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For the 3rd Week

of

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Note:

The YouTube links for all the topics are embedded in the name of the Topic itself

1. Geography

1.1. World Bank's Human Capital Index 2020

- Recently, the World Bank released the Human Capital Index (HCI) report for 2020.

| Rank | Country | Score |
|------|---------|-------|
| 116 | India | 0.49 |

- India has been ranked at the 116th position in the latest edition of the world bank's annual human capital index that benchmarks key components of human capital across countries.

- The index measures how much capital each country loses through lack of education and health.
- The index measures which countries are best in mobilizing the economic and professional potential of its citizens.
- The index was first published in October 2018 and ranked 157 countries.
- The human capital index ranges between 0 and 1, with 1 meaning maximum potential is reached .

Methodology

- The Index is grounded on the following three pillars:
 - ✓ The index measures how much capital each country loses through lack of education and health - Remember.
- School
 - ✓ Quantity of education (expected years of schooling by age 18)
 - ✓ Quality of education (harmonized test scores)
- Health
 - ✓ Adult survival rates (share of 15-year-olds who survive until age 60 in %).
 - ✓ Healthy growth among children (stunting rates of children under 5 in %).
- Survival
 - ✓ Share of children surviving past the age of 5 in %.

Additional Info

- World Bank released the report titled "The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human Capital in the Time of COVID-19".
- The 2020 human capital index update includes health and education data for 174 countries - covering 98 per cent of the world's population - up to
- march 2020, providing a pre-pandemic baseline on the health and education of children, with the biggest strides made in low-income countries.

- The analysis shows that pre-pandemic, most countries had made steady progress in building human capital of children, with the biggest strides made in low-income countries.
- Despite this progress, and even before the effects of the pandemic, a child born in a typical country could expect to achieve just 56 per cent of their potential human capital, relative to a benchmark of complete education and full health.
- The pandemic puts at risk the decade's progress in building human capital, including the improvements in health, survival rates, school enrolment, and reduced stunting.
- Due to the pandemic's impact, most children more than 1 billion have been out of school and could lose out, on average, half a year of schooling, adjusted for learning, translating into considerable monetary losses.
- And that could lose as much as USD 10 trillion in lifetime earnings because of the reduced learning, the school closing and the potential for dropping out of school and the disproportionate impact on girls.
- Data also shows significant disruptions to essential health services for women and children, with many children missing out on crucial vaccinations.
- The impact of covid-19, on developing countries particularly has been hard, there is the collapse of the formal and informal market, and also there is a very limited social safety net.
- The world bank estimates a 12% drop in employment.
- There has been major decline in remittances and total income is going down by 11 or 12%.
- It has increased income inequality, its economic impact has been particularly deep for women and for the most disadvantaged families, leaving many vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty.
- There's two-fold inequality in this crisis:
 - ✓ one is that developing countries are being left further behind.
 - ✓ and within developing countries, the poor are being left further behind.
- Protecting and investing in people is vital as countries work to lay the foundation for sustainable, inclusive recoveries and future growth.
- World bank is trying to work to restart the learning process, including by helping countries secure access to equipment, assisting in reopening, and with distance learning.

Previous Year Question (2019)

1. Which one of the following is not a sub-index of the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business Index'?
- A. Maintenance of law and order
 - B. Paying taxes
 - C. Registering property
 - D. Dealing with construction permits

2. History

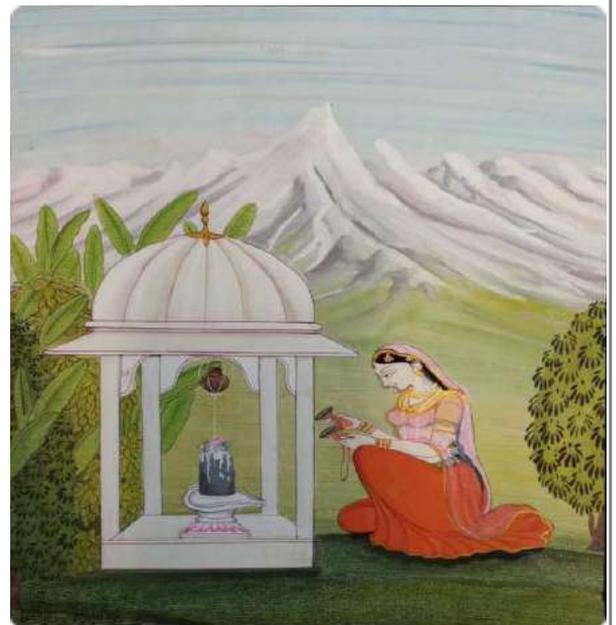
2.1.Kangra School of Painting

Introduction

- Painting in the Kangra region blossomed under the patronage of a remarkable ruler, Raja Sansar Chand (1775–1823).
- Raja Sansar Chand established supremacy of Kangra over all surrounding hill states. Tira Sujampur emerged as the most prolific centre of painting under his patronage.
- An earlier phase of Kangra kalam paintings is witnessed in Alampur and the most matured paintings were painted at Nadaun, where Sansar Chand shifted later in his life.

Features

- The Kangra style is by far the most poetic and lyrical of Indian styles marked with serene beauty and delicacy of execution.
- Characteristic features of the Kangra style are delicacy of line, brilliance of colour and minuteness of decorative details.
- This imaging delicacy and fineness of the line was achieved by the use of fine brushes made from the hair of squirrels.
- Most popular themes that were painted were the Bhagvata Purana, Gita Govinda, Nala Damayanti, Bihari Satsai, Ragamala and Baramasa.
- Many other paintings comprise a pictorial record of Sansar Chand and his court.
- Painting depicts ideas and values which guided life in society, sentiments and passions pictured in the language of brush and color make our experience rich and sensibilities sharp.
- The Kangra painters made use of pure colors like yellow, red, and blue and these have retained the brilliance, even after two hundred years.
- The series of Bhagvata Purana paintings is one of the greatest achievements of Kangra artists.
- It is remarkable for its effortless naturalism, deft and vivid rendering of figures in unusual poses that crisply portray dramatic scenes.
- Fattu, Purkhu and Khushala are important painters of the Kangra style.



Other details

- During Sansar Chand's reign, the production of Kangra School was far greater than any other hill state.
- He exercised wide political power and was able to support a large studio with artists from Guler and other areas.
- The Kangra style soon spread from Tira Sujanpur to Garhwal in the east and Kashmir in the west.
- Painting activity was severely affected around 1805 when the Gurkhas besieged the Kangra fort and Sansar Chand had to flee to his hill palace at Tira Sujanpur.
- Depiction of Ashta Nayikas or eight heroines is one of the most painted themes in Pahari paintings, involving the depiction of women in various dispositions and emotive states.
- The Baramasa paintings, consisting of 12 folios, illustrating the modes of love or courtship appropriate to each month of the year had become a popular theme in the hills during the nineteenth century.
- In Kashmir (1846–1885), the Kangra style initiated a local school of Hindu book illumination. The Sikhs employed other Kangra painters eventually.



3. Polity & Governance

3.1. Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities

- Originally, the Constitution of India did not make any provision with respect to the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.
- Later, the States Reorganisation Commission (1953-55) made a recommendation in this regard.
- Accordingly, the Seventh Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956 inserted a new Article 350-B in Part XVII of the Constitution.
- This article contains the following provisions:
 - ✓ There should be a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities. He is to be appointed by the President of India. It would be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.
 - ✓ He would report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct. The President should place all such reports before each House of Parliament and send to the governments of the states concerned.
- It must be noted here that the Constitution does not specify the qualifications, tenure, salaries and allowances, service conditions and procedure for removal of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.

Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities

- In pursuance of the provision of Article 350-B of the Constitution, the office of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities was created in 1957.
- He is designated as the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities.
- The Commissioner has his headquarters at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh).
- He has three regional offices at Belgaum (Karnataka), Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Kolkata (West Bengal).
- Each regional office is headed by an Assistant Commissioner.
- The Commissioner is assisted at headquarters by Deputy Commissioner and an Assistant Commissioner.
- He maintains liaison with the State Governments and Union Territories through nodal officers appointed by them.
- At the Central level, the Commissioner falls under the Ministry of Minority Affairs. Hence, he submits the annual reports or other reports to the President through the Union Minority Affairs Minister.

Role

- The Commissioner takes up all the matters pertaining to the grievances arising out of the non-implementation of the Constitutional and Nationally Agreed Scheme of Safeguards provided to linguistic minorities that come to its notice or are brought to its knowledge by the linguistic minority individuals, groups, associations or organisations at the highest political and administrative levels of

the state governments and UT administrations and recommends remedial actions to be taken.

- To promote and preserve linguistic minority groups, the Ministry of Minority Affairs has requested the State Governments / Union Territories to give wide publicity to the constitutional safeguards provided to linguistic minorities and to take necessary administrative measures.
- The state governments and UT Administrations were urged to accord priority to the implementation of the scheme of safeguards for linguistic minorities.

Vision

- Streamlining and strengthening implementation machinery and mechanism for effective implementation of the Constitutional safeguards for the Linguistic Minorities, thereby ensuring protection of the rights of speakers of the minority languages so as to provide them equal opportunities for inclusive and integrated development.

Mission

- To ensure that all the states / U.T.s effectively implement the Constitutional safeguards and the nationally agreed scheme of safeguards for the linguistic minorities for providing them equal opportunities for inclusive development.

Functions

- To investigate all matters related to safeguards provided to the linguistic minorities.
- To submit to the President of India, the reports on the status of implementation of the Constitutional and the nationally agreed safeguards for the linguistic minorities.
- To monitor the implementation of safeguards through questionnaires, visits, conferences, seminars, meetings, review mechanism, etc

Objectives

- To provide equal opportunities to the linguistic minorities for inclusive development and national integration.
- To spread awareness amongst the linguistic minorities about the safeguards available to them.
- To ensure effective implementation of the safeguards provided for the linguistic minorities in the Constitution and other safeguards, which are agreed to by the states / U.T.s.
- To handle the representations for redress of grievances related to the safeguards for linguistic minorities.

4. Economy

4.1.15th Finance Commission Report

- The report of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, along with an Action Taken Report, was tabled in Parliament. The Commission, headed by N K Singh, had submitted its Report to the President in December 2019.

About the Finance Commission

- Article 280 of the Constitution requires that a Finance Commission be constituted to recommend
- the distribution of the net proceeds of taxes between the Centre and states, and among the states.
- It is to address:
 - The vertical imbalance between the taxation powers and expenditure and responsibilities of the federal government and the states
 - The horizontal imbalance, or inequality, between states that were at different stages of development.
- The Finance Commission is a constitutional body formed by the President of India to give suggestions on centre-state financial relations.
- The 15th Finance Commission (Chair: Mr. N. K. Singh) was required to submit two reports.
 - ✓ The first report, consisting of recommendations for the financial year 2020-21, was tabled in Parliament in February 2020.
 - ✓ The final report with recommendations for the 2021-26 period was tabled in Parliament on February 1, 2021.

Key recommendations in the report for 2021-26 include

| Criteria | 14 th FC 2015-20 | 15 th FC 2020-21 | 15 th FC 2021-26 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Income Distance | 50.0 | 45.0 | 45.0 |
| Area | 15.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| Population (1971) | 17.5 | - | - |
| Population (2011) [#] | 10.0 | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| Demographic Performance | - | 12.5 | 12.5 |
| Forest Cover | 7.5 | - | - |
| Forest and Ecology | - | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Tax and fiscal efforts* | - | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Share of states in central taxes

- The share of states in the central taxes for the 2021-26 period is recommended to be 41%, same as that for 2020-21.

- This is less than the 42% share recommended by the 14th Finance Commission for 2015-20 period. The adjustment of 1% is to provide for the newly formed union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh from the resources of the centre.

Criteria for devolution

- 14th FC used the term “demographic change” which was defined as Population in 2011.
- The report for 2020-21 used the term “tax effort”, the definition of the criterion is same. On horizontal devolution, while XVFC agreed that the Census 2011 population data better represents the present need of States, to be fair to, as well as reward, the States which have done better on the demographic front, XVFC has assigned a 12.5 per cent weight to the demographic performance criterion.
- XVFC has re-introduced tax effort criterion to reward fiscal performance.
- Income distance: Income distance is the distance of a state’s income from the state with the highest income. Income of a state has been computed as average per capita GSDP during the three-year period between 2016-17 and 2018-19. A state with lower per capita income will have a higher share to maintain equity among states.
- Demographic performance: The Terms of Reference of the Commission required it to use the population data of 2011 while making recommendations. Accordingly, the Commission used 2011 population data for its recommendations. The demographic performance criterion has been used to reward efforts made by states in controlling their population. States with a lower fertility ratio will be scored higher on this criterion.
- Forest and ecology: This criterion has been arrived at by calculating the share of the dense forest of each state in the total dense forest of all the states.
- Tax and fiscal efforts: This criterion has been used to reward states with higher tax collection efficiency. It is measured as the ratio of the average per capita own tax revenue and the average per capita state GDP during the three years between 2016-17 and 2018-19.

Grants

- Over the 2021-26 period, the following grants will be provided from the centre’s resources:
- Revenue deficit grants: 17 states will receive grants worth Rs 2.9 lakh crore to eliminate revenue deficit.
- Sector-specific grants: Sector-specific grants of Rs 1.3 lakh crore will be given to states for eight sectors: (i) health, (ii) school education, (iii) higher education, (iv) implementation of agricultural reforms, (v) maintenance of PMGSY roads, (vi) judiciary, (vii) statistics, and (viii) aspirational districts and blocks. A portion of these grants will be performance-linked.
- State-specific grants: The Commission recommended state-specific grants of Rs 49,599 crore.
- These will be given in the areas of: (i) social needs, (ii) administrative governance and infrastructure, (iii) water and sanitation, (iv) preservation of culture and historical monuments, (v) high-cost physical infrastructure, and (vi) tourism.
- The Commission recommended a high-level committee at state-level to review and monitor utilisation of state-specific and sector-specific grants.

- Grants to local bodies: The total grants to local bodies will be Rs 4.36 lakh crore (a portion of grants to be performance-linked) including: (i) Rs 2.4 lakh crore for rural local bodies, (ii) Rs 1.2 lakh crore for urban local bodies, and (iii) Rs 70,051 crore for health grants through local governments.
- The grants to local bodies will be made available to all three tiers of Panchayat- village, block, and district.
- The health grants will be provided for: (i) conversion of rural sub-centres and primary healthcare centres (PHCs) to health and wellness centres (HWCs), (ii) support for diagnostic infrastructure for primary healthcare activities, and (iii) support for urban HWCs, sub-centres, PHCs, and public health units at the block level.
- Grants to local bodies (other than health grants) will be distributed among states based on population and area, with 90% and 10% weightage, respectively.

Important for Mains

- The Commission has prescribed certain conditions for availing these grants (except health grants). The entry-level criteria include: (i) publishing provisional and audited accounts in the public domain and (ii) fixation of minimum floor rates for property taxes by states and improvement in the collection of property taxes (an additional requirement after 2021-22 for urban bodies).
- No grants will be released to local bodies of a state after March 2024 if the state does not constitute State Finance Commission and act upon its recommendations by then.

Disaster risk management

- The Commission recommended retaining the existing cost-sharing patterns between the centre and states for disaster management funds.
- The cost-sharing pattern between centre and states is: (i) 90:10 for north-eastern and Himalayan states, and (ii) 75:25 for all other states.
- State disaster management funds will have a corpus of Rs 1.6 lakh crore (centre's share is Rs 1.2 lakh crore).

Fiscal roadmap

- Fiscal deficit and debt levels: The Commission suggested that the centre bring down fiscal deficit to 4% of GDP by 2025-26.
- For states, it recommended the fiscal deficit limit (as % of GSDP) of: (i) 4% in 2021-22, (ii) 3.5% in 2022-23, and (iii) 3% during 2023-26.
- If a state is unable to fully utilise the sanctioned borrowing limit as specified above during the first four years (2021-25), it can avail the unutilised borrowing amount (calculated in rupees) in subsequent years (within the 2021-26 period).
- Extra annual borrowing worth 0.5% of GSDP will be allowed to states during first four years (2021-25) upon undertaking power sector reforms including:
 - ✓ Reduction in operational losses
 - ✓ Reduction in revenue gap
 - ✓ Reduction in payment of cash subsidy by adopting direct benefit transfer

✓ Reduction in tariff subsidy as a percentage of revenue.

- The Commission observed that the recommended path for fiscal deficit for the centre and states will result in a reduction of total liabilities of: (i) the centre from 62.9% of GDP in 2020-21 to 56.6% in 2025-26, and (ii) the states on aggregate from 33.1% of GDP in 2020-21 to 32.5% by 2025-26.
- It recommended forming a high-powered inter-governmental group to:
 - ✓ review the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM)
 - ✓ Recommend a new FRBM framework for centre as well as states, and oversee its implementation.

Revenue mobilisation

- Income and asset-based taxation should be strengthened.
- To reduce excessive dependence on income tax on salaried incomes, the coverage of provisions related to tax deduction and collection at source (TDS/TCS) should be expanded.
- Stamp duty and registration fees at the state level have large untapped potential.
- Computerised property records should be integrated with the registration of transactions, and the market value of properties should be captured.
- State governments should streamline the methodology of property valuation.

GST

- The inverted duty structure between intermediate inputs and final outputs present in GST needs to be resolved.
- Revenue neutrality of GST rate should be restored which has been compromised by multiple rate structure and several downward adjustments.
- Rate structure should be rationalised by merging the rates of 12% and 18%.
- States need to step up field efforts for expanding the GST base and for ensuring compliance.

Financial management practices

- A comprehensive framework for public financial management should be developed.
- An independent Fiscal Council should be established with powers to assess records from the centre as well as states. The Council will only have an advisory role.
- A time-bound plan for phased adoption of standard-based accounting and financial reporting for both centre and states should be prepared while eventual adoption of accrual-based accounting is being considered.
- The centre as well as states should not resort to off-budget financing or any other non-transparent means of financing for any expenditure.
- A standardised framework for reporting of contingent liabilities should be devised. Both centre and states should strive to improve the accuracy and consistency of macroeconomic and fiscal forecasting.

On States

- States should amend their fiscal responsibility legislation to ensure consistency with the centre's legislation, in particular, with the definition of debt.
- States should have more avenues for short-term borrowings other than the ways and means advances, and overdraft facility from the Reserve Bank of India.
- States may form an independent debt management cell to manage their borrowing programmes efficiently.

Other recommendations

- **Health:** States should increase spending on health to more than 8% of their budget by 2022. Primary healthcare expenditure should be two-thirds of the total health expenditure by 2022. Centrally sponsored schemes (CSS) in health should be flexible enough to allow states to adapt and innovate. Focus of CSS in health should be shifted from inputs to outcome. All India Medical and Health Service should be established.
- **Funding of defence and internal security:** A dedicated non-lapsable fund called the Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security (MFDIS) will be constituted to primarily
- bridge the gap between budgetary requirements and allocation for capital outlay in defence and internal security. The fund will have an estimated corpus of Rs 2.4 lakh crore over the five years (2021-26). Of this, Rs 1.5 lakh crore will be transferred from the Consolidated Fund of India. Rest of the amount will be generated from measures such as disinvestment of defence public sector enterprises, and monetisation of defence lands.
- **Centrally-sponsored schemes (CSS):** A threshold should be fixed for annual allocation to CSS below which the funding for a CSS should be stopped (to phase out CSS which outlived its utility or has insignificant outlay). Third-party evaluation of all CSS should be completed within a stipulated timeframe. Funding pattern should be fixed upfront in a transparent manner and be kept stable.
- (Note: Under Central sector schemes, it is 100% funded by the Union government and implemented by the Central Government machinery.
- Central sector schemes are mainly formulated on subjects from the Union List. In addition, the Central Ministries also implement some schemes directly in States/UTs which are called Central Sector Schemes but resources under these Schemes are not generally transferred to States.
- Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) a certain percentage of the funding is borne by the States in the ratio of 50:50, 70:30, 75:25 or 90:10 and the implementation is by the State Governments.)

5. Environment & Ecology

5.1. Fishing Cat

Introduction

- Fishing cats (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) are medium-sized wild cats that owe their names to their eating habits.
- Unlike what we may imagine of feline creatures, fishing cats are well adapted to life by the water.
- They appear to be good swimmers and have partially webbed feet that may help them navigate water and wet soils.
- It is twice the size of a house cat.
- The fishing cat is nocturnal (active at night) and apart from fish also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.
- The species breed all year round.



Distribution

- Fishing cat is a symbolic species of floodplains, deltas and coastal wetlands of South and Southeast Asia.
- They have a patchy distribution from Sind in Pakistan to Cambodia.
- The South Asian countries of India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka hold the core of the global Fishing Cat population.
- In India, it is largely restricted to the floodplains of Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Sundarbans Delta and smaller coastal wetlands along the Bay of Bengal formed by Mahanadi, Godavari and Krishna rivers.

Threats

- Habitat Destruction - The biggest threat to the fishing cat, however, is the degradation and loss of its habitat. "In the past two decades, over 50% of the Gangetic floodplain has been lost to urbanisation, infrastructure projects, industries and aquaculture.
- Shrimp Farming - Shrimp farming is another growing threat to mangrove habitats of the Fishing Cat.
- Hunting - This unique cat also faces threats from hunting for meat and skin. It is also occasionally poached for its skin.
- Poisoning - Indiscriminate trapping, snaring and poisoning.

Protection Status

- IUCN Red List - Vulnerable.
- Despite multiple threats, the Fishing Cat was recently downlisted to "Vulnerable" from "Endangered" in the IUCN Red List species assessment. CITES - Appendix II

- Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 - Schedule I.
- In India, the fishing cat is listed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 and receives the same level of legal protection as the tiger, the elephant and other threatened fauna. However, more than 90% of the cat's range is outside protected areas and negative interactions are inevitable in human-dominated landscapes.

Conservation

- The Fishing Cat Project, launched in 2010 started raising awareness about the Cat in West Bengal.
- In 2012, the West Bengal government officially declared the Fishing Cat as the State Animal.
- As part of a programme called Know Thy Neighbours in 2017, camera traps were installed in the back yards of village homes in areas fishing cats were known to frequent. Villagers were shown the camera footage and taught how to identify the individual cats visiting their homes based on body markings.
- Last year, Chilika – the second largest coastal lagoon in the world – adopted the fishing cat as its ambassador. In collaboration with TFCP and volunteers from the community, the CDA (Chilika Development Authority) will soon be installing 100 camera traps across the lagoon to help establish fishing cat numbers and improve protection of this little-known creature.
- In 2020, fishing cat scientists, researchers and conservationists from around the world came together to form the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance.
- The nonprofit has declared the month of February Fishing Cat February to raise awareness of the mammal and support conservation efforts.
- Recently, the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance has initiated a study of the bio-geographical distribution of the fishing cat in the unprotected and human-dominated landscapes of the northeastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.

6. Science & Technology

6.1. Einsteinium

- It is the 99th element in the periodic table, named after Albert Einstein and discovered in 1952 in the debris of the first hydrogen bomb (the detonation of a thermonuclear device called “Ivy Mike” in the Pacific Ocean).
- Scientists have not been able to perform a lot of experiments with it because it is difficult to create and is highly radioactive.
- The most common isotope of the element is einsteinium 253 with a half-life of 20 days, and einsteinium-254 is one of the more stable isotopes of the element that has a half-life of 276 days.
- Because of its high radioactivity and short half-life of all einsteinium isotopes, even if the element was present on Earth during its formation, it has most certainly decayed. This is the reason that it cannot be found in nature and needs to be manufactured using very precise and intense processes.
- So far the element has been produced in very small quantities and its usage is limited except for the purposes of scientific research.
- The element is also not visible to the naked eye and after it was discovered, it took over nine years to manufacture enough of it so that it could be seen with the naked eye.
- Since the element has no known uses, there isn't any reason for making einsteinium. It's an element without a role in life.

Prelims Test Series

This course includes 25 GS Tests

- 4 Tests for Current Affairs of 2019 (Jan-Feb-March; Apr-May-June; July-Aug-Sept; Oct-Nov-Dec)
 - 12 Sectional Tests – 2 Tests each for History, Polity, Economy, Geography, Sci & Tech, and Environment, including Current Affairs of 12 months of 2020, one month in each test
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