



PLUTUS IAS

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1. United Nations: India sponsored Nuclear Disarmament Resolutions adopted

Two resolutions were adopted by the United Nations namely “Convention on Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons” and “Reducing Nuclear Danger”. The resolutions were sponsored by India.

Convention on Prohibition of the use of Nuclear Weapons

The resolution has been tabled by India since 1982. The resolution was also backed by the majority of the members of the United Nations. It requests the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to commence negotiations to prohibit use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

Reducing Nuclear Danger

It was tabled since 1998. It draws global attention to accidental use of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to review nuclear doctrines. Also, it calls for concrete steps to reduce risks and de-targeting of nuclear weapons.

2. India-GCC Troika Dialogue: Key Facts

India and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Troika held an annual Political Dialogue. India was represented by the External Affairs Minister S Jai Shankar at the dialogue.

Highlights

During the dialogue, India requested the members of GCC to ease the return of Indian professionals and workers to the Gulf countries.

Gulf Cooperation Council

It is an intergovernmental economic and political union. It comprises of Arab states such as Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE.

India-GCC

Earlier, India had robust ties with Iran. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia and GCC were allies of Pakistan traditionally. India was the second largest customer of Iranian oil until recently. However, US pressure forced India to reduce oil imports from Iran. Saudi Arabia and GCC countries quickly stepped in to replace Iranian supplies.

ARAMCO and ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) will jointly build a mega refinery in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. Also, ARAMCO of Saudi Arabia recently purchased 20% stake in Indian Reliance industries.

In 2018, India, UAE and Saudi Arabia created a trilateral oil cooperation to bring stability in oil cooperation after the US sanctions on Iran.

GCC

GCC is one of the “immediate neighbourhood” of India. There are more than 6.5 million Indian workers in the GCC region. The GCC accounts to 34% of crude imports of India.

3. US approves 600 million USD armed drones sale to Taiwan

The United States recently approved a 600 million USD armed drones sale to Taiwan. By the end of October 2020, the US approved the sale of Harpoon missile systems to Taiwan.

Background

The current ruling Communist Party of China claims Taiwan. Taiwan was split from the Chinese mainland in 1949 during a civil war.

History of China-Taiwan issue

After the first Sino-Japanese war in 1895, the Qing Government ceded Taiwan to Japan. Later in World war II, China took over control of Taiwan from Japan and began ruling the island with the consent of the UK and US. However, in a few years a civil war broke out in China and troops of Chiang Kai Shek were beaten by the Communist armies. The Communist army was then under the control of Mao Zedong.

In 1949, Chiang and remnants of the Government of Kuomintang fled to Taiwan.

One Country Two System

The famous Chinese formula of “One Country Two System” was established in Hong Kong. Chinese tried to reunify Taiwan too under the formula. They also offered to provide autonomy to the Taiwanese after reunification.

Taiwan in United Nations

A region shall be recognized as an independent country if it gains United Nations membership. Till date, Taiwan has not become an official member of the UN. It is still recognized as a province of China. Recently, there were issues over reinstating the observer status of Taiwan at the World Health Assembly. US backed Taiwan and China opposed it.

Economy of Taiwan

The economy of Taiwan is highly dependent on China. The Taiwanese companies have invested more than 60 billion USD in China and upto 1 million Taiwanese live in China.

Why is Taiwan important for the US?

The US uses Taiwan as a gateway to trade and invest in China. Taiwan is an alternative to escape from Chinese sanctions, taxes.

4.CBDT exempts Sovereign Wealth Fund: Key Facts, Benefits, Types, Sources of Sovereign Wealth Fund

The Central Board of Direct Taxes recently exempted the interest, dividend and long term capital gains made by the Sovereign Fund MIC Redwood 1 RSC Limited of Abu Dhabi, UAE (United Arab Emirates).

Highlights

The exemption has been provided under clause 23 FE of Section 10 of the Income Tax Act. This will allow sovereign wealth funds to invest in infrastructure projects in India. The exemption is to be allowed till March 31, 2024.

Conditions

The Sovereign Wealth Funds are being exempted under the certain conditions. They are as follows

- No Commercial activity shall be undertaken using the fund within India or outside India
- Income Tax has to be filed for the years investment is made till the time it is liquidated.
- Quarterly statement of investments should be produced

The funds shall be continued to be controlled and owned by the government of Abu Dhabi. Also, it will be regulated under the laws of Abu Dhabi.

What is Sovereign Wealth Fund?

It is an investment fund owned by the state. It comprises money generated by the Government. It is often derived from the surplus reserves of the country. The Sovereign Funds benefits economy of the country largely.

What are the sources of the Sovereign Wealth Fund?

The Sovereign Wealth Fund comes from trade surpluses, state-owned natural resource revenues, and bank reserves. It might accumulate from foreign currency operations, budgeting excesses, money from privatizations and governmental transfer payments.

Types of Sovereign Wealth Fund

The different types of Sovereign Wealth Fund are stabilization funds, Reserve Investment Funds, Savings or future generation funds, Public benefit pension reserve funds, funds targeting specific industries, foreign currency reserve assets.

Way Forward

A monitoring mechanism is to be set up by the fund. Only the surplus fund of the Government of Abu Dhabi shall be invested in the fund.

QUESTIONS

1. Which article of the Indian Constitution confers the Right on minorities to establish and administer educational institutions?

- [A] Article 22**
- [B] Article 25**
- [C] Article 27**
- [D] Article 30**

Correct Answer: D [Article 30]

Notes:

Article 30 of the Indian Constitution confers the right on minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. This right is provided to all language and religious minorities.

The Article was recently in news because the Supreme Court of India held that the appointment of teachers in minority educational institutions can be regulated by the Government and it will not violate Article 30. As per the judgement, the institutions cannot have an absolute right on the appointment.

2. Recently, the Government of India has issued revised guidelines for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters with other nations. At present (January, 2020) India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties with how many countries?

- [A] 32**
- [B] 40**
- [C] 42**
- [D] 48**

Correct Answer: C [42]

Notes:

India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties with 42 countries and is signatory to various International Conventions for cooperation in criminal matters. The Home Ministry is the designated central authority for this. The recently revised guidelines have incorporated various legal and technological developments in recent years and aim to make documentation more compliant with international requirements. The revised guidelines provide step-by-step guidance to the investigation agencies for drafting and processing letters, rogatory or mutual legal assistance requests and service of summons, notices and other judicial documents. The guidelines have taken into account the concerns raised by various courts for prompt and timely responses in service of documents to persons residing abroad. These revised guidelines have provision for service of documents to authorities of foreign country preferably within ten days of receipt of request in respect of offences committed against women and children.

3.The Hubballi to Dharwad Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project was recently inaugurated in which state?

- [A] Karnataka
- [B] Maharashtra
- [C] Madhya Pradesh
- [D] Telangana

Correct Answer: A [Karnataka]

Notes:

The Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu recently inaugurated the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) project between the twin cities of Karnataka, Hubballi to Dharwad.

The project cost of Rs 970 crore is jointly funded by the state and central governments and the World Bank. The BRTS established between the cities on a trial basis already serves more than 1 lakh passengers per day. It has now become fully operational and is expected to be a major boost in the state's public transport.

4.Which state/UT has recently renamed its Public Health Engineering, Irrigation and Flood Control Department as the 'Jal Shakti Department'?

- [A] New Delhi
- [B] Puducherry
- [C] Jammu and Kashmir
- [D] Chandigarh

Correct Answer: C [Jammu and Kashmir]

Notes:

The Administrative Council under the chairmanship of Lt Governor G C Murmu recently approved the renaming of the state's Public Health Engineering, Irrigation and Flood Control Department as the 'Jal Shakti Department'.

The council also approved the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission and the strategy to achieve 100 percent coverage of piped water supply across the UT, by December 2021. It was also proposed to set up a Mission Directorate of Jal Jeevan Mission for implementation of the scheme. Seven districts of the UT would be covered for 100 per cent piped water supply by June 2020, in the initial phase.

5.As per the notification of the Ministry of health and family welfare, which component will be treated as 'drugs' from April 1, 2020?

[A] Medical devices

[B] AYUSH drugs

[C] Alcohol

[D] Raw materials for drugs

Correct Answer: A [Medical devices]

Notes:

The Ministry of health and family welfare recently said in a notification that all medical devices sold in the country would be treated as drugs and would be regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940, from April 1, 2020.

As of now, only 23 medical devices are being categorised as drugs. Only a few of these including cardiac stents and intrauterine devices have been brought under price control. The decision was taken after discussing with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB).

6.Arvind Kejriwal led- Aam Aadmi party won how many seats in the Delhi assembly elections?

[A] 42

[B] 52

[C] 62

[D] 72

Correct Answer: C [62]

Notes:

Arvind Kejriwal led- Aam Aadmi party won 62 seats out of the total 70 seats in the Delhi assembly elections. Arvind Kejriwal is set to become the Chief Minister of Delhi for the third time. The Bharatiya Janata Party got the remaining 8 seats.

Aam Aadmi party (AAP) MLAs chose Arvind Kejriwal as the leader of the legislature party and he is set to claim to form the next government in Delhi.

7. The area of which city of Rajasthan was declared as a 'No construction zone', as per the recent Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2020?

- [A] Jaipur
- [B] Jodhpur
- [C] Jaisalmer
- [D] Udaipur

Correct Answer: A [Jaipur]

Notes:

The Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was recently passed by the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly to declare the entire Walled City area in Jaipur as a 'no construction zone'.

Under the new Act, the state government will get the right to declare a particular area of the urban bodies of the state as a No-construction zone to promote tourism and preserve heritage. UNESCO had mandated to declare the Heritage site-Walled Area of Jaipur city as a no-construction zone.

8. The statehood day of which Indian state is celebrated as 'Utkal Divas' on April 1?

- [A] Rajasthan
- [B] Odisha
- [C] Gujarat
- [D] Karnataka

Correct Answer: B [Odisha]

Notes:

The Indian state of Odisha was formed on 1st April 1936. Its statehood day is called as 'Utkal Divas', which is celebrated in the state and across the country.

In the memory of the formation of Odisha as a separate state from the earlier Bihar and Orissa province, the day has been celebrated. Due to the nation-wide lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic, there were no prominent celebrations in the state.

9. What is the name of the online challenge for students, launched by the innovation cell of MHRD and AICTE, for developing solutions to the Coronavirus pandemic?

- [A] SAMRIDDHI
- [B] SAMADHAN
- [C] SOOCHNA
- [D] CHUNAUTI

Correct Answer: B [SAMADHAN]

Notes:

The innovation cell of the Ministry of HRD and AICTE have recently launched an online challenge for students called 'SAMADHAN', in collaboration with Forge and InnovatioCuris.

This challenge calls for students to search and develop quick solutions to the Coronavirus pandemic that will assist the government agencies and health services. Under the programme, the students and teachers of the country will be motivated for conducting new experiments.

10. Which mobile application is the fastest in the world to reach 50 million users, as per the announcement of NITI Aayog?

[A] Digilocker

[B] Aaykar Setu

[C] Aarogya Setu

[D] UMANG

Correct Answer: C [Aarogya Setu]

Notes:

The mobile application recently launched by the Government of India to combat the coronavirus spread in the country named 'Aarogya Setu' has become the fastest application in the world to be downloaded by 50 million users.

The application took just 13 days to reach 50 million users, as per the announcement of the CEO of NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant. The app, which is available on both Android and iOS platforms, was developed by the National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Electronics and IT.