

GS PAPER 2- INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS-INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD- RELATIONS**Resolve the military stand-off in eastern Ladakh**

The article discusses the ongoing talks between India and China to resolve the military stand-off in eastern Ladakh. It highlights cautious optimism for a potential breakthrough, while noting the need for careful handling of political and public perceptions in India.

What is the Current Situation Between India and China?

1. India and China are in discussions to resolve the military standoff in eastern Ladakh, ongoing since 2020.
2. Talks have been described as “constructive and forward-looking” by the Indian Foreign Office.
3. Both countries have disengaged from several friction points, focusing now on legacy issues in Depsang and Demchok.

What Are the Political Implications?

1. China recognizes the negative impact of its 2020 military aggression, leading to deteriorating relations with India, a key Asian neighbor.
2. Beijing is losing business opportunities in India, one of the fastest-growing markets.
3. India is concerned about its isolated stance as other major powers, including its Quad partners, continue engaging with China.

What Challenges Remain?

1. **Political Polarization:** Internal divisions and hyper-nationalism in India could oppose any compromise with China, risking derailment of a potential deal.
2. **Public Perception:** The secrecy around the talks and the complex nature of the negotiations make it difficult to gain public support.
3. **Economic Considerations:** Despite the pressure to reconsider economic restrictions, lifting them might face opposition due to lingering mistrust from the 2020 border crisis.

What Should be Done?

1. A potential deal may involve China reducing military tensions, with India in return restoring political dialogue and lifting trade barriers.
2. Indian authorities are encouraged to reassess economic measures against China, as suggested by the NDA government’s Economic Survey and various industry groups.
3. The government must reach out to opposition parties and the public to explain the potential deal, ensuring it aligns with India’s national interest.

GS PAPER 2 – GOVERNANCE**Challenges of categorizing people, especially regarding sex and gender**

The article discusses the challenges of categorizing people, especially regarding sex and gender. It highlights how rigid categories can be contested, particularly in sports, and explores the complexities of individual identity, gender transitions, and societal debates over these issues.

How Is Gender Identity Currently Viewed?

1. **Fluidity of Gender:** Gender is increasingly seen as a fluid concept rather than a fixed one. It is distinguished from biological sex, which was traditionally seen as binary (male and female).
2. **Gender as Personal Choice:** The Canadian Institutes of Health Research defines gender as socially constructed roles and behaviors, contrasting it with biological sex, which is now viewed by some as alterable.
3. **Liberalism’s Paradox:** Liberalism, which values individual freedom and autonomy, must tolerate diverse ideas, even those that might contradict its own principles. For example, while liberalism supports personal freedom, it also has to respect cultural and religious practices that might restrict individual freedoms. This creates a paradox where liberalism must accept ideas that could potentially undermine its own foundation. In the context of gender identity, liberalism supports the right to self-identify, even if this challenges long-standing social norms about sex and gender,
4. **Feasible identity:** Technological advancements are reshaping how individuals can express their identities. As technology enables changes from restorative to transformative medical interventions, individual choices about identity become more feasible.

What Are the Implications of Modern Views on Individualism?

1. **Individualism and Modernity:** Modernity promotes individualism as a higher form of social evolution, where individuals are seen as the fundamental units of society, free from communal constraints.
2. **Social Fragmentation:** The emphasis on individualism can lead to social fragmentation, as people focus more on their personal identities and less on communal bonds.

What Happens When Categories Are Challenged?

1. **Governance and Politics:** Categories like sex, citizenship, and crime are central to governance. Challenges to these categories can cause confusion and conflict. **For example, the 2024 Paris Olympics showed this.** Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified for being overweight by 100 grams, a clear category-based decision.

Algerian boxer Imane Khelif faced sex-related scrutiny despite winning gold, highlighting the fluidity in defining categories.

2. **Political and Social tensions:** The fluidity of categories creates challenges in governance, as seen in the debate over Kamala Harris's ethnicity (whether she is more Asian-American or African-American). Apart from this, the controversy over subgroups within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India for social justice reflects the difficulty in achieving consensus on categories. These examples show how rigid categorization can cause political and social tensions, complicating governance and policy-making efforts.

How do science and technology impact this debate?

1. **Science Defines Categories:** Science traditionally defines biological categories like sex based on physical attributes. For example, sex categories have been widely accepted across various disciplines due to biological differences.
2. **Technology Enables Change:** Advances in medical technology allow for gender-affirming surgeries, facilitating changes that align biological attributes with personal identity. This technological progress supports the idea of sex as a choice rather than a fixed category.
3. **Impact on Social Debates:** The use of technology in verifying and altering sex categories influences social debates, such as those seen in sports. For instance, Imane Khelif's eligibility in boxing was questioned, affecting perceptions of gender norms.

GS PAPER-2- THE ROLE OF NGOS, SHGS, VARIOUS GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS, DONORS, CHARITIES, INSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Bangladesh's Development Model

Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Prize-winning microfinance expert, recently called economics a "meaningless subject." His statement drew attention when he was appointed to lead Bangladesh's caretaker government after the removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

By the 1990s, Bangladesh was a development success story, largely due to Yunus and BRAC founder Fazle Hasan Abed. They effectively used civil society alongside traditional state and market methods to drive progress.

With Yunus in a key role, Bangladesh's development model will face close scrutiny. The main question is whether the civil-society-driven approach is a genuine alternative to traditional economic theories or just a short-term shift.

What is the Significance of The Microfinance Model?

- 1) **Community-Based Model**– Yunus's microfinance model was innovative. By lending to groups of women instead of individuals, it built a supportive community where borrowers held each other accountable and encouraged repayment.
- 2) **Culturally Tailored Group**– Research shows that Grameen Bank's success stems from its group-based social support, unlike Western models that use external systems. Designed for the Global South's cultural context, Yunus's model is more effective and relevant.

What are the Critiques and Challenges of Microfinance model?

- 1) **High Interest Rate**–Microcredit commercialization has caused high interest rates and excessive debt for borrowers.
- 2) **Misuse of Microcredit** –Some organizations misuse the system for profit, raising concerns about its sustainability and ethics.

GS PAPER III-ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Highest Fluoride contamination in groundwater

A recent study by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) has highlighted significant fluoride contamination in groundwater across India.

About Fluoride

- Fluoride is an inorganic, single-atom anion of the element fluorine with chemical formula F⁻.
- Fluoride salts are usually white or colorless, have a bitter taste, and are odorless.
- It is found naturally in groundwater, and comes from the Earth's crust (0.06-0.09%).
- It enters the water through the leaching and dissolution of fluoride-bearing minerals in underground aquifers.
- According to WHO, the safe limit for fluoride in drinking water is 1.50 mg/litre, and levels above this are considered unsafe.

Key Findings of the Study on Fluoride Contamination in Groundwater

- **Fluoride Contamination in Groundwater**
 - **Western India:** Groundwater in western Indian regions, characterized by arid and dry climates, generally has higher fluoride concentrations.
 - **Highest pre-monsoon and post-monsoon fluoride concentrations:** Rajasthan recorded the highest levels of fluoride in groundwater during both pre-monsoon and post-monsoon periods.
 - Its Pre-monsoon concentration was 1.41 mg/litre and post-monsoon was 1.44 mg/litre, close to the maximum permissible limit.
 - **Jaisalmer district worst affected:** The Jaisalmer district in Rajasthan exhibited the worst fluoride contamination.

- **Southern India:**
 - Several other states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Jharkhand also showed post-monsoon fluoride levels higher than the permissible limit.
- **Eastern India:** Jharkhand, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh have elevated fluoride levels.
- **Seasonal Variation in Contamination**
- The highest levels of fluoride contamination in groundwater were observed during the **dry, pre-monsoon months (March-May)**.
 - During this period, fluoride levels were 8.65% above the permissible limit.
- **Post-monsoon months** also showed significant contamination, with levels 7.1% above normal.
- **Risk of Fluorosis**
- **Skeletal fluorosis:** Even a 2% fluoride concentration in groundwater poses a significant risk of skeletal fluorosis.
 - **Skeletal fluorosis** is a bone disease caused by too much fluoride in the body, which makes the bones weak.
- **Dental decay:** This risk increases if fluoride levels reach 40% in groundwater.
- **Factors Affecting Fluoride Contamination**
- **Geology:** The type of rocks and soil in an area can influence fluoride levels.
- **Climate:** Arid and dry regions, especially in western India, are more prone to high fluoride levels compared to humid areas.
- **Season:** Fluoride levels tend to be higher during dry, pre-monsoon months.

Fluoride Remediation Using Biochars

- Fluoride remediation is defined as the process in which excess fluoride is removed from the water.
- **Biochars:** it is a charcoal like material which is made by heating biomass in a low oxygen environment.
- The process of heating organic substances at high temperatures is called "pyrolysi".
- **Working of Biochars**
 - **Absorption:** porous structure of biochars help in absorbing fluoride ions from water.
 - **Ion Exchange:** In biochars, fluoride ions are exchanged with other ions.
 - **Precipitation:** In some cases, fluoride ions react with compounds to form insoluble fluoride compounds that precipitate out of the water.

GS PAPER III ECONOMY

Core Sector Growth

According to the recently released official data by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's core sector output grew by 6.1% in July, down from 8.5% a year ago.

Crucial Insights on the Released Data

The core sector comprises coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement, and electricity.

Summary of the Index of 8 Core Industries:

Core Industry	Weight
Cement	• 5.37%
Coal	• 10.33%
Crude Oil	• 8.98%
Electricity	• 19.85%
Fertilizers	• 2.63%
Natural Gas	• 6.88%
Petroleum Refinery Products	• 28.04%
Steel	• 17.92%

- Growth: Despite an unfavourable base effect, the core sector output grew better than the previous month. The growth rate is up from 5.1% in June.
- In June 2024, the growth in IIP was at a five-month low of 4.2%. It was 4% in June last year.
- Reason for Growth is Rise in Infrastructure Activity:
- Infra activity on the government side picked up, which resulted in steel and cement growing. This came over high base year growth rates.
- Post election, there has been a pick up in road construction in particular. The good performance of housing and auto also added to the demand for steel.
- Growth in fertilisers indicates that companies are building stocks for both kharif and rabi seasons.
- Higher refinery products growth can be attributed to higher industrial activity as well as exports.

About Core Sector Growth

The main or the key industries constitute the core sectors of an economy. In India, there are eight sectors that are considered the core sectors.

- Impact of Core Sector: These sectors have a major impact on the Indian economy and significantly affect most other industries as well.
- Share of Eight Core Sectors: The eight industries have a combined share of 40.27% in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which gives the growth rates of different industry groups in a specified period.
- Published by: The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is prepared every month and released by the Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), and Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an important economic indicator that assesses the performance of a country’s main industrial sectors.
- Providing Insights into Economic Activity: It tracks variations in industrial output levels over time, providing insights into total economic activity.
- Classification: Industries are divided into broad sectors (mining, manufacturing, electricity) and use-based sectors (basic goods, capital goods, intermediate goods).
- Publisher: The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, compiles and releases data weekly.
- Composition: The IIP’s primary sectors include refinery products, electricity, steel, coal, crude oil, natural gas, cement, and fertilisers.

PRELIM FACTS

1.Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd (SECI) attains Navratna Status

Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd (SECI), a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has been granted the Navratna status by the Ministry of Finance.

About Criteria for grant of Navratna status to CPSEs

- The CPSEs which are **Miniratna I, Schedule ‘A’** and have **obtained ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ MOU rating in three of the last five years**
- CPSEs should have a **composite score of 60 or above in following six selected performance indicators** are eligible to be considered for grant of Navratna status.

1. Net Profit to Net worth	25
2. Manpower Cost to total Cost of Production or Cost of Services	15
3. PBDIT to Capital employed	15
4. PBIT to Turnover	15
5. Earning Per Share	10
6. Inter Sectoral Performance	20
	(Maximum Weight) = 100

- **Criteria for grant of Miniratna status to CPSEs**
 - **Miniratna Category-I status:** The CPSEs which have made profit in the last three years continuously, **pre-tax profit is Rs.30 crores** or more in **at least one of the three years** and have a positive net worth are **eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-I status.**
 - **Miniratna Category-II status:** The CPSEs which have **made profit for the last three years continuously** and have a positive **net worth** are **eligible to be considered** for grant of Miniratna-II status.

2.Cyclone Asna

Cyclone Asna recently moved **past Gujarat** without making any serious impact on the prone regions, said officials.

About Cyclone Asna:

- This is the **first cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea in August since 1976.**
- **Between 1891 and 2023:** Only **three cyclonic storms** formed in the **Arabian Sea** during August (in 1976, 1964, and 1944), according to the IMD.
- **Naming:** The name **Asna** has been given by **Pakistan.**
- **Path :** The deep depression over the **Kachchh coast** and adjoining areas of **Pakistan and the Northeast Arabian Sea**

- It moved **westward** and intensified into **cyclonic storm 'Asna'** and lay centred at **1130 hours over the same region, 190 km west-northwest of Bhuj (Gujarat).**
- **Usual Path:** Tropical cyclones generally **do not cross the equator** due to the **Coriolis effect**, which is responsible for the **rotation of cyclones.**
- The Coriolis effect is **weakest at the equator** and increases as you move towards the poles.
- This weak effect near the equator makes it **difficult for cyclones to cross** from one hemisphere to the other.
- **Deep Depression vs Cyclone:** A deep depression is a low-pressure system with wind speeds ranging from **52 kmph to 61 kmph**, while a cyclone has wind speeds between **63 kmph and 87 kmph.**
- **Geographically Rare:** It is considered **geographically rare** because it **originated over land in Rajasthan**, an area far from the **typical oceanic origins of cyclones.**
- The system then **moved into the Arabian Sea**, which generally sees **fewer cyclones compared to the Bay of Bengal**, particularly during the month of August.
- **Minimum Temperature Requirement:** A sea surface temperature of **27 degrees Celsius and above** is needed for a **low-pressure system to intensify into a cyclone.**
- Currently, the sea surface temperature in the **Bay of Bengal is 28-30 degrees Celsius.**
- It is around **27-28 degrees Celsius in the Arabian Sea**
- It's **colder (below 26 degrees Celsius)** in the west-central Arabian Sea and very warm (above 32 degrees Celsius) in the Gulf of Aden.
- The **Tropical Cyclone Heat Potential** is high in the central Bay of Bengal but **low in the northern and central Arabian Sea.**
- **Movement:** In the **southern hemisphere, cyclones rotate clockwise.**
- The Coriolis effect causes cyclones to rotate **counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere** and clockwise in the southern hemisphere.
- **Eye of Cyclone:** The **eye of a cyclone is the calmest part.**
- It is characterised by relatively **clear skies and light winds**, while the most intense and destructive winds occur in the **eyewall surrounding the eye.**

3.Samudra Pratap

Recently, the first indigenously built **Pollution Control Vessel (Samudra Pratap)** was launched in Goa.

- 'Samudra Pratap' is the **first indigenously developed Pollution Control Vessel** of the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG).**
- The Ship has been built by **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- It is for the **first time that these vessels** are being designed and constructed indigenously.
- **Objective:** The vessel will help to check the oil spillage in the country's sea coast.
- **Features:**
 - 'Samudra Pratap' boasts a **length of 114.5 meters**, a breadth of **16.5 meters**, and a **displacement of 4,170 tons.**
 - The vessel will be **manned by 14 officers and 115 sailors** and is equipped with state-of-the-art technology for pollution control.
 - It features **side-sweeping arms** to contain oil spills while in motion, an **advanced radar system for oil spill detection**, and **facilities to recover and store various types of oil.**
 - It has an oil recovery rate of **300 tonnes per hour**, and a **storage capacity of 300 tonnes** in onboard tanks, which can be **extended to 1,000 tonnes using inflatable barges.**

4.Dispute Resolution Scheme (e-DRS)

Recently, the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** had notified the **e-Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2022 (e-DRS)**

About Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2022 (e-DRS)

- **Section 245MA :** This initiative, established under **section 245MA of the Income-tax Act, 1961**, will allow **taxpayers to resolve disputes electronically** through **Dispute Resolution Committees (DRCs).**
- Section 245MA of the Act also provides for the **constitution of Dispute Resolution Committees (DRC).**
- **AIM:** To **reduce litigation and provide relief to eligible taxpayers**
- **Scheme Working:**
 - **Eligibility:** Taxpayers who meet certain conditions **specified in section 245MA** can apply for dispute resolution.
 - This includes cases where the **disputed amount does not exceed Rs. 10 lakh** and the **taxpayer's income for the relevant year is below Rs. 50 lakh.**
 - The dispute **must not involve information from searches or international agreements.**
 - **Application Process:** Taxpayers can **apply electronically using Form No. 34BC** on the Income Tax Department's e-filing portal.
 - Applications must be **submitted within one month of receiving the specified order.**

- **Dispute Resolution Committees (DRC) Function:** The DRC, established in all 18 regions across the country, can **modify orders, reduce penalties, or waive prosecution.**
- They are required to **decide within six months** of receiving the application.

5. Dhaincha and Green Manuring

The Tamil Nadu government has recently distributed Dhaincha (green manure) under the Chief Minister’s Mannuyir Kaathu Mannuyir Kaappom (MKMK) Scheme. Farmers receive 20 kg of green manure per acre at a 50% subsidy to improve soil health.

About Dhaincha and Green Manuring

- Dhaincha: A tall herb grown in wet areas, used for livestock feed and soil improvement.
- Green Manuring: Involves growing and incorporating leguminous plants into the soil. Benefits include improved soil structure, increased water retention, reduced erosion, weed control, and enhanced soil microorganism activity.

6. Pacific Islands Forum

The annual meeting of the **Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)** began in **Nuku’alofa, the capital of Tonga.**

About Pacific Islands Forum (PIF):

- **Formations:** Formed in **1971**, PIF is an **intergovernmental organisation** which consists of **18 member states** located in the **Pacific region.**
- **Members:** **Australia and New Zealand** are among the **wealthiest and largest countries** which are part of the organisation
- **Other member states are:** Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia,, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- **AIM:** The PIF aims to push for **economic growth, enhance political governance and security** for the region, and **strengthen regional cooperation.**
- **Vision:** PIF vision is for a **resilient Pacific region** of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures **all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives**

Key Highlights of the Meeting

- **Climate change is high on the agenda:** Several PIF members are **among the world’s worst-affected countries**, especially due to rising sea levels.
- **World Meteorological Organization (WMO) report:** It revealed that **faster-than-average sea level rise, ocean warming, and acidification** are threatening the **Pacific Islands.**
- The **South West Pacific** was **worst hit by sea level rises**, in some places by more than double the **global average in the past 30 years**
- **To tackle these challenges:** PIF members have been pushing to raise **funds for climate action.**
- Notably, the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) — a regional financing facility established by PIF — is **currently \$380 million short of its \$500 million target**
- **China-US tussle under the spotlight:** Another issue which is being widely discussed at the summit is **the ongoing tussle between China and the US for influence over the region**
- The **Asian country** signed **security and policing agreements** with the **Solomon Islands**, in particular, setting off **alarm bells in Australia and the US.**

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Discuss the legal and social impact of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly’s bill to raise the minimum marriage age for women to 21 years on existing personal laws.

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly’s recent bill to raise the minimum marriage age for women from 18 to 21 years reflects a significant legislative change aimed at promoting gender equality and safeguarding women’s rights. This move aligns with India’s broader efforts to challenge traditional norms and empower women, but it also raises questions about its impact on existing personal laws across communities.

Legal Impact of Raising the Minimum Marriage Age for Women to 21 Years:

Positive Legal Impact	Negative Legal Impact
1. Strengthens Gender Equality: By aligning the marriage age for women with men, the bill promotes gender equality and supports India’s commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).	1. Conflict with Personal Laws: The bill could conflict with personal laws governing various communities, such as Muslim Personal Law, which sets the marriage age at puberty.
2. Reduces Child Marriage: Raising the marriage age to 21 helps to prevent child marriages, ensuring that women	2. Legal Complexity and Enforcement: The bill introduces legal complexities for enforcement, as the age of marriage is a criterion under different personal

have the opportunity to complete their education and become economically independent.

For instance: According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), states with stricter marriage laws have seen reduced rates of child marriage.

3. Harmonization with National Laws: The bill aligns with national efforts such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, creating uniformity in legal standards across India.

For instance: This move complements the recommendations of the Task Force on Marriage Age for Women set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

4. Protects Women's Rights: Raising the age of marriage is consistent with international human rights standards and helps protect young women from early pregnancy and health risks.

For instance: The WHO emphasises delaying marriage as crucial for reducing maternal mortality and improving women's health outcomes.

5. Legal Precedent for Reforms: Setting the marriage age at 21 could serve as a legal precedent for other states and potentially influence national policy.

laws, creating confusion and potential legal challenges.

3. Constitutional Challenges: The bill could face constitutional challenges on grounds of religious freedom and personal autonomy, especially if viewed as infringing on personal law rights.

For instance: Previous attempts to standardise marriage age across religions have been contested in courts, citing violations of Articles 25 and 26.

4. Potential for Legal Loopholes: The bill might create legal loopholes where parties could bypass state laws by marrying under personal laws or in other jurisdictions.

5. Resistance from Communities: The bill could face resistance from communities who view it as an imposition on cultural practices and traditions.

Social Impact of Raising the Minimum Marriage Age for Women to 21 Years:

Positive Social Impact

1. Empowers Women: Raising the marriage age provides women with more time to pursue education and career opportunities, fostering economic independence and personal development.

For instance: States with higher marriage ages have shown improved female literacy rates and employment opportunities.

2. Reduces Health Risks: By delaying marriage, women are less likely to experience early pregnancies, reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.

For example: The NFHS-5 data shows a correlation between higher marriage age and lower rates of maternal and infant mortality in states like Kerala.

3. Enhances Social Awareness: The bill encourages awareness about the importance of education and women's rights, promoting a progressive outlook in society.

For instance: Public awareness campaigns like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have been instrumental in shifting societal attitudes toward the education and empowerment of girls.

4. Supports Social Reforms: Raising the marriage age aligns with broader social reforms aimed at reducing gender inequality and promoting women's autonomy.

For instance: Legislative reforms like the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 aim to protect women's rights, similar to the objectives of this bill.

5. Promotes Long-Term Development: Delaying marriage can lead to more informed decision-making regarding life partners, contributing to stable families and societal progress.

Negative Social Impact

1. Potential for Increased Unregistered Marriages: There could be a rise in unregistered marriages if couples decide to marry under traditional or religious customs instead of legal provisions.

For instance: In regions where social norms strongly favour early marriage, communities might resist formal registration under the new law.

2. Societal Backlash: The law may face resistance in conservative societies where early marriage is customary, leading to potential social backlash and community unrest.

For instance: In certain rural areas, traditional practices may conflict with the new legal framework, causing societal friction.

3. Increase in Covert Practices: There is a risk of covert practices, such as falsifying ages or arranging marriages in secrecy, to circumvent the new age restrictions.

4. Strain on Family Dynamics: Changing the marriage age may put a strain on traditional family dynamics and expectations, leading to intergenerational conflicts.

For instance: Families accustomed to early marriages may struggle with adapting to new norms, causing disputes and misunderstandings within the community.

5. Potential Disruption of Social Norms: Sudden changes in legal marriage age may disrupt existing social norms, causing confusion and discontent among certain demographics.

Looking to the future, raising the minimum marriage age for women to 21 years in Himachal Pradesh marks a progressive step towards gender equality and women's empowerment. However, it also presents challenges in harmonising with existing personal laws and societal norms. A balanced approach, considering legal frameworks and social sensitivities, is crucial to ensure effective implementation and widespread acceptance of this transformative change.

MCQ

- Consider the following pairs:
Sectors-----Activities
1. Tertiary Sector-----Utilities (electricity & water supply)
2. Secondary Sector-----Construction
3. Tertiary Sector-----Trade
Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?
a) 1 and 2 only **b) 2 and 3 only**
c) 1 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3
- With reference to the Indian Economy, consider the following statements:
1. The Index of Core Industries (ICI) constitutes 40.27% of the total index of industrial production (IIP).
2. The Index of Core Industries is published quarterly with the base year as 2011-12.
3. Index of Eight core Industries is published by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Program implementation.
Which of the statements given above are correct?
a) 1 only b) 1 and 3 only
c) 3 only d) 2 and 3 only
- Consider the following statements:
1. Tropical cyclones typically do not cross the equator.
2. Cyclones rotate counter clockwise in the southern hemisphere.
3. The eye is the calmest part of a cyclone.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct:
a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
c) 3 only **d) 1 and 3 only**
- In recent times Second Thomas Shoal, Sabina Shoal and Scarborough Shoal are often seen in the news for which one of the following reasons?
a) Discovery of significant oil and gas reserves
b) Territorial disputes between China and the Philippines
c) Establishment of new marine conservation areas
d) Site of recent underwater volcanic activity
- With reference to the Criteria for Navratna status , consider the following statements:
1. The Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) should be are Miniratna I, Schedule 'A'
2. CPSEs should have obtained 'excellent' or 'very good' MOU rating in three of the last five years
3. CPSEs should be having a composite score of 90 or above in prescribed six selected performance indicators
Which of the statements given above are required in order to be considered eligible for grant of Navratna status. ?
a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
- With reference to the fluorine contamination in groundwater in India , consider the following statements:
1. The contamination in humid and wet areas was relatively high in comparison to arid and dry areas
2. Heavy Contamination poses the risk of skeletal fluorosis and dental decay
3. Fluoride is among the many minerals found naturally in groundwater
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
a) 1 and 2 only **b) 2 and 3 only**
c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3 only
- Which of the following statements is true regarding the current Chandipura virus (CHPV) outbreak in India?
a) The outbreak has primarily affected the southern states of India.
b) WHO has recommended travel and trade restrictions due to the outbreak.
c) A vaccine for the Chandipura virus is widely available.
d) The Chandipura virus is known to cause acute encephalitis syndrome (AES).
- Recently which state government has launched Dhaincha under cm's mannuyir/kaathu mannuyir kaappom scheme ?
a) Andhra Pradesh **b) Tamil nadu**
c) Karnataka d) Kerala
- With reference to Vadhvan Port, consider the following statements:
1. It will be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will provide direct connectivity to international shipping routes.
2. The port will serve as a gateway for India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and International North-South Transportation Corridor.
3. Ministry of Defense and Indian Railways are involved in the joint venture for the development of Vadhvan Port.
How many of the statements given above are correct?
a) Only one **b) Only two**
c) All three d) None
- Consider the following statements:
1. The Ganga River drains into Bay of Bengal after a confluence with the river Meghna.
2. The Ganga Water Treaty, 1996 aimed to build a new dam on the Ganges River to generate hydroelectric power for both India and Bangladesh.
Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2