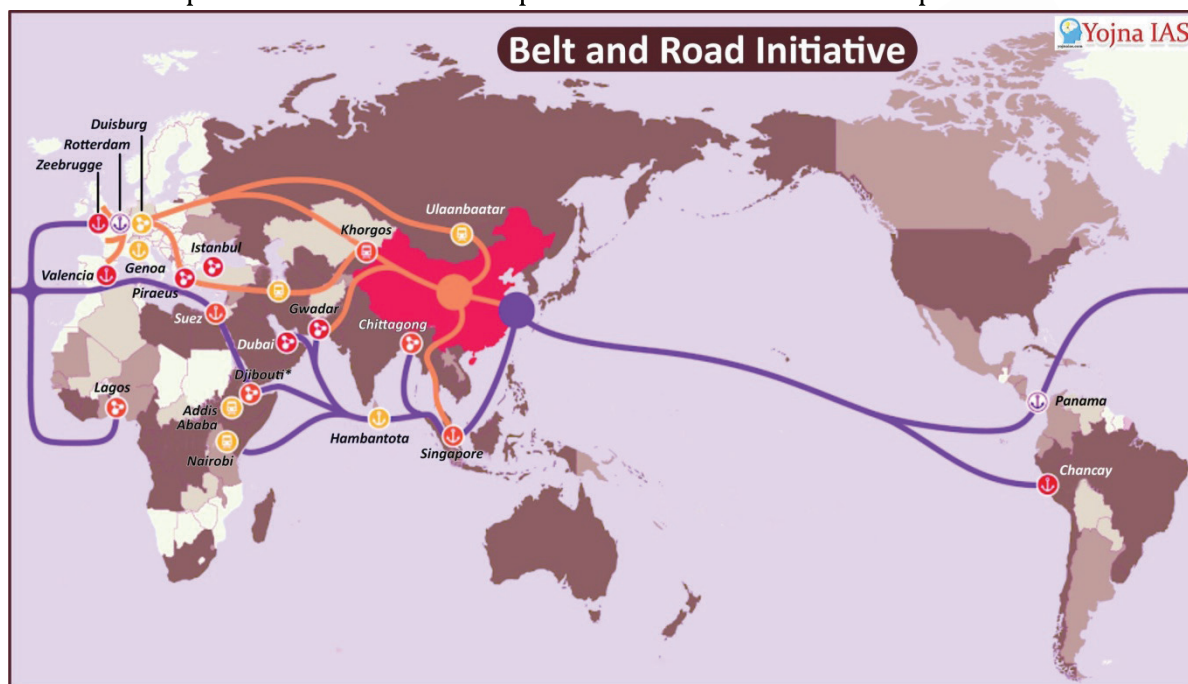
The year 2023 commemorates ten years since President Xi Jinping introduced the ambitious infrastructure funding project known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in China.

### About Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- In 2013, President Xi Jinping launched the **Silk Road Economic 'Belt'** focusing on revitalising trade and infrastructure connections between Asia and Europe, particularly through Central Asia.
- Expanding on this, he later introduced the **'Road,' which aimed to establish sea trade**

**infrastructure** connecting China to Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa, prioritising the development of ports, bridges, industry corridors, and critical infrastructure throughout Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

- While **initially termed the One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR)**, these projects have been commonly referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since 2015.
- This ambitious undertaking involves the creation of an **extensive network encompassing railways, energy pipelines, highways**, and more efficient border crossings.
- As of now, **over sixty countries**, accounting for a significant portion of the world's population, have either signed on to BRI projects or expressed their interest in doing so.
- Behind the BRI lie both geopolitical and economic motives for China. The initiative aligns with China's vision of a more assertive global presence.
- Additionally, factors like slowing economic growth and challenging trade relations with the United States have compelled Chinese leadership to seek new markets for its products.



### Principles of BRI

- The BRI was underpinned by five core principles initially:
  - **Policy Coordination**
  - **Infrastructure Connectivity**
  - **Trade**
  - **Financial Integration**
  - **People-to-People Connections**
- Later, a sixth principle of '**Industrial cooperation**' was added.

### India's Position on the BRI

India's stance on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has remained consistent since 2013.

- **Sovereignty Concerns:** India's main reservations stem from sovereignty issues, particularly regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

- **Geopolitical Implications:** India is concerned about the geopolitical implications of the BRI's expansion in the Indian Ocean region, as China's presence grows, impacting trade, energy transport, and investments in neighbouring countries.
- **Broader Impact on Relations:** Negative developments in India-China relations, such as the trade deficit and border tensions, further influence India's view of the BRI.
- **Non-Endorsement and AIIB Participation:** India refrains from endorsing the BRI and has not participated in BRI Forums. Instead, it has actively engaged with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) since its inception, emerging as a significant market for the agency.

### China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been a central element of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from its inception. Pakistan faces economic and political difficulties, but it remains committed to the CPEC, despite concerns about potential long-term economic consequences.

- **Cornerstone of China-Pakistan Partnership:** The \$60 billion CPEC is a crucial part of the "all-weather" strategic partnership between China and Pakistan, bolstered by a bilateral free trade agreement.
- **Project Focus:** The CPEC emphasises energy projects to address Pakistan's energy needs, alongside extensive infrastructure development and the strategic Gwadar port.
  - **Strategic Objectives:** The primary objectives of CPEC are to provide China with an alternate and shorter route to the Middle East and Africa, bypassing the Malacca Strait. Simultaneously, it seeks to promote Pakistan's economic development and bolster its energy security.
- **Operational Achievements:** Several CPEC projects are now operational, including the Sukkur-Multan section of the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway, the Havelian-Thakot section of the Karakoram Highway Phase II, the Lahore Orange Line Metro, and various operational energy projects such as coal-fired plants.
- **Regional Expansion:** Some CPEC projects may extend into Afghanistan, potentially broadening the corridor's regional impact.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) serves as a platform through which China leverages its infrastructure, knowledge, and financial prowess to cultivate enhanced political connections with countries reliant on capital imports. In light of these evolving dynamics, it is imperative for India to carefully assess the geopolitical interests it holds in the Indian Ocean region. This critical examination is vital, as the Indian Ocean region presents potential security challenges that India must proactively address and navigate.

**Sources:**

**An Expert Explains | 10 years of China's Belt and Road Initiative: The project, its aims and where it stands now | Explained News – The Indian Express**

**Q1. With reference Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), consider the following statements:**

1. 'Belt' has a focus on revitalising trade and infrastructure connections between China to Southeast

Asia, Europe, and Africa.

2. The 'Road' component, reminiscent of the Ancient Silk Road, will connect between Asia and Europe, particularly through Central Asia.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: (d)**

**Q2. Consider the following:**

1. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a bilateral venture between Pakistan and China, aiming to enhance infrastructure and connectivity within Pakistan.
2. CPEC is an integral component of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
3. CPEC's main goals include offering China a more direct route to the Middle East and Africa, bypassing the Gulf of Aden.

**How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer: (b)**

**Q3. Discuss the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its evolution over the past decade. Evaluate India's stance on the BRI.**

## CARBON NANO FLORETS

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Carbon Nano Florets". This topic has relevance in the Science and technology section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*About Carbon Nano Florets?*

*Special properties of Nano Florets?*

**For Mains:**

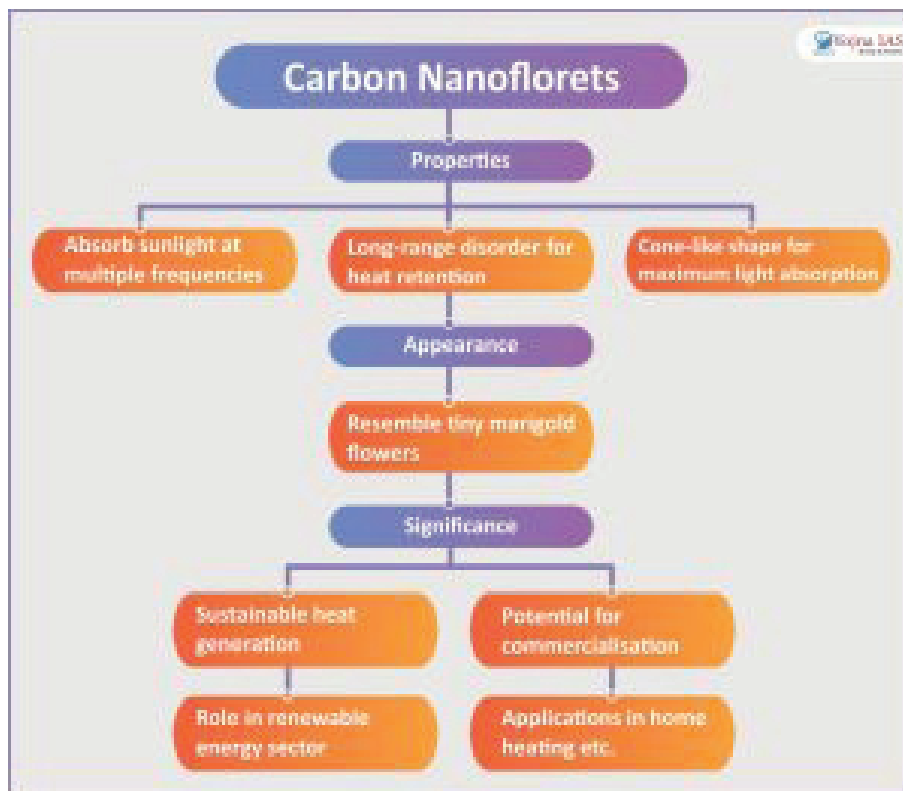
*GS 3: Science and technology*

*Significance of Nano Florets?*

**Why in the news?**

Scientists at IIT Bombay have successfully created particles that can absorb sunlight at three different frequencies and convert it into heat with an impressive efficiency rate of 87%





### About Carbon Nano Florets:

- The potential for revolutionizing solar energy conversion lies within the carbon nanostructure. Scientists initiated their research using dendritic fibrous nanosilica (DFNS), a white material, and engineered it into the deepest black carbon nanoflorets.
- In the process of creating these carbon nanoflorets, DFNS powder was subjected to heat in a furnace while being exposed to acetylene gas within the chamber. The transformation from white to black signified the deposition of carbon onto the DFNS.
- Upon the dissolution of the DFNS using a potent chemical, what remained were carbon cone-shaped spherical nanostructures. These nanoflorets take on the appearance of diminutive marigold flowers.

### Special properties of Nano Florets:

- The distinctive characteristics of carbon nanoflorets include their unparalleled capacity to absorb sunlight across various frequencies and convert it into heat with remarkable effectiveness.
- These nanoflorets exhibit the exceptional ability to absorb infrared, visible, and ultraviolet light, setting them apart from conventional materials for solar-thermal conversion, which typically only absorb visible and ultraviolet light.
- Their conical structure serves to minimize reflection, ensuring maximum light absorption by allowing most incident light to be internally reflected.
- Moreover, the nanoflorets feature long-range disorder, which hinders heat dissipation over extended distances, thus facilitating efficient heat retention.

### Significance of Nano Florets:

- This material is poised for commercialization due to the cost-effectiveness of carbon and the

sustainable heat generation capabilities of nanoflorets, eliminating the need for burning fossil fuels.

- A single square meter of carbon nanofloret coating has the remarkable capacity to vaporize 5 liters of water per hour, surpassing the performance of conventional commercial solar stills. This breakthrough opens the door to sustainable solutions for heating residential spaces and sterilizing hospital surfaces without dependence on fossil fuels.
- With its diverse array of potential applications and minimal environmental footprint, this material holds the potential to make a substantial impact in the realm of renewable energy.

**Source:**

**<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/carbon-nanoflorets-iit-bombay-solar-thermal-conversion-high-efficiency/article67472739.ece>**

**Q.1 Consider the following statements about carbon nanoflorets:**

1. Carbon nanoflorets can only absorb visible and ultraviolet light, unlike traditional solar-thermal conversion materials.
2. The conical structure of carbon nanoflorets enhances reflection, reducing light absorption.
3. Carbon nanoflorets' unique feature of long-range disorder promotes heat dissipation over extended distances.
4. Carbon nanoflorets possess the exceptional ability to absorb sunlight at various frequencies, converting it into heat effectively, unlike conventional solar-thermal materials.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**ANSWER: A**

**Q.2 In relation to carbon nanotubes, assess the following statements: (2020)**

1. They can serve as carriers for delivering drugs and antigens within the human body.
2. They have the potential to be fashioned into synthetic blood vessels for damaged areas of the human body.
3. They find utility in the field of biochemical sensors.
4. Carbon nanotubes do not naturally degrade in biological environments.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

**ANSWER: C**

# LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTER PRACHAND

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Light Combat Helicopter Prachand". This topic has relevance in the "Security" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*What is Light Combat Helicopter Prachand? What are its features?*

**For Mains:**

*GS2: Security*

## Why in the news?

The Indian Army's Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), known as 'Prachand', successfully conducted rocket firing on Monday, both during the day and at night.



- Developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- Modern stealth features and strong armor protection
- Fitted with Shakti Engine (co-developed by HAL and France's Safran)
- Received operational clearance in 2017
- Maximum speed of 288 kmph and combat radius of 500 km
- Can land and take off at altitudes of 5,000 meters

## Light Combat Helicopter Prachand

- The LCH Prachand is India's first indigenous **multi-role combat** helicopter. It is designed and manufactured by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.
- The helicopter features modern stealth characteristics, strong armour protection, and powerful night attack capabilities. It has advanced navigation systems, close combat guns, and effective air-to-air missiles.
- The LCH Prachand is **suitable for high-altitude operations** and accurate strikes on targets located at elevated positions.
- It holds the distinction of being the **only attack helicopter** in the world capable of **landing and taking off at altitudes of 5,000 meters** while carrying significant weapons and fuel payload.

- It is powered by the **Shakti Engine**, which is a collaborative effort between HAL and France's Safran, ensuring top-notch performance.
- LCH Prachand received operational clearance in 2017, highlighting its readiness for military service.
- **Performance Specifications**
  - Capable of flying at a maximum speed of 288 kmph.
  - With a combat radius of 500 km, it can reach a service ceiling of 21,000 feet.
- The LCH Prachand can carry out an array of activities, including Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR), Destruction of Enemy Air Defence (DEAD), operations against slow-moving aircraft and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs), high-altitude bunker busting operations, counter-insurgency missions in jungle and urban environments, and providing crucial support to ground forces.
- It will be **equipped with Helina missiles**, with the Air Force version named Dhruvastra.

The LCH Prachand stands as a remarkable achievement in Indian aeronautics, designed to meet the diverse needs of the armed forces across a range of challenging terrains and operational scenarios. Its cutting-edge features, indigenous development, and versatile capabilities make it a key asset in India's military arsenal.

**Sources:**

Army's LCH Prachand carries out inaugural firing of 70mm rocket – The Economic Times (indiatimes.com)

**Q1. With reference LCH Prachanda, consider the following statements:**

1. It is India's first indigenous multi-role combat fighter aircraft.
2. It is designed and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None

**Answer: (b)**

**Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to LCH Prachanda:**

1. LCH Prachand is suitable for high-altitude operations.
2. It is the only attack helicopter in the world capable of landing and taking off at altitudes of 8,500 meters while carrying significant weapons and fuel payload.
3. The Shakti Engine that powers it is developed entirely indigenously in the country.

**How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer: (a)**



# CAYMAN ISLANDS

*This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “ Cayman Islands”. This topic has relevance in the Economy section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

GS 2: Economy

## Why in the news?

The removal of the Cayman Islands from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list is anticipated to bring about a favorable effect for international private equity funds looking to make investments in India.

## Cayman Islands: A British Overseas Territory

**Location:** The Cayman Islands, located within the Western Caribbean Sea, is a British Overseas Territory. This territory consists of three main islands: Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. They are positioned to the south of Cuba and northwest of Jamaica.

## Historical Background:

- The Cayman Islands were colonized by the British during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- After 1863, these islands were administered by Jamaica.
- In 1959, the Cayman Islands became a territory within the Federation of the West Indies.
- Following the dissolution of the Federation in 1962, the Cayman Islands chose to remain a British dependency.

**Language:** While English is the predominant language spoken in the Cayman Islands, many inhabitants also communicate in local Creole dialects.

**Geography:** The Cayman Islands feature a low-lying landscape with extensive coral reefs that contribute to their natural beauty.

**Capital:** George Town, situated on Grand Cayman Island, serves as the capital of the Cayman Islands.

**Currency:** The official currency of the Cayman Islands is the Cayman Island dollar. However, American currency is widely accepted throughout the islands.

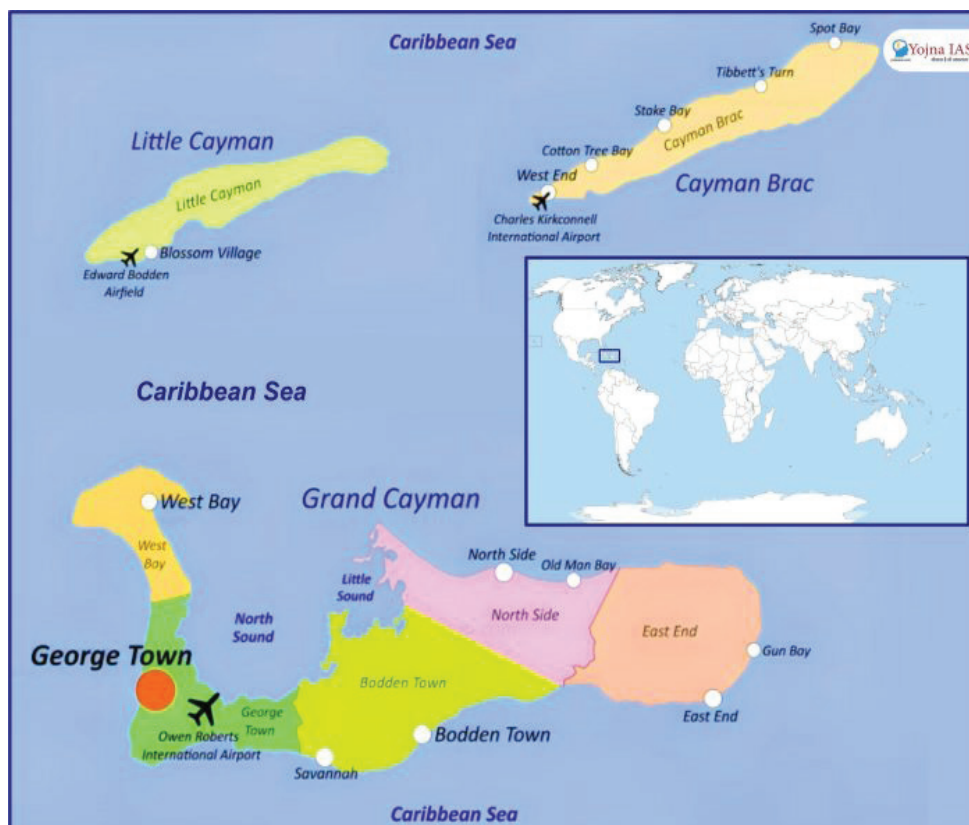
**Government:** The government system in the Cayman Islands is based on a parliamentary democracy. The chief of state is the queen of the United Kingdom, while the head of government is the premier.

## Economy:

- The Cayman Islands boast a mixed economic system.
- They are renowned as a thriving offshore financial center, attracting international businesses and corporations.
- The Cayman Islands are considered a tax haven due to their lack of corporate taxation, making them an attractive location for multinational companies to establish subsidiary entities and shield their incomes from taxation.
- Notably, the Cayman Islands do not impose taxes on residents. There are no income taxes, property taxes, capital gains taxes, payroll taxes, or withholding taxes.

- The Caymans generate revenue through tourism-related fees, work permits, financial transactions, and import duties.

The Cayman Islands' unique economic and tax structure make them an intriguing destination for both businesses and tourists.



### Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

**Overview:** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 at the initiative of the G7 nations.

**Mandate:** FATF serves as a “policy-making body” focused on generating political will to encourage national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.

**Secretariat:** The OECD headquarters in Paris houses the FATF Secretariat.

### Roles and Functions:

- **Money Laundering:** Initially, FATF was established to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
- **Terrorist Financing:** In October 2001, FATF expanded its mandate to include efforts to combat terrorist financing alongside money laundering.
- **Weapons of Mass Destruction:** In April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Composition:** FATF currently consists of 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organizations, representing major financial centers worldwide. Additionally, the organization includes observer and associate members.

### Objectives: FATF aims to:

- Set standards for and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational

measures to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and threats to the international financial system's integrity.

### **Blacklist and Grey List:**

- **Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are placed on the blacklist due to their support for terror funding and money laundering activities. The blacklist is periodically revised by FATF, with countries added or removed.
- **Grey List:** Countries considered safe havens for supporting terror funding and money laundering are placed on the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may eventually be moved to the blacklist.

### **Implications of Being in the Grey List:** Countries in the grey list may face:

- Economic sanctions from international financial institutions like IMF, World Bank, and ADB.
- Challenges in obtaining loans from international financial organizations.
- Reduction in international trade opportunities.
- Risk of international boycott.

**FATF President:** The FATF President is a senior official appointed by the FATF Plenary from among its members for a one-year term.

### **Source:**

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/money/topstories/cayman-islands-exit-from-fatf-grey-list-to-boost-fdi-inflow-in-india/ar-AA1j7tEh>

### **Q.1 Consider the following statements:**

1. This territory is located in the Caribbean Sea and is a British Overseas Territory.
2. The Cayman Islands are known for being a part of the European Union (EU).
3. The Cayman Islands have gained recognition for their advanced technological developments in the field of aerospace.

### **How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**ANSWER: A**

### **Q.2 Consider the following statements about the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):**

1. FATF was established primarily to combat money laundering and was formed under the guidance of the G20 nations.
2. The FATF Secretariat is situated in London.

### **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANSWER: D**

**Q.3 Discuss the impact of black money havens on the global economy and the measures that can be taken at both national and international levels to combat the issue.**

## **GAZA STRIP AND RAFAH BORDER STATE FOOD SAFETY INDEX (SFSI) 2023**

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2023". This topic has relevance in the "Social Issues" section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

**For Prelims:**

*What is State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2023?*

**For Mains:**

*GS2: Social Issues*

### **Why in the news?**

The State Food Safety Index (SFSI) for 2023 has been released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

### **State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2023**

- The aim behind the creation of the State Food Safety Index is to assess the performance of various states in relation to different aspects of food safety.
- This index is constructed based on five crucial parameters:
  - **Human Resources and Institutional Data**
  - **Compliance**
  - **Infrastructure and Surveillance for Food Testing**
  - **Training & Capacity Building**
  - **Consumer Empowerment**
- To ensure a fair comparison among similar entities, the states are classified into three categories: Large States, Small States, and Union Territories (UTs)
- Starting from 2019, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has been **annually releasing** the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) on **June 7, coinciding with World Food Safety Day**.
- Notably, the 2023 edition of the index introduced a new parameter called '**Improvement in SFSI Rank**,' which measures the degree of improvement in each state's ranking from the previous year.

### **Key Findings of SFSI 2023**

- Kerala has claimed the top position in the index, with Punjab and Tamil Nadu following closely behind.



- In the category of smaller states, Goa has secured the first position for the fourth consecutive time, with Manipur and Sikkim trailing behind.
- Among the Union territories, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, and Chandigarh have secured the first, second, and third positions, respectively.
- 19 out of 20 large states recorded a drop in their 2023 scores from 2019, indicating a decline in food safety performance across the country.
- The worst drop was seen in Maharashtra, which scored 45 out of 100 in 2023 compared to 74 in 2019, followed by Bihar and Gujarat.
- The steepest fall in scores over five years was observed in the Food Testing Infrastructure parameter, where the average score for all large states dropped to 7 points out of 17 in 2023 from 13 points out of 20 in 2019.
- The only parameter that recorded significant improvement was Training and Capacity Building, where the average score improved to 5 points out of 8 in 2023 from 3.5 points out of 10 in 2019.



#### **About FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India)**

**Parent Act:** Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the primary legislation governing food safety and standards in India.

**Nodal Ministry:** FSSAI falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in India.

#### **Primary Aim:**

- To ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- It does this by laying down science-based standards for articles of food and regulating their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and imports.

#### **Functions:**

- Establishing and laying down scientific and comprehensive food safety standards for various food products.
- Regulating and licensing food businesses, including manufacturers, processors, distributors, and retailers.
- Inspecting and monitoring food businesses for compliance with the food safety standards and guidelines.
- Providing suggestions to the government in framing the policies related to food safety.
- Protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

#### **Sources:**

In FSSAI index, nearly all major states slip on food safety compared to 2019 | Business News - The Indian Express

**Q1. With reference to State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2023, consider the following statements:**

1. The SFSI aims to assess the performance of various states in relation to different aspects of food safety.
2. It is being released by the Food and Drug Administration every year.
3. The recent 2023 report indicates an overall improvement in food safety performance across the country

**Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

**Answer: (b)**

**Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India:**

1. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is a statutory body.
2. FSSAI falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Food and Public Distribution.
3. FSSAI lays down science-based standards for articles of food and regulating their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and imports.

**How many of the abovementioned statements are correct ?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**Answer: (b)**

**Q3. Elaborate on the FSSAI's functions and its pivotal role in regulating and supervising food safety in India.**

## **GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS**

*This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Galápagos Islands". This topic has relevance in the Geography section of the UPSC CSE exam.*

*GS 1: Geography*

**Why in the news?**

Recently, scientists made discoveries of two previously unknown coral reefs and identified two uncharted seamounts in the Galapagos Islands.

## About Galápagos Islands:

The Galápagos Islands, situated in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean approximately 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador

### Key Aspects of the Galápagos Islands:

- **Geographic Location:** The Galápagos Archipelago comprises 19 islands, including 13 larger islands and 6 smaller ones, along with numerous islets and rocks. This vast expanse covers over 17,000 square miles and is distributed on both sides of the Equator.
- **Geological Formation:** The Galápagos Islands owe their dramatic, rugged landscapes to repeated volcanic eruptions. Despite their pristine appearance, these islands are relatively young compared to most oceanic archipelagos. The largest and youngest islands, Isabela and Fernandina, are less than one million years old, while the oldest islands, such as Española and San Cristóbal, are estimated to be between three to five million years old. Mount Azul, standing at 5,541 feet, is the highest point in the Galápagos.
- **Climate:** The Galápagos Islands are characterized by low rainfall, low humidity, and relatively cool air and water temperatures. These environmental conditions have contributed to the islands' unique ecosystems and have had a profound impact on the evolution of their wildlife.
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** In recognition of its extraordinary natural heritage, the Galápagos Islands were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978. This status underscores their global importance for scientific research and conservation.

### Biodiversity of the Galápagos:

The Galápagos Islands are renowned for their rich and diverse flora and fauna, much of which is endemic to the region. Notable species include:

- **Giant Galápagos Tortoise (*Chelonoidis nigra*):** These iconic reptiles are among the most famous inhabitants of the islands. They come in various shapes and sizes on different islands, showcasing remarkable adaptability.
- **Marine Iguana (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*):** The Galápagos are the only place in the world where marine iguanas exist. They have adapted to feed underwater and are excellent swimmers.
- **Flightless Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*):** As the name suggests, these cormorants have lost their ability to fly. They are excellent divers and have evolved on the islands without natural predators.
- **Galápagos Penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*):** This is the only penguin species that lives in the Northern Hemisphere. The Galápagos penguin thrives in the archipelago's unique marine environment.

### Understanding Seamounts:

In addition to the terrestrial wonders of the Galápagos, the surrounding waters feature underwater formations known as seamounts.

#### Key characteristics of seamounts include:

- **Underwater Mountains:** Seamounts are underwater mountains with steep sides that rise from the seafloor. They are often remnants of extinct volcanoes and exhibit diverse features like craters and linear ridges.
- **Diversity Hubs:** Seamounts function as "oases of life" in the deep ocean, supporting higher

species diversity and biomass compared to the surrounding seafloor. They also provide a substrate for various organisms to attach and grow.

- **Global Distribution:** Seamounts can be found in every ocean basin around the world, making them vital areas for ecological research and exploration.

**Q.1 Galápagos Islands is located in:**

1. Atlantic Ocean
2. Pacific Ocean
3. Indian Ocean
4. Black Sea

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding seamounts:**

1. Seamounts are typically underwater mountains with steep sides rising from the seafloor.
2. Most seamounts are remnants of active volcanoes.
3. They are primarily found in the Atlantic Ocean.

**How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**ANSWER: B**

**Q.3 Discuss the significant ocean relief features and their geological origins. How do these features influence marine ecosystems, weather patterns, and human activities? Provide examples to support your answer.**