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Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

16th October 2025



Why is Fiscal Architecture of Municipalities Flawed?

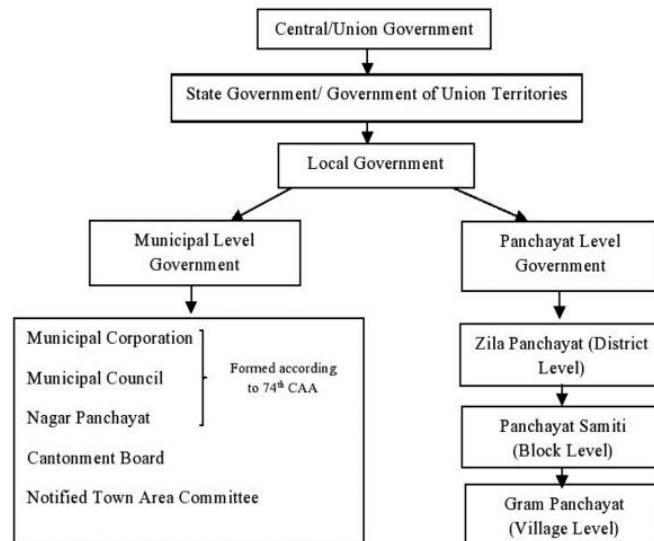
CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared emphasizing the financial issues faced by municipalities.

Year	Event
1688	First Municipal Corporation in Madras
1726	Municipal Corporations set up in Bombay and Calcutta provinces
1870	Mayo's Resolution on Democratic Decentralization
1882	Ripon's Resolution on Local Self-Governance
1919	Local Governance- transferable subject by (GoI) Act, 1919
1924	Passage of the Cantonment Act
1935	Local Governance -transferable subject by (GoI) Act, 1935

73RS AND 74TH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACTS, 1992:

- The panchayats constitutional status (previously panchayat matters were considered as state subjects);
 - An institutionalised three tier system at village, block and district levels;
 - The amendment stipulated that all panchayat members be elected for five year term in the elections supervised by the state election commission.
- Reservation for Women, SCs and STs (not less than 33%)
 - Compulsory elections every five years
 - To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.
 - Preparation of plan for economic development and social justice.

Fig. 1: Present form of Hierarchy of Government System in India



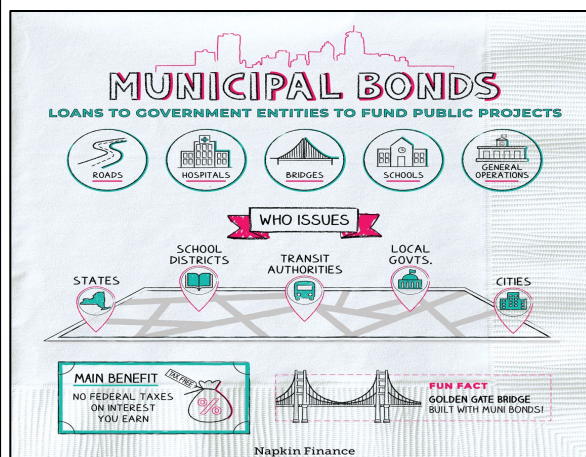
Source: Author.

Issue of Finances

REVENUE RECEIPTS OF THE MCS (% OF GDP)

	2017-18 (Actual)	2018-19 (Revised Estimates)	2019-20 (Budgeted Estimate)
Revenue Receipts	0.61	0.67	0.72
Own Tax Revenue	0.21	0.21	0.22
Of which: Property Tax	0.09	0.1	0.11
Own Non-Tax Revenue	0.18	0.19	0.23
Transfer from state governments	0.21	0.26	0.26

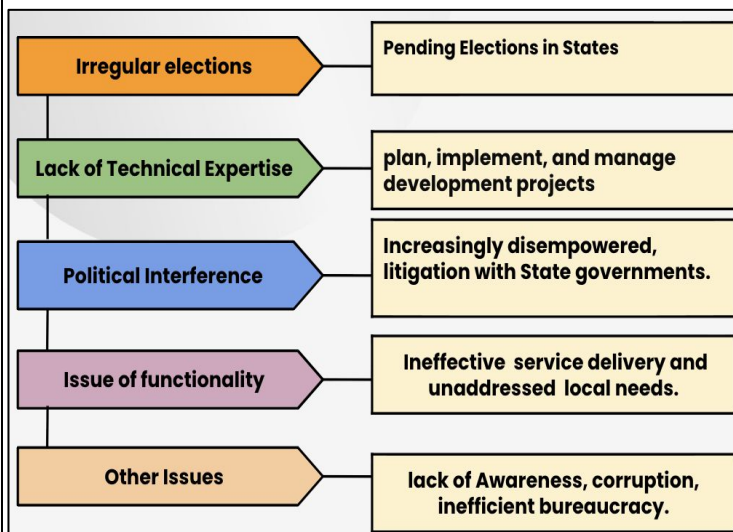
Source: RBI



Why is Fiscal Architecture of Municipalities Flawed?

CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared emphasizing the financial issues faced by municipalities.

Other Issues



Average Revenue per Panchayat

(₹ thousand per Panchayat)

Revenue Receipts	2,117	2,320	2,123
A. Own Tax Revenue	24	26	21
B. Own Non-Tax Revenue	68	72	73
C. Grants-in-aid	2,026	2,221	2,029
(i) Grants from Central Government	1,640	1,846	1,694
(ii) Grants from State Government	377	366	327

Note: Grants-in-aid include grants from Centre, States, and other institutions.

Source: MoPR.

Case Study

Municipal Corporation	Property Data Management	Digital & Mobile Initiatives	Revenue & Impact
Pimpri-Chinchwad (PCMC)	GIS mapping; 2L - 3.5L properties	Online portal, tax dashboard, handheld devices for staff	50%+ revenue increase; Smart City recognition
Indore (IMC)	GIS mapping; 1.8L-3.1L properties	Mobile app, online payments, awareness campaigns	₹100 Cr - ₹250 Cr; Cleanest City award
Ahmedabad (AMC)	GIS mapping; 7L-11L properties	Digital portal, field verification via mobile	₹300 Cr-₹600 Cr; Urban Governance awards

- **Hiware Village** - Ahmednagar District: turned itself into prosperous village
- **Used Funds from Government Schemes-** regenerate Natural Forests, water and soil management led by strong village body-Sarpanch



Why is Fiscal Architecture of Municipalities Flawed?

CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared emphasizing the financial issues faced by municipalities.

Parameters speaks about success of Hiware Bazar



Due to water availability by watershed development, Cultivable land increased from 70 ha in 1993 to 260 ha in 2006.



In 2006 income from agriculture alone was 24784000. Grass production increased from 100 MT in 2000 to 1000 MT in 2004.



Due to high increase in fodder cultivation milk production increased from 150 lpd in 1990 to 4000 lpd in 2006



In 1995 year 168 out of 182 families were BPL. In 2010 only 3 families are BPL.

By 2010 village income increased twenty fold. 50 families become **Millionaires**



Hiware Bazar was awarded 'National water award' by GOI in 2007. Hiware Bazar continues to inspire other villages and people.

EXPLORING THE VILLAGE OF MILLIONAIRES HIWARE BAZAR



The Path Ahead

What should be done?

Democratise local finances- Scandinavian Countries

Municipal bonds - backed by governance and transparency metrics, not just revenue.

Addressing Malpractice Empowering SECs for Delimitation and Reservations:

Accountability : mechanisms for public oversight. Capacity Building: Provide training and resources to local officials.

Public involvement in decision-making. Institutional Reforms: Modernize and streamline local governance structures.



Why is Fiscal Architecture of Municipalities Flawed?



CONTEXT: A write-up has appeared emphasizing the financial issues faced by municipalities.

UPSC Mains PYQs

Q) The strength and sustenance of local institutions in India has shifted from their formative phase of 'Functions, Functionaries and Funds' to the contemporary stage of 'Functionality'. Highlight the critical challenges faced by local institutions in terms of their functionality in recent times. (2020)

Q) "The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self- government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process." Comment. (2019)

Q) Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing development projects? (2018)

Q) The local self government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance". Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation. (2017)

Q) In absence of well-educated and organised local level government system, 'Panchayats' and 'Samitis' have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instruments of governance. Critically discuss. (2015)

Mains Practise Question

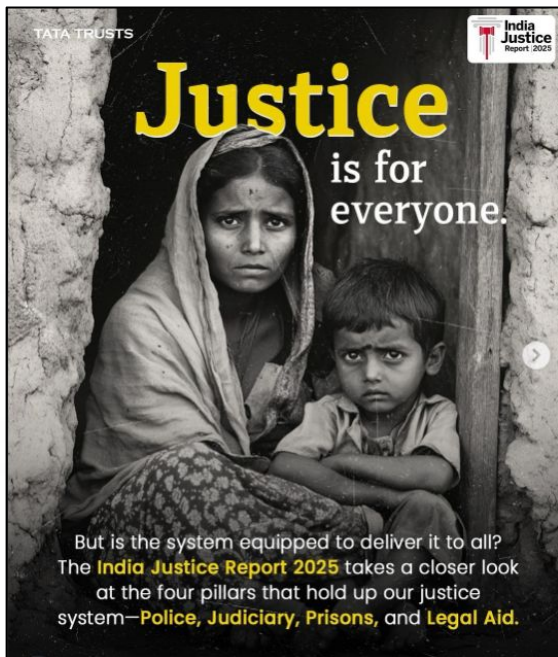
Q- Discuss the challenges faced by Urban Local Bodies in India and suggest effective solutions to address these issues. (10 Marks 150 Words)



CONTEXT: A lead editorial has highlighted various aspects of representation of Women in Judiciary.

Background

- **India Justice Report 2025**
 - Only **14%** of judges in High Courts are women.
 - Just **3.1%** in the Supreme Court are women.
- The SC currently has **only one woman judge** among 34.
- **First woman Chief Justice of India.**
- **25 High Courts**— **only one** is headed by a woman Chief Justice.



Judiciary



38%

Share of women judges in district judiciary

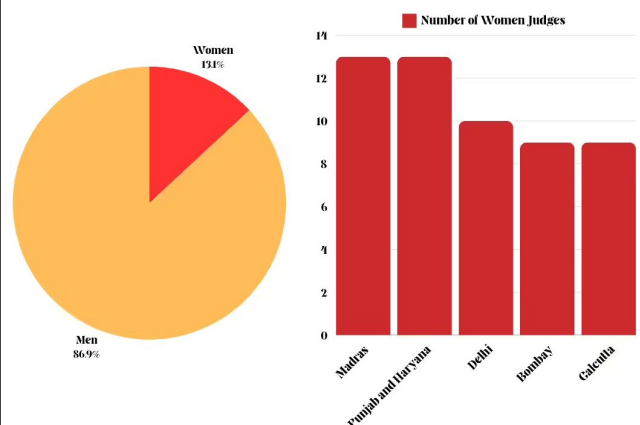


Reasons For Low Representation

- **Gender Biases and stereotypes**
- **Dual Burden**
- **Lack of Role Models**
- **Networking Barriers**
- **Lack of Infrastructure**
- **Selection Bias**
- **Inadequate Policies**

Underrepresentation of Women in Judicial Positions

Women in High Court (2023)



State of Infra

Judicial officers:
24,280;
Court halls:
20,143
(including 620 rented halls)



26% of court complexes do not have separate ladies' toilets; 16% do not have toilets for gents

5% have medical facilities

32% have separate record rooms

51% have a library



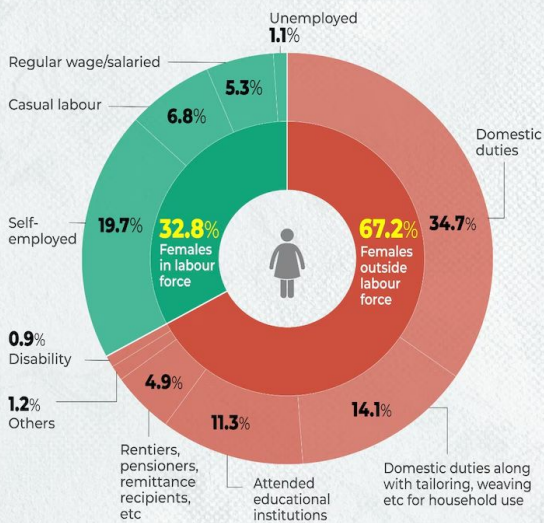
27% have a computer on judge's dais with video conferencing facility



CONTEXT: A lead editorial has highlighted various aspects of representation of Women in Judiciary.

Reasons For Low Representation

What are Women in India Doing?

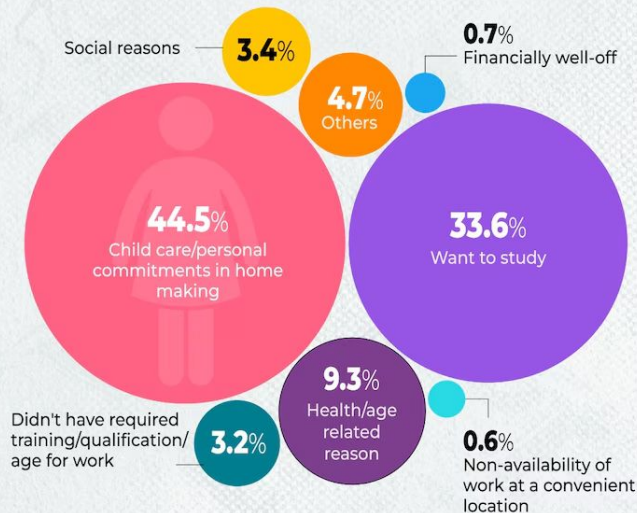


Source: Female Labour Utilization in India April 2023, Ministry of Labour & Employment
Graphic: Samrat Sharma, Jaipal Sharma



Why are Indian Women Out of Job Market?

Reasons reported by females for not being in labour force (%)

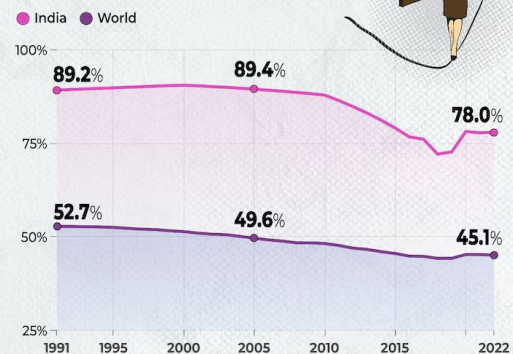


Source: Female Labour Utilization in India April 2023, Ministry of Labour & Employment
Graphic: Samrat Sharma, Jaipal Sharma



Women Vulnerable at the Workplace

Vulnerable employment, which includes lack of decent work conditions, is higher for women in India compared to the global average



Note: Vulnerable employment lacks decent work conditions & adequate social security
Source: Gender Data Portal, World Bank Group
Graphic: Samrat Sharma, Jaipal Sharma



WOMEN JUDGES IN THE COUNTRY

SUBORDINATE COURTS

States	Total Judges	Women Judges	% of women judges	Reservation for women
Bihar	1,002	99	9.88	35
Jharkhand	448	62	13.83	05
Gujarat	1,111	177	16	Nil
J&K	219	43	19.65	Nil
UP	1,728	376	21.75	20
MP	1,240	319	25.72	Nil
Himachal	147	39	26.55	Nil
Maharashtra	2,025	596	29.43	Nil
Delhi	489	170	34.76	Nil
All India	16,443	4,704	28.60	—

Note: The percentage of women judges are of the total strength of judges in subordinate courts. Reservation for women judges range from 5% to 35%; not all states have provided quota in the subordinate courts. No quota in HC and SC.

JUDICIARY VACANCIES

FOR
1,400,000,000+
PEOPLE

INDIA HAS
21,285
JUDGES

33%

HIGH COURT

21%

DISTRICT COURTS

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS



The Road to Gender Equity in Courts



CONTEXT: A lead editorial has highlighted various aspects of representation of Women in Judiciary.

What Should be done?

- **AIJS- (Editorial)**
- **Institutional, social and behavioral change**
- **Inclusive Recruitment Policies**
- **Awareness Campaigns:**
 - Ex: **Delhi HC Women's Lawyers Forum** promotes women in law.
- **Equal Promotion Opportunities:**
- **Work-Life Balance Support**
 - Ex: **Delhi High Court's crèche.**
- **Specialized Training**
 - Ex: Judicial Academy workshops.
- **Scholarships for Legal Education**
 - Ex: NLSIU Bangalore scholarship programs encourage women in law.
- **Gender Sensitization:** unconscious gender biases.

Q : What are the major causes of the low representation of women in the Indian judiciary? Suggest some effective measures to enhance women's participation across all levels of the judicial system. (10 Marks 150 Words)



SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Global grouping and agreements
Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 14

The recent trade friction with the U.S. has prompted India to intensify its efforts to further diversify its economic interactions with various countries worldwide. While India has signed an agreement with the U.K., it is also negotiating a similar agreement with the EU. In addition to such compacts, India should also proactively develop frameworks such as the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).

The IMEC visualises the upgradation of maritime connectivity between India and the Arabian Peninsula, as well as high-speed trains running from the ports in the UAE to the Haifa port in Israel through Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The goods transported on these networks would be shipped to and from European countries. Additionally, the IMEC seeks to build a clean hydrogen pipeline, an electricity cable, a high-speed undersea digital cable and consolidate existing infrastructure such as ports.

Historical background

In 2023, the geopolitical context was favourable for the operationalisation of the IMEC. The Abraham Accords had generated considerable optimism that peace would prevail in West Asia, with Israel and Arab countries working to build a stable relationship. Consequently, proposals were made to build railway lines for regional peace, connecting the Israeli port of Haifa with the Jordanian railway network, which would be linked to other ports in the Gulf region. Furthermore, there was significant improvement in India's relations with Arab countries, particularly with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. India's relations with the U.S. were also on an upward trajectory. Such convergences facilitated the emergence of the India, Israel, UAE, and U.S. (I2U2) framework. These

geopolitical developments created a favourable environment for the launch of the IMEC on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Delhi, with various leaders of the EU, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia etc. endorsing the initiative.

However, within a few weeks of the launch of the IMEC, the security situation in West Asia deteriorated significantly. The October 7 Hamas attacks, followed by Israel's military actions in the region, contributed to the deterioration in the relationship between Israel and other countries in the region. These developments have raised questions about the feasibility of the IMEC.

Mediterranean concerns

Climate change has now opened new transport routes through the Arctic, with the principal beneficiaries being countries such as the U.S., Russia, China, and other northern European nations. It is now possible to transport more goods through

the Arctic, significantly reducing transportation time and associated costs. Consequently, there is an expectation that port cities near the Arctic will emerge as new commercial centres.

Among IMEC's European signatories, France has both the Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines. On the other hand, Italy has only the Mediterranean coast. Thus, there is significant concern about the implications of an Arctic trade route on its economy. As a result, Italy and other Mediterranean countries view the IMEC as a vital platform to preserve their influence in maritime trade. Mediterranean countries maintain that to hold a strong position in global trade requires new thinking, new partners, and scaling up of economic engagement with leading economies. India, with its four trillion-plus economy and sustained high growth, is seen as a viable partner to meet future challenges. Currently, it is still uncertain whether the Arctic route

confers any unique advantages to India in terms of reduced transportation costs. Therefore, for India, accessing European markets through the Mediterranean route will continue to be important.

Given higher per capita income, technological advancements, and educational progress, Europe will continue to retain its trade significance for India. With trade over \$136 billion, the EU is the largest trade partner of India. India and European countries need to scale up connectivity corridors and logistics networks to build resilient supply chains between the two.

The importance of the IMEC

The recent geopolitical developments have demonstrated that the security of sea lanes is unpredictable. The Houthi disruption in the Red Sea trade has prompted considerable trade to go around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, increasing the time and costs of transportation of goods. It is also still too early to determine if the recent Gaza peace plan will hold in the long run. Therefore, it is essential to find new routes to amplify economic relations between India, West Asia, and Europe.

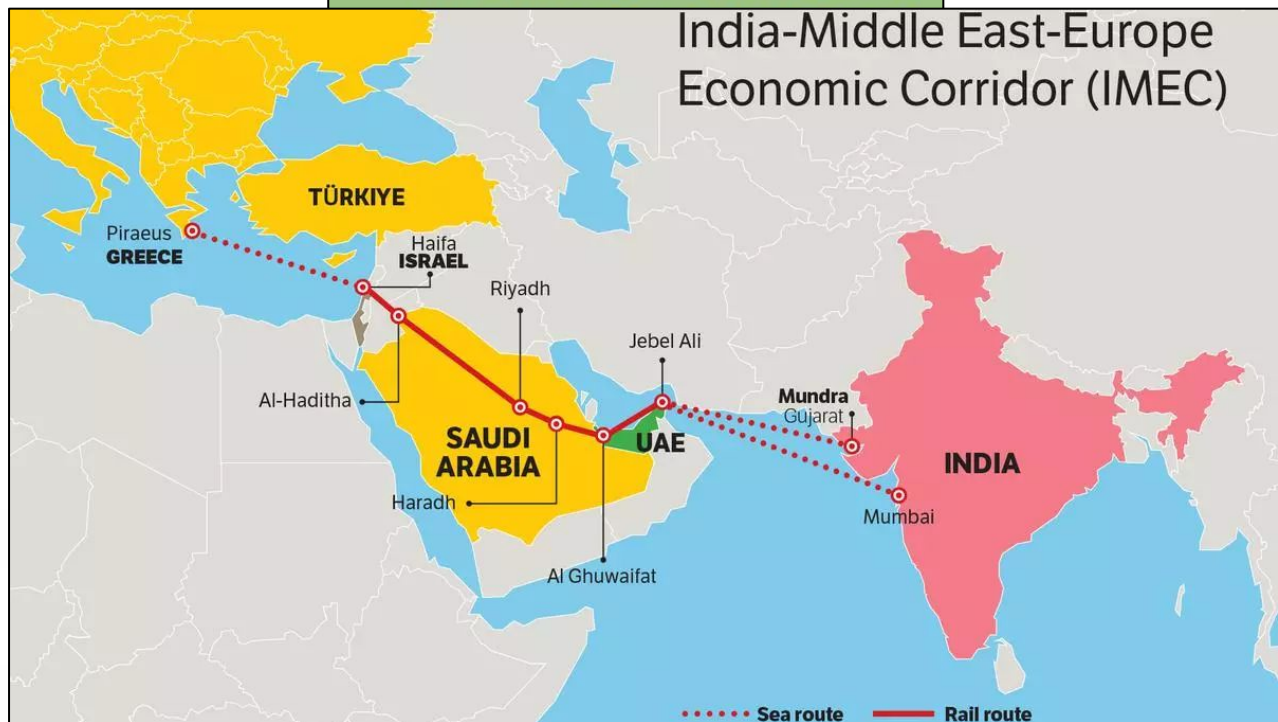


SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Global grouping and agreements
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Since the IMEC is a multi-member initiative, it gives considerable space for innovative approaches to adapt to changing geopolitical dynamics, which India and Arab countries should leverage. In addition to the proposed routes in IMEC, there is a need to explore the possibility of engaging other commercial centres and ports in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Robust economic interactions between India and the Arab countries will also nullify Pakistan's attempt to build an alliance-like relationship in the region.

While focusing on the security challenges of IMEC, it is critical not to lose sight of economic opportunities that can be derived from India-Europe interactions. India and Europe should act as bookends by pooling their resources to promote prosperity in the IMEC region.

Prelims Pointers



16th October 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 1 Paper : Mineral Resources

Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 12

THE CHINA-US trade war has had an enduring sticking point: rare earth minerals.

Last Thursday, China ramped up its clampdown on rare earth exports, prompting US President Donald Trump to threaten economic retaliation by way of 100% tariffs. Trump also suggested that he could cancel a scheduled meetup with China President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Meeting in South Korea later this month, although he toned down his rhetoric just hours later.

Valuable but not so rare

Rare earths are a subset of the critical minerals grouping. They include 17 metallic elements lower down in the periodic table, from lanthanum (atomic number 57) to lutetium (71), plus scandium (21) and yttrium (39).

These elements are characterised by their high density, high melting point, high conductivity and high thermal conductance. They are classified as heavy or light, based on atomic weight.

Rare earths form crucial inputs, although often in trace volumes, across a range of products, from weapons platforms and electronics, including flat screen TVs and smartphones, to wind turbines, robotics, electric vehicles, MRI scanners and cancer treatment devices.

Their material properties make alloys stronger and more heat resistant, and importantly, magnets more powerful. Magnets, although often not visible, are found in nearly every modern device: from consumer goods to defence equipment, electric motors to ships and warplanes, power windows in cars to airbag deployment systems.

The term "rare" earths, however, is a misnomer: with the exception of the highly unstable promethium, these elements are found in relatively high concentrations across Earth's crust. Cerium is, in fact, the 25th most abundant element in the planet's crust, more abundant than gold, silver, tungsten, and many other elements which do not enjoy the "rare" tag.

There are two main reasons why the tag "rare" is used.

■ One, although moderately abundant, these elements are not found in large concentrations. This makes them difficult and costly to extract, and thus challenging to exploit economically.

■ Two, according to the International Energy Agency, more than 60% of mined rare earth production currently comes from only one country: China. Moreover, Beijing controls more than 90% of the global output of rare earths in the processing stage.

Beijing's trade 'weapon'

Starting 1987, when Deng Xiaoping, considered to be the "architect of modern China", compared China's rare earth reserves in Inner Mongolia to West Asia's oil reserves, Beijing has built up near-total control of the minerals as part of its wider industrial policy.

China's repeated curbs on rare earth minerals, especially the heavy ones like terbium (65) and dysprosium (66) which are more scarce than their lighter counterparts, are part of its stated policy to weaponise trade. Trump's tariff threats have further prompted Beijing to use rare earths as leverage.

It is not that rare earths cannot be found outside China: Brazil has large reserves, so does Australia, and even India. The problem is that most of these countries are not doing all that

much in the way of mining. This is driven by both economic viability issues, as well as concerns over the pollution that rare earth mining, an extremely dirty process, causes.

This has meant that most of the mining of rare earths happens in China, as does the capital- and technology-intensive processing. Beijing has played the long game here, and decades after it decided to get into this business, the move is yielding dividends as a strong trade leverage.

China's fresh curbs

In its most recent move, China has added five rare earth elements — holmium, erbium, thulium, europium, and ytterbium — as well as related magnets and materials, to its existing control list, requiring export licenses. That takes the total amount of restricted rare earths to 12. Seven — samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium, and yttrium — were restricted earlier in April.

Beijing has also added dozens of pieces of refining technologies to its control list, while announcing rules that will require compliance from foreign rare earth producers who use Chinese materials, the country's Ministry of Commerce said. The new curbs will take effect on November 8, just before a 90-day trade truce with Washington expires.

"Depending on what China says about the hostile 'order' that they have just put out,

I will be forced, as President of the United States of America, to financially counter their move," Trump wrote on Truth Social Friday. "For every Element that they have been able to monopolize, we have two," he posted.

Analysts see the new move increasing Beijing's leverage ahead of the proposed meeting between Trump and Xi in South Korea later this month. Investors have been spooked by the fresh flare up in the China-US trade war, with Wall Street sinking on Friday after Trump threatened 100% tariffs on Chinese exports in retaliation to Beijing's announcement of restrictions on rare earths.

Impact on India

The impact of China's rare earth restrictions on India is expected to be limited, given its relatively low domestic consumption of rare earths (although demand has seen some growth in recent years).

India imported 2,270 tonnes of rare earth elements in 2023-24, up 23% from 1,848 tonnes in 2019-20, according to the Ministry of Mines. Imports from China accounted for 65% of this amount, and another 10% came from Hong Kong. The two sectors that have been badly affected by the Chinese supply curbs in April are the auto industry, especially EV makers, and the electronics sector.

Domestic mining and refining, meanwhile, remains modest, led by state-owned

IREL Ltd, which operates a processing unit with a capacity of over 10,000 tonnes per annum. In contrast, China refined over 2 lakh tonnes of REEs in 2023 alone.

India is, however, hoping to ramp up its exposure to rare earths. Last November, the country launched an auction for seven seabed blocks in the Andaman Sea for exploration and eventual mining. These blocks are estimated to hold polymetallic nodules and crusts, which can contain heavy rare earth metals.

The Department of Atomic Energy is learnt to have accorded in principle approval for the futuristic proposal of IREL towards setting up of rare earths theme park, which includes establishing pilot plants in the value chain of rare earths. A Rare Earth Permanent Magnet Park in Vizag and Rare Earth and Titanium Theme Park in Bhopal are coming up with the funding assistance of the Centre, which could enhance the visibility of IREL in the strategic and niche sector.

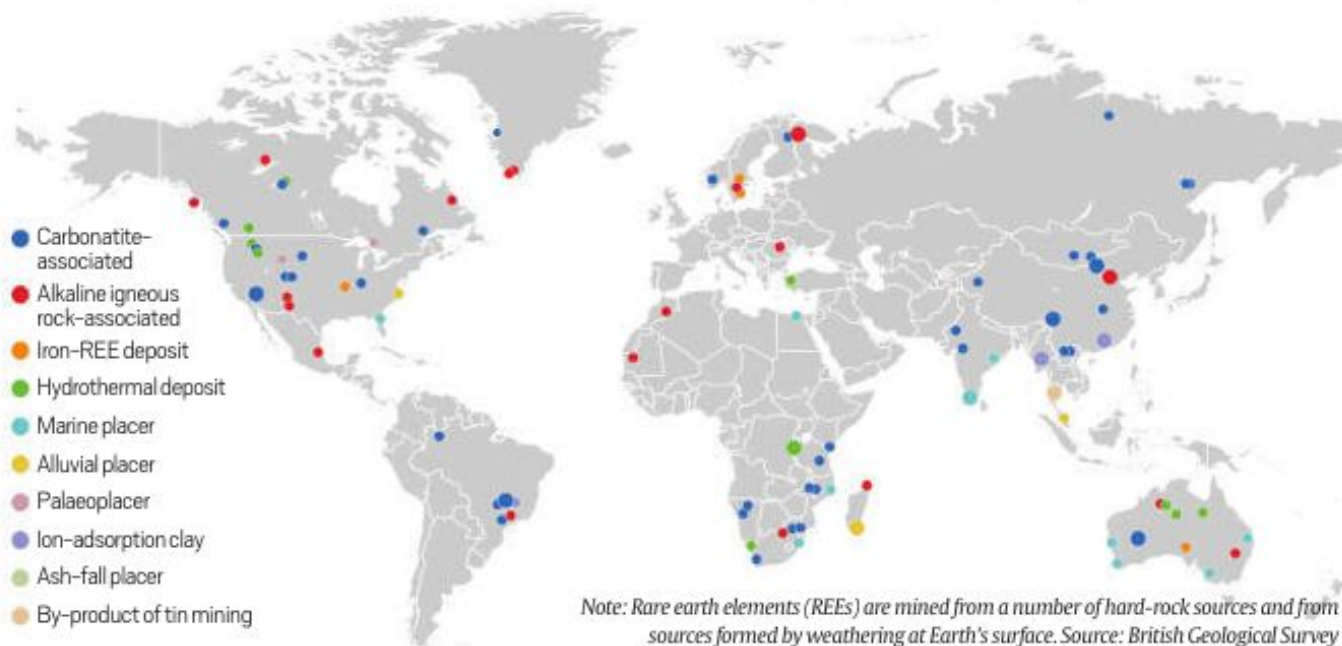
The US too is getting back into rare earths processing. The Trump administration is working on an executive order to allow stockpiling of deep-sea metals from the Pacific seabed, aiming to reduce reliance on China for battery minerals and rare earths, the Financial Times reported in April 2025.



SYLLABUS : GS 1 Paper : Mineral Resources

Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 12

GLOBAL RARE EARTH ELEMENT MINES & DEPOSITS, 2021



WORLD RESERVES OF RARE EARTHS

(By principal countries; in tonnes of rare earth ore equivalent content)

COUNTRY	RESERVES
WORLD	13,00,00,000
China	4,40,00,000
Vietnam	2,20,00,000
Brazil	2,10,00,000
Russia	2,10,00,000
India	69,00,000
Australia*	42,00,000
USA	23,00,000
Other countries	42,90,000

Source: USGS, Mineral Commodity Summaries, 2023

* Australia's Joint Ore Reserves Committee reported much higher equivalent reserves of 30 lakh tonnes

WORLD PRODUCTION OF RARE-EARTHS OXIDES

(By principal countries)

(In tonnes)

COUNTRY	2020	2021	2022
China	1,80,000 ⁽²⁾	1,80,000 ⁽²⁾	2,10,000 ⁽²⁾
Myanmar	35,000 ⁽¹⁾	35,000 ⁽¹⁾	24,000 ⁽¹⁾
USA	22,800	25,800 ⁽³⁾	25,800
Australia	14,562 ⁽⁴⁾	15,761 ⁽⁴⁾	15,970 ⁽⁴⁾
India	4,200 ⁽³⁾	4,200 ⁽³⁾	4,200 ⁽³⁾
Madagascar	5,000 ⁽¹⁾	2,000 ⁽¹⁾	2,000 ⁽¹⁾
Russia	2,663	2,276	2,038 ⁽¹⁾
Vietnam	690 ⁽¹⁾	440 ⁽¹⁾	440 ⁽¹⁾
Malaysia	14	29	52

(1) Estimates; (2) Estimates (Includes production from iron ore extraction, bastnaesite concentrates and ion absorption clays.); (3) Estimates (Year ending 31st March following that stated.); (4) Estimates (Year ending 30th June following that stated.)

Source: BGS, World Mineral Production, 2018-22



SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper :
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 12

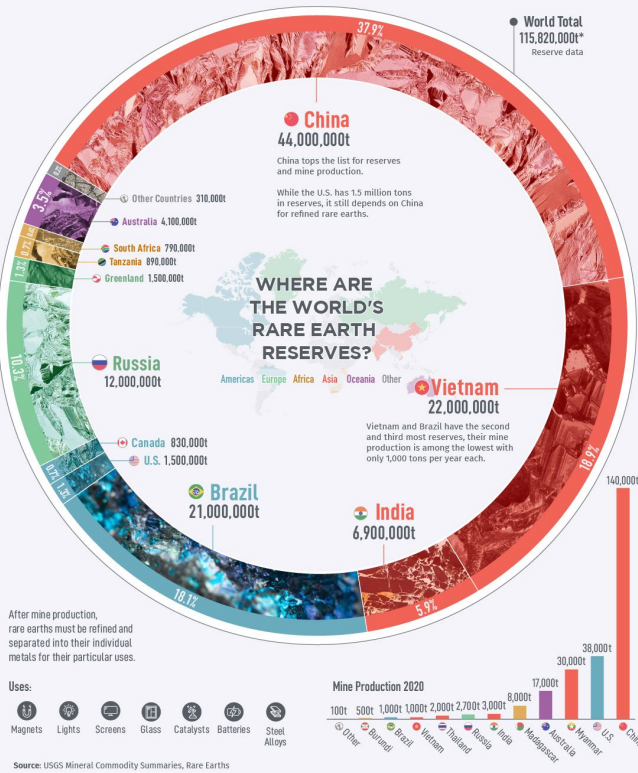
Prelims Pointers



WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE ALL THE RARE EARTHS?

Rare earth elements (REEs) are a group of 17 elements whose importance is critical in high technology. Their use has exploded as electronics and renewable technologies increasingly have become part of everyone's daily lives.

Rare earths are abundant in the Earth's crust but mineable concentrations are less common, making reserves potential very valuable and strategic. *The USGS tracked the world's reserves in tons (imperial).



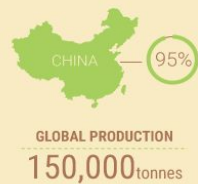
WHICH PRODUCTS REQUIRE RARE EARTH ELEMENTS AS RAW MATERIAL?

Superconductors, refining catalysts, cellphones, wind mills, hybrid car components, electronic polishers and high-flux rare-earth magnets.



WHICH RARE EARTH ELEMENTS ARE FOUND IN INDIA?

Monazite is the main rare earth mineral found in India. However, it contains radioactive thorium which cannot be stored and so monazite is not mined. The ministry of mines believes that rare earth elements found in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have low thorium content and can be extracted.



WHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD RARE EARTH ELEMENTS ARE MINED?

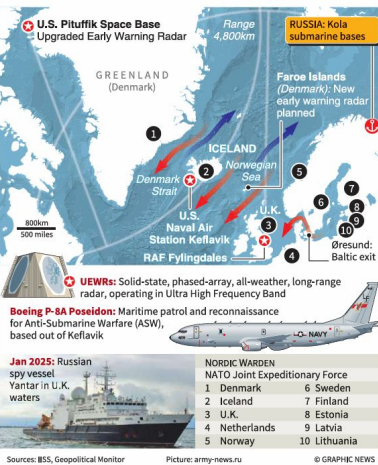
China is the largest producer of world's rare earth elements with 95% share in 150,000 tonnes of global production. Some sites under development are Nolans and Mt. Weld projects in Australia and Hoidas Lake project in Canada.

The Many Uses of Rare Earths



Ice cold war

The melting of Arctic sea ice has prompted renewed interest in the region. The U.K. has repeatedly emphasised the strategic importance of the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. (GIUK) gap, a critical choke point for NATO's naval defences



16th October 2025

SYLLABUS : GS 3 Paper : Cropping pattern
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 04

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A model of Sustainable Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems (SAIME) developed by the Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) in West Bengal's Sundarbans has been conferred Global Technical Recognition by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

The recognition was conferred on the non-governmental organisation on October 15, during FAO's 80th Anniversary Celebrations and the World Food Forum at its headquarters in Rome, Italy.

The SAIME initiative in the Indian Sundarbans exemplifies an ecosystem-based, climate-adaptive, and conservation-linked livelihood approach, ensuring 5%-30% mangrove coverage in aquaculture

ponds. After a few years of implementation across 29.84 hectares of farm area by 42 fish farmers, the annual average net profit of farmers increased by over 100%, owing to a significant reduction in production costs.

Farmers practising sustainable aquaculture at Chaital in North 24 Parganas and Madhabpur in South 24 Parganas districts use mangrove litter as fodder for the input-intensive monoculture of Black Tiger Shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*).

"This climate-adaptive model enhances coastal resilience, supports sustainable livelihoods, promotes chemical-free shrimp farming, and aids carbon sequestration and climate action in the context of global sea-level rise," Ajanta Dey, Joint Secretary of NEWS, who received the award said.

Prelims Pointers

ANI

India rises as global fisheries powerhouse, contributes 8% to world output

India has emerged as a global powerhouse in fisheries, ranking as the world's second-largest fish producer and contributing about 8 per cent to the global output, according to the government.

The country also holds the second position in global aquaculture production. Since 2015, when the Centre rolled out a series of targeted schemes to boost the sector, cumulative investments worth Rs. 38,572 crore have been approved.

As a result, India's total fish production has surged to 195 lakh tonnes, registering an impressive annual growth rate of 8.74 per cent. Seafood exports have also witnessed steady growth, touching Rs. 60,524 crore in 2023-24.

What is food and agriculture organization ?

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- It acts as a source of knowledge and information and thus helps the developing countries to modernize and improve agriculture (including livestock practices), forestry and fishery.
- It ensures good nutrition and food security for all.

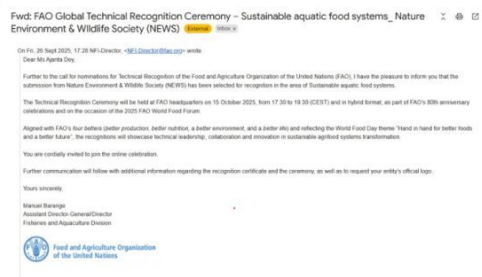


FAO Emblem

"FIAT PANIS" (Latin) means
"Let there be bread"

Global Recognition for NEWS from FAO

We feel pleasure to announce that the **Nature Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS)** has been selected for recognition in the area of Sustainable Aquatic Food Systems by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



WTI Founder becomes chair of key IUCN Panel

SYLLABUS : GS 3 Paper : Conservation , Environment pollution and degradation
Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number: 16

THE INTERNATIONAL Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on Wednesday elected Wildlife Trust of India's (WTI) founder Vivek Menon as the new chair of the Species Survival Commission (SSC), making him the first Asian to hold the post.

The announcement came on the last day of the World Congress of IUCN at Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The SSC is one of the six expert commissions under the global body that advises the IUCN secretariat on matters concerning biodiversity and species conservation. The commission and its specialist groups play a key role in preparing the IUCN's red list of threatened species.

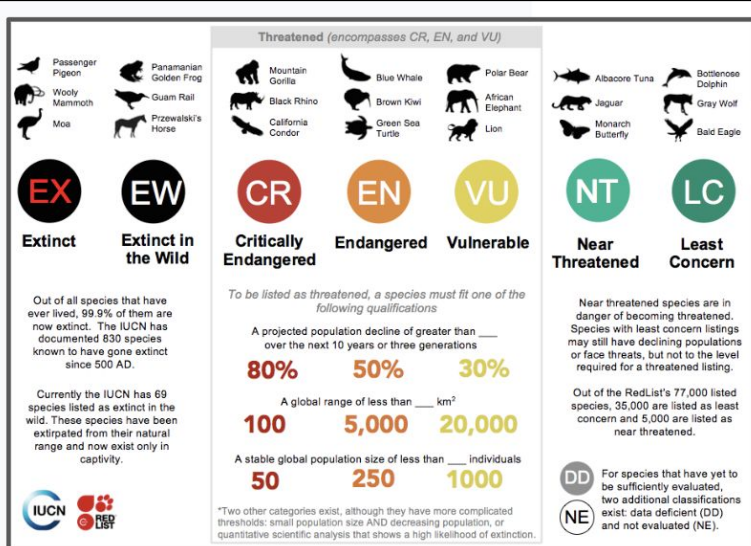
Following his election, Menon said that as the first chair from Asia, it will be his focus to ensure



Vivek Menon

leadership from the Global South is included in the SSC and it drives policy in the region. "My focus will also be on scaling up recovery for threatened species, leveraging technology and data-driven tools to make science speak to policy and ensuring every effort we undertake has measurable, lasting conservation impact," he told *The Indian Express*.

On tackling the rising threats to survival of biodiversity due to anthropogenic impacts, Menon said the SSC's strength lies in mobilising global expertise, adding that conservation must move as fast as the anthropogenic forces that threaten it.



Prelims Pointers

- An International Organisation with hybrid membership
 - 80 States
 - 115 Governmental Agencies
 - 850 NGOs
- A presence in 160 countries worldwide
- A unique expertise through its 6 thematic commissions and 11,000 experts



SC Allows Green Crackers in Delhi NCR

SYLLABUS : GS 2 Paper : Judiciary, Government Policies and Interventions
Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number: 01

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 15

DAYS AHEAD of Diwali, the Supreme Court Wednesday relaxed the total ban on firecrackers in the Delhi-National Capital Region and allowed the sale of green crackers approved by the

National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) for use on two days — October 19-20, from 6-7 am and 8-10 pm. The sale of firecrackers will be allowed from October 18-20, the court said.

A bench of Chief Justice of India B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran said the relax-

ation was a "temporary measure" allowed on a "test case basis" following guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in 2018, when it allowed green
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WHAT ARE 'GREEN CRACKERS'?

Firecrackers that have "less dangerous" and "less harmful" chemicals than conventional ones

Being Developed by
CSIR's National Environmental Engineering Research Institute

Production after they are approved by Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)

Green Because

- ▶ They have a chemical formulation that produces water molecules
- ▶ This substantially reduces emission level and absorbs dust
- ▶ Is basically a light and sound show that produces lower emissions
- ▶ Promise 30-35% reduction in particulate matter, nitrous oxide and sulphur oxide

OTHER INITIATIVES

Crackers with lower aluminium to reduce emissions substantially

'Anar' or flower pot made using eco-friendly material that can reduce particulate matter by 40%

Bijli crackers that eliminate use of ash as desiccants

Firecrackers without antimony, lithium, mercury, arsenic and lead as directed by PESO last year

Expected to hit the market in 4-5 years*

Also In The Works
E-CRACKERS BEING DEVELOPED BY CSIR'S CENTRAL ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

Prelims Pointers

WHAT ARE THEY MADE OF?

Green crackers are eco-friendly crackers that are **MADE USING LESS POLLUTING RAW MATERIALS** and thus cause less pollution as compared to normal crackers. Their chemical composition also helps them suppress dust

In some green crackers, harmful chemicals are not used at all.

Network 10 creative

HOW DO THEY WORK?

Unlike normal firecrackers, green crackers do not use harmful polluting chemicals like arsenic, lithium, barium etc.

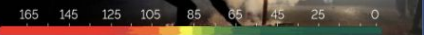
Aluminium, lead, carbon etc are used in a reduced quantity.

This helps reduce the emissions from the crackers

When they burst, green crackers release water vapour which doesn't allow the dust to rise.

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ARE GREEN CRACKERS REALLY EFFECTIVE?



NOISE POLLUTION

Regular crackers emit about 160 decibels of sound. **green crackers' emission rate is limited to 110-125 decibels.**

EMISSIONS

Green crackers are believed to cause **30 percent less** particulate matter pollution as compared to traditional crackers.

Did You Know?

- NOISE ABOVE 85 DECIBELS CAN DAMAGE YOUR HEARING

Source: CSIR, news reports

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Q1. Regarding the evolution of Local Self-Governance in India, consider the following statements:

1. The first Municipal Corporation in India was established in Madras in 1688.
2. Lord Mayo's Resolution of 1870 was the first step toward democratic decentralisation in British India.
3. The Government of India Act, 1919, made local governance a Central subject.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q2. Regarding the India Justice Report 2025, consider the following statements:

1. The share of women judges in High Courts has increased to 35%.
2. The Supreme Court currently has two women judges among 34 sitting judges.

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: d

Q3. Regarding Rare Earth Elements (REEs), consider the following statements:

1. Rare earth elements are used in superconductors, refining catalysts, windmills, cellphones, and hybrid car components.
2. Monazite is the main rare earth mineral found in India.
3. China is the largest producer of rare earth elements, accounting for about 95% of global production.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q4. Regarding the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), consider the following statements:

1. It is a specialised agency of the World Bank that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
2. The FAO helps developing countries improve agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.
3. The organisation's headquarters is located in New York, United States.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q5. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. India is the world's third-largest fish producer, contributing around 20% of the world's output.
2. India holds the second position in global aquaculture production.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

Answer: b





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