



Yojna IAS

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APRIL 2024

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
15/04/2024 TO 21/04/2024

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL 2024

“TWO ARCH RIVALS- IRAN AND ISREAL”

Why in the News?

Iran attacked Israel on April 13, 2024, in response to an alleged Israeli strike on an Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital of Damascus on April 1, 2024. The attack on the consulate reportedly killed multiple Iranian military personnel.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWS-

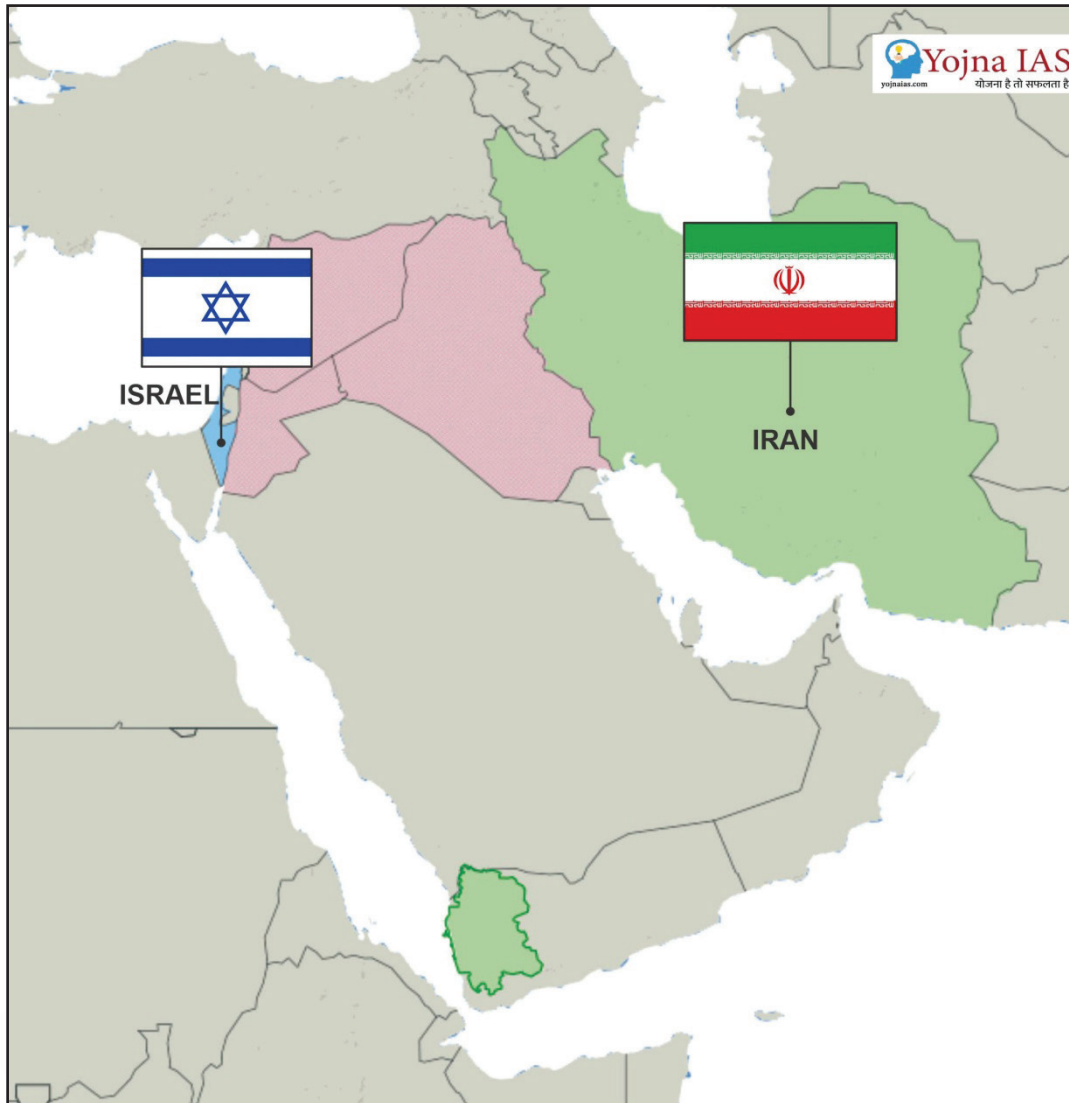
Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, along with the Popular Mobilization Forces, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, launched a large aerial attack on Israel using drones, cruise, and ballistic missiles in a retaliatory strike codenamed Operation True Promise. This marked Iran's first direct military attack on Israel and escalated tensions between the two countries.

History of Two Arch-Rivals-

The rivalry between Iran and Israel primarily stems from ideological, geopolitical, and religious differences.

- **Geopolitical Competition:** Both countries vie for influence in the Middle East. Iran seeks to establish itself as a regional power, often through support for proxy groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel sees Iran's support for these groups as a threat to its security.
- **Religious Differences:** Iran's population primarily follows the Shia Muslim faith, whereas Israel's population is predominantly Jewish. This religious contrast contributes to ideological tensions and perceptions of each other as adversaries.
- **Historical Context:** Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 replaced a pro-Western monarchy with an Islamic Republic hostile to Israel. Since then, Iran's leadership has often expressed anti-Israel sentiments, including calls for its destruction.
- **Israeli Security Concerns:** Iran's nuclear program and its rhetoric about Israel's annihilation have heightened Israeli concerns about its security and survival. Israel views Iran's nuclear aspirations as posing an existential danger to it.
- **Proxy Conflicts:** Iran and Israel have engaged in proxy conflicts across the Middle East, including

in Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. Their support for opposing factions exacerbates tensions and reinforces their status as arch-rivals.



How Iran-Israel conflict can affect the Global Geopolitics-

- **Escalation of tensions:** The conflict could escalate into a larger regional conflict, with the potential for increased violence and instability in the Middle East. This could pose a threat to global security and potentially lead to a more significant military confrontation between major powers.
- **Strained international relations:** The conflict could strain relationships between countries with significant stakes in the region, such as the United States, Russia, China, and European powers. This could lead to increased tensions and potential conflicts in other areas of the world.
- **Proliferation of weapons:** The conflict could lead to the proliferation of weapons, particularly if Iran or Israel were to resort to using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. This could pose a threat to global security and public health.
- **Displacement of populations:** The conflict could result in the displacement of large numbers of people, particularly if the fighting were to escalate or reach densely populated urban areas. This could lead to humanitarian crises and refugee flows, placing additional burdens on neighbouring countries and the international community.

- **Economic consequences:** The conflict could disrupt trade, investment, and economic growth in the region, which could have global economic repercussions. Additionally, the conflict could lead to increased energy prices due to potential disruptions in oil production and distribution.

What is India's stake in Iran-Israel conflict-

India has a complex stake in the Iran-Israel conflict, as it seeks to maintain a delicate balance between its strategic partnerships with both countries while also trying to protect its own interests in the region.

- **Energy Security:** India relies heavily on oil imports, with around 80% of its oil needs being met by imports. The Persian Gulf region, including Iran and Iraq, is a major source of oil for India. A disruption in the supply of oil from the region could have a significant impact on India's economy and energy security.
- **Non-Proliferation:** India is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and has been actively promoting nuclear non-proliferation. The Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) was a significant diplomatic achievement for India, as it sought to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions and ensure that its nuclear capabilities remain peaceful. A conflict in the region could potentially undermine India's non-proliferation efforts.
- **Terrorism:** India faces the challenge of terrorism from various sources, including elements within Pakistan and Afghanistan. Iran and Israel are both known to be counter-terrorism partners, and India would prefer to see stability in the region to address its own security concerns.
- **Balance of Power:** India has been pursuing a policy of strategic autonomy, seeking to reduce its dependence on any single country for defense and security cooperation. The Iran-Israel conflict could potentially force India to choose sides, which could be detrimental to its strategic interests.
- **Regional Stability:** India has been trying to play a role as a mediator in the Middle East peace process and has diplomatic relations with both Israel and Iran. A conflict between Iran and Israel could destabilise the region, potentially affecting India's own stability and security.
- **Indian Diaspora:** Members of the Indian diaspora living in countries with a significant presence of Israeli or Iranian nationals might feel increased safety concerns due to the heightened tensions between the two countries.

Future Course of Action for India-

- **Diplomatic engagement:** India should actively engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict between Iran and Israel. This may include mediating negotiations, offering support for peace talks, and promoting dialogue between the two countries.
- **Maintain strategic autonomy:** India should continue to maintain its strategic autonomy in the Middle East, avoiding getting directly involved in the conflict between Iran and Israel. This would help ensure regional stability and allow India to focus on its own national interests.
- **Support regional partners:** India should support its regional partners, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other Gulf countries, in maintaining stability and security in the Middle East. This can help India build and maintain strong relationships in the region.
- **Promote economic cooperation:** India should continue to pursue economic cooperation with both Iran and Israel, focusing on areas such as energy, trade, and technology. This can help create opportunities for economic growth and development in the region, which can contribute to long-term stability.

- **Promote cultural exchange:** India should encourage cultural exchange programs and educational initiatives between its people and those in Iran and Israel. This can help build understanding and goodwill between the two countries, fostering a more peaceful and cooperative relationship.
- **Monitor the situation:** India should closely monitor the situation in the Middle East, particularly any developments that could directly impact its national security or regional stability. This will allow India to respond appropriately and effectively to any changes in the conflict.

The Iran-Israel conflict has the potential to significantly affect global geopolitics, posing risks to international security, economic stability, and diplomatic relations. It is essential for the international community to work towards resolving the conflict peacefully and promoting dialogue between the two countries to mitigate these risks.

Prelims Based Question-

Q1. Which of the following countries DOES NOT share a border with Israel?

- (a). Syria
- (b). Jordan
- (c). Saudi Arabia
- (d). Lebanon

ANSWER: C

Mains based Question-

Q1. What are the historical and geopolitical factors that have contributed to the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, and how has this conflict impacted the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East? How can this conflict impact India's regional interests?

SWISS NEUTRALITY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Swiss government recently announced that it will host a two-day high-level conference in June to achieve peace in Ukraine. However, Russia has clarified that it will not participate in the initiative. The top Swiss diplomat said more than 100 countries would be invited to the gathering.

Switzerland said in January it would host a peace summit at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Since then, it has held talks with the EU, G7 member states, and countries such as China and India to gauge their interest in participating.

BACKGROUNDS OF THE SWISS NEUTRALITY:

Swiss neutrality refers to Switzerland's long-standing policy of neutrality in international conflicts. This policy has been a cornerstone of Swiss foreign policy for centuries, dating back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which recognized Switzerland as a neutral territory during the Thirty Years' War.

Switzerland has the oldest policy of military neutrality in the world. It has not participated in a foreign war since the Treaty of Paris in 1815 established its neutrality, although the country did have a civil war in 1847. Switzerland's commitment to neutrality is enshrined in its constitution, and the country has not been involved in any military conflict since the early 19th century. This neutrality has allowed Switzerland to avoid entanglement in the wars that have plagued Europe, even during the World Wars.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SWISS NEUTRALITY:

It will "provide a platform for a high-level dialogue on achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the UN Charter". The conference will aim to "create a common understanding of the framework conducive to this goal and a concrete roadmap for the peace process". **Some more objectives are:**

- **Protecting Swiss sovereignty:** Neutrality helps safeguard Switzerland's independence and sovereignty by avoiding entanglement in foreign conflicts. This allows Switzerland to pursue its interests and policies without being influenced by the agendas of other nations.
- **Preserving peace:** Switzerland contributes to preserving peace regionally and globally by remaining neutral. Its stance reduces the risk of being drawn into conflicts and helps mitigate tensions between conflicting parties.
- **Facilitating diplomacy and mediation:** Switzerland's neutral status enables it to act as a mediator and facilitator in international disputes. Its reputation for impartiality and trustworthiness makes it a preferred location for diplomatic negotiations and peace talks.
- **Promoting humanitarianism:** Swiss neutrality aligns with the country's tradition of humanitarianism. Switzerland has a long history of providing aid and assistance to victims of conflict and natural disasters, and its neutral status enhances its ability to do so effectively.

ASSESSMENT OF RERA, 2016 BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is currently assessing the operations of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016.

WHAT IS THE NEED TO REVIEW RERA?

Assessment of the impact of RERA: A crucial aspect of the review involves **evaluating RERA's real-world impact**. This includes examining how effectively the Act has fostered transparency in real estate transactions, promoted accountability among developers, and provided efficient mechanisms for homebuyers to address grievances.

Data-Driven Decisions: To move beyond anecdotal evidence, the **Ministry is establishing a dedicated data collection unit**. This unit will gather crucial data on the functioning of RERAs across various states over the years. Data on project approvals, progress reports, and delays will provide a more comprehensive picture of RERA's effectiveness and identify potential bottlenecks in implementation.

Gathering the stakeholder's Feedback: Recognizing the importance of firsthand experiences, the government is actively **seeking feedback from stakeholders, particularly homebuyers**. Through regular meetings, homebuyers can voice their experiences with RERA, highlighting areas where the Act has fallen short or exceeded expectations. This feedback will be instrumental in identifying areas for improvement and potential amendments.

Amendment for the improvement: The RERA review process serves as a springboard for **potential future amendments**. By proactively identifying and addressing shortcomings in the Act's implementation, the government aims to enhance its effectiveness and ultimately safeguard the interests of homebuyers. This proactive approach demonstrates a commitment to a real estate sector that prioritises fairness, transparency, and protects home buyers' investments.

Standardised Information and Ensuring Consistency: The government is focusing on **ensuring consistency in the information available on RERA websites across different states**. This will provide homebuyers with easy access to crucial project details and developer updates, regardless of location. It also reinforces the **mandatory publication of annual reports and quarterly progress reports from builders**, fostering greater transparency. Discrepancies identified during the review, such as websites lacking information or projects being registered without proper document verification, will be addressed **to ensure developers comply with the Act's provisions**.

ABOUT RERA

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) is a notable law passed by the Indian government in 2016. The RERA Act was put into effect in March 2016 under the jurisdiction of Entry 6 and 7 of the Concurrent List of the Indian Constitution, which pertains to contracts and property transfer. It officially came into force in May 2017. Key Objectives of RERA are:

- **Protecting Homebuyers:** RERA prioritises safeguarding homebuyers' interests. It establishes a regulatory authority (RERA) in each state, acting as a watchdog to ensure fair practices and speedy dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Boosting Transparency:** The Act promotes transparency in real estate transactions. Builders are obligated to register projects with RERA and provide comprehensive information to homebuyers. This empowers buyers with better decision-making through access to accurate details about projects.
- **Timely Deliveries:** RERA aims to combat delays in project completion. The Act emphasises the timely delivery of projects without compromising quality standards, ensuring homebuyers receive their investments within the agreed-upon timeframe.
- **Standardisation and Professionalism:** RERA aims to establish a nationwide standard for real estate

transactions, promoting professionalism within the sector.

- **Enhanced Information Flow:** The Act facilitates a smooth flow of accurate information between homebuyers and sellers, empowering informed decision-making.
- **Increased Accountability:** RERA fosters accountability by placing greater responsibility on both developers and investors, ensuring a fair and balanced environment.
- **Building Investor Confidence:** By promoting transparency and accountability, RERA strengthens trust within the real estate sector, potentially attracting more investors.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF RERA

REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

- **State-Level RERAs:** RERA mandates the establishment of Real Estate Regulatory Authorities (RERAs) in each state. These authorities handle project registration, maintain databases, and promote fair practices within the sector.
- **Appeals Process:** The Act establishes Real Estate Appellate Tribunals to address appeals against RERA decisions. Hence, provides a dispute resolution mechanism for aggrieved parties.

PROJECT REGISTRATION AND TRANSPARENCY

- **Mandatory Registration:** Real estate projects exceeding a minimum size threshold (plot size or number of apartments) must be registered with the relevant RERA authority. This ensures transparency and provides a central repository of project information.
- **Public Access to Information:** Registered projects and related details are made available on the RERA website for public viewing. This empowers homebuyers with access to crucial project information before making investment decisions.

FINANCIAL SAFEGUARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Escrow Account Mandate:** Developers are required to deposit at least 70% of the funds collected from homebuyers into a separate escrow bank account. These funds can only be used for project construction, mitigating the risk of misuse.
- **Structural Defect Liability:** Developers are held accountable for repairing structural defects in a property for a period of five years after handover. This protects homebuyers from shoddy workmanship.
- **Penal Interest for Delays:** Both developers and buyers are liable to pay an equal rate of interest for any delays in fulfilling their obligations as per the sale agreement. This incentivises timely project completion and protects homebuyers from financial losses due to developer delays.

CONSUMER PROTECTION MEASURES

- **Advance Payment Limits:** Developers are restricted from accepting more than 10% of the property cost as an advance payment or application fee before entering into a formal sale agreement. This safeguards buyers from losing significant sums if a project falls through.
- **Focus on Carpet Area:** RERA emphasises the use of carpet area, which refers to the usable floor space within an apartment, as the basis for pricing. This protects buyers from inflated costs based on

the total built-up area, which includes walls and common areas.

- **Penalties for Violations:** The Act prescribes penalties for violations, including imprisonment for developers and agents/buyers who disregard orders from RERA or the Appellate Tribunals. This enforcement mechanism discourages malpractices and ensures compliance.

ISSUES ARISING FROM RERA

EXCLUSION OF PAST REAL ESTATE PROJECTS

1. Only new projects fall under the purview of the Act, leaving ongoing, completed, or stalled projects due to clearance or financial issues unaffected.
2. Consequently, many buyers may not receive the benefits envisioned by the Act.

GOVERNMENT DELAYS

1. Government agencies sometimes take considerable time to approve projects, leading to delays.
2. Timely approval by government bodies is essential for developers to initiate, complete, and deliver projects on schedule.

LACK OF COMPULSORY REGULATION FOR SMALL PROJECTS

- Projects smaller than 500 square metres are not required to register with the regulator, exempting small developers from this obligation.

EXPECTED DELAYS IN NEW PROJECT LAUNCHES

- Projects cannot commence without necessary clearances from the government, typically taking two to three years, resulting in automatic delays.

UNADDRESSED DEVELOPER CONCERNS REGARDING FORCE MAJEURE AND LAND TITLE REPOSITORY

- The Act does not address developer concerns related to force majeure events, such as labour shortages or the absence of a central repository for land titles and deeds.

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTIONS

- Q1. In your opinion, what measures can RERA implement to address the issue of low-quality materials used in residential buildings? Discuss particularly in light of recent collapses in India?
- Q2. How effective do you think RERA's major provisions are in ensuring transparency and accountability in the real estate sector?

HEALTH DRINK IN INDIA

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently instructed e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and BigBasket to remove products like Bournvita, Horlicks, and Protinex from the health drinks category due to undefined standards and definitions under India's food laws.

This decision follows the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which said that there is no "health drink defined under the FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations as submitted by FSSAI & Mondelez India". "NCPCR, a statutory body constituted under Section (3) of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, after its inquiry under Section 14 of CPCR Act, 2005, concluded that there is no health drink defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations as submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt Ltd." The FSSAI also instructed e-commerce portals earlier this month not to label dairy- or malt-based beverages as 'health drinks'.

The decision will have a "significant impact", potentially leading to a dip in sales and heightened regulatory scrutiny. The government aims to limit the accessibility of products with high sugar content and misleading health claims, particularly those targeted at children.

HEALTH DRINKS:

A health drink is formulated to provide specific health benefits beyond basic hydration. These drinks typically contain vitamins, minerals, herbs, botanical extracts, proteins, and other nutrients supporting overall health and well-being. Health drinks can come in various forms, including powders, concentrates, ready-to-drink liquids, or diluted or prepared mixes before consumption.

Health food drinks in India are primarily malt-based milk drinks that act as taste enhancers and offer nutritional benefits. For years, such mixes have been sold to kids and adults, making health food drinks an over \$1-billion category. **Some health drinks offer benefits such as:**

- **Nutritional Support:** Health drinks may be fortified with essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that may be lacking in one's diet, helping to fill nutritional gaps and promote overall health. Fruit and vegetable juices are a natural source of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants and are widely consumed for health benefits.
- **Malted Drinks:** Malted drinks are popular as nutritious beverages for children and adults. They are often fortified with vitamins and minerals and may contain malted barley, milk powder, cocoa, and other ingredients.
- **Energy Boost:** Some health drinks contain ingredients like caffeine, taurine, or B vitamins that can provide a quick energy boost, increase alertness, and combat fatigue. However, they may also contain high levels of sugar and artificial additives.
- **Hydration:** Some health drinks are designed to help maintain proper hydration levels by replenishing electrolytes lost through sweating during physical activity or illness.
- **Immune Support:** Health drinks fortified with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and botanical extracts are believed to strengthen the immune system and help the body fight off infections and illness.

- **Protein Shakes:** Protein shakes are popular among fitness enthusiasts and individuals looking to increase their protein intake for muscle building, weight management, or general health.

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONS FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS ACT, 2005:

The Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005, is legislation enacted by the Government of India to establish commissions at the national and state levels to protect and promote children's rights. The Act provides for establishing the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) at the national level and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs) in each state and union territory. The commission began operation a year later, in March 2007. **The primary functions of the NCPCR include:**

1. Monitoring and implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other related laws and policies.
2. Inquiring into complaints regarding child rights violations and taking appropriate action.
3. Conducting research, studies, and advocacy on issues related to child rights.
4. Advising the government on policy and legislative measures for the protection and welfare of children.
5. Promoting public awareness and understanding of child rights issues.

The commissions have the **powers of a civil court while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**. They can summon and enforce the attendance of witnesses, examine them on oath, require the discovery and production of documents, and issue commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents.

The NCPCR and SCPCRs comprise **a chairperson and six members** appointed by the central or state government. The members are chosen based on their expertise and experience in child rights areas. **Shri Priyank Kanoongo is currently the chairperson of the NCPCR**. The commissions submit annual and special reports to the government, highlighting the status of child rights in the country or state and making recommendations for improvement.

FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA:

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. It was created under the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006, consolidating various acts and orders that have hitherto handled food-related issues in various Ministries and Departments.

FSSAI is responsible for setting standards for food products and regulating their production, storage, distribution, sale, and import to ensure they meet the safety and quality standards laid down by the authority. It aims to promote public health by ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption. **Some key functions include:**

- Framing of regulations to lay down the standards and guidelines for food safety.
- Setting up of food laboratories for testing and analysis.
- Providing scientific advice and technical support to the government.
- Monitoring and enforcing food safety standards across the food industry.

- Licensing and registration of food businesses.

CONCLUSION:

Reclassifying certain beverages on e-commerce websites marks a commendable move towards upholding consumer rights and well-being. This initiative fosters healthier choices among consumers and underlines a shared commitment to improving societal health. The concerted effort to adjust how these drinks are presented and marketed online reflects a growing awareness of the impact of such products on consumer health, promoting a more informed and health-conscious society.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):

1. FSSAI comes under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs.
2. It is a statutory body that provides a licence to the food business.
3. The president of India appoints the Chairman of FSSAI.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

- Q.1. How do the marketing strategies of health drinks align with the ethical responsibility to accurately inform consumers about potential health benefits and risks?
- Q.2. Analyze the ethical considerations in formulating and promoting healthy drinks targeting children and adolescents. How does this practice impact consumer behaviour and trust?
- Q.3. Reflect on the ethical responsibility of health professionals in recommending or endorsing healthy drinks. What guidelines should be established to govern such endorsements?

CUSTODIAL DEATHS IN INDIA

Why in the News?

Recently, the Supreme Court has underscored the importance of employing a “more stringent method” when evaluating bail requests from law enforcement officers accused in instances of custodial Deaths. A Bench consisting of Justices Aniruddha Bose and P V Sanjay Kumar remarked as they revoked the bail grant-

ed to a police constable implicated in a custodial death case dated February 12, 2021.

MEANING OF CUSTODIAL DEATH-

- Custodial death refers to the demise of an individual that occurs while they are under the custody of law enforcement authorities, typically in police custody or in a detention facility.
- As outlined by the Law Commission of India, when a public servant commits an offense against an individual who is under arrest or detained, such actions constitute custodial violence.

Reasons for Custodial Deaths in India-

Custodial deaths in India can occur due to various reasons, often stemming from systemic issues within the criminal justice system. Some possible reasons include:

1. **Police Brutality and Torture:** One of the primary reasons for custodial deaths is police brutality and torture. Suspects or detainees are sometimes subjected to physical abuse, torture, or excessive force during interrogation or while in custody, leading to severe injuries or death.
 2. **Lack of Oversight and Accountability:** There is often a lack of effective oversight mechanisms and accountability within law enforcement agencies. This allows for unchecked abuse of power, with officers facing little to no consequences for their actions.
 3. **Inadequate Training and Sensitization:** Insufficient training of law enforcement personnel on human rights standards and proper procedures for handling detainees can contribute to incidents of custodial deaths. Lack of awareness about legal boundaries and protocols may result in misuse of authority and violence.
 4. **Overcrowded and Poorly Maintained Detention Facilities:** Many police stations and jails in India are overcrowded and poorly maintained, lacking basic amenities and healthcare facilities. In such environments, detainees are vulnerable to physical harm, neglect, and medical emergencies, increasing the risk of custodial deaths.
 5. **Delay in Legal Proceedings:** Lengthy legal proceedings and delays in the justice system can prolong the detention period of individuals, exacerbating their vulnerability to mistreatment or neglect while in custody.
 6. **Corruption and Misconduct:** Instances of corruption and misconduct within law enforcement agencies can further exacerbate the risk of custodial deaths. Bribery, collusion, and other forms of malpractice may undermine efforts to uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of detainees.
- **Lack of International commitment:** India, despite signing the United Nations Convention against Torture in 1997, has yet to ratify it. While signing signifies the country's willingness to adhere to the treaty's obligations, ratification involves implementing laws and mechanisms to fulfill these commitments.

Constitutional and Legal Safeguards against Custodial Deaths-

In India, there are several constitutional and legal safeguards in place to address custodial deaths and protect the rights of individuals in custody. These safeguards include:

1. **Constitutional Protections:** The Indian Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights to all individuals, including those in custody. These rights include the right to life and personal liberty (Article 21), protection against torture and inhuman treatment, and the right to legal representation and fair trial. Article 20 provides safeguarding against unjust and disproportionate punishment for an accused

individual, regardless of their citizenship status or legal entity, such as a company or corporation.

1. **Legal Framework:** India has enacted specific legislation to prevent custodial deaths and hold accountable those responsible for such incidents. The most notable among these is the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, which establishes the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commissions (SHRCs) to investigate complaints of human rights violations, including custodial deaths.
2. **Criminal Laws:** Various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) address offenses related to custodial deaths, including sections on homicide, culpable homicide not amounting to murder, assault, and torture. These laws provide for the prosecution of law enforcement officials found guilty of causing death or harm to individuals in custody.
3. **Judicial Oversight:** The judiciary plays a crucial role in safeguarding against custodial deaths through its power of judicial review. Courts can issue writs such as habeas corpus to ensure the legality of detention and can also take suo motu cognizance of cases involving custodial deaths to ensure prompt investigation and accountability.
4. **Supreme Court Guidelines:** The Supreme Court of India has issued guidelines and directives to prevent custodial deaths and ensure accountability. These include guidelines on the arrest and detention of individuals, the use of force by law enforcement agencies, and the need for independent and impartial investigations into cases of custodial deaths.

LANDMARK SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS ON CUSTODIAL DEATHS-

- **D.K. Basu vs. State of West Bengal (1997):** This case resulted in the formulation of guidelines commonly known as the “**D.K. Basu Guidelines**” to prevent custodial torture and deaths. The Supreme Court outlined several measures including the requirement for police personnel to carry accurate and visible identification, the right of the detainee to inform a friend, relative, or lawyer about their arrest, and the mandate for police to maintain a register of arrestees at the police station.
- **Nilabati Behera vs. State of Orissa (1993):** In this case, the Supreme Court recognized the **right to compensation** for victims of custodial deaths. The Court held that custodial death violates Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. It established the principle of strict liability on the state to compensate the victim’s family for custodial deaths, irrespective of whether the state was directly responsible for the death.
- **State of Maharashtra vs. Ravikant S. Patil (2011):** In this case, the Supreme Court reiterated that custodial death is a serious violation of human rights and emphasized the duty of the state to ensure the safety and security of individuals in custody. The Court emphasized the need for independent and impartial investigations into cases of custodial deaths and held that the burden of proof lies on the custodial authorities to prove that the death occurred due to natural causes and was not a result of torture or negligence.

Measures to be taken to tackle Custodian Deaths-

1. **Strengthening oversight and accountability:** Ensuring that there is proper supervision and accountability at all levels of the criminal justice system, from police officers to prison officials. This includes implementing clear guidelines, monitoring systems, and reporting mechanisms for any misconduct or abuse.
2. **Providing adequate training and Sensitization:** : Ensuring that law enforcement officers and prison staff receive proper training in human rights, effective communication, and non-violent conflict reso-

lution. This will help them better handle situations involving detainees and minimize the use of force.

3. **Implementing reforms:** Implementing comprehensive reforms in the criminal justice system, including addressing overcrowding in prisons, improving access to legal representation, and ensuring that detainees receive fair and timely trials.
4. **Ensuring access to medical care:** Ensuring that detainees have timely access to medical care, including mental health care, to prevent injuries and illnesses that may lead to death.
5. **Implementing the use of CCTV cameras:** Installing CCTV cameras in detention facilities can help monitor the treatment of detainees and provide evidence in case of any abuse or neglect.
6. **Offering compensation to families:** Providing financial compensation to the families of those who have died in custody can help alleviate some of their suffering and may serve as a deterrent to future incidents.
7. **Collaborating with civil society:** Engaging with civil society organizations, including human rights groups, to monitor detention facilities and advocate for improvements in the treatment of detainees.
8. **Access to Legal Representation:** Ensuring that detainees have prompt access to legal representation and are informed of their rights, including the right to remain silent and the right to consult with a lawyer. Legal aid services should be readily available to individuals who cannot afford representation.

Prelims based Question-

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India is a signatory to United nations convention against Torture.
2. Article 21 of Constitution guarantees Right to life which also includes Right to be free from torture.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANSWER: C

Mains based Questions-

- Q1. How do systemic issues within the criminal justice system contribute to custodial deaths in India, and what measures can be taken to address these underlying causes?
- Q2. What are the legal and constitutional provisions in India aimed at preventing custodial deaths, and how effectively are they enforced?

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT APPLICABLE TO ALL WOMEN IRRESPECTIVE OF RELIGION

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The recent observation by the Delhi High Court underscores that the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, serves as a tool for social justice intended to protect all women regardless of their religious beliefs or social status. Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta emphasised that the law was created to uphold the rights of individuals facing 'domestic violence' within a 'domestic relationship'.

ABOUT PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Act defines domestic violence as any act, omission, or commission by the respondent that harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb, or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes:

1. **Physical Abuse:** This includes any act that causes physical harm or injury, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, or pushing.
2. **Sexual Abuse:** This includes any act of a sexual nature that is forced or coerced upon the aggrieved person.
3. **Verbal and Emotional Abuse:** This includes insults, name-calling, threats, intimidation, and humiliation.
4. **Economic Abuse:** This includes depriving the aggrieved person of financial resources or controlling their access to money.

WHO IS COVERED UNDER THE DV ACT?

The DV Act adopts a broad definition of "domestic relationship," ensuring a wide net of protection. Here's a breakdown of women who can seek protection under the Act:

1. **Close Family Members:** Mothers, sisters, wives, and widows are explicitly included, recognising the potential for violence within familial relationships.
2. **Partners in Shared Households:** The Act extends protection to women in live-in partnerships, irrespective of a formal marriage or adoption, acknowledging the realities of modern relationships.
3. **Female Relatives in Joint Families:** Women residing with their male relatives in a joint family structure are also covered, understanding the complexities of domestic dynamics within extended families.

WHO CAN FILE A COMPLAINT?

Women Experiencing Domestic Violence: Any woman who has endured domestic violence has the legal right to file a complaint, initiating the process of seeking justice and safety.

Mothers Acting on Behalf of Children: Recognizing the vulnerability of children, the Act allows mothers

to file complaints on behalf of their minor children (regardless of gender) who have experienced domestic violence within the household.

Children Included in Applications: If a woman files for her own protection, her children can be included as co-applicants in the court proceedings, ensuring their well-being is addressed alongside the mother's.

It's important to note that the DV Act does not allow female relatives of the husband/partner to file complaints against the wife/female partner, focusing on violence within a heterosexual relationship.

AVAILABLE RELIEF MEASURES UNDER THE DV ACT

- 1. Protection Orders:** These court-ordered safeguards aim to shield women from further physical or emotional harm by the respondent. These orders can restrict the respondent's contact with the woman or limit their access to the shared household.
- 2. Residence Orders:** These orders grant women the right to stay in the shared household, irrespective of ownership. This ensures they have a safe space to live, especially if they have children.
- 3. Financial Support:** The Act recognises the economic impact of domestic violence. Women can seek financial assistance (maintenance) for themselves and their children, ensuring their financial security and independence.
- 4. Temporary Child Custody:** During legal proceedings, women can obtain orders for temporary custody of their children. This is crucial to ensure the children's safety and well-being while the court makes long-term decisions.
- 5. Compensation for Damages:** Women can claim compensation for any physical or emotional harm caused by domestic violence. This serves as a form of justice and helps cover medical expenses or other losses incurred.

SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR WOMEN

- 1. Protection Officers:** Government-appointed officers play a vital role. They assist women in filing complaints, accessing legal aid, and ensuring court order enforcement. These officers act as a bridge between women and the legal system.
- 2. Service Providers:** These are NGOs that collaborate with various stakeholders, including the police and legal aid organisations. Service providers offer a holistic range of support, including legal aid, shelter in short-stay homes for women and children, counselling, medical care if needed, and even vocational training to empower women to achieve economic independence.

Laws For Indian Women

01

Hindu Succession Act (1956)

02

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976

03

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

04

Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

05

The Pire-conception Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994

06

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971

07

The Commission of Sati (prevention) Act, 1987

08

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

FACTORS BEHIND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Power Imbalance:** Domestic violence often stems from an unequal distribution of power within relationships, where one partner exerts control over the other through physical, emotional, or

financial means.

- **Social Norms and Gender Roles:** Traditional gender norms and expectations may perpetuate attitudes that condone or justify violence against women. Societal expectations regarding masculinity and femininity can reinforce power differentials and normalise abusive behaviour.
- **History of Abuse:** Individuals who have experienced or witnessed violence in their childhood or past relationships may be more likely to perpetrate domestic violence or become victims themselves.
- **Stress and Economic Hardship:** Financial strain, unemployment, or poverty can exacerbate tension within households and increase the likelihood of conflict and violence. Economic dependence on the perpetrator may also trap victims in abusive situations.
- **Lack of Education and Awareness:** Limited access to education and awareness about healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and legal rights may contribute to a lack of understanding of what constitutes acceptable behaviour within intimate partnerships.
- **Cultural and Religious Beliefs:** Cultural or religious beliefs that prioritise male authority or uphold strict gender roles may perpetuate attitudes that tolerate or justify domestic violence.

STATUS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIA

- Domestic violence persists as a significant issue in India, impacting a substantial portion of married women aged 18-49 years, as evidenced by the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-2021**, which reports a prevalence rate of 29.3%. Additionally, 3.1% of pregnant women have encountered physical violence during their pregnancy.
- The prevalence of domestic violence displays **regional disparities, with Karnataka, Bihar, and Manipur exhibiting the highest rates, while Lakshadweep, Goa, and Himachal Pradesh record the lowest rates.** Recent NFHS-5 data indicates that 30% of Indian women encounter domestic or sexual violence, highlighting the widespread nature of this issue. Notably, domestic violence transcends educational backgrounds, affecting women across all strata of society, including educated households.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' is:

- (a) a strategy to tackle regional terrorism, an outcome of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- (b) a plan of action for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific Region, an outcome of the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum
- (c) an agenda for women's empowerment, an outcome of a World Conference convened by the United Nations
- (d) a strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, a declaration of the East Asia Summit

Answer: C

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the impact of climate change on women:

- 1. Women in low-income countries are more vulnerable to climate change due to their dependence on

natural resources and labour-intensive work.

2. Women in urban areas are more vulnerable to climate change than those in rural areas.

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: A

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

- Q1. In what ways has economic instability during the pandemic contributed to instances of shadow violence, particularly in marginalised populations?**

IPEF CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMIC FORUM

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Department of Commerce recently announced that the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) will host its first clean economy investor forum in Singapore on June 5th and 6th, 2024. The department has also invited applications from domestic climate and tech entrepreneurs to participate in the meeting.

WHAT IS THE INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY (IPEF)?

- The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), initiated in 2022, aims to foster collaboration among countries in the region for resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, promoting cooperation, stability, and prosperity.
- It comprises 14 countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.
- The IPEF comprises four pillars of cooperation: Trade, Supply Chain, Clean Economy, and Fair Economy.
- It is not a free trade agreement (FTA) between the member countries.
- The IPEF provides a platform for countries in the region to collaborate on advancing resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth. Further, it aims to contribute to regional cooperation, stability and prosperity.

ABOUT IPEF CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMIC FORUM:

1. The IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum brings together the region's top investors, philanthropies, financial institutions, innovative companies, start-ups and entrepreneurs.
2. The forum focuses on catalyzing investments in sustainable infrastructure, climate technology, and renewable energy projects.
3. The forum will provide opportunities for the Indian industry in two distinct tracks, e.g., the Climate Tech Track and the Infrastructure Track.
4. The Infrastructure Track emphasizes investment-ready sustainable projects spanning energy (solar, wind, hydrogen), transportation (EVs, charging stations), and waste management.
5. Through its Climate Tech and Infrastructure Tracks, the forum will highlight leading climate tech firms and sustainable infrastructure projects to global investors.
6. Top climate tech companies from India seeking investment opportunities will also attend the meeting.

The Department of Commerce is the nodal agency for the IPEF engagements, and the IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum is managed by Invest India, India's National Investment Promotion Agency.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S INITIATIVES FOR PROMOTING CLEAN ENERGY IN INDIA:

Clean energy addresses the world's various environmental, economic, and social challenges. Clean energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and biomass produce minimal or no greenhouse gas emissions during power generation. By replacing fossil fuels, which are major contributors to air and water pollution and climate change, clean energy helps mitigate environmental degradation and reduce the impact of global warming.

Since pledging to be a net zero emitter by 2070 at COP 26 in Glasgow, India has introduced policies and regulatory actions to develop technologies. These initiatives aim to help India to achieve its ambitious climate target, reflecting its commitment to environmental sustainability. **Some targets are:**

- Reducing emission intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030, compared to 2005.
- Raising the share of non-fossil fuel-based generation capacity to 50% by 2030.
- Reduce projected carbon emissions by 1 bn tonnes by 2030.
- 20% ethanol blending by 2025.
- 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based capacity by 2030.
- 5 MMTPA green H2 production by 2030.

Several companies in India have announced their net zero goals and plans to reduce their carbon footprint through technology. These clean energy drivers primarily focus on renewables, battery storage, electric vehicles, carbon capture, green hydrogen, and biofuels.

The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives to promote renewable energy. These initiatives reflect India's commitment to achieving its renewable energy targets, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and transitioning towards a more sustainable and cleaner future. **Here are some key initiatives:**

- **National Solar Mission (NSM):** Launched in 2010, the NSM aims to promote solar energy develop-

ment in India. This mission includes various incentives, such as subsidies, tax benefits, and generation-based incentives, to attract investments in solar power generation.

- **PM-KUSUM:** PM Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) is a farmer-oriented solar power scheme that will allow the setting up of grid-connected solar plants in rural areas and off-grid solar pumps. Under the scheme, the government plans to incentivize farmers to run solar farms and water pumps and use barren land to generate power for extra income up to Rs 60,000 per acre annually.
- **Clean Energy Financing:** The government has established institutions like the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) to provide financial assistance and loans for renewable energy projects. Additionally, initiatives like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) aim to mobilize funds for India's climate-resilient and low-carbon development projects.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Promotion:** To reduce vehicular emissions and promote clean transportation, the Indian government has launched schemes such as the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme. This initiative provides subsidies and incentives for adopting electric and hybrid vehicles.
- **Energy Efficiency Programs:** The government has implemented various energy efficiency programs to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainable practices. This includes the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme, which aims to improve energy efficiency in energy-intensive industries through regulatory mechanisms and incentives.
- **Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO):** Under the Electricity Act 2003, state electricity regulatory commissions enforce RPOs on distribution companies and open-access consumers. These companies are mandated to procure a specific percentage of their power from renewable sources.
- **Tax Incentives:** The government provides tax benefits, including accelerated depreciation and income tax exemptions, to promote investments in renewable energy projects.

India actively participates in international collaborations and agreements related to clean energy and climate change, such as the Paris Agreement. These collaborations facilitate technology transfer, capacity building, and financial assistance for clean energy projects in India. However, policy implementation, infrastructure development, and financing challenges remain critical for achieving ambitious clean energy targets.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Clean Energy Economic Forum:

1. It is the initiative of the World Economic Forum.
2. India is not part of this forum.
3. The forum only focuses on reducing CO₂ emissions.

Which of the above statements is correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three

D. None of the above

ANSWER: D

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

- Q. What are the most effective strategies for overcoming the technological, financial, and policy barriers to significantly increase the global adoption of clean energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to ensure a sustainable and environmentally friendly future?**

CENTRE LIBERALISED FDI NORMS FOR THE SPACE SECTOR

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The central government has notified amendments to the space sector's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy to attract offshore investors in satellite manufacturing and satellite launch vehicles segments. A notification from the finance ministry said the new rules are called Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments).

An amendment to the FDI policy for the space sector, made through a gazette notification dated April 16, 2024, prescribes a liberalized entry route and provides clarity for FDI in satellites, launch vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, the creation of spaceports for launching and receiving Spacecraft, and the manufacturing of space-related components and systems.

THE NEW RULE UNDER FDI FOR THE SPACE SECTOR:

- 100 per cent FDI has been allowed for the space sector category of manufacturing and operation of satellites, satellite data products, and ground segment and user segment.
- Up to 74 per cent FDI for satellite manufacturing & operation, satellite data products, ground segment & user segment are allowed under automatic route. Beyond 74 per cent, these activities are carried out by the government.
- FDI of up to 49 per cent is allowed for Launch Vehicles and associated systems or subsystems. Creation of Spaceports for launching and receiving Spacecraft is under the automatic route, but beyond 49 per cent, government permission would be required.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT:

FDI refers to an investment made by a company or individual in one country in business interests in another country, either in establishing business operations or acquiring business assets in the other country, such as ownership or a controlling interest in a foreign company.

FDI plays a significant role in the global economy, fostering economic growth, technological transfer, job creation, and international trade. Governments often implement policies to attract FDI, offering incentives

such as tax breaks, infrastructure development, and streamlined regulations to encourage foreign investors to invest in their countries.

FDI inflows can contribute to government revenue through taxes, royalties, and other fees levied on foreign investors. This additional revenue can fund public services, infrastructure projects, and social welfare programs, benefiting the economy and creating more employment. FDI promotes trade integration by facilitating access to global markets. FDI can stimulate domestic investment by creating a more competitive business environment, fostering entrepreneurship, and encouraging local firms to upgrade their operations to remain competitive in the face of foreign competition.

FDI IN INDIA:

India began economic liberalization in the early 1990s, opening its economy to foreign investment. Foreign Investment in India is governed by the FDI policy announced by the Government of India and the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999. The Indian government has introduced several policy measures to promote FDI across various sectors. These include increasing FDI limits, simplifying procedures, and offering incentives in strategic sectors like manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology.

India has been attracting substantial FDI inflows in recent years. Key sources of FDI include countries like the United States, Singapore, Mauritius, Netherlands, and Japan, among others. In FY 22-23, India witnessed total FDI inflows of \$70.97 Bn, with FDI equity inflows reaching \$46.03 Bn. The top five contributors to FDI equity inflows during FY 2022-23 were Mauritius (26%), Singapore (23%), the USA (9%), the Netherlands (7%), and Japan (6%).

ROUTES FOR FDI IN INDIA:

In India, foreign investors can make investments through two main routes: the Automatic Route and the Government Route. These routes determine the scrutiny and approval required for foreign investment in different sectors.

AUTOMATIC ROUTE:

Under the Automatic Route, foreign investors do not require prior government or the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approval for investment in most sectors. Foreign Investment is allowed under the automatic route without prior approval of the Government or the Reserve Bank of India in all activities/ sectors as specified in Regulation 16 of FEMA 20 (R). **Under the ' 100% Automatic Route' sectors are:**

1. Broadcast Content Services (Up-linking & down-linking of TV channels, Broadcasting Carriage Services)
2. Agriculture & Animal Husbandry,
3. Air-transport services (non-scheduled and other services under the civil aviation sector), Airports (Greenfield + Brownfield),
4. Asset Reconstruction Companies, Auto-components, Automobiles, Biotechnology (Greenfield),
5. Capital Goods,
6. Cash & Carry Wholesale Trading (including sourcing from MSEs),
7. Chemicals,
8. Coal & Lignite,

9. Construction Development,
10. Construction of Hospitals,
11. Credit Information Companies,
12. Duty Free Shops,
13. E-commerce Activities,
14. Electronic Systems,
15. Food Processing,
16. Gems & Jewellery,
17. Healthcare,
18. Industrial Parks,
19. IT & BPM,
20. Leather,
21. Manufacturing,
22. Mining & Exploration of metals & non-metal ores,
23. Other Financial Services,
24. Services under Civil Aviation Services, such as Maintenance & Repair Organizations,
25. Petroleum & Natural gas,
26. Pharmaceuticals,
27. Plantation sector,
28. Ports & Shipping,
29. Railway Infrastructure,
30. Renewable Energy,
31. Roads & Highways,
32. Single Brand Retail Trading,
33. Textiles & Garments,
34. Thermal Power,
35. Tourism &
36. Hospitality and
37. White Label ATM Operations.

GOVERNMENT ROUTE:

The Government Approval Route requires foreign investors to seek prior approval from the government or the RBI before making investments in specific sectors. **100% Government Route' category are:**

1. Banking & Public sector: 20%
2. Broadcasting Content Services: 49%

3. Core Investment Company: 100%
4. Food Products Retail Trading: 100%
5. Mining & Minerals separations of titanium-bearing minerals and ores: 100%
6. Multi-Brand Retail Trading: 51%
7. Print Media (publications/ printing of scientific and technical magazines/speciality journals/ periodicals and facsimile editions of foreign newspapers): 100%
8. Print Media (publishing of newspapers, periodicals and Indian editions of foreign magazines dealing with news & current affairs): 26%
9. Satellite (Establishment and operations): 100%

GOVERNMENT+ AUTOMATIC ROUTE ARE:

1. Infrastructure Company in the Securities Market: 49%
2. Insurance: up to 74%
3. Medical Devices: up to 100%
4. Pension: 49%
5. Petroleum Refining (By PSUs): 49%
6. Power Exchanges: 49%
7. Telecom: 100%

INDIA HAS SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FDI IN CERTAIN SECTORS. THESE ARE:

1. Atomic Energy Generation
2. Any Gambling or Betting businesses
3. Lotteries (online, private, government, etc.)
4. Investment in Chit Funds
5. Nidhi Company
6. Agricultural or Plantation Activities (although there are many exceptions, such as horticulture, fisheries, tea plantations, Pisciculture, animal husbandry, etc.)
7. Housing and Real Estate (except townships, commercial projects, etc.)
8. Trading in TDRs
9. Cigars, Cigarettes, or any related tobacco industry

CONCLUSION:

FDI has played a crucial role in India's economic transformation, and the government continues pursuing policies to attract more foreign investment to fuel growth and development. However, its benefits depend on effective governance, sound economic policies, and favourable business environments in host and home countries.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Which of the following countries share the highest FDI in India in 2023?

- A. Singapur
- B. Mauritius
- C. U.S.A
- D. Japan

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Critically examines the key factors driving Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India and how it has impacted the country's economic growth.

INSURGENCY URGENCY

Why in the News?

Recently, paramilitary and police forces dealt significant blows to the insurgents, resulting in the deaths of at least 29 Maoists in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. This marked the most significant loss of Maoist lives in a single operation within the Bastar region. The operation was conducted collaboratively by a team comprising the DRG (District Reserve Guards) and BSF (Border Security Force).

ORIGIN OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISM

- The term "Naxalism" or "Naxalite movement" originates from Naxalbari and has since been used to describe various leftist extremist movements across India. Left-wing extremism (LWE) in India has its roots in various historical, socio-economic, and political factors. One of the primary origins can be traced back to the Naxalbari uprising of 1967 in the state of West Bengal.
- Over time, the movement spread to other states with significant rural poverty and tribal populations, such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra.

Reasons Behind the Growth and Sustenance of LWE in India

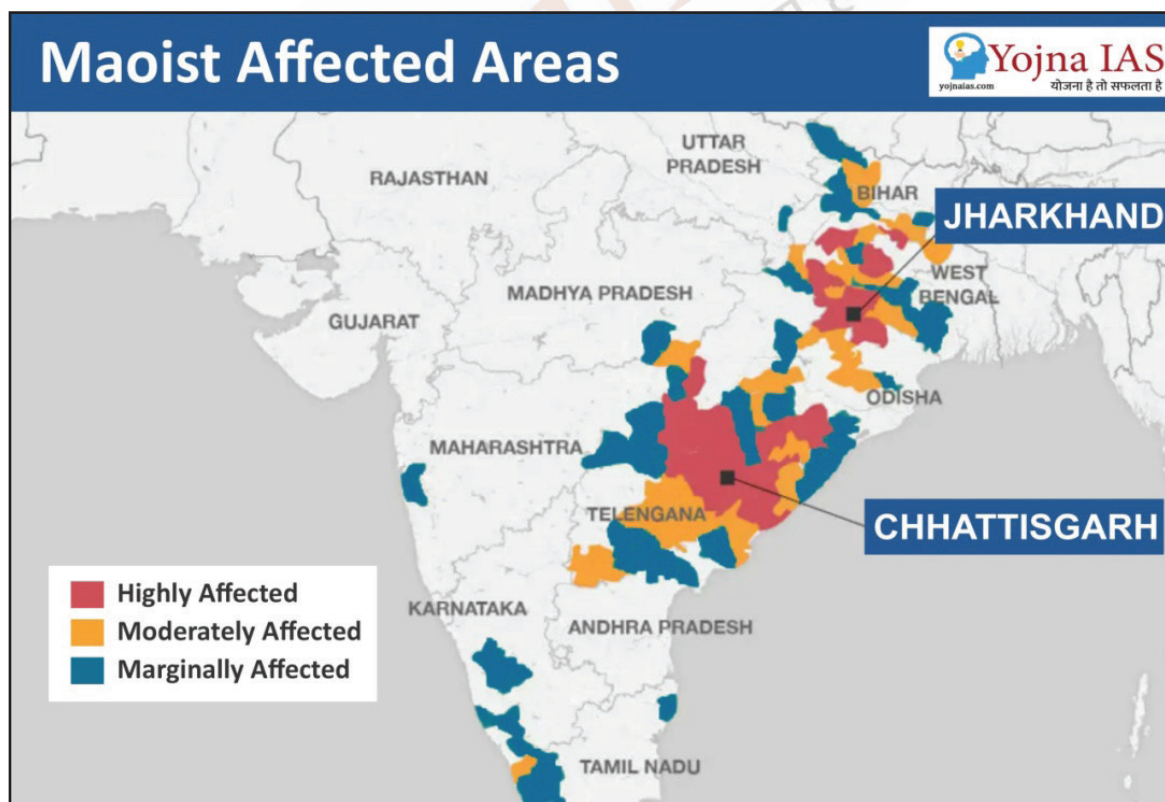
1. **Poverty and unemployment:** Poverty and unemployment are significant factors that contribute to the radicalization of individuals in affected regions. People from impoverished backgrounds often feel marginalized and exploited, leading them to seek alternative means of survival, such as joining LWE groups.
2. **Political grievances:** The lack of political representation and voice for marginalized communities in some regions has led to feelings of alienation and resentment. This can result in the formation of LWE groups that promise to fight for the rights and aspirations of these communities.
3. **Social exclusion:** Social exclusion due to caste, religion, or ethnicity can also contribute to the formation of LWE groups. People who feel socially excluded often seek to establish their dominance by

engaging in violence and creating fear among the local population.

4. **Failure of governance:** Inadequate governance, corruption, and the inability of the state to address socio-economic disparities have led to disillusionment and alienation, particularly among tribal and rural communities.
5. **Influence of global terrorism:** The rise of global terrorism and extremist ideologies has had a significant impact on the formation of LWE groups in India. The spread of extremist ideologies through the internet, recruitment by terrorist organizations, and the flow of funds and arms from neighboring countries have all contributed to the growth of LWE groups.
6. **Development deficit:** In some remote and underdeveloped areas, the government's inability to provide basic services like education, healthcare, and infrastructure development has led to a sense of hopelessness among the local population. This can result in the formation of LWE groups that promise to bring change and development to these areas.

CURRENT SITUATION OF INSURGENCY IN INDIA

- As per the Ministry of Home Affairs, LWE impacts 90 districts across 10 states to differing extents. These states include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, and West Bengal. Among these, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Bihar bear the brunt of LWE activity, with these groups exhibiting significant influence and regularly engaging in assaults on both security personnel and civilians.
- From 2004 to 2022, a total of 8625 individuals lost their lives due to LWE activities in various regions of India. The victims predominantly consist of tribal civilians who are frequently labeled as 'Police informers' before undergoing severe torture and ultimately being killed.



Initiatives taken by Government

INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVES

- **Road Requirement Plan-I (RRP-I) for LWE affected areas:** The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways is executing this initiative to enhance road connectivity in 34 districts affected by LWE across 8 states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. The scheme aims to construct a total of 5,362 km of roads in these affected states, with 5,136 km of roads already completed.
- **LWE Mobile Tower Project:** In order to enhance mobile connectivity in regions affected by LWE, the government sanctioned the installation of mobile towers in affected states on 20.08.2014.
- **Aspirational District:** The Ministry of Home Affairs has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the Aspirational Districts program in 35 districts affected by LWE.

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

- **Integrated Tribal Development Programme:** The government has initiated several programs such as the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to enhance infrastructure, create livelihood opportunities, and fulfill fundamental requirements such as education and healthcare in regions affected by LWE.
- **Skill development initiatives:** The government offers training in skill development to young individuals residing in LWE-affected regions with the goal of enhancing their employability and diminishing their susceptibility to recruitment by Naxalite groups.
- **Encouragement of sustainable livelihoods:** Programs such as Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and MGNREGA are designed to foster sustainable livelihood options for tribal communities through activities based in forests and rural employment opportunities.

SECURITY INITIATIVES

- **Scheme of Fortified Police stations:** As part of the initiative, 400 Fortified Police Stations have been built across 10 states affected by LWE. In total, 604 Fortified Police Stations have been established in these areas.
- **Smart Police:** It is an acronym for **Strategic Management & Alternative Response Tactics**, entails the utilization of data-driven strategies by law enforcement agencies. Its objective is to enhance the effectiveness and precision of policing through the analysis of diverse data sources like crime statistics, public input, and social media. This approach informs decision-making processes and resource distribution, ultimately aiming to elevate the quality and efficiency of law enforcement efforts.
- **Creation of specialized task forces:** Dedicated units such as Cobra Commandos and Greyhounds have been formed to conduct precise operations targeting Naxalite leaders and hideouts.

Way forward

- **Intelligence gathering and surveillance:** The government should invest in robust intelligence gathering and surveillance systems to monitor the activities of insurgents, gather information about their plans, and identify potential threats.
- **Community engagement:** The government should work with local communities to build trust and

support. This can include implementing social programs, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, to improve the living conditions of the population.

- **Counter-narrative strategy:** The government should work to counter the insurgents' propaganda and messaging by developing a communication strategy that promotes positive narratives and values. This can include working with media outlets, influencers, and community leaders to spread information that highlights the benefits of peace and stability.
- **Disarmament and reintegration:** The government should implement programs to disarm and demobilize insurgents, offering them opportunities for reintegration into society.
- **Long-term peacebuilding:** The government should work towards building long-term peace and reconciliation in areas affected by insurgency. This can include supporting local initiatives that promote dialogue, tolerance, and understanding between different communities, as well as fostering economic and social development to reduce the appeal of insurgency.

Prelims Based Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding PESA act,1996:

1. It seeks to establish Democratic decentralization.
2. It empowers the state government to override decisions taken by the Gram Sabha.

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANSWER: A

Mains Based Question

Q1. Analyze the socio-economic and political factors that have contributed to the growth and sustenance of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India and Evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives in addressing the challenges posed by LWE.

INDIA'S NEW POST OFFICE IN ANTARCTICA

WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a recent development, the Department of Posts inaugurated a second post office branch at the Bharati research station in Antarctica, marking the first expansion in nearly forty years. As part of this initiative,

letters designated for Antarctica will now bear a unique experimental PIN code, MH-1718, tailored for the new branch.

IMPORTANCE OF INDIA'S POST OFFICE IN ANTARCTICA

INDIA'S PRESENCE IN ANTARCTICA IN HISTORY

India's Antarctic postal story began in 1984 with the inauguration of a post office at Dakshin Gangotri, the country's first research station on the continent. This pioneering outpost, though eventually decommissioned due to ice submergence, stands as a historical landmark, a testament to India's early foray into Antarctic exploration. The legacy continues at the Maitri and Bharati research stations, both equipped with functional post offices established in 1990 and beyond.

COLLABORATION FOR RESEARCH

These Antarctic post offices serve as vital communication lifelines for researchers stationed at the remote bases. Letters carrying scientific data and personal messages travel between India and Antarctica, facilitating collaboration and keeping researchers connected to loved ones back home. The act of sending and receiving mail, even in such a harsh environment, provides a morale boost, reminding researchers of the world beyond the frozen expanse.

THE GROWING PRESENCE OF INDIA IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

Unlike a traditional post office operating within national borders, India's Antarctic branches hold a unique significance. Antarctica, governed by the Antarctic Treaty promoting peaceful research and environmental protection, presents a special opportunity. The presence of these post offices subtly yet demonstrably asserts India's peaceful presence and commitment to scientific exploration on the continent. It's a way to plant a flag, not of conquest but of scientific curiosity and international collaboration.

ALIGNING WITH THE ANTARCTIC TREATY

The Antarctic Treaty plays a crucial role in governing the continent. It neutralises territorial claims, prohibits military activity, and emphasises scientific discovery. India's postal network in Antarctica aligns perfectly with this spirit. It signifies India's commitment to peaceful scientific pursuits and environmental stewardship in a region crucial for understanding our planet.

BOOST TO MORALE

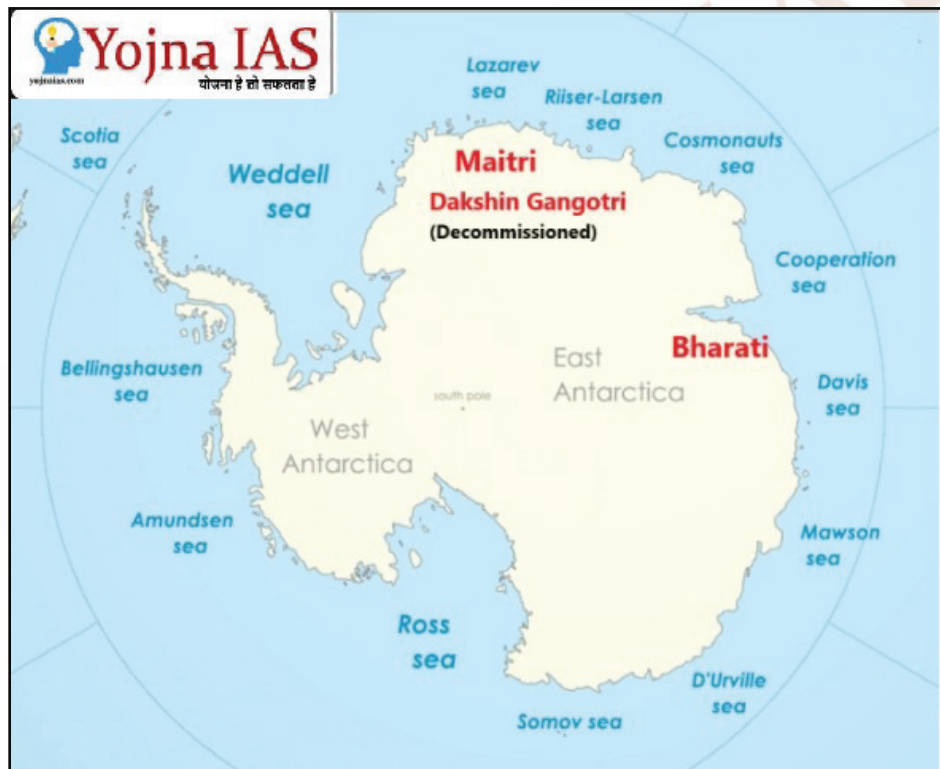
For researchers stationed in Antarctica for extended periods, being able to send and receive mail from home through a familiar Indian postal service can be a morale booster, helping them stay connected to loved ones.

ABOUT THE ANTARCTIC TREATY SYSTEM

- The Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) stands as a cornerstone of international cooperation and governance in the Antarctic region. Signed on December 1, 1959, the treaty entered into force in 1961 and has since been joined by numerous nations, including major stakeholders in Antarctic affairs.
- It serves as a comprehensive framework for the management of Antarctica, encompassing gover-

nance, environmental protection, scientific research, and peaceful cooperation.

- Key provisions of the Antarctic Treaty include the **demilitarisation of the continent**, the prohibition of nuclear testing and disposal of radioactive waste, and the promotion of scientific research and collaboration among signatory nations. The treaty establishes Antarctica as a zone of peace and scientific endeavour, ensuring that it is used exclusively for peaceful purposes and scientific research.
- Furthermore, the Antarctic Treaty System encompasses a series of additional agreements and protocols aimed at addressing specific issues and challenges facing the region.
- These include the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which regulates fishing and marine resource exploitation in Antarctic waters, and the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, which designates Antarctica as a natural reserve dedicated to peace and science and outlines measures for environmental protection and conservation.
- It operates on the basis of consensus decision-making among its member states, ensuring that all decisions are made collectively and in the best interests of Antarctica and its inhabitants. Regular meetings of treaty parties, scientific committees, and expert groups facilitate communication, cooperation, and the exchange of scientific knowledge and expertise.



INDIA AT THE ANTARCTIC

India's Antarctic Programme represents a significant commitment to scientific research, environmental conservation, and international cooperation in Antarctica. Central to this programme are India's three research stations strategically located in the Antarctic region: Maitri, Bharati, and Dakshin Gangotri.

- **Dakshin Gangotri (1983-1991):** This pioneering research station, established in 1983, marked India's initial foray into Antarctica. Notably, it was the first time an Indian team wintered over on the continent, a crucial milestone for scientific research. While eventually decommissioned due to

being submerged by ice, Dakshin Gangotri's legacy lives on as a symbol of India's early Antarctic endeavours.

- **Maitri (1989):** Commissioned in 1989, Maitri stands as India's first permanent research station in Antarctica. Located near Schirmacher Oasis, this all-weather station allows researchers to conduct year-round scientific studies in various disciplines, including atmospheric sciences, biology, geology, and glaciology.
- **Bharati (2012):** India's most recent research station, Bharati, was inaugurated in 2012. Situated in a region with minimal snowfall, this station facilitates research on upper atmospheric studies, coastal processes, and the impact of climate change.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Emperor penguin is native to Antarctica
2. Aurora borealis phenomena cause the sky to appear greenish-blue in Antarctica
3. Ross Ice Shelf is the largest ice shelf in Antarctica

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. Analyse the strategic importance of Antarctica in India's diplomatic endeavours, exploring how the nation's involvement in Antarctic affairs contributes to its stature as a responsible global actor and enhances its soft power on the international stage.

DRAGONFLY MISSION

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, NASA confirmed the Dragonfly rotorcraft mission to Saturn's organic compound-rich moon Titan. The mission has a budget of \$3.35 billion and a launch date of July 2028.

NASA initially selected Dragonfly in 2019, beating out projects like the Titan Saturn System Mission, which called for using an inflatable balloon to explore the moon. Dragonfly didn't have an easy path to final approval, though. NASA experienced a severe budget crunch from 2020 through 2022 due to the pandemic. However, to compensate for this delay, NASA will provide extra funding for a heavy-lift launch vehicle to reduce the time spent cruising to the Saturnian moon.

ABOUT THE DRAGONFLY MISSION:

- o Dragonfly mission is a NASA mission to Saturn's moon Titan.
- o Scheduled to launch in July 2028 and arrive in 2034.
- o The drone should arrive on Titan in 2034 to begin a three-year mission.
- o It will be the first mission to fly a rotorcraft on another planet and fly its entire scientific payload through a thick atmosphere like Titan.
- o Dragonfly's mission is to search for evidence of past, present, or future life on Titan.

Dragonfly is a quadcopter drone with a nominal mass of 400 to 450 kg, roughly the size of the largest Mars rovers. It flies using eight rotors attached in four pairs to outriggers mounted on the side of the body. The craft can fly at about ten m/s and reach altitudes of 4000 m. During the planned two-year mission, Dragonfly will cover several hundred kilometres.

The hazy atmosphere on Titan will make using solar power difficult so that the rover will use a radioisotope power system like the Curiosity rover on Mars. All flights, data transmission, and most science operations will happen during the day, so the rover will have much time to recharge on Titan at night.

WHAT IS TITAN?

- Titan is Saturn's largest moon and the second-largest moon in the entire solar system, after Ganymede, which orbits Jupiter. Titan's dense and calm atmosphere and low gravity make flying an ideal way to explore its various parts. It's known for its dense atmosphere, primarily composed of nitrogen, and its surface features, including lakes and rivers of liquid methane and ethane.
- Titan is the only other place in the solar system besides Earth where stable bodies of liquid exist on the surface, and due to its extremely cold temperatures (around -180°C or -290°F), these liquids are not water but hydrocarbons like methane and ethane.
- It also supports an Earth-like hydrological cycle with methane clouds, rain and liquid flowing across the surface. There is also a lot of organic material accessible on Titan's surface.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Titan is the largest moon of Saturn.
2. Dragonfly mission is the mission of NASA to explore the Titan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A. Only
- B. Only
- C. Both 1 and
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

- Q. Critically examine researchers' challenges when sending probes to study other planets. How do gravitational waves help scientists learn about collisions between celestial bodies in other solar systems?

