

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND POLICIES

❖ **PM-DevINE**

❖ **CONTEXT:** The Union Cabinet has approved the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) – a new scheme for the Northeastern states which was announced in the Union Budget earlier this year. The scheme will be operational for the remaining four years of the 15th Finance Commission, from 2022-23 to 2025-26, and will have an outlay of Rs 6,600 crore.

❖ **What is PM-DevINE?**

- The new scheme, PM-DevINE, is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding and will be implemented by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) through North Eastern Council or Central Ministries/ agencies.
- The PM-DevINE Scheme will have an outlay of Rs.6,600 crore for the four year period from 2022-23 to 2025-26 (remaining years of 15th Finance Commission period).
- PM-DevINE will lead to creation of infrastructure, support industries, social development projects and create livelihood activities for youth and women, thus leading to employment generation.
- Measures would be taken to ensure adequate operation and maintenance of the projects sanctioned under PM-DevINE so that they are sustainable.
- To limit construction risks of time and cost overrun, falling on the Government projects would be implemented on Engineering-procurement-Construction (EPC) basis, to the extent possible.
- Efforts will be made to complete the PM-DevINE projects by 2025-26 so that there are no committed liabilities beyond this year.

❖ **What are the objectives of PM-DevINE?**

The objectives of PM-DevINE are to:

- ✓ Fund infrastructure convergently, in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti.
- ✓ Support social development projects based on felt needs of the NER.
- ✓ Enable livelihood activities for youth and women.
- ✓ Fill the development gaps in various sectors.

❖ **What is the justification for announcement of PM- DevINE?**

- The justification for announcement of PM-DevINE is that the parameters of NE States in respect of Basic Minimum Services (BMS) are well below the national average and there are critical development gaps as per the NER District Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index 2021-22 prepared by NITI Aayog, UNDP and MDoNER. The new Scheme, PM-DevINE was announced to address these BMS shortfalls and development gaps.

❖ **What else to know about PM-DevINE?**

- PM-DevINE will provide support to infrastructure and social development projects which may be larger in size and will also provide an end-to-end development solution instead of isolated projects.
- It will be ensured that there is no duplication of project support under PM-DevINE with any of the other schemes of MDoNER or those of any other Ministry/Department.
- PM-DevINE, was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 to address development gaps in the North Eastern Region (NER). Announcement of PM-DevINE is yet another instance of the importance being attached to the development of NE Region by the Government.
- PM-DevINE is an additionality to the quantum of resources available for the development of the NER. It will not be a substitute for existing Central and State Schemes.
- While some of the projects to be approved for 2022-23 under PM-DevINE are part of the Budget announcement, projects with substantial socio-economic impact or sustainable livelihood opportunities for the general public (e.g., basic infrastructure in all Primary Health Care Centres, comprehensive facilities in Government Primary and Secondary Schools, etc) may be considered in the future.

❖ **MDoNER, its initiatives/activities and an Index**

❖ **MDoNER**

- The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) is responsible for the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the North Eastern Region. Its vision is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the Region so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country.

❖ **Initiatives/activities of MDoNER:**

➤ **NESIDS**

- North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme" (NESIDS) was approved by the Government of India as a Central Sector Scheme.
- Under the Scheme guidelines of NESIDS, 100% centrally funding is provided to the State Governments of North Eastern Region for the projects of physical infrastructure relating to water supply, power and connectivity enhancing tourism and Social infrastructure relating to primary and secondary sectors of education and health.

➤ **NLCPR**

- The Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) Scheme came into existence in 1998 under then Planning Commission. Subsequently, it was transferred to DoNER in 2001. Since inception of the Scheme, various projects were sanctioned across sectors for development of North Eastern Region as per Scheme guidelines framed for the purpose and revised from time to time.
- The objective of NLCPR Scheme is to fill up the gap in infrastructure sector of the North Eastern Region through sanctioning the projects prioritised by the State Governments. Ministry gets Annual Budgetary Allocation from Ministry of Finance for funding the projects under NLCPR Scheme. Funds under the scheme are shared between the Central and State Governments on 90:10 basis.

➤ **SIDF**

- The Union Finance Minister in his Budget Speech for 2008-09 announced to set apart a sum of Rs.500 crore (subsequently enhanced to Rs.586.20 crore) for North Eastern Region (NER), especially for Arunachal Pradesh and other border areas facing special problems that cannot be tackled through normal schemes. This is called Social and Infrastructure Development Fund (SIDF).
- It is a one-time package that covers projects, prioritized by the State Governments as per their requirement, which, inter alia, include construction of new roads and bridges, re-establishment of new sub-stations/transmission lines, construction/upgradation of hospitals, establishment of schools, water supply projects etc.

➤ **10 percent GBS**

- Earmarking 10% of their Annual Plan Budgets by Central Ministries for the North Eastern Region is a bold step by the Union Government to address the development deficit of the NER.
- 10% of the Annual Plan Budget of 52 Ministries of the Union Government is earmarked every year for spending in NER since 1998-99 even though the NER has 7.9% (2,62,179 sq. km out of 3287263 sq. km) of India's land mass and 3.76% (4.55 crore out of 121 crore) of population as per Census 2011.

➤ **The North East Venture Fund (NEVF)**

- Ministry of DoNER had joined with North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) to set up the North East Venture Fund, the first and the only Venture Fund for Northeast with an initial corpus of Rs. 100 crores.
- The fund targets to invest in Start-Ups and unique business opportunities to provide resources for new entrepreneurs. The main focus of North East Venture Fund (NEVF) is for mostly the enterprises involved in Food Processing, Healthcare, Tourism, segregation of services, IT, etc.

➤ **STINER**

- The main objective of Science & Technology Interventions in the North East Region (STINER) is to bring in the latest and advanced technologies to the North-Eastern region to help the women farmers and other artisans living there.
- National research institutes and technological institutions such as IITs are assigned to develop new technology for the people living in the North-eastern region which can help them in agriculture.

❖ **External aided projects**

➤ **North Eastern States Roads Investment Programme (NESRIP) assisted by Asian Development Bank (ADB)**

- The scheme envisaged construction/up-gradation of total 433.425 km long roads in 6 North Eastern States of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura.

➤ **North East Rural Livelihood Project assisted by World Bank**

- The objective of the North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) is "To improve rural livelihoods especially that of women, unemployed youth and the most disadvantaged, in four North Eastern States". The proposed project has four major components:
 - ✓ Social empowerment;
 - ✓ Economic empowerment;
 - ✓ Partnership development & management and
 - ✓ Project management.

➤ **NER District Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index 2021-22**

- The NER District SDG Index & Dashboard, a collaborative effort by NITI Aayog and Ministry of DoNER, with technical support from UNDP, is the first of its kind in the country as it focuses on the North Eastern Region, which is of critical significance to the country's development trajectory.
- The Index measures the performance of the districts of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura on the Sustainable Development Goals and their corresponding targets and ranks the districts based on the same.
- The index is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index –the principal and official tool for monitoring progress on the SDGs at the national and State/ Union Territory levels and shares the common ethos of benchmarking performance and ranking on the SDGs to foster competition among the districts.
- The NER District SDG Index aims at delineating progress at the district level on a basket of indicators and enhancing analytical understanding of sectoral issues as well as data gaps, while assisting in designing future courses of action in the region. The modular nature of the index makes it a policy tool and a ready reckoner for gauging progress of districts on the expansive set of the Global Goals, including health, education, gender, economic growth, institutions, climate change and environment, among others.
- Out of the 103 districts considered for ranking, 64 districts belonged to the Front Runner category while 39 districts were in the Performer category in the composite score and ranking of districts. All districts in Sikkim and Tripura fall in the Front Runner category and there are no districts in the Aspirant or Achiever categories.
- East Sikkim [Score 75.87] ranks first in the region followed by districts Gomati and North Tripura [Score 75.73] in the second position.

➤ **NEHHDC**

- Home Minister recently launched the North Eastern Handicrafts & Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC) Mobile Application during the session.
- The NEHHDC would help register artisans and weavers online and collect authentic data through the app. It is expected to provide training through specially designed online courses and help the beneficiaries and redress grievances.

➤ **NESAC**

- North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC) was established as a joint initiative of Department of Space (DOS) and the North Eastern Council (NEC) and came into being on 5th of September, 2000.
- The Centre helps in augmenting the developmental process in the region by providing the advanced space technology support.

PRELIMS

1. Rythu Bharosa Kendras

❖ **CONTEXT: An Ethiopian delegation led by the country's Agricultural Minister Dr Meles Mekonen Yimer is in Andhra Pradesh (AP) to study the first-of-its kind Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), which have been set up by the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government.**

- Ethiopia has shown keen interest in the RBKs. Since the country wants to increase its agriculture output, it seeks to improve the quantity and quality of yields, reduce production costs, and provide newer skills to its farmers.
- ❖ **What are Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs)?**
- Set up for the first time in the country, the RBKs are unique seeds-to-sales, single-window service centres for farmers that have been set up across the state.
- They are a one-stop solution to all farmers' needs and grievances. RBKs sell pre-tested quality seeds, certified fertilisers and animal feed. Farmers can purchase or hire farm equipment, and even sell their produce at the prevailing MSP in the RBKs.
- Touted as role models for the country, agriculture and horticulture officials manning the RBKs also provide services like soil testing and make recommendations — on which crops to sow, and quantity and type of fertiliser to be used. The state government also pays crop insurance, procures grains and makes payments to farmers through the RBKs.

❖ **Have the RBKs proved to be helpful to farmers?**

- RBKs facilitate interaction between farmers, agriculture scientists, and agriculture extension officers right at the village level. Apart from providing services and items for sale, RBK officials demonstrate new farm equipment and provide training to farmers.
- Based on inputs provided by officials after soil testing and weather conditions, many farmers have changed their cropping patterns and benefited immensely, according to the state Agriculture Department. The RBKs have been responsible for elimination of spurious seeds and uncertified and dangerous fertilisers, which can cause crop damage and failures.
- Over 10,700 RBKs multi-functional kiosks with digital Aadhar authentication equipment — have been set up across the state. The RBKs, staffed by agriculture and horticulture graduates, help farmers decide the crops they should cultivate in a scientific manner.
- They also assist in selling their produce at MSPs, through supporting systems of e-cropping, geo-tagging, and the CM App through which payments are made to farmers.
- The Centre has recently nominated the RBK concept for the Food and Agriculture Organisation's "Champion" award. Several agrarian countries are expressing interest in understanding the RBK concept and seek to implement it in their countries.

❖ **What will the Ethiopian delegation do?**

- The Ethiopian delegation will visit several RBKs and understand how they function. They will likely sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state government and Centre to transfer the know-how, while AP officials will provide training to Ethiopian officials on operation of RBKs, and share knowledge about the farming systems in the state.
- An AP delegation led by Agricultural Special Chief Secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, Agricultural Commissioner C H Hari Kiran, AP Seeds Development Corporation MD Dr G Sekhar Babu, and others may visit Ethiopia to study the prevailing farming conditions there and make suggestions.

❖ **What is the Integrated Call Centre which the Ethiopian delegation visited?**

- The call centre established at Gannavaram was set up in March of 2021 to address farmers grievances. Experts from various fields manning the call centre will assist the farmers.
- Suggestions and advice will be given to farmers on agriculture and related areas like horticulture, sericulture, veterinary, fisheries and marketing related technical queries will be addressed.
- This call centre in Gannavaram has several scientists and 30 experienced call centre executives. All these executives are either B.Sc or M.Sc agriculture graduates with four to eight years of field experience.

2. Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2022 survey report

❖ **CONTEXT: The Ministry of commerce and industry launched the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2022 survey report.**

- The LEADS is an indigenous data-driven index to assess logistics infrastructure, services, and human resources across all 36 States and UTs.
- By engaging with various end-user stakeholders, the LEADS acts as a feedback mechanism on the existing logistic capacities and draws recommendations for further improvement. The LEADS further uses the feedback evaluation to classify states on the scale of logistics ease currently present among them.
- The LEADS 2022 has garnered more than 6500 responses from more than 2100 respondents across the country. Unlike the previous versions of LEADS which were based on ranking systems for all states, LEADS 2022 has adopted a classification-based grading, states have been now classified under four categories viz coastal states, hinterland/landlocked states, north-eastern states, and Union Territories. For the assessment of how well a State or UT has performed in comparison to the Top State/UT within the specific cluster.

- Three performance categories namely, Achievers: States/UTs achieving 90% or more percentage, Fast Movers: States/UTs achieving percentage scores between 80% to 90%, and Aspirers: States/UTs achieving percentage scores below 80% have been made.
- The LEADS 2022 survey report would assist PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) and National Logistics Policy (NLP) to perform a network mapping of logistics infrastructure, services, and regulatory environment enabling State Governments to identify and fill the gaps and achieve data-driven multimodal connectivity. LEADS continues to act as a guiding & bridging mechanism for the identification of interventions enhancing logistics efficiency at State/UTs.

3. Exercise PRASTHAN

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** Exercise PRASTHAN conducted under the aegis of eastern naval command
- An offshore security exercise, 'Prasthan' was conducted in the Krishna Godavari Basin Offshore Development Area (ODA) recently
- Conducted every six months, this exercise is an important element of ensuring offshore security and aims to integrate the efforts of all maritime stakeholders involved in offshore defence.
- Led by the Navy, the exercise saw participation from the various oil operators, like ONGC, RIL, Vedanta, and other stakeholders in the domain of maritime security including AP Marine Police, AP fisheries department and the Coast Guard.
- The two-day exercise resulted in refining standard operating procedures (SOPs) and response actions to several contingencies in the Offshore Defence Area off Kakinada
- The exercise was conducted onboard Drill rigs Platinum Explorer and DDKG- of ONGC and RIL located about 40 nm south of Kakinada.
- Contingencies such as terrorist intrusion, bomb explosion, casualty evacuation, search and rescue, man overboard, major fire, oil spill and mass evacuation were exercised.
- The exercise provided all stakeholders with a realistic opportunity to assess their readiness to respond and combat contingencies in the Eastern ODA, as also to operate together in a coordinated and synergised manner.

4. PowerEX-2022

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** CERT-In and Power-CSIRTs jointly conduct Cyber Security Exercise "PowerEX-2022"
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in collaboration with Power-CSIRTs (Computer Security Incident Response Teams in Power sector), successfully designed & conducted the Cyber Security Exercise "PowerEX" for 193 invited Power Sector Utilities.
- The Objective of the exercise was to "Recognize, Analyse & Respond to Cyber Incident in IT & OT Systems".
- The theme of the exercise was "Defending Cyber induced disruption in IT & OT infrastructure".
- Exercise "PowerEX" was hosted by CERT-In on its exercise simulation platform. Around 350+ official from various Power Sector Utilities participated in the event. Exercise "PowerEX" was successful in meeting its objectives and helped the participants to learn, practice and respond to cyber security incidents.

5. Living Planet Report 2022

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** According to the latest Living Planet Report by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), there has been a 69 per cent decline in the wildlife populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish, across the globe in the last 50 years.
- Biodiversity loss and climate crisis should be dealt with as one instead of two different issues as they are intertwined, the report noted, highlighting the link between the two issues for the first time.
- The highest decline (94 per cent) was in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.
- Africa recorded a 66 per cent fall in its wildlife populations from 1970-2018.
- The Asia Pacific saw 55 per cent fall.
- Freshwater species populations globally reduced by 83 per cent, confirming that the planet is experiencing a biodiversity and climate crisis.
- ❖ **Threats to biodiversity:**
- WWF identified six key threats to biodiversity to highlight 'threat hotspots' for terrestrial vertebrates agriculture, hunting, logging, pollution, invasive species and climate change.
- Habitat loss and barriers to migration routes were responsible for about half of the threats to monitored migratory fish species.
- The Living Planet Index (LPI), featuring about 32,000 populations of 5,230 species across the world, showed that vertebrate wildlife populations are plummeting at a particularly staggering rate in tropical regions of the world.
- ❖ **Loss of Mangroves:**
- Mangroves continue to be lost to aquaculture, agriculture and coastal development at a rate of 0.13 per cent per year.
- Many mangroves are also degraded by overexploitation and pollution, alongside natural stressors such as storms and coastal erosion.
- Mangrove-loss represents loss of habitat for biodiversity and the loss of ecosystem services for coastal communities.
- Around 137 square kilometres of the Sundarbans mangrove forest in India and Bangladesh has been eroded since 1985, reducing land and ecosystem services for many of the 10 million people who live there.

6. Snow Leopard

- ❖ **CONTEXT:** Wildlife officials in Arunachal Pradesh await results of a survey to ascertain the presence of the elusive snow leopard in the Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve. As the belief the national park is also the habitat of the snow leopard is based on the claim of a hunter from the Lisu ethnic community that he possessed the skin of the carnivore.

- Scientific Name of the snow leopard is Panthera uncia
- Snow leopards act as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live, due to their position as the top predator in the food web.
- Protection Status
 - ✓ IUCN List of Threatened Species: Vulnerable.
 - ✓ CITES: Appendix I.
 - ✓ Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule-I.
- They have a vast but fragmented distribution across the mountainous landscape of central Asia, which covers different parts of the Himalayas such as Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.
- Largely threatened because of the loss of natural prey species, retaliatory killing due to conflict with humans and illegal trade of its fur and bones.



The snow leopard is often referred to as a mountain ghost because of its coat that helps it blend in a snowy environment. GETTY IMAGES

❖ **What are the Indian Initiatives?**

- The Government of India has identified the snow leopard as a flagship species for the high-altitude Himalayas.
- India is also party to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme since 2013.
- Himal Sanrakshak: It is a community volunteer programme, to protect snow leopards, launched in October 2020.
- In 2019, First National Protocol was also launched on Snow Leopard Population Assessment which has been very useful for monitoring populations.
- SECURE Himalaya: Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded the project on conservation of high altitude biodiversity and reducing the dependency of local communities on the natural ecosystem.
- Project Snow Leopard (PSL): It was launched in 2009 to promote an inclusive and participatory approach to conserve snow leopards and their habitat.
- Snow Leopard is on the list of 21 critically endangered species for the recovery programme of the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change.
- Snow Leopard conservation breeding programme is undertaken at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Darjeeling, West Bengal.

7. **Central report on lead poisoning**

❖ **Context: A central report has found that India bears the world's highest health and economic burden due to lead poisoning.**

- The report was prepared jointly by government think tank Niti Aayog and the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).
- Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh had the highest average blood lead levels (BLL) among Indian states.
- These states account for 40 per cent of India's population that is plagued with this poor health indicator.
- Some 23 states have an average BLL that goes beyond five microgram per decilitre ($\mu\text{g} / \text{dl}$) — the standard used to gauge poisoning.
- The statistics are worrying on a national level with the average for the country being $4.9 \mu\text{g} / \text{dl}$ for children less than two years old.
- Half of India's children were poisoned by lead in 2020 according to a UNICEF report.
- The Unicef report also noted that lead poisoning shaved off an estimated five per cent of Indian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to lower economic productivity and reduced lifetime earnings.
- It also caused 230,000 premature deaths in India.
- Deaths due to lead poisoning have continued to rise in India even though lead use in petrol was phased out by 2000 in the country.
- Sources of lead poisoning: battery recycling, lead mining, smelting, welding, soldering, automobile repatriating, adulterated spices, cosmetics and traditional medicines.

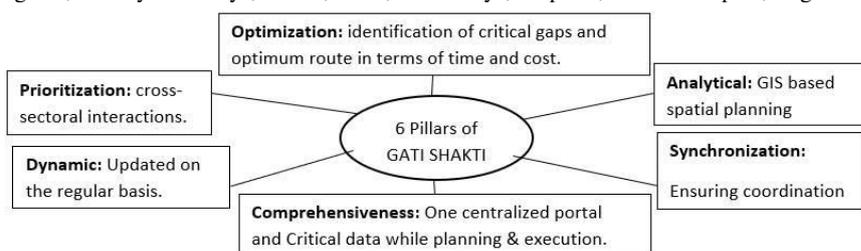
❖ **Way forward**

- Identifying at-risk populations through BLL monitoring, Investigating sources of elevated BLLs, Healthcare workforce training to sensitise them to monitor, detect and treat lead poisoning. To undertake targeted research and intervention studies to identify potential newer sources which policy makers and the scientific community can address head on.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. The Gati-Shakti Yojana needs meticulous co-ordination between the government and the private sector to achieve the goal of connectivity. Discuss.

PM Gati-Shakti is a transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development. The approach is driven by 7 engines, namely: Railways, Roads, Ports, Waterways, Airports, Mass Transport, Logistics Infrastructure.



The approach is powered by Clean Energy and Sabka Prayas - the efforts of the Central Government, the state governments, and the private sector together - Leading to huge jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for all.

Need for the Government and the Private sector coordination:

- Improving quality and efficiency of services delivery.
- Exchange of expertise and managerial competence.
- Driving investments and Finance availability.
- Mobilisation of additional resources for activities.
- Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation and technology development.
- Ensuring optimal utilization of government investment and infrastructure.
- Cost-effectiveness and competitiveness.
- Addressing structural issues and environmental issues
- Promote co-ordination, collaboration and cooperative development.

Way forward

- Feasibility mapping of the project needs strengthening.
- Utilization of viability gap funds to ensure financial viability of the project
- Prudent fiscal reporting and monitoring of risk allocations with all stakeholders.
- Move the PPP model to the next level of maturity with redesigning.

The projects pertaining to these 7 engines in the “National Infrastructure Pipeline” will be aligned with PM Gati-Shakti framework. It will ensure Indian infrastructure’s embrace of digital technology, which will improve overall project execution and efficiency.

MCQs

1. Which of the following is not correctly matched?
 - a) North Eastern States Roads Investment Programme- Asian Development Bank
 - b) North Eastern Space Applications Centre- North Eastern Council
 - c) North East Venture Fund- North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd
 - d) North East Rural Livelihood Project- UNDP**
2. Consider the following

1. Black-necked crane	2. Cheetah	3. Flying squirrel	4. Snow leopard
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Which of the above are naturally found in India?

 - a) 1, 2 and 3 only
 - b) 1, 3 and 4 only**
 - c) 2 and 4 only
 - d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
3. With reference to PMDevINE scheme consider the following statements
 1. PMDevINE is substitute scheme of PM GatiShakti scheme for the development of North Eastern region.
 2. The Scheme, PM-DevINE was announced to address these Basic Minimum Services (BMS) shortfalls and development gaps.

Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below

 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements about Lead
 1. Lead in bone is released into blood during pregnancy and becomes a source of exposure to the developing fetus
 2. Informal and substandard recycling of lead-acid batteries is one of the cause of Lead Poisoning

Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?

 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Which of the tiger reserve is the eastern most tiger reserve of India?
 - a) Manas National Park
 - b) Nameri Tiger Reserve
 - c) Namdapha Tiger Reserve**
 - d) Orang Tiger Reserve
6. “Living Planet Report” has been released by which organisation?
 - a) UN Environment Programme
 - b) UN Developing Programme
 - c) World Wide Fund for Nature**
 - d) IUCN
7. “Rythu Bandhu scheme” “Rythu Bhorasa kendras’ often seen in news recently related to which of the following state?
 - a) Andhra Pradesh**
 - b) Kerala
 - c) Tamil Nadu
 - d) Karnataka
8. Consider the following statements
 1. India’s first snow leopard conservation centre has been established in Himachal Pradesh
 2. Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) is an inter-governmental alliance of all 12 snow leopard range countries.

Choose the correct statement using the codes given below

 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only**
 - c) Both 1 and 2
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2022 survey report has been released by which ministry?
 - a) Ministry of Road transport and Highway
 - b) Ministry of Finance
 - c) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
 - d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry**
10. Which of the following statement is correct regarding Exercise PRASTHAN often mentioned in news?
 - a) It is a bilateral marine exercise between India and Bangladesh
 - b) An offshore security exercise was conducted in the Krishna Godavari Basin Offshore Development Area (ODA)**
 - c) Exercise conducted by CBI for online child sexual abuse
 - d) Evacuation programme exercise of Indian Air force from high seas