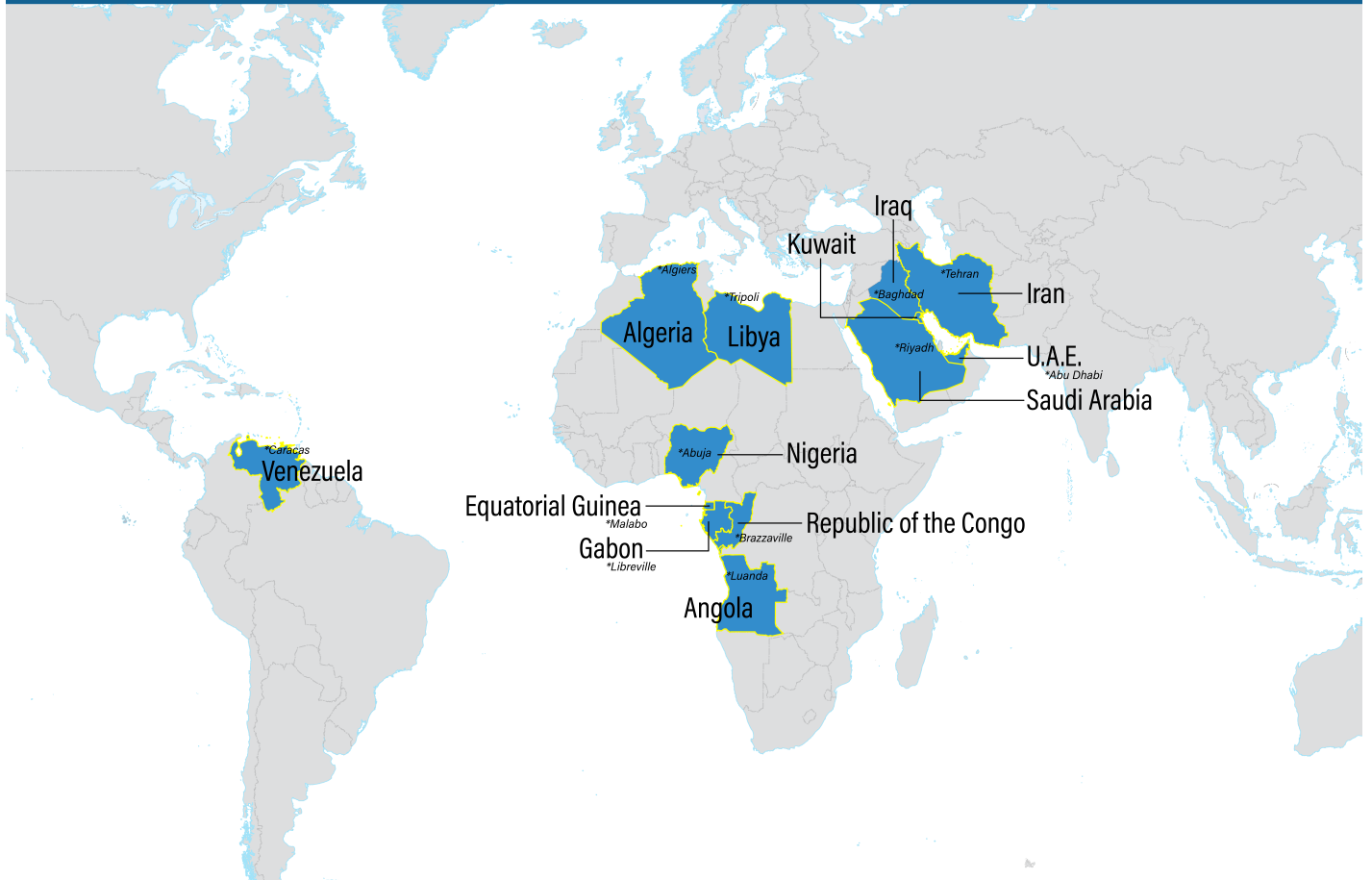




OPEC

// Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)



- Intergovernmental organisation, created at the Baghdad Conference (1960)
- Headquarter – Vienna, Austria
- Current Members – 13
- Members who Quit – Ecuador (2020), Qatar (2019), Indonesia (2016)
- Membership – Open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil
- OPEC Fund for International Development – Only globally mandated development institution that provides financing from member to non-member countries exclusively.

RBI's Green Deposits Framework

For Prelims: Green Finance Ecosystem, Green Bond, RBI, Non-Banking Financial Companies, UNEP

(United Nations Environment Program), Perform Achieve and Trade.

For Mains: Green Finance Ecosystem.

Why in News?

The [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) has announced a new framework to offer **green deposits to the customers**, aiming at developing a **Green Finance Ecosystem (GFS)** in India.

- The framework will come into effect from June 1, 2023.
- A green deposit refers to an interest-bearing deposit received by an RE (Regulated Entity) for a fixed period, with the proceeds earmarked for allocation towards green finance.

What are the Key Features of the Framework?

- **Applicability:**
 - The framework is applicable to **Scheduled Commercial Banks**, including Small Finance Banks, excluding Regional Rural Banks, Local Area Banks and Payments Banks and all deposit-taking [Non-Banking Financial Companies \(NBFCs\)](#), including Housing Finance Companies.
- **Allocation:**
 - REs will be required to allocate the proceeds raised through green deposits towards a **list of green activities and projects that encourage energy efficiency** in resource utilization, reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases, promote climate resilience and/or adaptation, and improve natural ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Exclusion:**
 - Projects involving new or existing extraction, **production and distribution of fossil fuels, including improvements and upgrades**, nuclear power, direct waste incineration, alcohol, weapons, tobacco, gaming, or palm oil industries, **renewable energy projects generating [energy from biomass](#)** using feedstock originating from protected areas, landfill projects and hydropower plants larger than 25 MW have been excluded from green financing.
- **Financing Framework:**
 - To ensure effective allocation of green deposits, REs must put in place a **Board-approved Financing Framework (FF)**. The green deposits shall be denominated in Indian Rupees only.
 - The allocation of funds raised through green deposits by REs during a financial year shall be **subject to independent third-party verification/assurance**, which shall be done on an annual basis.

What is Green Finance Ecosystem?

- **About:**
 - GFS refers to the financial system that supports and **enables investments in environmentally sustainable projects** and activities.
 - It includes a range of financial products, such as [green bonds](#), **green loans, green insurance, and green funds**, that are designed to promote environmentally friendly practices and projects.
 - The green finance ecosystem aims to create a financial system that supports the transition to a **low-carbon, resource-efficient, and sustainable economy**, while also addressing the risks and opportunities associated with environmental issues such as [climate change](#), pollution, and biodiversity loss.
- **Need:**
 - The financial sector can play a pivotal role in mobilising resources and their allocation thereof in green activities/projects. Green finance is **also progressively gaining traction in India**.

- The GFS can augment the **flow of credit to green activities and projects while also protecting the interest of depositors** and addressing greenwashing concerns.
- It can promote [sustainable development](#) and **create a positive impact** on the environment in India.
- **Indian Scenario:**
 - India has commenced its journey for carbon neutrality and put forward a '**Green Deal**' to be achieved by 2070.
 - The Green Deal has classified green finance as an enabler to accelerate decarbonisation. It emphasises on the need for an increased flow of capital from the **national government and private entities to establish green infrastructure.**
 - In 2016, the RBI had released a report in collaboration with [UNEP \(United Nations Environment Programme\)](#) and India on the lines of sustainable financial systems.
 - The report explores various facets of financial systems in India and its role in accelerating green finance.
 - Carbon trading has been introduced in the policy framework of the country through the '[Perform Achieve and Trade](#)' **scheme.**
 - According to the World Economic Forum the market for green bonds could be worth more than **two trillion dollars by 2023.**

What are the Related Initiatives?

- **Encouraging Foreign Capital:** The Government has permitted [Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\)](#) up to 100% under the automatic route in the renewable energy sector.
- **Encouraging Renewable energy:**
 - The Government has waived inter-state Transmission System (ISTS) charges for inter-State sale of solar and wind power for projects.
 - Making provisions for [Renewable Purchase Obligation \(RPO\)](#) and setting up Renewable Energy parks
 - Announcement of the [National Hydrogen Mission.](#)
- **India's Nationally Determined Contribution:** Under the Paris Agreement which was adopted by signatory countries in 2015, India had submitted [Nationally Determined Contribution \(NDC\)](#) with quantified targets.
 - To reduce the emissions intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 33-35% till 2030 from the levels in 2005,
 - To achieve about 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

Way Forward

- India's green economy is showing promising signs of growth, and banks are playing an important role in promoting sustainable finance and supporting the country's transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and sustainable economy.
- Financing green projects is a critical step towards achieving a sustainable future.

[Source: IE](#)

Radioactive Materials in Recycling Chain

For Prelims: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), IAEA Nuclear Security Plan, Nobel Peace Prize, United Nation General Assembly, UPSC, IAS, Civil Services Examination.

Why in News?

The [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#), has released its annual data on **illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material**.

- The data shows that **radioactive materials or contaminated devices** are entering into the **booming scraps recycling chain, posing a grave health hazard**.

What does the IAEA Data Suggest?

- The IAEA's [Nuclear Security Plan](#) was established to **report incidents of illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material**.
- The latest dataset shows that **incidents of unauthorised disposal of radioactive sources** slipping into scrap metal or waste recycling industries are increasing.
 - The occurrence of such incidents indicates deficiencies in the systems to **control, secure and properly dispose of radioactive material**.
- The resulting contaminated metal, if used to **manufacture household goods**, could pose a **potential health problem to unsuspecting consumers**.
 - IAEA reported **146 incidents in 2022**, which is an increase of nearly 38% over the 2021 figure.

What Measures can be Taken to Prevent Radioactive Materials from Entering the Recycling Chain?

- **Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks:** Governments need to strengthen their regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to ensure **proper handling, storage, and disposal of radioactive materials**.
 - This can include **stricter licensing requirements for facilities that handle radioactive materials**, and penalties for non-compliance.
- **Improve Monitoring and Control Mechanisms:** Governments should also invest in improving monitoring and control mechanisms to **prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials**.
 - This can include the **use of radiation detection equipment at borders and other points of entry**, and more **comprehensive tracking and reporting systems**.
- **Encourage the Use of Alternative Materials:** Governments and other stakeholders should encourage the **use of alternative materials that do not pose a risk of radioactive contamination** and promote the development of technologies to extract valuable materials from radioactive waste in a safe and sustainable manner.

What is Radioactivity?

- Radioactivity is the phenomenon of **spontaneous emission of particles or waves from the unstable nuclei of some elements**. There are three types of radioactive emissions: **Alpha, Beta and Gamma**.
 - Alpha particles are positively charged **He (Helium) atoms**, beta particles are negatively charged electrons and gamma rays are neutral electromagnetic radiations.
- Radioactive elements are **naturally found in the earth's crust**. **Uranium, thorium and actinium** are three NORM (Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials) series that contaminate water resources.
- Radioactivity is measured in **Becquerel (SI unit) or in Curie**. The unit **Sievert measures the quantity of radiation absorbed by human tissues**.

International Atomic Energy Agency

- **About:**
 - Widely known as the world's "**Atoms for Peace and Development**" organisation within the [United Nations family](#), the IAEA is the international centre for **cooperation in the nuclear field**.
- **Establishment:**
 - The IAEA was created in 1957 in response to the deep fears and expectations generated by the **discoveries and diverse uses of nuclear technology**.
 - Headquarter: **Vienna, Austria**.
- **Objective:**
 - The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
 - In 2005, it was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for their work for a safe and peaceful world.
- **Functions:**
 - It is an independent international organisation that reports annually to the [United Nation General Assembly](#).
 - When necessary, the IAEA also reports to the [UN Security Council](#) in regards to instances of members' non-compliance with safeguards and security obligations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. In the Indian context, what is the implication of ratifying the 'Additional Protocol' with the 'International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'? (2018)

- (a) The civilian nuclear reactors come under IAEA safeguards.
- (b) The military nuclear installations come under the inspection of IAEA.
- (c) The country will have the privilege to buy uranium from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- (d) The country automatically becomes a member of the NSG.

Ans: (a)

[Source: DTE](#)

River Rejuvenation

For Prelims: River Rejuvenation, Kuttamperoor River, Cleaning up riverbeds, Ganga Action Plan.

For Mains: River Rejuvenation.

Why in News?

The 7.2 Km Kuttamperoor River in Alappuzha, Kerala has been rejuvenated after over a 6-year effort through public participation and government intervention.

- It was dead for more than a decade due to waste dumping, encroachments, and other human activities.
- It has been rejuvenated through deepening the channel, removing encroachments, constructing bunds on both sides. The revival of the Kuttamperoor river is expected to help **control floods in the region**.

What is River Rejuvenation and its Impact?

- **About:**
 - River rejuvenation is the process of reviving or restoring the **natural flow and health of a river that has been damaged due to human activities** such as waste dumping, encroachment, and pollution. The process involves removing pollutants, cleaning up riverbeds, and restoring the natural environment around the river.
- **Impacts:**
 - It can help to **restore the natural habitats of plants and animals**, promote biodiversity, and provide cleaner water for drinking and irrigation.
 - Reviving rivers can also **boost tourism in the region and improve the livelihoods** of people who depend on the river for their livelihoods.
 - Furthermore, river rejuvenation can help to **control floods and reduce the damage caused by them**. A healthy river can absorb excess water during heavy rains and prevent **flooding** in downstream areas. This can save lives and property and reduce the economic impact of floods.
- **Initiatives:**
 - In 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released Rs. 19,000-crore Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) on rejuvenation of [13 major rivers through forestry interventions](#).
 - These 13 rivers are Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, [Sutlej](#), [Yamuna](#), [Brahmaputra](#), [Narmada](#), [Godavari](#), [Mahanadi](#), [Krishna](#), [Cauvery](#), and [Luni](#).

What are the Other Examples of River Rejuvenation Project?

- **Rhine River:** The Rhine River in Europe was once highly polluted but has since undergone a **massive clean-up effort that has transformed it** into a vibrant and thriving ecosystem.
- **Singapore River Clean-up:** The Singapore River Clean-up is another successful example of a river rejuvenation project. The project involved cleaning up the highly polluted river and transforming it into a major tourist attraction and a hub of cultural and social activities.
- **Thames River Restoration:** The Thames River Restoration project in London, UK, has led to the revival of the river's ecology and the creation of new habitats for wildlife.
- **Ganga Action Plan:** In India, the Ganga Action Plan is an ongoing project aimed at cleaning up and **rejuvenating the highly polluted Ganga River**. The project involves a range of interventions, including the construction of sewage treatment plants, the creation of green belts along the riverbanks, and the promotion of eco-friendly activities.

[Source: TH](#)

Himachal Pradesh Sukhashraya Act, 2023

For Prelims: Himachal Pradesh Sukhashraya Act, 2023

For Mains: Benefit and Significance of Himachal Pradesh Sukhashraya Act, 2023

Why in News?

Himachal Pradesh passed Sukhashraya (Care, Protection, and Self-Reliance of Children of the State) Act, 2023 to ensure the [welfare of orphans](#) and persons with special needs.

What are the Key Details of Sukhashraya Act, 2023?

▪ About:

- The Act defines **orphans as those without biological parents or whose parents are incapacitated** and includes children in need of care and protection such as those without homes or those at risk of forced marriage, crime, or drug abuse.
- The Act offers **financial and institutional benefits to the beneficiaries between the age of 18-27 years**, along with vocational training, skill development, and coaching to help them become active members of society.
- The Act is a step towards ensuring the protection and care of the most vulnerable section of society.

▪ Benefits under the Act:

- A **Mukhya Mantri Sukhashraya Sahayata Kosh fund** of Rs 101 crore has been formed, and a **child welfare committee will be established in each district** to oversee the scheme.
- Orphans and persons with special needs will **become 'children of the state'**.
- **Financial benefits** include **Rs 5,000 in summer** and **winter, Rs 500** for major **festivals**, and **Rs 4,000 monthly allowance** for **daily expenses** in college.
- **Institutional benefits** include sponsored **train tickets** and **accommodation for 10 days** within the state, and **hostel fees** for beneficiaries in **ITI and government colleges**.
- The government will give a **fixed amount of money at the time of marriage and three biswas of land to build their own homes**.
- **Orphans** who wish to establish their own **start-ups will be given a token corpus** to incentivize entrepreneurial pursuits.
 - **Ph.D. students will also receive the monthly allowance.**

▪ Other Safeguards Mentioned in the Act:

- Ex-residents of child care institutions will be supported by the state government till the age of 21 years.
- **Recurring deposit accounts will be opened for each child and orphan**, and the state government shall make contributions to these accounts as per prevalent rates.
- The **child welfare committee will carry out surveys to identify orphans** and will look into the demands of children in need.

Note: As per the [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act, 2015](#), orphan and destitute children in the country are "Children in need of care and protection (CNCP). The primary responsibility of execution of the Act lies with the States/UTs.

What is the Similar Initiative of Union Government?

▪ Child Protection Services (CPS) Scheme or "Mission Vatsalya":

- Launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Under the provisions of the CPS, Central Government is **providing financial assistance to the States/UTs for undertaking a situational analysis of children** in difficult circumstances, inter-alia.
- Under the scheme institutional care to Children in need of care and protection and Children in Conflict with Law is provided in Child Care Institutions (CCIs).
- The scheme also **provides for non-institutional care** wherein support is extended for adoption, foster care and sponsorship.

European Space Agency's Juice Mission

Why in News?

Recently, the European Space Agency is set to launch the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (Juice) mission to explore [Jupiter](#) and its icy moons, namely **Ganymede, Callisto, and Europa**.

What is Juice Mission?

- **About:**
 - **Launched from French Guiana** on an Ariane 5 launcher. The mission is set to reach Jupiter in 2031.
 - The spacecraft was constructed by Airbus Defence and Space, a division of the Airbus group.
- **Objectives:**
 - The main objective of the mission:
 - To create **detailed maps of the moons' surfaces** and look beneath them to probe the potential habitable environments by analyzing the water bodies underneath.
 - To create a **comprehensive picture of Jupiter** by trying to understand its origin, history, and evolution.
 - The focus will be on **Ganymede** (the **largest moon in the Solar System**, which generates its magnetic field).
 - The three moons, Ganymede, Callisto, and Europa, are believed to hold immense amounts of water, potentially making them habitable.
 - Juice isn't equipped to detect life but can find out whether there could be places around Jupiter, inside the icy moons, where the necessary conditions, such as water, biological essential elements, energy, and stability, to sustain life are present.

What is Jupiter?

- Fifth in line from the Sun, Jupiter is, by far, the **largest planet in the solar system** - more than twice as massive as all the other planets combined.
 - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are called **Jovian or Gas Giant Planets**. These have thick atmosphere, **mostly of helium and hydrogen**.
- Jupiter's iconic **Great Red Spot** is a giant storm bigger than Earth that has raged for hundreds of years.
- Jupiter **rotates once about every 10 hours** (a Jovian day), but takes about **12 Earth years** to complete **one orbit of the Sun** (a Jovian year).
- Jupiter has **more than 75 moons**.
 - The planet Jupiter's **four largest moons are called the Galilean satellites** after Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei, who first observed them in 1610.
 - These large moons, named **Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto**, are each distinctive world.
- In 1979, the **Voyager mission** discovered Jupiter's faint **ring system**.
- **Nine spacecraft** have visited Jupiter. Seven flew by and two have orbited the gas giant.
 - The **Galileo probe (NASA)** which orbited the planet between 1995 and 2003.
 - **Juno (NASA)** has been circling the planet since 2016.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched? (2014)

Spacecraft Purpose

1. Cassini-Huygens : Orbiting the Venus and transmitting data to the Earth
2. Messenger : Mapping and investigating the Mercury
3. Voyager 1 and 2 : Exploring the outer solar system

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Cassini-Huygens was sent to study Saturn and its moons. It was a joint collaboration between NASA and European Space Agency. It was launched in 1997 and entered Saturn's orbit in 2004. The mission ended in 2017. **Hence, pair 1 is not correctly matched.**
- Messenger, a spacecraft by NASA was sent to map and investigate Mercury. It was launched in 2004 and entered Mercury's orbit in 2011. The mission ended in 2015. **Hence, pair 2 is correctly matched.**
- Voyager 1 and 2 were launched by NASA in 1977 to explore the outer solar system. Both the spacecraft are still operational. **Hence, pair 3 is correctly matched.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer**

[Source: IE](#)

Nifty Reits & InvITs Index

Why in News?

Recently, India's first-ever **Real Estate Investment Trusts (Reits) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) Index** was launched by National Stock Exchange Indices Ltd, a subsidiary of the [National Stock Exchange of India](#).

What is the Nifty Reits & InvITs Index?

- **About:**
 - The **index aims to track the performance of Reits and InvITs that are publicly listed and traded on the NSE.**
 - The weights of securities within the index are based on their **free-float market capitalization**, subject to a security cap of 33% each and an aggregate weight of top-3 securities capped at 72%.

- The index has a **base date of 1 July 2019 and a base value of 1,000.**
- The index will be **reviewed and rebalanced on a quarterly basis.**
- **Top Constituents:**
 - The top constituents of the Nifty Reits & InvITs index include Embassy Office Parks Reit, Powergrid Infrastructure Investment, Mindspace Business Parks Reit, and India Grid Trust.
 - The index has 57.5% weight to Real estate, 35.6% to power, and 6.8% to services.

What is Infrastructure Investment Trust?

- An **InvITs is a collective Investment Scheme** similar to a [mutual fund](#), which enables **direct investment of money from individual and institutional investors in infrastructure projects** to earn a small portion of the income as a return.
- InvITs are listed on exchanges just like stocks — through [Initial Public Offering \(IPO\)](#).
- InvITs are regulated by the [Securities and Exchange Board of India \(SEBI\) \(Infrastructure Investment Trusts\) Regulations, 2014](#).

What is a Real estate Investment Trust?

- REIT refers to **an entity created with the sole purpose of channeling investible funds** into operating, owning or financing income-producing real estate.
- **REITs are modeled on the lines of mutual funds** and provide investors with an extremely liquid way to get a stake in real estate.
- It is a **type of security that provides all types of investors, big or small, with an outlet for regular income, portfolio diversification, and long-term capital appreciation.** Like any other security, REITs can enlist themselves on a stock exchange.
- In India, the **REIT were introduced by the SEBI in 2007.**

What is SEBI?

- The SEBI was **established on 12th April, 1992** in accordance with the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.**
- Major Function:
 - To protect the interests of investors in securities.
 - To regulate the securities market.

[Source: ET](#)

Trademark

Why in News?

The Delhi High Court has restrained Khadi Designing Council of India and Miss India Khadi Foundation from using the '**KHADI**' **Trademark** after the [Khadi and Village Industries Commission \(KVIC\)](#) filed a Trademark Infringement Lawsuit.

- The court held that the defendants had infringed KVIC's trademark and engaged in passing it off.
- A trademark infringement lawsuit is a legal action taken by a trademark owner to stop **others from using their trademark without permission**, or in a way that could cause confusion or dilute the value of the trademark.

What is a Trademark?

- A trademark is a symbol, word, phrase, design, or combination of these elements that is used to **identify and distinguish the goods or services of one company** from those of another.
- Trademarks are protected by [Intellectual Property Rights \(IPR\)](#).
- Trademarks can be registered with government **agencies to provide legal protection against unauthorized** use by others.
- In India, trademarks are protected under the [Trade Marks Act 1999](#) and its subsequent amendments.
 - The Act provides for the **registration of trademarks and establishes a system** of penalties for infringement.
- Trademark infringement occurs when someone uses a mark that is identical or deceptively similar to a registered trademark **without the owner's permission. Infringement can result in legal action**, including damages, injunctions, and criminal sanctions.
- To maintain legal protection for a trademark, the owner must make regular use of it in connection with the goods or services for which it is registered. Failure to use a mark for an extended **period of time may result in the mark being canceled or invalidated**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. In order to comply with TRIPS Agreement, India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The difference/differences between a “Trade Mark” and a Geographical Indications is/are (2010)

1. A Trade Mark is an individual or company's right whereas a Geographical Indication is a community's right.
2. A Trade Mark can be licensed whereas a Geographical Indication cannot be licensed.
3. A Trade Mark is assigned to the manufactured goods whereas the Geographical Indication is assigned to the agricultural goods/products and handicrafts only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

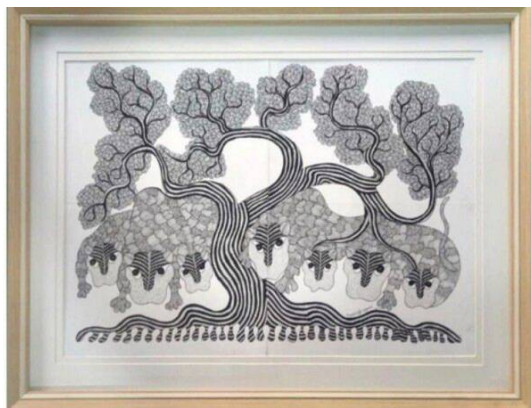
Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Trade Mark is a sign that a business/individual uses to distinguish its own goods or services from those of its competitors and Geographical Indication is an indicator that certain products have a regional origin, which is common to all such products in that entire region and the producers (community) in that region are allowed to use the Geographical Indication. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Only one undertaking can use a Trade Mark registered in its name and address by obtaining a license, whereas every undertaking in the same region is allowed to use the same Geographical Indication. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- A Trade Mark is assigned to goods as well as services, whereas Geographical Indication is assigned to agricultural goods, natural good or manufactured goods as originating, or manufactured in the territory of a country, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of such goods is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Rapid Fire Current Affairs

GI Tag for Madhya Pradesh's Gond Painting



Madhya Pradesh's traditional Gond painting has been awarded the [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#), a recognition that will help protect the art form and the artists who create it. The paintings, which are **created by the Gond tribe, depict nature, animals, and religious themes, and showcase their way of life.** The **Dindori district is the main source of Gond painting**, and it has expanded to other places in the area.

The **promotion of Gond painting through the [National Rural Livelihood Mission \(NRLM\)](#) and [National Urban Livelihood Mission \(NULM\)](#)** also will bring the art form to a wider audience through greeting cards, mobile covers, and bag covers.

Cellular Agriculture

Cellular agriculture is a relatively new concept that offers a sustainable and ethical alternative to traditional animal agriculture. It involves **growing animal-based products, such as meat, dairy, and seafood, from cell cultures rather than directly from animals.** This technology comprises **two different approaches, namely cell cultivation and precision fermentation.** In the **cell-cultivation method, stem cells are initially sampled from animals** through a painless process and then **fed with nutrients in large containers** where they **multiply and differentiate into muscle tissue, which is the main component of meat.** On the other hand, the **precision-fermentation method uses microorganisms, such as yeast,** to produce products such as milk and egg-white proteins. These products can be grown directly from microorganisms in a similar fermentation process to that which has been used for many years in the food industry to produce enzymes and other products.

One of the main advantages of cellular agriculture is its potential to **address the environmental and ethical issues associated with traditional animal agriculture.** It requires fewer resources, such as land, water, and feed, and produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions and waste. Additionally, the raising and slaughtering of animals can be avoided, which can significantly improve animal welfare.

US-Philippines Joint Military Exercises

Recently, the **US and the Philippines have launched their annual "Balikatan" military exercises,** and aimed at improving the respective militaries' ability to **respond jointly to threats in the [Indo-Pacific.](#)** The exercises were first staged in 1991. **Balikatan means "shoulder-to-shoulder".** The Philippines' foreign policy is moving towards the US and away from its previous China-friendly stance.

Overall, the joint military exercises reflect the Philippines' efforts to increase its military capabilities and defend against China's assertiveness in the region.

Read more: [Indo-Pacific](#)

Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) 2022

According to the [National Tiger Conservation Authority's \(NTCA\)](#) fifth cycle of [Management Effectiveness Evaluation \(MEE\)](#) for 2022, **the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) ranked first, Satpura and Bandipur came second**, while **Nagarhole was ranked third** (92.42%) in the 2022 cycle of MEE.

And all five reserves in Tamil Nadu are managed well, the [Anamalai Tiger Reserve \(ATR\)](#) and the [Mudumalai Tiger Reserve \(MTR\)](#) **are ranked fifth and eighth** among the 51 tiger reserves in the country and have improved their ranking from "very good" to "excellent." These two tiger reserves are among the 12 tiger reserves that have been classified as "excellent." The **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR)** and the **Kalakkad and Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR)** **retained their "very good"**. The newly declared tiger reserve, **Srivilliputhur-Megamalai, was ranked "good"**.

The MEE evaluation was based on the [International Union for Conservation of Nature's \(IUCN\) framework](#) and covered six assessment elements, including context, planning, input, process, output, and outcomes.

Read more: [Mudumalai Tiger Reserve](#), [Periyar Tiger Reserve \(PTR\)](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/13-04-2023/print>