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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 13

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SCAN TO EXPLORE





IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL - 13

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**1) NEPAL BORDER DISPUTE**

IN NEWS: - Nepal has released a new political map that claims Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand as part of Nepal's territory. The area of Susta (West Champaran district, Bihar) can also be noted in the new map.

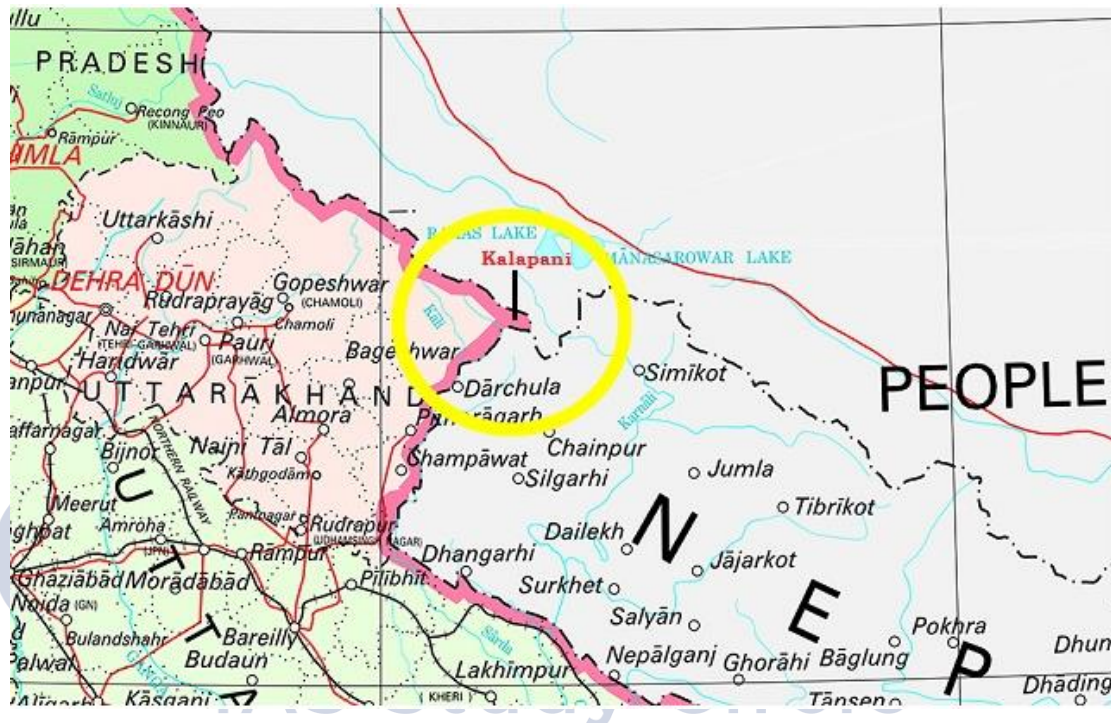
ABOUT BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL

India and Nepal have border disputes over Kalapani - Limpiyadhura - Lipulekh trijunction between India-Nepal and China and Susta area (West Champaran district, Bihar).

Kalapani Region

- Located in the easternmost corner of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district.
- Shares a border on the north with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and Nepal in the east and south.
- It is wedged in between Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani.
- The area is the largest territorial dispute between Nepal and India consisting of at least 37,000 hectares of land in the High Himalayas.
- Kalapani is a valley that is administered by India as a part of the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. It is situated on the Kailash Mansarovar route.
- Kalapani is advantageously located at a height of over 20,000 ft and serves as an observation post for that area.
- The Kali River in the Kalapani region demarcates the border between India and Nepal.

- The Treaty of Sugauli signed by the Kingdom of Nepal and British India (after Anglo-Nepalese War) in 1816 located the Kali River as Nepal's western boundary with India.
- The discrepancy in locating the source of the Kali River led to boundary disputes between India and Nepal, with each country producing maps supporting their own claims.



Susta Region:

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- The change of course by the Gandak river is the main reason for disputes in the Susta area.
- Susta is located on the bank of the Gandak river.
- It is called Narayani River in Nepal.
- It joins Ganga near Patna, Bihar



Nepal's Stand:

- Kali river originates from a stream at Limpiyadhura, north-west of Lipu Lekh. Thus Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura, and Lipu Lekh, fall to the east of the river and are part of Nepal's Dharchula district.
- Lipulekh was deleted from the country's map by the kings to get favors from India.
- The territory of Kalapani was offered to India by King Mahendra after the 1962 India-China war who wanted to help India's security concerns due to perceived lingering Chinese threats.
- Kalapani was not a part of Nepal-India dispute. It was Nepal's territory that the king had allowed India to use temporarily
- The new map is in fact a document that was in circulation in Nepal till the 1950s.

India's Stand:

- Kali river originates in springs well below the Lipu-lekh pass, and the Sugauli Treaty does not demarcate the area north of these streams.

- The administrative and revenue records of the nineteenth century also show that Kalapani was on the Indian side, and counted as part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Kalapani is located in the state of Uttarakhand
2. The Teesta River in the Kalapani region demarcates the border between India and Nepal.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - a

INTERNAL SECURITY

2) RECENT CYBER ATTACKS: SOLAR WINDS HACK

IN NEWS: - The 'SolarWinds hack', a cyberattack recently discovered in the US, has emerged as one of the biggest ever targeted against the US government, its agencies and several other private companies.

ABOUT SOLAR WINDS HACK

- It was first discovered by US cybersecurity company FireEye
- This is being called a 'Supply Chain' attack. Instead of directly attacking the federal government or a private organization's network, the hackers target a third-party vendor, which supplies software to them.

- Once installed, the malware gave a backdoor entry to the hackers to the systems and networks of SolarWinds' customers. The malware was also able to thwart tools such as anti-virus that could detect it.
- Federal investigators and cybersecurity experts say that Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, known as the SVR, is probably responsible for the attack.

ZERO DAY VULNERABILITY

- A zero-day attack (also referred to as Day Zero) is an attack that exploits a potentially serious software security weakness that the vendor or developer may be unaware of.
- The software developer must rush to resolve the weakness as soon as it is discovered in order to limit the threat to software users.
- The solution is called a software patch.
- Zero-day attacks can also be used to attack the internet of things (IoT).
- A zero-day attack gets its name from the number of days the software developer has known about the problem.

SHAMOON VIRUS

The Shmoon virus is reported to have wiped off the data from 30,000 computers of the Saudi Arabian State oil company, Aramco, followed a week later by a similar episode on the networks of the second largest LNG company in the world, Ras Gas of Qatar.

ZERO TRUST BASED ENVIRONMENT

- Zero Trust is a shift of network defenses toward a more comprehensive IT security model that allows organizations to restrict access controls to networks, applications, and environment without sacrificing performance and user experience.

- In short, a Zero Trust approach trusts no one viz; zero trust on end point devices, zero trust on identity, and zero trust on the network to protect all sensitive data.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Which among the following statements correctly describes Zero Trust Based Environment

- a. It is a virus which is reported to have wiped off the data from 30,000 computers of the Saudi Arabian State oil company, Aramco.
- b. It is a shift of network defenses toward a more comprehensive IT security model that allows organizations to restrict access controls to networks, applications, and environment without sacrificing performance and user experience.
- c. It is an attack in which instead of directly attacking the federal government or a private organization's network, the hackers target a third-party vendor, which supplies software to them.
- d. None of the above

Answer: - b

ECONOMY

3) INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE AMENDMENT BILL 2021

IN NEWS: - President has given his assent to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (amendment) Bill 2021, which was passed by Parliament in the monsoon session.

ABOUT INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE AMENDMENT BILL 2021

- The bill replaces the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, which was promulgated on April 4, when Parliament was not in session, and amends the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- The Code provides a time-bound process for resolving the insolvency of corporate debtors (within 330 days) called the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP).
- The debtor himself or its creditors may apply for initiation of CIRP in the event of a default of at least one lakh rupees.
- Under CIRP, a committee of creditors is constituted to decide on the insolvency resolution.
- The committee may consider a resolution plan which typically provides for the payoff of debt by merger, acquisition, or restructuring of the company.
- If a resolution plan is not approved by the committee of creditors within the specified time, the company is liquidated.
- During CIRP, the affairs of the company are managed by the resolution professional (RP), who is appointed to conduct CIRP.
- **Pre-packaged insolvency resolution:** The Bill introduces an alternate insolvency resolution process for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), called the pre-packaged insolvency resolution process (PIRP).
- Unlike CIRP, PIRP may be initiated only by debtors. The debtor should have a base resolution plan in place. During PIRP, the management of the company will remain with the debtor.
- Application for initiating PIRP may be filed in the event of a default of at least one lakh rupees. The central government may increase the threshold of minimum default up to one crore rupees through a notification.
- PIRP may be initiated in the event of a default by a corporate debtor classified as an MSME under the MSME Development Act, 2006.

- Currently, under the 2006 Act, an enterprise with an annual turnover of up to Rs 250 crore, and investment in plant and machinery or equipment up to Rs 50 crore, is classified as an MSME.
- For initiating PIRP, the corporate debtor himself must apply to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- The authority must approve or reject the application for PIRP within 14 days of its receipt.
- For applying for PIRP, the debtor must obtain approval of at least 66% of its financial creditors (in value of debt due to creditors) who are not related parties of the debtor.
- Before seeking such approval, the debtor must provide creditors with a base resolution plan.
- The debtor must also propose the name of RP along with the application for PIRP.
- The proposed RP must be approved by at least 66% of the financial creditors.
- The debtor will submit the base resolution plan to the RP within two days of the commencement of the PIRP.
- A committee of creditors will be constituted within seven days of the PIRP commencement date, which will consider the base resolution plan.
- The committee may provide the debtor with an opportunity to revise the plan.
- The RP may also invite resolution plans from other persons.
- Alternative resolution plans may be invited if the base plan is not approved by the committee, or is unable to pay the debt of operational creditors (claims related to the provision of goods and services).
- A resolution plan must be approved by the committee (with at least 66% of the voting shares) within 90 days from the commencement date of PIRP.

- The resolution plan approved by the committee will be examined by the NCLT. If no resolution plan is approved by the committee, the RP may apply for the termination of PIRP. The authority must either approve the plan or order termination of PIRP within 30 days of receipt.
- Termination of PIRP will result in the liquidation of the corporate debtor.
- During PIRP, the debtor will be provided with a moratorium under which certain actions against the debtor will be prohibited. These include filing or continuation of suits, execution of court orders, or recovery of property.
- During PIRP, the board of directors or partners of the debtor will continue to manage the affairs of the debtor. However, the management of the debtor may be vested with the RP if there has been fraudulent conduct or gross mismanagement.
- At any time from the PIRP commencement date but before the approval of the resolution plan, the committee of creditors may decide (with at least 66% of the voting shares) to terminate PIRP and instead initiate CIRP.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Consider the following statements

1. A pre-packaged insolvency resolution process can be initiated by both the debtor and creditor
2. For initiating PIRP, the corporate debtor himself must apply to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - b

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**4) DNA VACCINE AGAINST COVID 19 - ZYCOV - D**

IN NEWS: - BIRAC has announced that ZyCoV-D, the plasmid DNA vaccine designed and developed by Zydus and partially funded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has initiated Phase I/Phase II clinical trials in healthy subjects, making it the first indigenously developed vaccine for COVID-19 to be administered in humans in India.

ABOUT ZYCOV D VACCINE

- ZyCoV-D, a plasmid DNA vaccine, comes under the Vaccine Discovery Programme supported by the Department of Biotechnology under the National Biopharma Mission.
- Plasmids are circular deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) vectors that can be used as vaccines to prevent various types of diseases.
- In the pre-clinical Phase, it was found to initiate a strong immune response in multiple animal species like mice, rats, guinea pigs and rabbits.
- The antibodies produced by the vaccine were able to neutralize the wild type virus indicating the protective potential of the vaccine candidate.
- No safety concerns were observed in repeat dose by both intramuscular (directly into muscles) and intradermal (superficial injection into skin) routes of administration.
- The development of ZyCov-D has established the DNA vaccine platform in the country which is simple to deploy, temperature stable, and consistently manufacturable- thus lowering costs and enhancing the effectiveness of a vaccine

NATIONAL BIOPHARMA MISSION

- It is an industry-academia collaborative mission for accelerating biopharmaceutical development in the country.
- It was launched in 2017 at a total cost of Rs. 1500 crore and is 50% co-funded by World Bank loan.
- It is being implemented by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Plasmids are ribonucleic acid (RNA) vectors that can be used as vaccines to prevent various types of diseases.
2. ZyCoV-D is a plasmid DNA vaccine.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - b

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5) CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY

IN NEWS: - An ICMR study has found convalescent plasma was not associated with a reduction in progression to severe Covid-19 or all-cause mortality. After the country's largest such trial, known by the acronym PLACID, found that convalescent plasma was ineffective in arresting Covid-19.

ABOUT CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY

- Plasma is the liquid part of the blood.

- Convalescent plasma, extracted from the blood of patients recovering from an infection, is a source of antibodies against the infection.
- The therapy involves using their plasma to help others recover.
- For Covid-19, this has been one of the treatment options.
- The donor would have to be a documented case of Covid-19 and healthy for 28 days since the last symptoms
- Blood has been used to treat many other conditions. It's usually very safe.
- The risk of getting COVID-19 from convalescent plasma hasn't been tested yet. But researchers believe that the risk is low because donors have fully recovered from the infection. The risk of such infections is low. Donated blood must be tested for safety.
- Convalescent plasma therapy has some risks, such as:
 - Allergic reactions
 - Lung damage and difficulty breathing
 - Infections such as HIV and hepatitis B and C

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Convalescent plasma is a source of antibodies against infections
2. Plasma is the liquid part of the blood.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**6) INDIA BIODIVERSITY AWARD**

IN NEWS: - Recently, India Biodiversity Awards 2021 were presented on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22.

ABOUT INDIA BIODIVERSITY AWARDS

- The India Biodiversity Awards initiative was started jointly by ministry of environment, forest & climate change; National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2012.
- It recognizes and honour outstanding models from grassroot level for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and governance.

WINNERS

- Krishi Avam Paristhitiki Vikas Sansthan (KRAPAVIS) won the award under the category 'Sustainable Use of Biological Resources.'
- Shaji N.M., who is also called as 'Tuber Man' of Kerala has won in individual category of 'Conservation of domesticated species.'
- Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS) in Nagaland won the award under 'Sustainable Use of Biological Resources' category.

7) RED EARED SLIDER

IN NEWS: - Red Eared Slider Turtles are threatening to invade the natural water bodies across the Northeast region in India.

ABOUT RED EARED SLIDER

- The red-eared slider is a semi-aquatic turtle belonging to the family Emydidae.

- The red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) derives its name from red stripes around the part where its ears would be and from its ability to slide quickly off any surface into the water.
- Native to the U.S. and northern Mexico, this turtle is an extremely popular pet due to its small size, easy maintenance, and relatively low cost.
- These turtles are considered one of the world's worst invasive species. This is because they grow fast and virtually leave nothing for the native species to eat.
- The females of the species are usually larger than the males. They typically live between 20 and 30 years, although some individuals have lived for more than 40 years.
- Red-eared sliders are poikilotherms. This means that they are unable to regulate their body temperatures independently. Hence, they are completely dependent on the temperature of their environment. For this reason, they need to sunbathe frequently to warm themselves and maintain their body temperatures.
- A team of herpetologists from the NGO 'Help Earth' found red-eared sliders in the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary and the Ugratara temple pond in Assam. The turtle was also collected from an unnamed stream, connected to the Tlawng River, on a farm near Mizoram capital Aizawl.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Consider the following statements

1. Poikilotherms are organisms that are unable to regulate their body temperature independently.
2. All turtles are poikilotherms

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - a

MISCELLANEOUS

8) SENIOR CARE AGEING GROWTH ENGINE (SAGE)

IN NEWS: - The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine) initiative and SAGE portal for elderly persons.

ABOUT SAGE

- The SAGE portal will be a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.
- It has been launched with a view to help such persons who are interested in entrepreneurship in the field of providing services for elderly care.
- The SAGE project aims to identify, evaluate, verify, aggregate, and deliver products, solutions and services directly to the stakeholders. The Ministry will act as a facilitator, enabling the elderly to access the products through identified start-ups.
- Start-ups can apply for being a part of SAGE through a dedicated portal.
- The start-ups selected under SAGE will be those which will provide new innovative products and services to elderly persons in various areas like health, travel, finance, legal, housing, food among others.

PRACTICE QUESTION

With reference to the SAGE Portal, consider the following statements

1. The SAGE Portal will be a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.
2. It was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

→ **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas)**

- Aims to provide the ‘record of rights’ to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited rural areas and issuance of property cards to the property owners.
- Property owners in rural inhabited areas can download the Aadhaar authenticated property card on their mobile phones through the DigiLocker application.
- Its objectives include: **n. Achieve dreams.**
 - ❖ Leveraging property as a financial asset by the citizens of rural India
 - ❖ Opens avenue for applying loans from financial institutes by Property Owners
 - ❖ Creation of accurate land records for rural planning

- ❖ Provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India
- ❖ Serve as a means of reduction in property-related disputes,
- ❖ Facilitate the determination of property tax
- ❖ Creation of survey infrastructure and GIS (Geographic Information System) maps that can be used by any department or agency.
- ❖ Support in preparation of a better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

→ e-Gram Swaraj Portal

- In order to strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), eGramSwaraj, a Simplified Work Based Accounting Application for Panchayati Raj, was launched on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day on April 24, 2020.
- It has been developed amalgamating the functionalities of all the applications under e-panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP).
- e-GramSwaraj assists in enhancing the credibility of Panchayat through inducing greater devolution of funds to PRIs.
- It brings better transparency through decentralized planning, progress reporting and work-based accounting.

- Furthermore, the application provides a platform for effective monitoring by higher authorities
- It will help in establishing a strong financial system by integrating the **PRIASoft and Public Financial Management System (PFMS)**.
- The PRIASoft (Panchayati Raj Institutions Accounting Software) is the Online Payment Module whereby Gram Panchayats are carrying out online payments to the vendors and service providers.

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