

3-4 Apr. 2024



Daily Current Affairs

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Important News Articles

GSI

1. India risking demographic dividend-The Hindu

Relevance: Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

News:

- **The World Bank has warned that the South Asia** region including India was not making use of its demographic dividend as the pace of job creation in the region
- It will led to **fell short of growth in the working-age population**, even as it projected a strong 6.0-6.1% growth for 2024-25 for the region in its South Asia regional update, Jobs for Resilience

Prelims Takeaway

- Demographic dividend
- TFR

Key highlights

- Observing that **India's employment growth was "well below" the average growth** in its working age population for the 2000-23 period
- the multilateral lender said consequently the country's employment ratio had declined more than in any other country in the region except Nepal up till 2022.
- Noting that India's economy was expected to post a "robust growth" of 7.5% in FY23/24, the lender said this growth coupled with recoveries in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, was largely driving the strong numbers for the South Asian region.
- Still, the region could have 16% higher output growth if the share of its working-age population that was employed was on a par with other EMDEs
- **"South Asia is failing right now to fully capitalise** on its demographic dividend, This is a missed opportunity
- The weak employment trends in the region were concentrated in non-agricultural sectors
- To encourage job growth the Bank recommended supporting the participation of women in the economy, increasing openness to trade, and improving education.

Demographic dividend

- It is as **defined by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, is "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)"

Status of India's demographic dividend and challenges

- The Lancet report is a message that India's demographic dividend is not for perpetuity.
- Global experiences could be illustrative for the country's policymakers.
- **In China, for instance, the proportion of the working age population crossed 50 per cent** in 1987 and peaked around the middle of the last decade.
- This was also the period when the country registered impressive economic growth.
- By last year, China's TFR had dropped to a record low and its working-age population had contracted by more than 40 million.
- The Chinese government's pro-population-growth measures do not seem to be working.
- In fact, the last 60 years' history of developed nations suggests that once fertility rates fall below the replacement rate, it's almost impossible to set them back.
- At 1.9, India's TFR is currently just below the replacement rate, and according to UNPF calculations, the share of the country's working-age population will peak in the late 2030s, early 2040s.
- **Policymakers must, therefore, utilise this window to maximise India's demographic dividend**, as China did from the late 1980s till the early years of the last decade.
- No time must be lost in putting in place measures to overcome skill deficits and plug gaps in the knowledge economy.
- The challenge will also be to generate jobs outside of agriculture — they must not be in the low-paid informal sector.

- Going ahead, policymakers will also have to ensure adequate social security and healthcare provisions for the growing elderly population and create opportunities to harness their skills effectively.

GS II

2. ED can summon anyone for 'any information': SC- the hindu

Relevance: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

News:

- The Supreme Court **endorsed the sweeping powers of the Enforcement Directorate (ED)**
- It said the Central agency could call "anybody for any information" even as it castigated four Tamil Nadu District Collectors for failing to appear in person in response to a summons issued to them by the anti-money laundering body.

Prelims Takeaway

- Directorate of Enforcement
- FERA

50(2) of the PMLA

- It empowered the ED to summon "any person" whose attendance was considered necessary for giving evidence or production of records in the course of "any investigation or proceeding" under the statute.

Section 50(3)

- It mandated that the individual summoned was "bound to attend in person or through authorised agents" and would be required to make truthful statements and produce required documents.

Directorate of Enforcement (ED)

- The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws.
- It functions under the **Department of Revenue of the Ministry of Finance.**
- The origin of this Directorate goes back to 1st May, 1956, when an 'Enforcement Unit' was formed in the Department of Economic Affairs for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1947.
- It was headquartered in Delhi, **headed by a Legal Service Officer as the Director of Enforcement.**
- It had two branches – at Bombay and Calcutta.

Sharp censure

SC reprimands District Collectors of Vellore, Ariyalur, Karur and Tiruchi in T.N. for not appearing before investigative agency

■ Bench states that Section 50(2) of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) empowered the ED to summon 'any person' whose attendance was considered necessary for giving evidence or production of records

■ District Collectors express inability to compile data and present it to ED on time owing to poll work and implementation of welfare programmes

■ Bench refuses to accept argument; lists case for May 6



3. Firms without profits donated through electoral bonds- The Hindu

Relevance: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

News:

- An analysis of data on the purchasers and encashers of electoral bonds between April 12, 2019, and January 24, 2024, reveals that 45 companies, which made an aggregate donation of ₹1,432.4 crore through such bonds, had suspect sources of funds.

Electoral Bonds:

- Electoral bonds are money instruments like promissory notes, which can be bought by companies and individuals in India from the State Bank of India (SBI) and donated to a political party, which can then encash these bonds.
- The bonds are only redeemable in the designated account of a registered political party.
- A person being an individual can buy bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.

Argument in favor of electoral bond

- By protecting the confidentiality of donors, the apprehension of political retribution would also be greatly reduced
- **the right to information under Article 19(1)(a) can only be restricted on the grounds listed in Article 19(2)**, which does not include the purpose of curbing black money,

Section 29C of the Representation of People Act, 1951

- **before it was amended by the Finance Act, 2017**, required all political parties to declare any contributions higher than Rs. 20,000.
- The amendment to the section, which exempted political parties from making declarations for donations received through electoral bonds, **was struck down by the court.**

Prelims Takeaway

- Representation of People Act, 1951
- Electoral Bonds

4. Supreme Court to review Kerala verdict on Muslim women's unilateral right to divorce - India today

Relevance: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

News:

- The Supreme Court has agreed to examine a plea challenging the Kerala High Court judgment that gave Muslim women the absolute right to seek a divorce through 'Khula'.
- **Islamic law offers two main ways for marriages to end: Khula and Talaq.**

Khula: A Woman's Right to Initiate Divorce

- **Khula, mentioned in the Quran**, empowers women to seek separation from their husbands in court.
- Valid reasons like abuse, neglect, or simply being incompatible can be cited.
- The wife may return her dowry (Mehr) as part of the agreement.
- Importantly, the husband remains responsible for child support after a Khula divorce.

Talaq: Divorce Initiated by the Husband

- In contrast, **Talaq grants husbands the right to divorce their wives without needing court approval or providing a reason.**
- While the dowry and any property owned by the wife must be returned, the process is less structured.
- This system offers both spouses the ability to end an unhappy marriage, but Khula provides women with more control and safeguards their rights during the process.

Prelims Takeaway

- Talaq
- Khula

GS III

5. Nuclear power key to India's development, says report- the hindu

Relevance: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

News:

- **For India to be a developed country by 2047** and be on track to achieve net zero — or effectively **zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2070**
- it must significantly prioritise investments in nuclear energy and expand related infrastructure, says a study by academics at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

Key Highlights

- To put in perspective, it means **nuclear power contributing 4% of India's total energy by 2030 and sharply rising to 30% by 2050.**
- In the same scenario, the share of solar power falls from 42% in 2030 to 30% in 2050.

Uranium availability

- Currently, figures from the Central Electricity Authority say **solar energy accounts for 16% of India's installed generation capacity and coal 49%.**
- To achieve these idealistic figures for nuclear energy would require a doubling of investments as well as the assumption that uranium
- a critical fuel but restricted by international embargo, is available in necessary quantities.
- Coal would likely be the "backbone" of the Indian energy system and if the country has to phase down coal in the next three decades
- it would need to build adequate infrastructure for alternative sources such as nuclear power, in addition to flexible grid infrastructure and storage to support the integration of renewable energy.

Prelims Takeaway

- Uranium
- Nuclear fission

6. T.N. accuses Centre of delaying disaster relief funds- The hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

News:

- Tamil Nadu filed a suit in the Supreme Court accusing the Union government of treating the people of the State in delaying the release of disaster relief funds of nearly ₹38,000 crore sought by Chief Minister

Key highlight

- It is to help tide over the **twin calamities of Cyclone Michaung and unprecedented floods.**
- Tamil Nadu's suit follows recent suits by Kerala and Karnataka in the Supreme Court.
- Kerala has accused the Centre of arbitrarily interfering in its net borrowing limits, pushing the State to the brink of a financial emergency.
- Karnataka has moved the Supreme Court for the release of drought relief under the National Disaster Response Fund.

National Disaster Response Fund

- National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) was renamed as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) **with the enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005.**
- It is defined in Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act).
- It is placed in the "Public Account" of Government of India under "reserve funds not bearing interest".

Public Accounts:

- It was constituted under Article 266 (2) of the Constitution.
- It accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker eg. provident funds, small savings etc.

Prelims Takeaway

- Michaung
- cyclone

- These funds do not belong to the government and have to be paid back at some time.
- Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament.

Cyclone Michaung

- The cyclone developed from a **low pressure area in the southwest Bay of Bengal**.
- It gradually intensified into a deep depression, a cyclonic storm, and finally a super-cyclonic storm.
- They were aided by warm sea surface temperatures and the Madden-Julian oscillation, a weather anomaly that influences rainfall patterns.
- It moved northward towards the **Andhra Pradesh coast, while bringing heavy rain and strong winds to north Tamil Nadu**.
- It made landfall near Bapatla district, and weakened into a depression over land.
- **The name Michaung was suggested by Myanmar** symbolises strength and resilience following the list of names prepared by World Metrological Organisation and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

7. India rejects report on abusive conditions at shrimp hatcheries - the hindu

Relevance: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Prelims Takeaway

- Shrimp cultivation
- Blue economy

News:

- India, the biggest supplier of shrimp, U.S.'s favourite seafood, has strongly refuted allegations of human rights and environmental abuses raised by a Chicago-based human rights group.

Key highlights

- In 2022-23, India's seafood exports stood at \$8.09 billion, or ₹64,000 crore, and shrimps accounted for a bulk of these exports at \$5.6 billion.
- India has emerged as one of the world's largest shrimp exporters and its share in the U.S. market has risen from 21%, to 40% in 2022-23, far ahead of rivals such as Thailand, China, Vietnam, and Ecuador.
- the entire value chain for India's shrimp exports is certified by the Marine Products Export Development Authority and there is no scope for such concerns about overseas shipments.
- **State:** About a lakh shrimp farms in Andhra Pradesh alone account for almost 70% of India's shrimp output.
- **Women participation :** Women are reckoned to account for 70% of the eight million-odd jobs in the sector, including two lakh in hatcheries and aquaculture farms, and the rest in processing and freezing units.
- The Ministry is likely to advise exporters to commission independent studies on the working conditions at shrimp farms to dispel the concerns in major markets like the U.S. and the EU.

SAIME initiative

- Under Sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem (**SAIME**) initiative, farmers have taken up cultivation of shrimp at 30 hectares in West Bengal.
- **The mangrove ecosystem is integrated with shrimp cultivation**, but when fisheries were expanded inwards, the mangrove ecosystem was excluded.
- Fishing, particularly shrimp cultivation, is one of the **key occupations of the people of Sundarbans**, which is a complex network of rivers and low-lying islands that face a tide surge twice a day.

Jobless growth

World Bank warns South Asia, India risk squandering the demographic dividend if pace of job creation is not improved

■ Bank projects strong 6.0-6.1% growth for 2024-25 for the region in its regional update

■ Region could have 16% higher growth if share of its working-age population with jobs was on par with other EMDEs



■ Weak employment concentrated in non-agricultural sectors, notes lender

8. Govt. working on green steel policy' the hindu

Relevance: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

News:

- The Union Minister of Steel and Civil Aviation approved 13 Task Forces for defining the roadmap for 'Green Steel'.
- The task forces with the involvement of experts and the industry stakeholders have been identified to deliberate on various aspects of 'Green Steel' production, and chalk out action points.

Key highlights

- The task force for 'Green Steel' will work on developing the taxonomy of the green steel, including terminology, definition, benchmarks, scoping, certification and others.
- The task force for "Monitoring of Carbon Emission of Steel Plants" will work on formulating standards for carbon dioxide emission monitoring and development of methodology and institutional mechanism for the monitoring.
- Demand Side taskforce will make a policy framework for creating demand for green steel across key end-use sectors.
- Supply side taskforce will focus on improving energy efficiency, renewable energy transition, material efficiency, Green Hydrogen, Carbon capture uses and storage, and process transition.
- Facilitator's taskforce like **RD&D will be preparing a research roadmap for the green transition of the steel sector in India.**
- International Focus group will identify and collate measures being taken across the world for green steel production and explore possible collaboration.
- **RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant** has been a pioneer in installing state of art cleaner technologies to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption.
- Power generation from waste heat is around 62% of total captive power generation.
- With the motto of "One tree for every ton of steel capacity", more than 5 million trees have been planted

Green Steel

- It is the manufacturing of steel **without the use of fossil fuels.**

Prelims Takeaway

- National Hydrogen Energy Mission
- Green Steel

- This can be done by **using low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, coal gasification**, or electricity instead of the traditional carbon-intensive manufacturing route of coal-fired plants.
- It eventually lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel.
- Low-carbon hydrogen (blue hydrogen and green hydrogen) can help reduce the steel industry's carbon footprint.
- **National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHM)** capitalizes on hydrogen for a cleaner alternative fuel option.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Is the Katchatheevu islet disputed?- THE HINDU

Relevance: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

News:

- Prime Minister raised again the **controversial matter of Katchatheevu**, a few weeks ahead of the Lok Sabha poll in Tamil Nadu.

<p>When did Katchatheevu become a part of Sri Lanka?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During June 26-28, 1974, the then Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi and Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike, signed an agreement to demarcate the boundary between the two countries in the historic waters from Palk Strait to Adam's Bridge. • It also pointed out that "this boundary falls one mile off the west coast of the uninhabited" Katchatheevu. • The pact brought to a close the talks held between the two sides since October 1921. Initially, the negotiations were held between the governments of the then Madras and Ceylon. <p>How important has been Kachatheevu to the fisherfolk?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisherfolk of the two countries have been traditionally using the islet for fishing. • Though this feature was acknowledged in the 1974 agreement, the supplemental pact in March 1976 made it clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ that fishing vessels and fishermen of the two countries "shall not engage" in fishing in the historic waters, territorial sea and exclusive zone or exclusive economic zone of either of the countries "without the express permission of Sri Lanka or India." 	<p>What triggered the negotiations between India and Sri Lanka?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sri Lanka claimed sovereignty over Kachatheevu on the ground that the Portuguese who had occupied the island during 1505-1658 CE had exercised jurisdiction over the islet. • India's contention was that the erstwhile Raja of Ramnad [Ramanathapuram] had possession of it as part of his zamin. <p>How was the 1974 agreement received?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The present demand for the Katchatheevu retrieval traces its origin to the opposition that the pact generated in 1974.
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What has been the stand of the Union government on the issue?

- In August 2013, the Union government told the Supreme Court that the islet was a matter of dispute between British India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and there was no agreed boundary, a matter of which was settled through 1974 and 1976 agreements.
- In December 2022, the Union government, while referring to the two agreements, pointed out in its reply in the Rajya Sabha that Katchatheevu "lies on the Sri Lankan side of the India-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line."
- It added that the matter was sub-judice in the Supreme Court.

10. Fiscal battle : Kerala's suit raises questions on States' right to borrow, Centre's power to limit - the hindu

Relevance: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

News:

- The **Supreme Court of India order referring a suit filed by Kerala**, challenging the Centre's decisions curtailing its borrowings, to a Constitution Bench is a welcome development.
- The Court declined to grant an interim order to restore the position prior to the imposition of borrowing limits by the Centre
- but the referral will give a larger Bench an opportunity to examine the extent to which the Union government may regulate a State's borrowings.

Key highlights

- The litigation is much more than a tussle over the Centre's charge of fiscal mismanagement against the Left Front regime in the State.
- The Court has recognised that it is also a constitutional question on Centre-State relations:
 - an apparent conflict between efforts to maintain the country's fiscal health on the one hand and moves that undermine the fiscal space of States on the other.

Article 293,

- At the heart of this dispute is Article 293, which confers executive power on the States to borrow money within limits prescribed by the State legislature.
- It also allows the Union to extend loans and guarantees to the States, and requires the Centre to give its consent and impose conditions for States to raise further loans while earlier ones are outstanding.
- Kerala contends that the Article does not confer on the Centre any power to regulate all State loans and that it can impose conditions only on borrowings from the Centre.
- Kerala also challenges the Union's decision to include borrowings by State-owned enterprises and the liabilities on its public account under its 'Net Borrowing Ceiling'

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act

- A 2018 amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act capped the 'general government debt', or the sum total of the debts of the Central and State governments, at 60% of the GDP.
- The Union government argues that public finance being a national issue, it wanted to prevent the use of off-budget borrowings to bypass the borrowing ceiling.
- It also claims that unlimited borrowing by State governments will have the spillover effect of raising the cost of borrowing and crowding out private sector borrowers.
- The issue comes at a time when the current formula for distribution of revenue is seen as one that penalises States that perform better on social indicators.
- It is no surprise that Kerala, a topper in social advancement, faces this crisis.
- In an era in which a major revenue source for the States has been subsumed by a system in which they share the proceeds of a common Goods and Services Tax with the Centre, fiscal space has become precious.
- It is now up to the highest court to determine how strict the Centre should be on borrowing limits and giving consent to hold States to their fiscal obligations without violating federal norms.

Quick Look

1. White Rabbit (WR)

- It is a technology developed at CERN, in collaboration with institutes and companies, to synchronize devices in the accelerators down to sub-nanoseconds and solve the challenge of establishing a common notion of time across a network.
- White Rabbit Switches provides sub-nanosecond synchronization accuracy, which formerly required dedicated hard-wired timing systems, with the flexibility and modularity of real-time Ethernet networks. It achieves sub-nanosecond accuracy in Ethernet based networks.
- A White Rabbit network may be used solely to provide timing and synchronization to a distributed electronic system, or to provide both timing and real-time data transfer.

2. Lumpy Skin Disease

- It is an infectious viral disease of cattle.
- It is caused by the lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV), which belongs to the genus capripoxvirus, a part of the poxviridae family (smallpox and monkeypox viruses are also a part of the same family).
- LSDV is not a zoonotic virus, meaning the disease cannot spread to humans.
- Geographical distribution:
- LSD is currently endemic in most of Africa, parts of the Middle East and Turkey.
- Since 2015, the disease has spread to most of the Balkan countries, the Caucasus and the Russian Federation.
- Since 2019, several outbreaks of LSD have been reported by countries in Asia (Bangladesh, India, China, Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Bhutan, Hong Kong (SAR-RPC), Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand).

3. Contempt of Court

- Article 129 of the Constitution says that the Supreme Court shall be the 'Court of Record' and it has all the powers of such courts including the power to punish for contempt of itself.
- Article 215 conferred a corresponding power on the High Courts.
- According to the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, contempt of court can either be civil contempt or criminal contempt.
- Civil contempt means wilful disobedience to any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court.
- On the other hand, criminal contempt means the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which:
 - scandalises or tends to scandalise or lowers or tends to lower the authority of any court; or
 - prejudices, or interferes with, or tends to interfere with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or
 - interferes or tends to interfere with, or obstructs or tends to obstruct, the administration of justice in any other manner.

4. Sea of Japan

- It is a marginal sea of the western Pacific Ocean.
- It is located in Eastern Asia and is bounded by Japan and Sakhalin Island to the east and by Russia and Korea on the Asian mainland to the west.
- Dohoku Seamount, an underwater volcano, is its deepest point.

- The sea itself lies in a deep basin, separated from the East China Sea to the south by the Tsushima and Korea straits and from the Sea of Okhotsk to the north by the La Perouse (or Sōya) and Tatar straits.
- To the east, it is also connected to the Inland Sea of Japan by the Kanmon Strait and to the Pacific by the Tsugaru Strait.
- It influences the climate of Japan because of its relatively warm waters. It serves as the meeting point of the cold currents from the north and the warm currents from the south.



5. Punnett square

- It is named after British geneticist Reginald Punnett.
- Along the top and side of the grid, the possible genetic traits of one parent on one side and the other parent on the other side is listed.
- Then, you fill in the squares by combining the traits from each parent.
- Each square effectively represents a possible combination of traits that their offspring could inherit.
- It's a simple way to visualise the probabilities of different traits showing up in the offspring.
- They are commonly used in biology to understand inheritance patterns, like when you learn about dominant and recessive genes in school.
- It is a useful tool that helps predict the variations and probabilities resulting from cross-breeding.

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding PMLA:

1. The Act defines money laundering solely as the act of converting black money into white money.
2. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is the primary agency responsible for investigating offences under PMLA.
3. The PMLA places the burden of proof on the prosecution to establish that the accused is guilty of money laundering.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q2. Consider the following pair Report : Organization

1. World Happiness Report : UNSustainable Development Solutions Network India
2. State of World Population report : United Nations Population Fund
3. Gender Parity Index : UNESCO

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q3. Consider the following with respect to Representation of People Act, 1950

1. Section 29C of the Act Required all political parties to declare any contributions higher than Rs. 20,000.
2. The act lays down procedures for delimitation of constituencies.
3. It lays procedure for the preparation of electoral rolls and the manner of filling seats and the qualification of voters.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q4. Consider the following statements

Statement I : The Shariat Application Act mandates aspects of Muslim social life such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and family relations.

Statement II : It clearly states that in matters of **personal** disputes, the State has the right to interfere and a religious authority would pass a declaration based on his interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith.

Which one of the following statements is correct?

- A. Statement I is correct but statement II is incorrect
- B. Statement I is incorrect but Statement II is correct
- C. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement I
- D. Both Statement I and Statement II are incorrect and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement I

Q5. Consider the following statements

1. To achieve Net Zero by 2070, India needs to scale up nuclear energy to a couple of thousand GWe
2. India is also working on an entirely indigenous thorium-based nuclear plant, "Bhavni," which will be the first of its kind using Uranium-233.
3. The experimental thorium plant "Kamini" already exists in Kalpakkam.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q6. Consider the following statements

1. Public Accounts was constituted under Article 266 (2) which accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker
2. Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament.
3. National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) is placed in the "Public Account" of Government of India under "reserve funds not bearing interest".

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q7. Consider the following statements

1. Under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, Under Sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem (SAIME) initiative has started to increase farmer income.
2. Andhra Pradesh alone account for almost 70% of India's shrimp output.
3. India is world's largest shrimp exporters and its largest importer is U.S

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q8. Consider the following statements

1. Green Steel is the manufacturing of steel without the use of fossil fuels.
2. It eventually lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel.
3. RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has been a pioneer in installing state of art cleaner technologies to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q9. Consider the following pairs :

Area of conflict mentioned in news : where it is located

1. taiwan: indian ocean
2. Katchatheevu: Palk Strait,
3. Tigray : North Yemen

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Q10. Consider the following statements

Statement I :Article 293, which confers executive power on the state to borrow money within limits prescribed by the parliament

Statement II: It also allows the Union to extend loans and guarantees to the States, and requires the Centre to give its consent and impose conditions for States to raise further loans while earlier ones are outstanding.

Which one of the following statements is correct?

- A. Statement I is correct but statement II is incorrect
- B. Statement I is incorrect but Statement II is correct
- C. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement I
- D. Both Statement I and Statement II are incorrect and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement I

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option A is correct

Explanation

- PMLA defines money laundering as a broader range of activities related to disguising the origins of illegally obtained funds. It includes placement, layering, and integration stages. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**
- The Enforcement Directorate is the primary investigative agency for PMLA offences. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Under PMLA, the burden of proof can shift to the accused in certain situations to explain the source of suspicious assets. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The UN Population Fund's (UNPF) India Ageing Report projected that the number of elderly in India will more than double from 149 million in 2022 to 347 million by mid-century.
- The challenges of a growing ageing population may well be decades away.
- However, the young country would do well to prepare for them in advance.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has released the State of World Population report 2023,
- **Hence only C option is correct**

Answer 3 Option B is correct

Explanation

- AS per Section 29C of the Representation of People Act, 1951, before it was amended by the Finance Act, 2017, required all political parties to declare any contributions higher than Rs. 20,000. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Electoral Bonds Scheme violates the right to information under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution
- Key Provisions of Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950

- Lays down procedures for delimitation of constituencies. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Provides for the allocation of seats in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils of States.
- Lays procedure for the preparation of electoral rolls and the manner of filling seats.
- Lays down the qualification of voters. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 4 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Since 1937 therefore, the Shariat Application Act mandates aspects of Muslim social life such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and family relations. The Act lays out that in matters of personal dispute the state shall not interfere
- The Shariat Application Act in India protects the application of Islamic laws in personal legal relationships, but the Act does not define the laws. **Hence statement I is correct**
- It clearly states that in matters of personal disputes, the State shall not interfere and a religious authority would pass a declaration based on his interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith. **Hence statement II is incorrect**

Answer 5 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The government is promoting the expansion of nuclear installations to other parts of the country. For example, an upcoming nuclear power plant in Gorakhpur town in Haryana will become operational in the near future.
- India is also working on an entirely indigenous thorium-based nuclear plant, "Bhavni," which will be the first of its kind using Uranium-233. The experimental thorium plant "Kamini" already exists in Kalpakkam.

- To achieve Net Zero by 2070, India needs to scale up nuclear energy to a couple of thousand GWe as suggested by a study conducted by Vivekananda International Foundation with analytical support from IIT-Bombay. **Hence, all statements are correct.**

Answer 6 Option C is correct

Explanation

- National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) was renamed as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) with the enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005.
- It is defined in Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act).
- It is placed in the “Public Account” of Government of India under “reserve funds not bearing interest”.
- Public Accounts:
- It was constituted under Article 266 (2) of the Constitution.
- It accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker eg. provident funds, small savings etc.
- These funds do not belong to the government and have to be paid back at some time.
- Expenditures from it are not required to be approved by the Parliament. **Hence, all statements are correct.**

Answer 7 Option B is correct

Explanation

- starting in 2019, the community-based initiative of sustainable shrimp cultivation is being conceived by NGOs- Nature Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) and Global Nature Fund (GNF), Naturland, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS). Under Sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem (SAIME) initiative, farmers have taken up cultivation of shrimp at 30 hectares in West Bengal. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**

- About a lakh shrimp farms in Andhra Pradesh alone account for almost 70% of India's shrimp output.
- e world's largest shrimp exporters and its share in the U.S. market has risen from 21%, to 40% in 2022-23, far ahead of rivals such as Thailand, China, Vietnam, and Ecuador. **Hence, statement 2 & 3 are correct.**

Answer 8 Option C is correct

Explanation

- RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has been a pioneer in installing state of art cleaner technologies to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption.
- Power generation from waste heat is around 62% of total captive power generation.
- With the motto of “One tree for every ton of steel capacity’, more than 5 million trees have been planted
- Green Steel
- It is the manufacturing of steel without the use of fossil fuels.
- This can be done by using low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, coal gasification, or electricity instead of the traditional carbon-intensive manufacturing route of coal-fired plants.
- It eventually lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel.
- Low-carbon hydrogen (blue hydrogen and green hydrogen) can help reduce the steel industry's carbon footprint. **Hence, all statements are correct.**
- National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHM) capitalizes on hydrogen for a cleaner alternative fuel option.

Answer 9 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Taiwan is situated in a strategically important location in the western Pacific Ocean, adjacent to China, Japan, and the Philippines. Its location provides a natural gateway to Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, which are critical for global trade and security.. **Hence pair 1 is not correctly matched.**

- Katchatheev: it is a 285-acre uninhabited speck in the Palk Strait, between India and Sri Lanka, an island located about 14 nautical miles off Rameswaram, India.
- In 1974, Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi of India and Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka signed an agreement that recognized Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka's territory, resulting in a change of ownership. **Hence pair 2 is correctly matched.**
- Tigray is Ethiopia's northernmost region. The region is at the center of an ongoing civil conflict involving ethnoregional militias, the federal government, and the Eritrean military that has attracted the concern of humanitarian groups and external actors since November 2020. In October 2022, the first formal African Union-led peace talks between an Ethiopian government team and Tigray forces happened in South Africa. **Hence pair 3 is not correctly matched**
- It also allows the Union to extend loans and guarantees to the States, and requires the Centre to give its consent and impose conditions for States to raise further loans while earlier ones are outstanding.
- Kerala contends that the Article does not confer on the Centre any power to regulate all State loans and that it can impose conditions only on borrowings from the Centre.
- Kerala also challenges the Union's decision to include borrowings by State-owned enterprises and the liabilities on its public account under its 'Net Borrowing Ceiling' **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act
- A 2018 amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act capped the 'general government debt', or the sum total of the debts of the Central and State governments, at 60% of the GDP.

Answer 10 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Article 293,
- At the heart of this dispute is Article 293, which confers executive power on the States to borrow money within limits prescribed by the State legislature. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**



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