

ECONOMY**1. PM Modi inaugurates Surat Diamond Bourse in Gujarat**

- The PM inaugurated Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), the world's largest and modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business, at a time when the diamond industry is passing through its worst crisis due to global economic slowdown and G7 countries' tough stand on Russian diamonds.
- The SDB building is the world's largest office complex with over 67 lakh square feet of floor area spread in nine 15-storey interconnected towers with offices ranging from 300 sq ft to 7,5000 sq ft.
- It is located in Khajod village, near Surat.
- It will also be a global centre for trading both rough and polished diamonds as well as jewellery.
- It is aimed at shifting the diamond trading business from Mumbai to Surat, which is the hub of diamond cutting and polishing with thousands of factories across the city.

Diamond Industry in India

- India is the world's largest cutting and polishing center for diamonds. It accounts for over 90% of polished diamond manufacturing globally.
- Surat is a global hub for diamond manufacturing.
- The US is the biggest market for cut and polished diamonds, with China a close second.
- India's export of cut and polished diamonds is projected to decline by 22 per cent to USD 17.2 billion in the current fiscal due to weakened demand from the key consuming nations, according to rating agency Icra.
- India contributes 19% of the total diamond exports in the world.
- Over 75% of the world's polished diamonds, gems, and jewelry are exported by India.
- The govt. has permitted 100% FDI in the sector under the automatic route.
- India is the world's largest cutting and polishing center for diamonds, accounting for over 90% of polished diamond manufacturing globally. India exports more than 75% of the world's polished diamond, gems and jewellery.
- India depends largely on imports of rough gem diamonds for its Cutting and Polishing Industry as there is no notable production except for one producer in Madhya Pradesh.
- Diamond cutting and polishing is one of the fastest-growing sectors, mostly export-oriented and being labour intensive employs more than 5 million people, contributing around 7% to the country's GDP and 15% to India's total merchandise export.

2. Global coal demand likely to decline 2.3% by 2026:IEA

- Though global coal demand is rising by about 1.4% in 2023, IEA expects global coal demand to fall by 2.3% by 2026 compared with 2023 levels, even in the absence of governments announcing and implementing stronger clean energy and climate policies.
- This decline is set to be driven by the major expansion of renewable energy capacity in the three years to 2026, the IEA has projected.
- Coal consumption in most advanced economies in 2023 is on course for a sharp drop, including record reductions in the European Union and United States of around 20% each, the report projected.
- Demand in emerging and developing economies remains very strong, increasing by 8% in India and by 5% in China in 2023 due to rising demand for electricity and weak hydropower output.

Coal In India

- Coal, often known as "Black Gold" is the most important and abundant fossil fuel in India. It accounts for 55% of the country's energy need. The country's industrial heritage was built upon indigenous coal.
- The leading coal producers of the world include China, US, Australia, Indonesia, India.

- During the last nine years, India's overall coal production has gone up by 47% to 893.08 Million Tonne (MT) and supply has touched 877.74 Million tonne, recording 45.37% growth.
- Gondwana coal makes up to 98 % of the total reserves and 99 % of the production of coal in India.
- Gondwana coal forms India's metallurgical grade as well as superior quality coal.
- It is found in Damodar (Jharkhand-West Bengal), Mahanadi (ChhattisgarhOdisha), Godavari (Maharashtra), and Narmada valleys.
- 'Mission Coking Coal' has been launched by the Government in August 2021, to come up with a roadmap that would suggest ways to augment the production and utilization of domestic coking coal in India by 2030.
- Coking coal is mainly used in manufacturing of steel through blast furnace route. Domestic coking coal is high ash coal (mostly between 18%-49%) and is not suitable for direct use in the blast furnace.

International Energy Agency

- It is an autonomous inter-governmental organisation within the OECD framework.
- It works with governments and industry to shape a secure and sustainable energy future for all.
- It was founded in 1974 to ensure the security of oil supplies.
- It was created in response to the 1973-1974 oil crisis when an oil embargo by major producers pushed prices to historic levels and exposed the vulnerability of industrialised countries to dependency on oil imports.
- It consists of 31 member countries and eleven association countries.
- A candidate country to the IEA must be a member country of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- India joined this organization in 2017 as an Associate member.
- Reports published by IEA: World Energy Outlook, World Energy Balances, Energy Technology Perspectives, World Energy Statistics and Net Zero by 2050.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Waste Management Initiatives

Context: In a recent written reply in the Rajya Sabha, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change highlighted the significant steps taken to tackle waste management in the country.

Highlighted Initiatives Related to Waste Management

1. **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Mechanism:**
 - EPR is a policy approach in waste management that makes producers responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, including their collection, recycling, and disposal.
 - It aims to reduce the environmental impact of products by shifting the financial and physical burden of waste management from governments and taxpayers to producers.
 - In 2022, EPR initiatives utilizing market mechanisms were implemented for plastic packaging, E-waste, battery waste, and **used oil**. This strategic move is anticipated to stimulate growth in the waste management sector.
2. **Waste Processing Capacity:**
 - Out of the approximately 1.5 lakh metric tons per day (MT/D) waste generated in urban areas, around 76% is processed.
 - Since 2014, there has been a notable increase in the capacity for processing various types of waste, including solid waste, hazardous waste, bio-medical waste, E-waste, plastic waste, and construction and demolition waste.
 - Solid waste processing capacity has seen an increase of around 1.05 lakh MT/D in the last eight years, particularly under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
3. **Swachh Bharat Mission for Solid Waste Management:**

- Central assistance is provided under Swachh Bharat Mission for solid waste management including plastic waste management in urban and rural areas, as per scheme guidelines.
- The Central Government launched **Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0)** in 2021 with the overall vision of creating "**Garbage Free Cities**", which would involve achieving the target that all Urban Local Bodies will become at least **3-star certified (as per Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities)** covering door to door collection, source segregation, and scientific processing of municipal solid waste.
- The mission focuses on source segregation, reducing single-use plastic, managing waste from construction-and-demolition activities, and bio-remediation of legacy waste dump sites.
- Under Swachh Bharat Mission – Grameen Phase II, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has issued operational guidelines to the States and Union Territories which include solid waste management activities at the village level.

4. **Waste Management Rules and Guidelines:**

- The Ministry, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, has implemented various waste management rules and guidelines to ensure environmentally sound practices. These include:
 - Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
 - Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
 - Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2016.
 - Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016.
 - Hazardous and other wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016.
 - E-waste Management Rules, 2022.
 - Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022.
 - Guidelines have also been issued on environmentally sound waste management.
 - Guidelines have been developed for the levy of environmental damages /environmental compensation charges based upon the polluter pays principle, for hazardous waste, E-waste, and plastic waste.

POLITY AND CONSTITUTION

Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023

Context: Recently, the Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023, was passed in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Its purpose was to weed out 'touts' from the legal system. The Bill repeals the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 and amended the Advocates Act, 1961, to reduce "the number of superfluous enactments in the statute book" and repeal all "obsolete laws".

Key Highlights of the Advocates Amendment Bill, 2023

- **Touts:**
 - The Bill provides that every High Court, district judge, sessions judge, district magistrate, and revenue officer may frame and publish lists of touts.
 - Tout refers to a person who:
 - Either proposes to procure or procures the employment of a legal practitioner in a legal business in return of any payment.
 - Frequents places such as the precincts of civil or criminal courts, revenue-offices, or railway stations to procure such employment.
 - The Court or judge may exclude from the premises of the Court any person whose name is included in the list of touts.
- **Preparation of lists:**
 - The authorities empowered to frame and publish the list of touts may order subordinate courts to hold an inquiry into the conduct of persons alleged or suspected to be touts.

- Once such a person is proven to be a tout, his name may be included by the authority in the list of touts.
- No person will be included in such lists without getting an opportunity of showing cause against his inclusion.
- **Penalty:**
 - Any person who acts as a tout while his name is included in the list of touts will be punished with imprisonment up to three months, a fine up to Rs 500, or both.

What is the Advocate Act, 1961?

- The Advocates Act, 1961, was enacted to amend and consolidate the law relating to legal practitioners and to provide for the constitution of Bar Councils and an All-India Bar.
- This Act repealed a majority of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 but left behind provisions relating to its extent, definitions, and powers to frame and publish lists of touts.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Kashi Tamil Sangamam

Context: PM Modi inaugurates Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2.0 at Namoh Ghat in Varanasi

About

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam celebrates many aspects of the historical and civilisational connection between Varanasi and Tamil Nadu.
- The broader objective is to bring the two knowledge and cultural traditions (of the North and South) closer, create an understanding of our shared heritage and deepen the people-to-people bond between the regions.
- It is being organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries like Culture, Textiles, Railways, Tourism, Food Processing, Information & Broadcasting etc. and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- The endeavour is in sync with National Education Policy (NEP), 2020's emphasis on integrating the wealth of Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.
- IIT Madras and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) are the two implementing agencies for the programme.
- The first edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam was held from November 16 to December 16, 2022.

Historical Significance

- King Parakrama Pandya, who ruled over the region around Madurai in the 15th century, wanted to build a temple to Lord Shiva, and he travelled to Kashi (Uttar Pradesh) to bring back a lingam.
- While returning, he stopped to rest under a tree — but when he tried to continue his journey, the cow carrying the lingam refused to move.
- Parakrama Pandya understood this to be the Lord's wish, and installed the lingam there, a place that came to be known as Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu.
- For devotees who could not visit Kashi, the Pandyas had built the Kasi Viswanathar Temple in what is today Tenkasi in southwestern Tamil Nadu.

2. The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

Context: The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2023 has been jointly awarded to Daniel Barenboim and Ali Abu Award for Israel-Palestine conflict resolution efforts.

- In 1986, a trust in the former prime minister's honor established the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development.
- The prize is granted to people or groups that strive to establish a new global economic order guarantee scientific advancements are applied to expand freedom and improve mankind, and promote global peace and development.
- It includes a citation and a financial reward of 25 lakh rupees.

- Categories: Three categories are used to deliver the award:
- Peace: Acknowledges initiatives aimed at advancing and preserving world peace and security.
- Disarmament: Recognizes efforts to lessen and eventually eradicate weapons of mass devastation.
- Development: Honors efforts to advance social and economic development.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Explain the importance of a Constitution in the context of a democratic country like India.

The Constitution of a country is the supreme law that determines the relationship between the people and government in a territory and also the relationship among people living in that territory. All countries that have Constitutions are not necessarily democratic. But all countries that are democratic will usually have a Constitution; for example: U.S.A, France, India and South Africa.

Importance of Constitution in democratic country like India:

- Lays down the structure and functions of the organs of the state: A Constitution usually specifies how the state and its various organs will be constituted, who will have power to take which decision.
 - For example, Articles 79 to 122 in Part V of the Indian Constitution; Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the US Constitution.
- Act as a beacon to the elected government: To guide what the elected government should aim to do and devise the policies accordingly.
 - For example, Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Rule of Law: It lays down limits on the power of the government and specifies the rights of the citizens.
 - For example, Article 13 of the Indian Constitution declares any law, which takes away or abridges the Fundamental Rights of citizens as void under certain circumstances.
 - Fundamental Rights under Articles 12-35 of part III of Indian constitution
- Protection of Minorities: The Constitution in a democracy usually provides safeguards for the rights of minorities.
 - For example, Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution.
- It may lay down certain duties of citizens: A Constitution may lay down not only rights but also certain duties for citizens to help promote a spirit of patriotism and uphold the unity of the country.
 - Article 51(A) of the Indian Constitution lays down the duty of citizens individually and collectively to strive towards excellence in all spheres.
- Checks and balances: A Constitution ensures checks and balances among the different organs of the state.
 - For instance, under the Indian Constitution, the Judiciary has the power to exercise judicial review over legislative and executive actions.

Thus, a Constitution is necessary to ensure that the democratic principle of equality is not

MCQs

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| <p>1. The Banni Grasslands are found in which state/UT of India?
 a) Rajasthan
 b) Gujarat
 c) Haryana
 d) Ladakh</p> <p>2. Regarding the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, consider the following statements:
 1. It is awarded by the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Trust.</p> | <p>2. The Indira Gandhi Prize is awarded to individuals or organisations to honour their efforts in promoting international peace, development and a new international economic order.
 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</p> |
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3. Regarding the Pandyas of Madurai consider the following statements:
1. Bow and Arrow was the symbol of Pandya Kingdom.
 2. Korkai was a famous centre for pearl trade.
- 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
4. Consider the following statements in context of appointment of Supreme Court (SC) Judges:
1. Third Judges Case (1993), ruled that only the senior most judge of the SC should be appointed as Chief Justice of India (CJI).
 2. The Third Judges Case (1993) created the current structure of the Collegium of SC to recommend the appointment of SC judges.
- 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
5. Consider the following related to diamonds:
1. Diamond is the hardest naturally occurring substance found on Earth.
 2. Botswana is the leading diamond-producing country in terms of value.
 3. US is the largest producer of synthetic industrial diamonds
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) All three**
 - d) None of the above
6. Consider the following statements:
1. Coal ash contains arsenic, lead and mercury
 2. Coal fired power plants release sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen into the environment.
 3. High ash content is observed in coal.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- a) Only one
 - b) Only two
 - c) All three**
 - d) None of the above
7. The Net Zero by 2050 roadmap has been published by:
- a) International Union for Conservation of Nature
 - b) International Energy Agency**
 - c) World Wide Fund for nature
 - d) Arctic Council
8. Recently, Kaleshwaram Project was in news. It is situated in
- a) Tamil Nadu
 - b) Andhra Pradesh
 - c) Telangana**
 - d) Kerala
9. Khan Younis City, recently in news is located in
- a) Lebanon
 - b) Iraq
 - c) Palestine**
 - d) Syria
10. Ken Betwa link canal passes through which National Park?
- a) Bandhavgarh National Park
 - b) Kanha National Park
 - c) Panna national Park**
 - d) Pench National Park