

Recent events of importance

- **Why in News:** The NEET exam scandal has brought attention to widespread paper leaks across states like Gujarat and Bihar, raising significant concerns about the integrity of India's examination systems and governance.
 - **Systemic Rot and Scale:**
 - **Extent of the Scandal:** The scandal spans multiple states, indicating a systemic issue rather than isolated incidents.
 - **Impact on Students:** Nearly three million students are affected, causing psychological distress and uncertainty.
 - **Political Timing:** The scandal broke post-election, sparing the government but leaving a trust deficit at the start of its new tenure
 - **Impact on Democratic Legitimacy:**
 - **Role of Examinations:** Examinations and elections are critical legitimizing institutions in India's democracy.
 - **Societal Trust:** Trust in the exam system reflects broader societal trust in fairness and justice.
 - **Potential Fallout:** A collapse in trust could undermine the legitimacy of the entire state apparatus.
 - **Challenges and Reform Imperatives:**
 - **Immediate Concerns:** Immediate concerns include the necessity for retests and compensation for affected students.
 - **Institutional Adaptation:** Institutions must navigate the disruptive academic calendar.
 - **Call for Reforms:** The scandal underscores the urgent need for robust safeguards and reforms in India's examination and governance frameworks.

GS 1 (Art and Culture)

- **Why in News:** Srinagar has earned global acclaim as the **fourth Indian city** to be designated a '**World Craft City**' by the **World Craft Council (WCC)**. This prestigious recognition comes three years **after Srinagar joined the UNESCO Creative City Network** for its rich traditions in crafts and folk arts.
- **Craft Forms Thriving in Srinagar**
 - The recognition highlights Srinagar's diverse array of traditional crafts, which contribute significantly to its cultural identity and local economy.
 - Here are some of the prominent craft forms celebrated in Srinagar and its suburbs:
- **World Craft City Designation**
 - The World Craft City (WCC) initiative, launched in 2014 by the **World Crafts Council AISBL**, aims to recognize the cultural, economic, and social contributions of local crafts worldwide.
 - India now boasts four cities under this prestigious designation, including **Jaipur, Mysore, Mamallapuram, and now, Srinagar.**

As of now, at least 10 different forms of craftsmanship survive in Srinagar and its suburbs, including papier-mâché, walnut wood carving, carpets, Sozni embroidery and Pashmina and Kani shawls.

Email: iasncsc@gmail.com

- ◆ **Mysuru** (Kinnal paintings, Sandalwood carvings, Rosewood Inlay)
- ◆ **Mamallapuram** (Stone Carving continuing since Pallava dynasty)
- ◆ AND now Srinagar

● About the World Craft Council (WCC International)

- The World Craft Council (WCC) International, established in 1964 by Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Aileen Osborn Webb, operates as a non-profit, non-governmental organization registered in Belgium.
- It is affiliated with UNESCO and organized into five regional branches, fostering global fellowship among craftspeople and promoting economic development through craft-related activities.

3. Enemy Agents Ordinance

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** In Jammu & Kashmir, the efficacy and ethical implications of laws like the Enemy Agents Ordinance, its application remains a critical aspect of security policies. This ordinance, known for its severity, is being highlighted amid ongoing security concerns and legal frameworks in the erstwhile state.
- **What is the Enemy Agents Ordinance?**



- The Enemy Agents Ordinance traces its origins back to 1917, during the **Dogra rule** in Jammu and Kashmir. Initially termed an 'ordinance,' it was designed to address threats posed by those aiding enemies or engaging in activities detrimental to Indian military operations.
- **Legal Framework and Amendments:** Over time, the ordinance evolved and was incorporated into Jammu and Kashmir's legal system post-Partition. Despite subsequent legislative changes, it retained its status as a stringent law, with provisions allowing for severe penalties such as life imprisonment or even death sentences.
- **Changes Post-Article 370 Repeal:** In 2019, with the abrogation of Article 370, significant legal reforms took place in Jammu and Kashmir. While some local laws were retained, others were replaced by Indian statutes. However, laws like the Enemy Agents Ordinance and the Public Safety Act continued to be enforced.
- **Trial and Legal Procedures:** Trials under the Enemy Agents Ordinance are presided over by specially appointed judges.
 - ◆ The accused often face restrictions, including limited access to legal defense unless permitted by the court.
 - ◆ Moreover, the ordinance prohibits disclosure of case details without government authorization, reinforcing its stringent nature.

● Historical Cases and Controversies

- The ordinance has been controversial, with numerous Kashmiris, including prominent figures like Maqbool Bhat, being tried and convicted under its provisions.
- The lack of appeal provisions and the finality of judicial decisions have sparked debates regarding human rights and legal transparency.

4. Kerala Assembly passes resolution to change state's name

Recent events of importance

- **Why in news:** Kerala Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution urging the Centre to rename the state as "Keralam" in the Constitution. This is the second time in the past year that such a resolution has been passed.
- **Process of Changing the Name of a State**
 - **Constitutional provision**
 - ◆ Article 3 of the Indian Constitution outlines the process for changing the name of a state.
 - ◆ Article 3 also empowers the Parliament to:

- Form new states by separating territory from existing states, uniting states or parts of states, or attaching a territory to a state.
- Increase or decrease the area of a state.
- Alter the boundaries of a state.

■ Proposal by the State Legislature

- ◆ The proposal to change the name of a state typically begins with a resolution passed by the state legislature.
- ◆ The resolution reflects the desire of the state to change its name.
- ◆ This process can also be initiated by the central government through a proposal to change the name of a state.

■ Recommendation by the President

- ◆ Once the state legislature passes the resolution, it is sent to the central government.
- ◆ If the proposal is initiated by the Central govt, it must be submitted to the President of India.
- ◆ The President of India must recommend the proposal to the Parliament before any action can be taken.

■ Introduction of a Bill in Parliament

- ◆ A bill to alter the name of a state is introduced in either house of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha).
- ◆ **The bill can only be introduced with the prior recommendation of the President.**

■ Referral to the State Legislature

- ◆ Before the bill is taken up for consideration in Parliament, the President is required to refer it to the legislature of the state concerned for expressing its views within a specified period.
- ◆ This is done to seek the opinion of the state legislature on the proposed change.

■ Consideration of State Legislature's Views

- ◆ The state legislature's views are communicated back to the central government.
- ◆ However, the **Parliament is not bound by the state legislature's opinion. It is merely a consultative process.**

■ Passage of the Bill in Parliament

- ◆ The bill must be passed by a simple majority in both houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha).
- ◆ This means more than half of the members present and voting must approve the bill.

■ Assent of the President

- ◆ Once both houses of Parliament pass the bill, it is sent to the President for assent.
- ◆ Upon receiving the President's assent, the bill becomes law, and the name of the state is officially changed.

■ Notification in the Official Gazette

- ◆ The change in the state's name is then notified in the Official Gazette of India. This marks the formal and legal change of the state's name.

● Resolution passed by the Kerala Assembly

■ About

- ◆ Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan moved a resolution stating that the state's name should be changed to "Keralam" in the Constitution to match its Malayalam name.
- ◆ The Kerala Assembly unanimously requested the Union Government to make this change under Article 3.
- ◆ A similar resolution was passed on August 9 last year but needed reintroduction due to technical issues.
- ◆ The previous resolution aimed to amend the First Schedule (list of states) and inadvertently omitted a demand to amend the Eighth Schedule (list of official languages).
- ◆ This oversight led to the reintroduction of the modified resolution.

■ Why Keralam



- ◆ Kerala is the English version of the Malayalam word "Keralam," with several theories about its etymology.
- ◆ The earliest mention is in **Emperor Ashoka's Rock Edict II** from 257 BCE, referring to "Keralaputra" or "son of Kerala," associated with the Chera dynasty.
- ◆ German linguist Dr. Herman Gundert noted that "keram" in Kannada corresponds to "cheram," describing the coastal land from Gokarna to Kanyakumari.
- ◆ The term "cher" in Old Tamil means to join, possibly indicating the origin of the name.

■ Story of statehood

- ◆ The demand for a united Malayalam-speaking state began in the 1920s, aiming to integrate Travancore, Cochin, and the Malabar district.
- ◆ After independence, on July 1, 1949, Travancore and Cochin merged to form Travancore-Cochin.
- ◆ The State Reorganisation Commission recommended creating states on linguistic bases.
- ◆ This led to the inclusion of Malabar and Kasargod into the new state for Malayalam speakers and the exclusion of four southern taluks of Travancore, now part of Tamil Nadu.
- ◆ Kerala was officially formed on November 1, 1956.

5. New Anti-Cheating Law Operationalised

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** The recent operationalisation of **The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024** marks a significant step in India's efforts to curb cheating in public examinations.

- **What is The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024?**

- Passed by Parliament earlier this year, the Act aims to enhance the integrity of public exams by implementing stringent measures against unfair practices.

■ Key Provisions and Rules

- ◆ **Framework for Computer-Based Tests (CBT):** The Act outlines comprehensive guidelines for conducting Computer-Based Tests (CBT).

- This includes every aspect from candidate registration and allocation of test centers to the secure distribution of question papers and the evaluation process.

- The **National Recruitment Agency**, in consultation with stakeholders, will establish norms covering both physical and digital infrastructure requirements for CBT centers. These norms are crucial in ensuring standardized procedures across various examination bodies.

- ◆ **Appointment of Centre Coordinators:** Under the new rules, **Centre Coordinators for Public Examinations** will be appointed from a pool of serving or retired officials from central and state government bodies, public sector undertakings, and other designated organizations.

- Their role involves overseeing the coordination of exam activities and ensuring strict adherence to prescribed norms and guidelines at examination centers nationwide.

- **Defining Unfair Means:** Section 3 of the Act specifies actions that constitute the use of unfair means in public examinations.

- ◆ These include **leaking question papers, tampering with answer sheets, and creating fake examination centers or websites to deceive candidates.** The rules mandate stringent reporting mechanisms and actions against perpetrators to ensure swift and decisive handling of incidents.

Law against cheating

Rules under The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act have been notified. As Govt struggles to contain the fallout of exam cancellations, how can the law help in the future?

HARISH SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 24

THE CENTRE on Monday notified the Rules required to operationalise The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, the anti-cheating law passed by Parliament in February. The law itself came into force on June 24, after it was notified in the official gazette.

The Rules notified by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, provide a framework of actions to prevent the use of unfair means in public examinations, including appointing Centre Coordinators, venue in charge, and Regional Officers. The government is under great pressure from the opposition and protesting students across the country after being forced to postpone the UGC-NET, CBSE-UGC-NET and NEET PG competitive exams. The CBI is investigating NEET PG after investigators in Bihar found evidence of a paper leak.

What the Rules say

COMPUTER-BASED TESTS: The Rules lay down full parameters of Computer Based Tests (CBT) — from the registration of candidates, allocation of centres, and issue of admit cards to the opening and distribution of question papers, evaluation of answers, and the final recommendations.

The opening and distribution of question papers means downloading the question paper from the main server to the local server in the public examination centre, uploading and digitally transferring the question paper to individual computers authorised for the candidates. "The Rules say,

The central government's National Recruitment Agency shall prepare the norms, standards, and guidelines for CBT in consultation with stakeholders. Once finalised, these norms will be notified by the Centre.

The notified norms, standards, and guidelines shall cover both physical and digital infrastructure and activities, including the standard operating procedure (SOP) for registration of public examination centres; space requirements at CBT centres and layout of seating, specifications and layout of computer nodes, server and network infrastructure, and the electronic platform; candidate check-in/biometric registration, verification, setting and loading of question papers; invigilation; and all post-examination activities.

CENTRE COORDINATOR: The Rules provide for the appointment of a Centre Coordinator for Public Examinations, who may be serving or retired employee of the Central Government, State Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Public Sector Banks, Government Universities, Autonomous bodies and other Government Organisations.



Media persons outside the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) office in Patna as a CBI team arrives to probe the alleged irregularities in NEET UG exam on Monday (7)

According to the Rules, the Centre Coordinator shall be the representative of the public examination authority for coordination of activities of the various service providers and the examination authority and for overseeing the compliance of all norms, standards, and guidelines for the exam. The Rules also lay down the definition of "service provider" for the purposes of the Act.

Public examination

Which exams are covered by the law?

Section 2(1) of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 defines a "public examination" as "any examination conducted by the public examination authority" listed in the Schedule of the Act or any "such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government".

The Schedule lists five public examination authorities: (i) Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the Civil Services Examinations, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examinations, Engineering Services Examinations, etc.; (ii) Staff Selection Commission (SSC), which recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-technical) jobs in the central government; (iii) the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), which recruit Group C and D staff in the Indian Railways; (iv) Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), which hires at all levels for nationalised banks and regional rural banks (RRBs); and (v) National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), etc.

Apart from these designated public examination authorities, all "Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff" also come under the purview of the new law.

The central government can add new authorities in the Schedule through a notification as and when required.

The law defines "candidate" in these terms: "a person who has been granted permission by the public examination authority to appear in public examination" as well as "a person authorised to act as a scribe on his behalf in the public examination".

Use of unfair means

What constitutes the use of unfair means for the purposes of the Act?

Section 3 of the Act lists 15 actions that amount to using unfair means in public examination: "for monetary or wrongful gain".

These actions include: "accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority"; "tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets"; "providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorised person during a public examination"; and "illegally or indirectly assisting the candidate in a public examination".

The section also lists "tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates or finalising the merit or rank of a candidate"; "tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system"; "creation of fake website"; and "conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain" as illegal acts.

The Rules notified on Monday provide a

detailed framework and format for reporting incidents of use of unfair means.

"If any incident of unfair means or of breach occurs, the venue-in-charge shall prepare a report along with his findings in form 1. The report shall be sent to the Regional Officer through Centre Coordinator. If a private case is considered for filing of First Information Report, the venue-in-charge shall take necessary action," the Rules say.

"In case persons below the level of Management or Board of Directors of the service provider resort to unfair means, or fail to report the incident, the Centre Coordinator shall report the matter to the Regional Officer in Form 2. The Regional Officer shall examine and satisfied that impregnation of any service provider at examination centre level is involved, he shall direct the Centre Coordinator to file the First Information Report."

The Rules define venue-in-charge as a "person nominated by the examination conducting service provider to supervise, coordinate and manage the activities of different service providers and to ensure that the norms or standards and the guidelines notified for conduct of public examination are complied with".

Rationale for the law

The ongoing controversy over alleged paper leaks would appear to provide an obvious justification for such an Act, and future incidents of the use of unfair means in examinations will be prevented under the provisions of the law.

There have been a very large number of cases of question paper leaks in recruitment exams across the country in recent years — an investigation by the Indian Express had found at least 60 instances of paper leaks in Exams over the last five years, in which the process of hiring for government jobs was disrupted. The leaks touched the lives of at least 1.21 crore applicants for about 12 lakh posts.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill said: "Malpractices in public examinations lead to delays and cancellations of examinations, adversely impacting the prospects of millions of youth. At present, there is no specific substantive law to deal with unfair means adopted or offences committed. It is imperative that elements that require validation of examination systems are identified and effectively dealt with by a comprehensive Central Legislation."

The Statement added: "The objective of the Bill is to bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examination systems and to measure the growth that their sincere and genuine efforts will be duly rewarded and their future is safe."

The new law, which provides for fines of Rs 1 crore and up to 10 years in prison, also expects to serve as a "model draft for States to adopt at their discretion".

● Coverage of Public Examination

- The Act defines 'public examinations' broadly to encompass tests conducted by designated authorities such as:
 - ◆ **Union Public Service Commission** (i.e., for civil service entrance exams)
 - ◆ **Staff Selection Commission** (i.e., for posts in union ministries and subordinate offices)
 - ◆ **Railway Recruitment Boards** (i.e., for certain kinds of jobs in the Indian Railways)
 - ◆ **Institute of Banking Personnel Selection** (i.e., for all public sector banks, except State Bank of India)
 - ◆ **National Testing Agency** (i.e., for entrance exams for admission to higher educational institutions)
 - ◆ Additionally, **ministries, departments, and their offices** responsible for staff recruitment are also included under its purview.

● Rationale for the Law:

- The enactment of this law comes in response to widespread instances of question paper leaks and other malpractices disrupting examination processes across the country.
- The law seeks to restore confidence in the examination system, assuring candidates that genuine efforts will be duly recognized and rewarded.
- It is designed not only to prevent cheating but also to uphold the fairness and credibility of India's public examination systems.

6. Government Offers Ten New Critical Mineral Blocks

GS 3 (Economy)

- **Why in the News:** The Ministry of Mines launched the fourth tranche of critical minerals auction, offering a total of 21 blocks across 14 states.

● What are Critical Minerals?

- Critical minerals are raw materials essential for economic and national security, often used in **high-tech industries** and **renewable energy technologies**.
- They are typically rare, difficult to mine and substitute, and often vulnerable to supply chain disruptions due to limited global production and geopolitical factors.
- The growing demand for these minerals, driven by technological advancements and the global transition to green energy, underscores their critical importance.
- Securing a stable supply of critical minerals is thus a strategic priority for many countries to ensure economic stability and technological progress.

● Characteristics of Critical Minerals:

- **Economic Importance:** Critical minerals are indispensable for the production of high-tech devices, electric vehicles (EVs), energy storage systems, and other key industries.
- **Supply Chain Vulnerability:** The supply of these minerals is often concentrated in a few countries, making them susceptible to geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, and other disruptions.
- **Limited Substitutability:** These minerals typically have few or no viable substitutes, which means that any disruption in their supply can have significant economic and technological impacts.

● Examples of Critical Minerals:

■ Lithium:

- ◆ Used in lithium-ion batteries for EVs, consumer electronics, and energy storage systems.
- ◆ According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), **Australia** and **Chile** boast the largest reserves of lithium available in mines around the world today.

■ Cobalt:

- ◆ Essential for battery production, aerospace components, and other high-strength alloys.
- ◆ The **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** is by far the largest global supplier of cobalt, possessing almost half of all cobalt reserves in global mines.

4TH TRANCHE OF CRITICAL MINERALS AUCTION: 21 BLOCKS OFFERED

Govt offers 10 new critical mineral blocks, fresh incentives

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 24

THE MINISTRY OF Mines led by Mines Minister G. Kishan Reddy launched the fourth tranche of critical minerals auction, offering a total of 21 blocks across four states, including 11 blocks that are being reoffered from the second tranche after failing to secure the mandatory participation of at least three bidders. At the launch on Monday, the ministry also unveiled an incentive scheme for reimbursing up to its 20 crore in exploration expenses incurred by licence holders.

The preferred bidders for 6 blocks that were successfully auctioned off in the first tranche in November were also announced— notably, the licence to further explore the lithium block in Chhattisgarh's Karghola has been granted to Kolkata-based Maili South Mining Pvt Ltd. Monrovec, Curtack-based Agastee Sponge Pvt Ltd won the licence to mine two blocks in Odisha holding graphite resources of around 4.6 million tonnes (MT).

EXPLAINED What are critical minerals?

CRITICAL MINERALS are raw materials essential for economic and national security, often used in high-tech industries and renewable energy technologies. They are typically rare, difficult to mine and substitute, and often vulnerable to supply chain disruptions due to limited global production and geopolitical factors.

The ministry's fourth tranche brings the total critical mineral blocks offered to 48. The auction journey has been mixed: The first tranche offered 20 blocks, with 6 successful auctions and 14 annulled. The second tranche saw 18 blocks offered but 14 annulled. All 7 blocks in the third tranche were re-offers from the first tranche. Now, the fourth tranche presents

10 new blocks alongside 11 previously annulled from the second tranche. In total, 24 of the 48 blocks have been annulled once, but the ministry remains hopeful about successful re-auctions.

"We are hoping for good results from the third tranche. In the current tranche, there are 10 fresh blocks and 11 blocks are re-auctioned. We will intensify our roadshows and we will try to convince (investors) that some of the blocks that have not been picked up are good blocks," the Mines Secretary V.L. Kantha Rao said during a media briefing. The newly announced exploration reimbursement incentive aims to boost investor interest in critical mineral blocks. Under this scheme, exploration licence (EL) holders can claim up to 8-20 crore in reimbursements for key activities such as geological investigations, exploratory drilling, and chemical and petrological analysis. If an EL holder successfully hands over a block for grant of mining lease within three years from the execution of the EL, they will be eligible for further reimbursements. Previously,

some mining companies were hesitant to bid for exploration licences, knowing the block would be re-auctioned for mining after exploration. The latest financial incentive is expected to mitigate risks, encourage more thorough exploration efforts, and potentially lead to increased mineral discoveries.

"The law of the land is that whoever does exploration, the ultimate mining rights will be given only through a process of auction. Therefore, in an exploration licence regime, the person can never get the block unless they bid again. We have a provision where the same company that does exploration can also bid, but it will be a transparent bidding," Kantha Rao said. During the media briefing, the Mines Secretary said that almost 100 critical mineral blocks have been identified by the government and will be offered in tranches over time. He also added that 10 blocks have been identified for offshore mining and will be announced alongside an offshore minerals action plan in the next 100 days.

■ Graphite:

- ◆ Key for batteries, fuel cells, and high-temperature applications.
- ◆ In 2023, **China** had the world's largest reserves of natural graphite, at approximately 78 million metric tons.

■ Nickel:

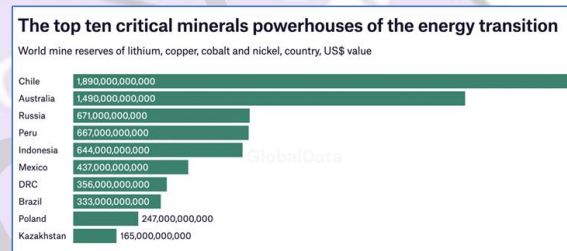
- ◆ Important for stainless steel production and battery manufacturing.
- ◆ **Australia** and **Indonesia** boast the world's largest reserves of nickel in global mines today.

■ Rare Earth Elements (REEs):

- ◆ Vital for manufacturing electronics, magnets, and military applications.
- ◆ According to estimates, the total worldwide reserves of rare earths amount to approximately 110 million metric tons.
- ◆ Most of these reserves are located within China, estimated at some 44 million metric tons.
- ◆ After China, the major rare earth countries based on reserve volume are Vietnam, Russia, and Brazil.

● Critical Minerals Reserves in the World & India:

- India does not have reserves of nickel, cobalt, molybdenum, rare earth elements, neodymium and indium, and the country's requirement of copper and silver are higher than its current reserves.



● India's Critical Minerals Policy:

- India is bolstering its position in the global supply chain of critical minerals like lithium and cobalt through domestic exploration and international partnerships. The Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with the joint venture **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)**, is acquiring critical mineral assets in Australia, Argentina, and Chile to ensure a steady supply.
- India has joined the U.S.-led Mineral Security Partnership to enhance cooperation and investment in critical mineral supply chains.
- The MMDR Amendment Act, 2023, empowers the Central Government to auction mining leases and licenses for 24 critical minerals, promoting self-sufficiency and advancing sectors like high-tech electronics, telecommunications, and renewable energy.
- The first tranche of e-auction for 20 blocks of critical minerals, including lithium and rare earth elements, was launched on November 29, 2023. This initiative **aims to reduce import dependency, attract mining sector investments, and support India's goal of becoming self-reliant (Atma Nirbhar Bharat)**.
- Additionally, a new Exploration Licence has been introduced for 29 critical and deep-seated minerals, encouraging expertise and advanced technologies in mineral discovery and mining. This effort is expected to enhance domestic production, secure supply chains, and contribute to India's economic growth and technological advancement.

● Government Offers Ten New Critical Mineral Blocks:

- The Ministry of Mines launched the fourth tranche of critical minerals auction, offering 21 blocks across 14 states.
- To incentivize exploration, the **ministry announced a scheme to reimburse up to Rs 20 crore in exploration expenses for license holders.**
- The fourth tranche brings the total number of critical mineral blocks offered to 48.
 - ◆ The auction history has seen mixed results: out of 48 blocks, 24 have been annulled due to low bidder interest.
 - ◆ The ministry remains optimistic about successful re-auctions, with efforts to intensify investor engagement.
 - ◆ The newly announced **exploration reimbursement scheme** aims to boost investor interest.
 - ◆ License holders can claim up to Rs 20 crore for exploration activities and may receive additional reimbursements if they hand over a block for mining lease within three years.
 - ◆ This incentive addresses concerns about the need to re-auction blocks for mining after exploration.

MCQ Current Affairs
25th June, 2024

1. Kakodkar Committee, recently seen in news is related to?

- a) To safeguard and preserve UNESCO World Heritage Sites of India.
- b) To increase financial inclusion and literacy
- c) Establishment of statutory railway safety authority
- d) Addressing plights of Indian immigrants in Middle East

2. Consider the following statements about Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme

A. ITEC aims to share India's developmental experience and expertise with other developing countries, enhancing India's role as a responsible global player.

B. It is administered by the Development Partnership Administration of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Choose the correct statements:

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

3. Consider the following statements about Parliamentary Oath

A. The Parliamentary Oath is prescribed in the Second Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

B. MPs can take the oath in any of the 22 languages specified in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

C. MPs who are in jail can take the oath in Parliament, provided they receive permission from the court.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) One only
- b) Two only
- c) All three
- d) None

4. Consider the following statements

A. Cancer cells shed DNA/RNA into the circulation called 'Circulating Nucleic Acids (CNAs)'.

B. microRNAs (miRNAs) are released into the bloodstream as a part of CNAs.

C. Some of the miRNAs are qualified as potential biomarkers in early diagnosis of breast cancer.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) One only
- b) Two only
- c) All three
- d) None

5. The Energy Transition Index is released by which of the following organisations?

- a) International Energy Agency (IEA)
- b) World Economic Forum (WEF)
- c) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- d) International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

**Answers Current Affairs
25th June, 2024**

1. c
2. c
3. b
4. c
5. b

