

P2. NATIONAL



SC seeks Centre’s reply on AI use in public welfare. - The NTA ordered re-tests for English, Sociology and Commerce after widespread question-paper errors, underscoring concerns over examination quality and the need for institutional reform.

P3 NATIONAL



Mahadayi River Diversion Project - The Centre clarified that no Environmental Clearance proposal for Karnataka’s Mahadayi diversion projects is under consideration, while forest and wildlife clearances and inter-State water issues remain contested.

P4. WORLD



Bangladesh sets ‘conditions’ for Rahman’s visit to India - Bangladesh has linked a possible Prime Minister Tarique Rahman visit to India to an improved bilateral environment.

Editor’s Note

As another week rolls in, we have a fresh set of topics ahead of us, covering important developments across the national, health, international and editorial sections. On the national front, the NTA remains in focus following the latest developments surrounding the UGC-NET examination, while the Meghalaya rat-hole mining issue brings attention to the continuing concerns over illegal mining and the need for the closure and rehabilitation of abandoned mines. In the health sector, we look at the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare and the serious environmental and public-health consequences of chromium pollution. The world affairs section takes us to the Korean Peninsula, where tensions resurfaced after North Korean soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line, as well as to India-Bangladesh relations, particularly in the context of the Bangladesh Prime Minister’s proposed visit to India. Finally, our Decoded editorials examine aviation safety in light of the latest Air India incident and the ongoing NALSAR controversy. Students are encouraged to read each topic carefully, understand its broader context, and connect the developments with relevant concepts. Stay focused, keep learning, and all the best. Happy reading!

P7. HEALTH



How AI can be optimised for better healthcare - Artificial intelligence is increasingly entering healthcare delivery in India and globally, offering efficiency and wider access to expertise but requiring clinical validation, representative data and human oversight.

Editorials Decoded

THE HINDU

Not just turbulence



The Phuket–Delhi Air India flight incident has raised parallel concerns over aircraft technical failures and the effectiveness of psychoactive-substance screening and crew-fitness safeguards.

The Indian EXPRESS

Bar Council breaks the law to crawl, its chief must go



The NALSAR episode raises questions about the Bar Council of India’s statutory powers, the grounds for enrolment disqualification, and the limits of regulatory authority over peaceful dissent by law students.

NTA orders re-test for three UGC-NET papers

What happened? The National Testing Agency (NTA) is re-conducting UGC-NET examinations for English, Sociology and Commerce after widespread complaints about errors in the question papers.

The Radhakrishnan blueprint: Following the 2024 examination-paper leaks, the High-Level Expert Committee headed by former ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan proposed restructuring the NTA into a more empowered and self-reliant institution, strengthening examination security and governance.

Major recommendations: The committee proposed placing the NTA under a Director General of Additional Secretary rank, supported by two Additional Director Generals, where one of them shall be responsible technology, products and operations, and the other for test security and surveillance. It also proposed stronger institutional governance through an empowered governing body and specialised oversight mechanisms covering areas such as test audit, ethics, transparency and stakeholder relations.

Challenges to transformation: A major challenge is recruiting specialist technical expertise. Conventional government recruitment and UPSC deputation mechanisms largely provide administrative generalists, whereas NTA requires specialists in areas such as psychometrics, cybersecurity and data architecture.

Way forward: NTA should treat indenting bodies such as the NMC, UGC and IITs as active knowledge partners, rather than merely as clients. Subject experts should work with NTA's technical teams throughout question development, examination design and post-exam analysis to improve question quality, security and the overall reliability of national examinations.

Panel flags absence of policy to shut mines in Meghalaya



What happened? A Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey Committee, constituted by the Meghalaya High Court, has flagged the State government's delay in adopting a comprehensive mine-closure policy and in sealing or fencing abandoned and illegally operated rat-hole coal mines that pose serious risks to people and livestock.

What are the key concerns? The committee's 39th Interim Report identified the absence of a comprehensive action plan, inadequate mine-closure measures and gaps in regulating coal-based industries, particularly coke-oven plants.

What has been done for mine restoration? The Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd. prepared DPRs for two pilot restoration projects — Sutnga in East Jaintia Hills (₹63 lakh) and Arenggtim in South Garo Hills (₹92.78 lakh). Both remain pending before the National Green Tribunal-constituted Oversight Committee.

What is the scale of the problem? The Jaintia Coal Mines Owners and Dealers' Association estimates around 60,000 mines across 360 villages in East Jaintia Hills alone, most of them abandoned and uncovered.

What is the legal background? The National Green Tribunal banned hazardous rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya in 2014. Despite the ban, continued deaths and reports of illegal mining indicate that the practice has persisted. More than 45 miners have died in the narrow underground tunnels over the years.

What are rat-hole mines? They are narrow coal-mining tunnels branching horizontally from deep pits, often only large enough for a person to crawl through. The practice is particularly hazardous because of unsafe excavation and inadequate safeguards. Similar mining activity has also been reported along parts of the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh and Assam-Nagaland borders.



PYQ Compass

Which of the following is/are the possible consequence/s of heavy sand mining in river beds? (2018)

1. Decreased salinity in the river
2. Pollution of groundwater
3. Lowering of the water-table

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Mahadayi River Diversion Project

Why in news? The Union government told the Lok Sabha that no proposal from Karnataka seeking Environmental Clearance (EC) for diversion of the Mahadayi/Mandovi river is currently under consideration.

Cumulative impact assessment: The Centre said that no proposal or river-basin details have been submitted by the concerned States for a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) and Carrying Capacity Study (CCS) of the Mahadayi/Mandovi basin.

Environmental concerns: Environmental groups and experts have warned that diversion could affect Goa's drinking-water security, freshwater aquifers and the risk of saline ingress.

When is EC required? River-diversion projects involving hydroelectric generation or major/medium irrigation schemes require prior EC under Item 1(c) of the Environment (Impact Assessment) Notification, 2006. Such projects are assessed by an Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), which recommends environmental safeguards.

Inter-State clearance: An inter-State river proposal also requires the prescribed clearance from the Central Water Commission (CWC) or the relevant Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal, as applicable. States must also identify and submit details of river basins requiring CIA and CCS.

Drinking-water projects: Karnataka maintains that Kalasa and Banduri are drinking-water projects and therefore do not require EC.

Mahadayi River: The Mahadayi, also known as the Mandovi, originates in Karnataka and flows through Karnataka and Goa, with its basin also extending into Maharashtra. The river is the subject of a long-running inter-State water-sharing dispute, particularly between Karnataka and Goa. The Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal was constituted by the Centre in 2010.



PYQ Compass

Q. "Biorock technology" is talked about in which one of the following situations? (2022)

- Restoration of damaged coral reefs
- Development of building materials using plant residues
- Identification of areas for exploration/extraction of shale gas
- Providing salt licks for wild animals in forests/protected areas

MSC Elsa 3 sinking caused no significant impact on Lakshadweep islands: study



Why in news? A National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) assessment found that the sinking of the container vessel MSC Elsa 3 off the Kerala coast on May 25, 2025 caused no measurable ecological or socioeconomic damage to Lakshadweep.

Why was the study conducted? The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered an assessment after taking suo motu cognisance of reports on the shipwreck and potential coastal impacts. Lakshadweep required special assessment because of its fragile coral reefs, lagoons and seagrass ecosystems.

What was the MSC Elsa 3 incident? The vessel sank about 38 nautical miles off Kerala at a depth of around 51 metres, carrying 640 containers, including 13 containing hazardous cargo and 12 containing calcium carbide. Large quantities of plastic pellets, or nurdles, subsequently washed ashore along Kerala's southern coast.

What did the study find? Nutrients, heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, remained within natural baseline ranges. No significant stress or degradation was detected in plankton, benthic communities, coral reefs or seagrass ecosystems. Contaminants from the wreck did not reach Lakshadweep during the assessment period.

What are the broader concerns? Despite the absence of measurable damage, the incident highlighted the vulnerability of remote, low-lying island ecosystems to maritime accidents. Lakshadweep also faces waste-management constraints due to limited land, fragile groundwater systems, tourism pressure and dependence on imported goods.

Way forward: Lakshadweep requires early-warning systems, island-specific and season-specific spill-response plans, sustained environmental monitoring and enhanced surveillance along maritime corridors.

WORLD

Bangladesh sets 'conditions' for Rahman's visit to India

What happened? India and Bangladesh have been in talks over a possible visit by Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to India. Dhaka said a "propitious environment" must first be created and urged India to extradite former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and hand over the accused killers of student leader Sharif Osman Hadi.

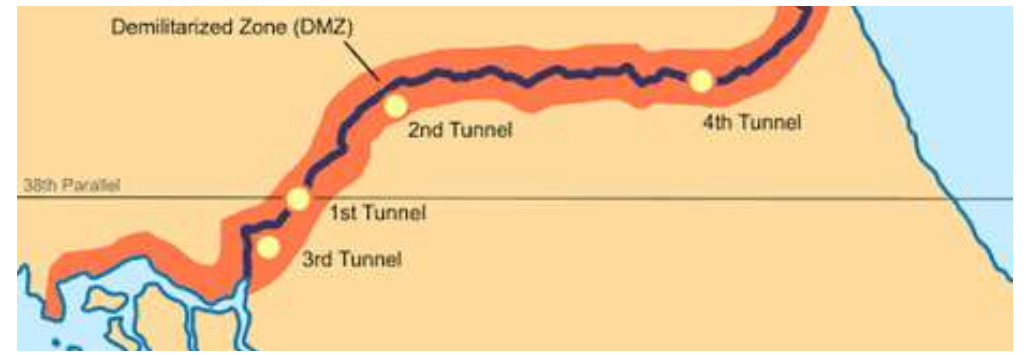
What is Bangladesh demanding? Dhaka has asked India to act on its extradition request concerning Sheikh Hasina and other fugitive criminals. It has also sought the handover of those accused in Hadi's killing, citing the India-Bangladesh bilateral extradition treaty. Why is Sheikh Hasina central to the issue? Hasina took refuge in India on August 5, 2024, after a popular uprising toppled her government. Bangladesh has repeatedly sought her extradition. Tensions increased after she addressed a press conference in Delhi on August 5, 2026, criticising Rahman's government.

What is the Sharif Osman Hadi controversy? Hadi, a student leader associated with the protests, was shot in Dhaka in December 2025 and died on December 18. His death triggered widespread violence, including attacks on Indian diplomatic missions and members of Bangladesh's Hindu minority. Dhaka maintains that the suspected shooters fled to India.

What has India said about Hasina's remarks? India has distanced itself from Hasina's August 5 press conference. On August 7, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India did not endorse her comments directed against Bangladesh's "duly constituted government."

What are the latest diplomatic developments? Diplomatic contacts had shown signs of improvement before the latest setback. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi met Rahman on August 10. India has invited Rahman to a bilateral visit as well as the upcoming BRICS summit.

North Korean soldiers cross military demarcation line



What happened? South Korea's military said it fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) on the eastern front. The soldiers returned to North Korea, and no further unusual activity was reported. It was the first reported MDL violation by North Korean troops in 2026.

How frequent are these border violations? According to South Korean military data, North Korean troops crossed the MDL 17 times in 2025.

What is the nature of North-South Korea relations? The Korean War ended in 1953 with an armistice rather than a peace treaty. An armistice suspends military operations but does not formally establish peace or resolve the underlying conflict. The two Koreas therefore remain technically at war.

What is the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)? The DMZ is an approximately 250-km-long buffer zone separating North and South Korea. Despite its name, the surrounding frontier is among the most heavily fortified areas in the world.

How are North Korea's external military ties changing? North Korea has deepened its military alignment with Russia, including support connected to Russia's war in Ukraine. South Korea, meanwhile, has continued to limit its assistance to Ukraine largely to humanitarian and financial support rather than lethal military aid.

What are the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises? Ulchi Freedom Shield is an annual U.S.-South Korea military exercise designed to strengthen preparedness against North Korean attacks and other security threats. The 2026 exercise is scheduled for August 17-27.



PYQ Compass

Q. The protests in Shahbag Square in Dhaka in Bangladesh reveal a fundamental split in society between the nationalists and Islamic forces. What is its significance for India? (GS II – 2013)

Not just turbulence (The Hindu : 17-08-2026)

On August 4, 2026, Air India flight AI 2379, travelling from Phuket to Delhi with 137 passengers and eight crew, experienced a major in-flight disturbance that was initially described as a turbulence event. It was subsequently classified as a “serious incident” after technical problems and a significant altitude deviation reportedly injured more than 20 passengers and crew.

What did the investigation reveal?

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), with France’s BEA and Airbus technical representatives, is examining multiple anomalies involving the Airbus A320neo, including **hydraulic-system warnings, elevator flight-control faults, autopilot disconnection, emergency-exit door indications and an engine anti-ice warning**. Initial Airbus data reportedly supports evidence of technical abnormalities.



Why has the pilot’s test become significant?

A separate line of inquiry concerns the post-flight screening of the pilot-in-command for psychoactive substances. No causal link has been established between the test result and the aircraft’s technical problems. However, the incident has prompted Air India to begin mandatory screening of its flight-deck crew for prohibited substances and unprescribed medications, highlighting concerns over the adequacy of existing crew-screening practices.

How are pilots tested in India?

The DGCA mandates psychoactive-substance testing for flight crew. Airlines must randomly test a prescribed proportion of pilots annually, while additional testing can follow an accident, incident or reasonable suspicion. Testing generally begins with a urine-based screening conducted under chain-of-custody procedures. A non-negative result is sent to an accredited laboratory for confirmatory analysis using techniques such as Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) or Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS).

What substances can be detected?

Testing can identify psychoactive substances such as cannabis, cocaine, amphetamines, opioids and certain sedatives, as well as certain medications that may impair alertness or cognitive performance. Pre-flight breathalyser tests for alcohol are separately mandated and form a routine aviation safety check.

What is the limitation of a dope test? A positive test does not necessarily establish that a pilot was impaired while operating the aircraft. It detects a substance or its metabolites, which can remain in the body after the immediate effects have disappeared. Detection periods vary according to the substance, dosage and individual metabolism.

What is the science behind the test? Drugs are metabolised into chemical by-products that may remain detectable in urine, blood, saliva, sweat or hair. For example, cannabis produces metabolites that can remain detectable after the psychoactive effects have worn off. Confirmatory laboratory techniques help identify specific compounds and reduce false-positive results.

Why does psychoactive-substance testing matter? Even limited impairment can affect judgement, reaction time, coordination and decision-making, all of which are critical in flight operations. DGCA’s Medical Circular No. 02 of 2021 on OTC drugs and self-medication also recognises the risk of impaired cognitive and psychomotor performance, drawing lessons from the Mangaluru (2010) and Kozhikode (2020) accidents.

India’s expanding aviation sector, increasing operational pressures and the availability of medicinal and recreational substances make robust crew-fitness systems increasingly important.

PYQ COMPASS



Q. Despite strict prohibitory regulations, “doping” has become increasingly common amongst athletes. Name five commonly used performance-enhancing drugs. What are the risks associated with their use? (GS II – 2012)

Bar Council breaks the law to crawl, its chief must go (I.E : 15-08-2026)

The controversy arose after NALSAR University of Law students objected to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant attending their convocation as chief guest. The Bar Council of India (BCI) responded by directing State Bar Councils to withhold enrolment of the university's 2026 graduating batch, triggering questions over its statutory authority, students' right to peaceful dissent and the limits of regulatory power.

What Happened at NALSAR

Student Protest: Around 450 graduating students objected to the CJI attending their convocation.

BCI Direction: The BCI initially directed State Bar Councils to withhold enrolment of the entire 2026 batch.

Collective Action: The direction affected about 1,400 graduates, despite only a section participating in the protest.

Reason for Controversy: The action was criticised as collective punishment for peaceful dissent.

Legal and Regulatory Developments

Statutory Body: The BCI was established under the Advocates Act, 1961.

Core Functions: It regulates legal education, recognises law degrees, supervises State Bar Councils and exercises disciplinary jurisdiction over advocates.

Regulatory Scope: Its powers concern legal education, enrolment and professional regulation.

Institutional Limit: The controversy raised whether these powers extend to regulating the conduct of students before they become advocates.



Enrolment Disqualification and Present Position

Section 24A: The Advocates Act provides specific grounds for disqualification from enrolment.

Specified Grounds: These include certain criminal convictions involving moral turpitude, conviction under the law relating to untouchability, and dismissal from State employment on specified grounds.

Legal Question: Peaceful participation in a student campaign is not among the stated grounds for enrolment disqualification.

Rollback: The BCI withdrew its directions and later apologised for its characterisation of the students.

Way Forward

The NALSAR episode demonstrates the need for regulatory bodies to exercise statutory powers within clearly defined legal limits. The withdrawal of the BCI's direction has resolved the immediate enrolment issue, but questions regarding institutional accountability and the treatment of peaceful dissent remain. The BCI's regulatory role should be exercised through lawful, proportionate and individually justified measures rather than collective punishment, while students' lawful expression should remain protected.

PYQ Compass



Q. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. Government law officers and legal firms are recognised as advocates, but corporate lawyers and patent attorneys are excluded from recognition as advocates.
2. Bar Councils have the power to lay down the rules relating to legal education and recognition of law colleges.

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

HEALTH

How AI can be optimised for better healthcare

Global context: By January 2025, the U.S. FDA had authorised 1,000+ AI-enabled medical devices, while the U.K. NHS introduced guidance on AI-enabled ambient scribing in 2025 and began developing a national adoption programme. The focus is shifting from developing AI tools to ensuring their reliability in routine care.

Why is AI relevant to India? Specialist healthcare remains concentrated in larger cities, chronic diseases require long-term monitoring, and hospitals face rising patient volumes without a proportionate increase in clinical capacity. AI can help prioritise diagnostic scans, detect patient deterioration, support complex clinical decisions and extend specialist expertise to smaller cities.

India's digital foundation: By May 2026, over 100 crore health records had been linked to Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHA). The ABDM's Scan and Share service had also reduced outpatient registration waiting times at participating hospitals from around an hour to 2–5 minutes. In the light of this development, AI can be extended to clinical documentation, scheduling, claims, inventory and discharge management.

Economic and service benefits: AI can improve healthcare efficiency by reducing administrative costs. A 2026 McKinsey analysis estimated that AI could reduce the cost to collect in healthcare revenue-cycle operations by 30–60%. It can also enable remote monitoring, risk-based preventive care, virtual specialist support and decentralised diagnostics, allowing hospitals to manage patients continuously rather than only during episodes of illness.

Challenges: AI performance can vary across populations, States, disease patterns and healthcare settings. Large-scale adoption therefore requires clinical validation, representative datasets, human oversight and continuous real-world monitoring.

Chromium pollution in Uttar Pradesh



What is the issue? Groundwater in around a dozen areas across Fatehpur, Kanpur Dehat and Kanpur Nagar is contaminated with hexavalent chromium [Cr(VI)], a toxic heavy metal. A 2025 government report found chromium levels above permissible limits in the blood of 73–96% of tested residents in affected areas.

Why has chromium pollution occurred? Kanpur's long-established tanning industry is linked to local chromium-processing industries that manufacture chromium sulphate. Industrial units have historically dumped untreated or inadequately treated waste and contaminated soil, allowing chromium to leach into soil and groundwater. Villagers were also given contaminated soil for filling fields and construction sites without knowing its toxicity.

What are the environmental and health concerns? Cr(VI) is highly toxic and has been classified as a carcinogen when inhaled. Chromium contamination can affect drinking-water quality and is associated with serious health risks, including kidney and liver damage, gastrointestinal problems and cancer.

What has been the government response? The U.P. Pollution Control Board shut down six polluting units in Kanpur Dehat in 2005, while the NGT ordered the removal of chromium dumps in Kanpur Nagar in 2017. In 2026, the NGT also took cognisance of fresh chemical dumping in Purwamir and sought an investigation. However, the identification and remediation of affected areas have often followed NGT intervention, while some contaminated areas remain outside the officially recognised zones.

PYQ Compass



Q. Due to improper / indiscriminate disposal of old and used computers or their parts, which of the following are released into the environment as e-waste? (2013)

1. Beryllium 2. Cadmium 3. Chromium 4. Heptachlor 5. Mercury 6. Lead 7. Plutonium

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

(a) 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 only (b) 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 only (c) 2, 4, 5 and 7 only (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

PYQ Compass



Q. Which of the following is/are the possible consequence/s of heavy sand mining in river beds? (2018)

1. Decreased salinity in the river
2. Pollution of groundwater
3. Lowering of the water-table

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans : b

Heavy sand mining in river beds can lead to several environmental consequences.

1. Decreased salinity in the river: This statement is incorrect. Sand mining itself does not directly affect the salinity of the river. Salinity in a river is typically influenced by the mixing of freshwater and saltwater (in coastal areas) or by the amount of salt entering the system, but sand mining primarily impacts the riverbed and water table, not salinity.

2. Pollution of groundwater: This statement is correct. Excessive sand mining can cause the infiltration of pollutants into the groundwater. When the riverbed is disturbed, it can allow surface water contaminants to reach groundwater, polluting it.

3. Lowering of the water-table: This statement is correct. Sand mining reduces the volume of material in the riverbed, which can disrupt the natural filtration system of the river and its surrounding area. This leads to a lowering of the water table, as groundwater may be drawn into the riverbed more easily, depleting local water resources.

Q. "Biorock technology" is talked about in which one of the following situations? (2022)

- a) Restoration of damaged coral reefs
- b) Development of building materials using plant residues
- c) Identification of areas for exploration/extraction of shale gas
- d) Providing salt licks for wild animals in forests/protected areas

Ans : a

Biorock technology involves using electrical currents to promote the growth of coral reefs, making it a popular technique for restoring damaged coral reefs. The technology helps accelerate coral growth by creating an artificial structure made of minerals that coral can grow on, leading to healthier and more resilient reefs.

PYQ Compass



Q. With reference to India, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. Government law officers and legal firms are recognised as advocates, but corporate lawyers and patent attorneys are excluded from recognition as advocates.
2. Bar Councils have the power to lay down the rules relating to legal education and recognition of law colleges.

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

Ans : b

Statement 1: This is incorrect. Under the Advocates Act, 1961, any person enrolled with a Bar Council is recognized as an advocate. This includes corporate lawyers and patent attorneys, provided they meet the qualifications and are enrolled. There is no exclusion for corporate lawyers or patent attorneys under the Act. Statement 2: This is correct. Bar Councils, particularly the Bar Council of India (BCI), have the power to lay down rules relating to legal education and the recognition of law colleges. The BCI sets standards for legal education and approves institutions imparting legal education in India.

Q. Due to improper / indiscriminate disposal of old and used computers or their parts, which of the following are released into the environment as e-waste? (2013)

1. Beryllium 2. Cadmium 3. Chromium 4. Heptachlor 5. Mercury 6. Lead 7. Plutonium

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- (a) 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 only
- (b) 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 only
- (c) 2, 4, 5 and 7 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Ans : b

Beryllium: Found in motherboards and connectors, it is toxic and carcinogenic when released.

Cadmium: Found in semiconductors, batteries, and resistors, it is highly toxic to kidneys and bones.

Chromium: Used in metal finishes, particularly hexavalent chromium, which is a hazardous carcinogen.

Lead: Found in cathode ray tubes (CRTs) and solder, it is highly toxic and causes severe environmental and health issues.

Heptachlor and Plutonium: Not typically associated with e-waste; heptachlor is a pesticide, and plutonium is a radioactive element not found in consumer electronics.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. With reference to the Korean Peninsula, consider the following statements:

- 1.The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was established under the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement.
- 2.The Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and the DMZ are exactly the same geographical feature.
- 3.The DMZ functions as a buffer zone between North and South Korea.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only

The MDL is the actual military boundary, while the DMZ is the buffer zone established around it. Under the 1953 Armistice, both sides were required to withdraw their forces from the MDL to create the DMZ

Q. With reference to rat-hole mining, consider the following statements:

- 1.It involves narrow tunnels that are often just large enough for workers to crawl through.
- 2.It is particularly associated with coal extraction in Meghalaya.
- 3.The National Green Tribunal banned the practice in Meghalaya in 2014.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

All three are correct. Rat-hole mining involves extremely narrow tunnels and has historically been widespread in Meghalaya. The NGT banned the hazardous practice in 2014 because of its unsafe and environmentally damaging nature.