

Supreme Court ruling in *Radhika Agarwal v Union of India* case:

- It curtailed powers of officers making arrests under Customs Act, 1962 & Central Goods & Services Tax Act, 2017.
- Court ruled that powers exercised by custom officers under these acts are “analogous” to powers of arrest, search and seizure exercised by police, that is, they are subject to same restrictions and procedural standards that apply to police under Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Short-selling:

- It allows investors to sell a stock without owning stock at the time - a strategy used to bet on the fall in stock prices.
- Currently, there is a ban on naked short-selling, with SEBI mandating investors to fulfil their obligation to deliver securities at time of settlement.
- Only stocks qualifying for futures and options (F&O) trading were allowed for short selling.

India second-largest arms importer after Ukraine in 2020-24, says SIPRI:

- Largest share of Indian arms imports (36%) came from Russia, significantly smaller share than in 2015-19 (55%) and 2010-14 (72%).
- India received largest share of French arms exports (28%).
- China became even more dominant as Pakistan's supplier, accounting for 81% of its arms imports in 2020-24, compared with 74% in 2015-19.
- Russia's two thirds of exports went to three countries — India (38%), China (17%), and Kazakhstan (11%).

Alawite:

- Over 1,000 people have died in Syria in two days, following fighting between forces of new government and supporters of old regime.
- New government that came to power in December 2024, upending decades of dynastic rule, is reportedly targeting civilian members of minority Alawite community because of its perceived loyalty to previous regime.
- Deposed Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad is also an Alawite.
- It has its roots in Shia Islam. Word Alawite means “follower of Ali,” cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad.
- Alawites are believed to incorporate aspects of Christianity and ancient Iranian practices in their faith. For instance, they use wine in some of their rituals, believe in the concept of reincarnation, and Alawite women generally do not wear the headscarf.
- Alawites make up about 12% of the Syrian population and primarily live in the coastal region.

Places in the News:

- Rooppur, Bangladesh: Country's first nuclear power plant being set up with Russia's help.

Terms in the News:

- Gender washing:** It describes communications and practices that corporations as taking action on gender inequalities even as they engage in things that may be harmful to women and girls.

Biosolids:

- During wastewater treatment, liquids are separated from solid, which is then treated physically & chemically to

produce semi-solid, nutrient-rich material called biosolids.

- They are rich sources of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium — three essential nutrients for crop production worldwide.
- When treated and processed, biosolids possess high organic matter content, essential nutrients and beneficial microorganisms.
- They can enhance soil fertility, improve crop productivity and reduce reliance on chemical fertilisers.

Animals using tools:

- Charles Darwin had noted that chimpanzee in a state of nature cracks a native fruit, somewhat like a walnut, with a stone. They also use sticks to fish for termites, leaves to drink water.

Ethylene in banana:

- Changes in colour of banana during its growth is due to hormone called ethylene. They keep producing ethylene even after being harvested.
- Contact with ethylene triggers activity of a number of genes, including one which linked to the production of the enzyme polyphenol oxidase (PPO). It is this enzyme that makes bananas turn brown.
- Bruising of fruit - as is common during its handling - leads to production of higher quantities of ethylene, and thus speeds up the ripening and browning process.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) (established in 1987 as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture) has undertaken several initiatives to revive and restore India's ancient knowledge systems and centres:

- Vedic Heritage Portal:**
 - Launched on March 27, 2023, it is aimed at preserving and disseminating the rich heritage of the Vedas.
 - It offers access to over 550 hours of audio-visual content, including more than 18,000 Vedic mantras.
 - It features transcriptions of ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Vedangas, Upavedas, and details of Vedic rituals in both audio-visual formats.
- Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Initiative:**
 - In alignment with National Education Policy 2020, IGNCA supports Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) initiative under Ministry of Education.
 - Established in October 2020, IKS division focuses on integrating traditional Indian knowledge into contemporary education.
 - This includes incorporating subjects like Vedic mathematics, Ayurveda, yoga, and ancient Indian sciences into university curricula.
- Project 'Mausam':** It is a multidisciplinary initiative that seeks to revive and strengthen ancient historical maritime cultural and economic ties among countries along the Indian Ocean.

GloLitter Partnership programme:

- Launched by International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to support participating countries to tackle marine plastic litter issues on national and regional level both from shipping and fisheries sectors, implementing in partnership with Food & Agriculture Organisation of United Nation.

- India is a Lead Partner Country (LPC) in this programme.
- India has constituted National task force and published National Action Plan for on Marine Plastic Litter from Sea-based sources.

Spodumene:

- It is primary lithium-bearing mineral used in battery production.

PRACTICE MCQs

Q1. Spodumene is a major mineral of –

- a) Lithium
- b) Sodium
- c) Aluminum
- d) Titanium

Answer: A

Q2. Consider the following statements about 'Alawite' community:

1. They are the followers of Ali, who was cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad.
2. Majority of their population resides in coastal region of Pakistan.
3. They are believed to incorporate aspects of Christianity and ancient Iranian practices in their faith.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: C

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Short selling allows investors to sell a stock without owning stock at the time.
2. It is allowed for Futures and Options trading in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Q4. Consider the following statements about GloLitter Partnership programme:

1. It is launched by International Maritime Organisation (IMO).
2. It aims to support participating countries to tackle marine plastic litter issues on national and regional level.
3. India is a Lead Partner Country (LPC) in this programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Q5. Which of the following statements is correct about the Project 'Mausam'?

- a) It aims to revive & strengthen ancient historical maritime cultural & economic ties among countries along Indian Ocean.
- b) It aims to better understand and predict the monsoon phenomenon.
- c) It aims to develop efficient weather forecasting system in India.
- d) It aims to understand the co-relation between the Arctic region and Himalayan region.

Answer: A