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Important News Articles

GS II

1. 55 companies' electoral bond donations topped the 7.5% cap in 2022-24- the hindu

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

News:

- The Supreme Court's verdict on electoral bonds (EBs) had held the **deletion of a provision contained in Section 182 (1) of the Companies Act, 2013 as "violative of Article 14 of the Indian constitution"**.
- The provision **enabled unlimited corporate contributions to political parties**

Key highlights

- The provision had restricted corporate donations to a cap of 7.5% of the donor companies' average net profits in the three preceding financial years.
- The Finance Act, 2017, had deleted the provision.
- The total amount donated above the rescinded 7.5% cap figure stood at ₹1,377.9 crore, which was more than 69% of their aggregate donation of ₹1,993 crore.
- The ruling party alone received close to 71%, or ₹1,414 crore, of the total donations.
- Specifically, the EB donation data of these firms from 2019-20 to 2023-24 was matched against their financial data from 2016-17 to 2022-23.

The Finance Act, 2017

- It amended **The Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA), The Income-tax Act, 1961, and The Companies Act, 2013**.
- The amendments allowed electoral bonds to cut through many of the restrictions on political party funding by completely doing away with the donation limit for companies,
 - and removing the requirements to declare and maintain a record of donations through electoral bonds.

The Companies Act, 2013

- A number of changes were made to **Section 182 of the Act**, which details the prohibitions and restrictions a company must abide by when giving political contributions.
- Prior to the amendment, Section 182(1) placed a cap on the amount of money a company could donate in a single financial year
 - limiting it to 7.5% of the company's average net profits during the previous three financial years.
- Section 182(3) required a company to disclose any amount contributed to any political party along with the particulars of the amount donated and the name of the receiving party
 - only the total amount contributed had to be disclosed
 - and the company would no longer be required to declare which political party it had sent a donation to, nor the specific amount.
- The court struck down this amendment. Chief Justice of India observed that "permitting unlimited corporate contributions authorises unrestrained influence of companies in the electoral process".

Prelims Takeaway

- Section 182(3)
- The Companies Act, 2013

2. How are symbols allotted to political parties?- 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 Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) that secured 3.9% and 6.5% votes in Tamil Nadu in 2019 and 2021 respectively, has been allotted a new common symbol (Mike).
- The Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) that secured 1.09% and 0.99% votes in 2019 and 2021 has been denied a common symbol (Pot).

Prelims Takeaway

- Election symbol
- ECI

- This has raised questions **about the allotment of symbols to 'registered unrecognised parties'**.

What do the rules specify?

- A party is recognised as a 'national' or 'state' party under the provisions of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 (Symbols Order) by the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- The criteria for recognition at the State level consists of
 - winning one Lok Sabha seat for every 25 seats or 3% of Legislative Assembly seats or
 - winning one Lok Sabha or two Assembly seats along with 6% of votes polled
 - securing 8% of votes polled in a general election.
- Symbols are allotted to political parties and contesting candidates as per the provisions of the Symbols Order by ECI.
- In the largest democracy where a sizeable population is still illiterate, symbols play a crucial role in the voting process.
- A recognised political party has a reserved symbol that is not allotted to any other candidate in any constituency.
- For registered but unrecognised political parties, one of the free symbols is allotted as a common symbol during an election
 - if that party contests in two Lok Sabha constituencies or in 5% of seats to the Assembly of a State as the case may be.

What is the current issue?

- Rule 10B of the Symbols Order provides that the concession of a common free symbol shall be available to a 'registered unrecognised party' for two general elections.
- Furthermore, a party shall be eligible for a common symbol in any subsequent general election if it had secured at least 1% of votes polled in the State on the previous occasion when the party availed of this facility.
- Such an unrecognised party should however apply for a symbol every time in the prescribed format.
- This application can be made any time during the period commencing six months prior to the expiry of the term of the Lok Sabha or State Assembly as the case may be.
- The symbols are thereafter allotted on a 'first-come-first-served' basis.

3. Smaller citizens: how to bridge the gaps in India's education system The hindu

Relevance: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

News:

- In the Annual Status of Education Report, titled '**ASER 2023: Beyond Basics**', released in January, found that **more than half struggled with basic mathematics, a skill they should have mastered in Classes 3 and 4.**
- a survey by civil society organisation Pratham among rural students aged 14 to 18 years

Key highlights

- The household survey conducted in 28 districts across 26 States assessed the foundational reading and arithmetic abilities of over 30,000 students and discovered that about 25% in this age group could not read a Class 2 level text in their vernacular.
- As they grew older, the rate of dropouts increased.
- While 3.9% of 14-year-olds were not in school, the figure climbed to 32.6% for 18-year-olds.
- Also, only 5.6% had opted for vocational training or other related courses.
- Subsequent surveys, including the recent India Employment Report 2024, prepared by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization
 - Show that while access to education has improved for all social groups, "hierarchy between social groups persists; Scheduled Tribes are still the most disadvantaged."
- Transition rates from primary to upper primary and secondary school show significant dropouts and the gender gap is high too.

Prelims Takeaway

- ASER
- ILO

- To improve the quality of education imparted to ST children, there needs to be “improvised pedagogy”
 - Instruction in the mother tongue and support materials in tribal dialects.
- “There needs to be synchronisation between school activities and lives of students,

Gender and other inequalities

- Sex, caste, rich/poor, urban/rural divide — that persist in education.
- To implement quality services, bureaucracies need to solve complex problems and adapt to local needs, “

4. Political affiliation of applicant institution does not influence selection process on new Sainik Schools: Defence Ministry- the hindu

Relevance: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

News:

- **The scheme for new Sainik Schools** is “well thought out” and the “political or ideological affiliation or otherwise” of the applicant institution does not influence the selection process, the Defence Ministry
- Sainik Schools are special residential schools offering a public school education.

Key highlights

- **CBSE Affiliation:** These schools are affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), ensuring a standardized curriculum.
- **Government Funding:** Funded by both the central and state governments, Sainik Schools make quality education accessible.

A Legacy of Excellence

- **Founded in 1961:** Established with the primary aim of preparing boys for the National Defence Academy (NDA), Sainik Schools have a long history of academic and military excellence.
- **Focus on Well-Rounded Development:** These schools go beyond academics, focusing on physical fitness, mental resilience, and leadership qualities to prepare well-rounded individuals.
- **National Presence:** With 33 schools across India, Sainik Schools offer opportunities to students from various regions.
- **Recent Expansion:** A new initiative aims to establish 100 additional Sainik Schools in partnership with NGOs, private schools, and state governments, making quality education more accessible.

Building the Future:

- **Holistic Education:** Sainik Schools aim to create a generation of young people who are academically strong, culturally aware, confident, and possess strong leadership qualities.
- **Patriotism and Self-Reliance:** These schools instill a sense of patriotism and self-reliance in their students, preparing them to be responsible citizens and future leaders.
- Sainik Schools offer a unique educational path, shaping future generations of well-rounded individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the nation.

Prelims Takeaway

- NGOs
- Government aided school

GS III

5. India's PRATUSH among telescopes astronomers want to put on, around the moon- the hindu

Relevance: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

News:

- Astronomers are looking forward to opening a new window on the universe by posting **high-resolution telescopes on the moon**, and in orbit around it.

Prelims Takeaway

- Cosmic rays
- Pratyush

- There are numerous proposals to do this from astronomers around the world — including one **from India called PRATUSH**.

Key highlights

- India's PRATUSH telescope, built by RRI and ISRO, aims to unlock the secrets of the universe's early days.
- This radio telescope will be positioned on the far side of the moon. To avoid Earth's interference, it will first orbit Earth before being launched towards the moon.
- PRATUSH will listen for faint radio signals from the very first stars and galaxies.
- This will help us understand when these first stars emerged, what they were like, and the nature of the light they emitted during the universe's "cosmic dawn."
- The telescope is equipped with special instruments to capture these weak signals amidst the cosmic noise.
- These instruments include a wideband antenna, a self-calibrating receiver, and a digital correlator.
- The goal is to achieve a sensitivity of a few millikelvin, allowing for clear detection without distortions.

6. India plans to build first commercial crude storage- the hindu

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

News:

- India plans to build its **first commercial crude oil strategic storage** as part of efforts to shore up stockpiles as insurance against any supply disruption.

Key highlights

- **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL), an SPV created by the government** for building and operating strategic petroleum reserves in the country
 - Has invited bids for constructing 2.5 million tonnes of underground storage at **Padur in Karnataka**
- ISPRL had in the first phase built a strategic petroleum reserve in underground unlined rock caverns at three locations.

Strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs)

- These are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries ensuring a stable supply of crude oil even during times of geopolitical uncertainty or supply disruptions.
- These underground storage facilities play a crucial role in maintaining a steady flow of energy resources for the nation's growth and development.
- as per the terms of the International Energy Programme (I.E.P.) agreement, every nation belonging to the **International Energy Agency (IEA) is required to maintain emergency reserves** of oil amounting to a **minimum of 90 days'** worth of their net oil imports.
- In 2017, **India attained the status of an associate member** within the International Energy Agency.

Prelims Takeaway

- Strategic petroleum reserves
- International Energy Agency

7. EV subsidy: Ola, others get certificates the hindu

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

News:

- Ola Electric, TVS Motor, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp and Ather Energy have managed to **get certificates from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** in a manual format for getting subsidies **under the Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024**.

Key highlights

- Although the online portal for completing the process for availing subsidy under EMPS is not ready, companies are getting a 'go ahead' certificate from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) in a manual format.

Prelims Takeaway

- Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme
- Electric vehicle

- There is relief among the companies as vehicles manufactured from April 3 will be eligible for the subsidies under the scheme,

Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024:

- The Indian government has introduced the EMPS 2024 to promote the purchase of **electric two-wheelers (e2W) and three-wheelers (e3W)**.
- With a budget of Rs 5 billion, it will replace the FAME-2 scheme and will be effective from April to July 2024, with the possibility of being replaced or extended thereafter.
- The main goal is to increase the adoption of e2Ws and e3Ws while gradually reducing industry reliance on subsidies.
- The scheme **does not cover electric four-wheelers (e4Ws) and e-buses**.

8. Andhra Pradesh forest officials cut bark of laurel tree, water gushes out-indian today

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

News:

- Forest department authorities in **Andhra Pradesh's Alluri Sitharama Raju district cut the bark of an Indian laurel tree, with water gushing out**.
- The forest officials cut the bark of the tree at Papikonda National Park to find that the tree stores water in the summer.

The Indian laurel tree

- It also known by its scientific name *Terminalia elliptica* (syn. *T. tomentosa*), is a versatile tree native to southern and Southeast Asia.

Common Names and Appearance

- Besides Indian laurel, it has various names in different regions like Asna, saj, marutham, matti, ain, taukkyan, and asana.

Habitat and Distribution

- Primarily found in dry and moist deciduous forests in southern India, up to an altitude of 1000 meters.
- It's native to a wider region encompassing India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.
- The strong wood is used for furniture, cabinets, boat building, decorative veneers, and even musical instruments like guitar fretboards.
- The leaves are a food source for *Antheraea paphia* silkworms, which produce tussar silk, a commercially important wild silk.
- The bark has medicinal uses, including treating diarrhea, and can be used to extract oxalic acid.
- The bark and fruit are a source of pyrogallol and catechol, used for dyeing and tanning leather.

Prelims Takeaway

- The Indian laurel tree
- Andhra Pradesh

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

9. Should State Governments borrow more? | Explained- the hindu

Relevance: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

News:

- The Government of Kerala has approached the Supreme Court for a resolution on the issue of state borrowing power

Key highlights

- The Union government says that the state borrowing should be limited to 3% of the State's income or Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
- Kerala contends that by curtailing its borrowing powers, the Centre is undermining the State's ability to fulfil some of its basic financial commitments and violating the principle of federalism.
- The Constitution divides spending responsibilities between India's federal government (Union) and state governments.
- **Raising taxes:** Mostly done by the Union government.
- **Spending:** Mostly done by state governments, particularly on social services like education and healthcare (₹19,182 billion in 2022-23 compared to the Union's ₹2,230 billion).

Focus on Social Services vs. Other Areas:

- The Union government spends more on defense (roughly twice social services) and infrastructure & energy (2.4 times social services).
- State governments have significantly increased social spending over the past 20 years. This spending has helped address slow rural income growth.

Kerala: A Case Study

- They dedicated 40-50% of their budget to social sectors (1960-2000), leading to significant development.
- However, their social spending proportion has stagnated recently, while other states have increased theirs.
- Kerala devolves a significant portion of its budget to local governments, which might still put them above the national average in social spending.

Challenges and Considerations:

- States get funding from three sources: taxes, Union transfers, and borrowing.
- Kerala borrowed heavily during the pandemic to provide economic relief.
- Reduced Union transfers and stagnant tax revenue forced Kerala to increase borrowing beyond the limit set by the central government.

Arguments for Increased Borrowing by Kerala:

- Higher social spending fosters a knowledge-based economy.
- Borrowing from domestic institutions, with Kerala's high savings rate, could be productive.
- Effective use of borrowed funds can create a virtuous cycle of growth.

Concerns about Kerala's Spending:

- A large portion of social spending goes towards salaries and pensions, potentially limiting funds for new initiatives.
- Low capital expenditure (infrastructure) might hinder future growth.

The Way Forward:

- Kerala argues that restrictions on borrowing violate federalism and limit their ability to fulfill financial commitments.
- Other states might face similar challenges soon due to an aging population and youth out migration.
- The Union and State governments need to collaborate to address these issues.
- Kerala needs to convince the Union that their borrowing is a long-term investment, not just a quick fix.

10. Why Uttarakhand govt wants to evaluate the risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods- indian express

Relevance: Disaster and disaster management.

News:

- The Uttarakhand government has constituted two teams of experts to evaluate the risk posed by five potentially hazardous glacial lakes in the region.
- These lakes are prone to Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), the kind of events that have resulted in several disasters in the Himalayan states in recent years.

Key highlights

- The goal of the risk assessment exercise is to minimise the possibility of a GLOF incident and provide more time for relief and evacuation in case of a breach.

GLOF

- **Glacier Retreat, Lake Formation:** As glaciers melt, they leave behind depressions that fill with water, forming glacial lakes.
- These lakes are most common in high mountains and polar regions.
- **Two Types of Lakes:** There are two main types: ice-contact lakes (touching the glacier) and distal lakes (further away but still influenced by glaciers).
- **The GLOF Threat:** Most glacial lakes are precariously held back by unstable dams of ice or loose rock.
- If these dams break, a massive flood called a GLOF surges down the mountains, causing catastrophic damage.

What Triggers a GLOF?

- **Ice Calving:** Large chunks of ice can break off glaciers and fall into the lake, displacing huge amounts of water.
- **Landslides and Avalanches:** These events can destabilize the dam holding the lake, leading to a sudden release of water.

The Devastating Impact of GLOFs

- **Floods of Fury:** GLOFs unleash tremendous volumes of water, sediment, and debris, wiping out entire valleys with incredible force.
- **Infrastructure Obliterated:** Roads, bridges, and buildings are no match for these floods, leading to widespread destruction.
- **Loss of Life and Livelihoods:** GLOFs can cause tragic loss of life and devastate communities.

A Growing Threat: Climate Change and Development

- **Melting on the Rise:** Rising global temperatures are accelerating glacier melt, creating more and larger glacial lakes, especially in the Himalayas.
- **Development in Dangerous Places:** Construction of infrastructure in high-risk areas further increases the dangers of GLOFs.

Millions at Risk in India and Pakistan

- **A Recent Study:** A 2023 study published in Nature found that millions of people in India and Pakistan face GLOF dangers, despite the regions having fewer glacial lakes than other places.
- These regions have a high concentration of people living in vulnerable areas, making them some of the world's most GLOF-prone zones.

Risk Assessment: Minimizing the Threat

- **Early Warning Systems:** The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in India is identifying potentially dangerous glacial lakes to minimize GLOF risks and allow for faster evacuation if a breach occurs.
- **Uttarakhand on High Alert:** 188 potentially risky glacial lakes have been identified in the Himalayan states, with 13 of them in Uttarakhand.
- GLOFs are a serious threat posed by climate change.
- By understanding the risks and taking preventative measures, we can hopefully minimize the devastation they cause.

Quick Look

1. Paira cropping system

- The utera/paira is a type of cropping which is commonly practiced in Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- It is a kind of relay method of sowing in which lentil/ lathyrus/ urdbean/ mungbean seeds are broadcast in the standing crop of rice about 2 weeks before its harvest.
- This system does not allow agronomic intervention such as tillage, weeding, irrigation and fertilizer. However, rice variety decides the productivity of pulses in this system.
- This practice enables us to use better soil moisture available at the time of harvesting of rice crops, which could otherwise be lost quickly.
- Experimental evidence showed that paira cropping produced more yield of lentil than planting with tillage after harvesting of the rice crop.
- This is an efficient way of utilising resources for sustainable crop intensification and boosting land productivity.

2. S.A.R.A.H.

- Smart AI Resource Assistant for Health (S.A.R.A.H.) is a digital health promoter prototype with enhanced empathetic response powered by generative artificial intelligence (AI).
- It is launched by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- It aims to provide an additional tool for people to realize their rights to health, wherever they are.
- It is trained to provide information across major health topics, including healthy habits and mental health.
- It has the ability to support people in developing better understanding of risk factors for some of the leading causes of death in the world, including cancer, heart disease.
- It can help people access up-to-date information on quitting tobacco, being active, eating a healthy diet and de-stressing among other things.

3. Agni-Prime Missile

- It is a nuclear-capable new-generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles. It is a two-stage canisterised missile with a maximum range of 1,000 to 2,000 km.
- It is lighter than all the earlier Agni series of missiles. It weighs at least 50 per cent less than the Agni 3 missile and has new guidance and propulsion systems.
- It can be transported by road and rail and stored for longer periods, significantly reducing the time required for preparation and launch. The missile uses a cold launch mechanism and can be fired in salvo mode.

4. Purple-striped jellyfish

- It usually appears a blue purple (mauve) colour with a globe shaped umbrella covered in orangey brown warts.
- It is primarily pelagic or in the open ocean. However, this species can survive in benthic and temperate coastal habitats.
- It is found worldwide in tropical and warm-temperature seas. It is mainly found in the Indo-Pacific, Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Unlike other jellyfish species, it has stingers not just on the tentacles, but on the bell too. These are bioluminescent, having an ability to produce light in the dark.

5. Excise Duty

- Excise duty is a form of tax imposed on goods for their production, licensing and sale.
- It is an indirect tax paid to the Government of India by producers of goods.
- Excise duty is the opposite of Customs duty in that it applies to goods manufactured domestically in the country, while Customs is levied on those coming from outside of the country.
- At the central level, excise duty earlier used to be levied as Central Excise Duty, Additional Excise Duty, etc.
- However, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), introduction in July 2017, subsumed many types of excise duty. Today, excise duty applies only on petroleum and liquor.



Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements

1. supreme court declared Section 182 (1) of the Companies Act, 2013 as “violative of Article 14 of the Indian constitution”.
2. Section 182(1) placed a cap on the amount of money a company could donate in a single financial year
3. The section limited donations to 7.5% of the company’s average net profits during the previous three financial years.

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 statements

1. Symbols are allotted to political parties and contesting candidates as per the provisions of the Symbols Order by ECI.
2. A recognised political party has a reserved symbol that is not allotted to any other candidate in any constituency.
3. For registered but unrecognized political parties, one of the free symbols is allotted as a common symbol during an election if that party contests in two Lok Sabha constituencies

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

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

Q3. Which of the following Government Initiatives Related to Education?

1. National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning.
2. PRAGYATA
3. Mid Day Meal Scheme

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

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

Q4. Consider the following statements

1. Article 45 and Article 39 (f) of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), has a provision for state-funded as well as equitable and accessible education.
2. The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution in 1976 moved education from the State to the Concurrent List.
3. The education policies by the Central government are expected to followed mandatorily by state government

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

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

Q5. PRATUSH recently seen in news, is related to which of the following

- A. It is scheme by government of india to increase awareness about voting
- B. It is Scheme to increase enrolment of students in rural school
- C. Surface to surface missile developed by DRDO
- D. India's PRATUSH telescope, built by RRI and ISRO, aims to unlock the secrets of the universe's early days.

Q6. Consider the following statements about Strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs)

1. These are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries ensuring a stable supply of crude oil even during times of geopolitical uncertainty or supply disruptions.

- every nation belonging to the International Energy Agency (IEA) is required to maintain emergency reserves of oil amounting to a minimum of 90 days' worth of their net oil imports.
- In 2017, India attained the status of an associate member within the International Energy Agency.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q.7 Consider the following statements about Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024:

- The Indian government has introduced the EMPS 2024 to promote the purchase of electric two-wheelers (e2W) and three-wheelers (e3W).
- The main goal is to increase the adoption of e2Ws and e3Ws while gradually reducing industry reliance on subsidies.
- The scheme does not cover electric four-wheelers (e4Ws) and e-buses.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q.8 Which of the following statements are correct about Papikonda National Park?

- It is located in the Western Ghats and is famous for its rich biodiversity of evergreen forests.
- It is situated on the banks of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh and is known for its dry deciduous forests.
- It is home to the highest number of tiger species in India.

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q.9 Consider the following statements

- Article 246 of the Indian Constitution deals with the Seventh Schedule, which divides the responsibilities of the Union and State Governments into three lists
- spending on particularly on social services like education and healthcare are Mostly done by state governments,
- The Union government spends more on defense (roughly twice social services) and infrastructure & energy

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Q10. Which of the following is glacial lake:

- Lhonak lake
- Devtal lake
- Kolleru Lake

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

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option B is correct

Explanation

- The Supreme Court's verdict on electoral bonds (EBs) had held the deletion of a provision contained in Section 182 (1) of the Companies Act, 2013 as "violative of Article 14 of the Indian constitution". **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- A number of changes were made to Section 182 of the Act, which details the prohibitions and restrictions a company must abide by when giving political contributions.
- Prior to the amendment, Section 182(1) placed a cap on the amount of money a company could donate in a single financial year
- limiting it to 7.5% of the company's average net profits during the previous three financial years.
- Section 182(3) required a company to disclose any amount contributed to any political party along with the particulars of the amount donated and the name of the receiving party **Hence statement 2 & 3 are correct**

Answer 2 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Symbols are allotted to political parties and contesting candidates as per the provisions of the Symbols Order by ECI.
- In the largest democracy where a sizeable population is still illiterate, symbols play a crucial role in the voting process.
- A recognised political party has a reserved symbol that is not allotted to any other candidate in any constituency.
- For registered but unrecognised political parties, one of the free symbols is allotted as a common symbol during an election
- if that party contests in two Lok Sabha constituencies or in 5% of seats to the Assembly of a State as the case may be. **Hence all statements are correct**

Answer 3 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Government Initiatives Related to Education?
- National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning.
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- PRAGYATA
- Mid Day Meal Scheme

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
- PM SHRI Schools **Hence all options are correct**

Answer 4 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Part IV of Indian Constitution, Article 45 and Article 39 (f) of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), has a provision for state-funded as well as equitable and accessible education.
- The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution in 1976 moved education from the State to the Concurrent List. **Hence statement 1 & 2 are correct**
- The education policies by the Central government provides a broad direction and state governments are expected to follow it. But it is not mandatory, for instance Tamil Nadu does not follow the three-language formula prescribed by the first education policy in 1968. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 5 Option D is correct

Explanation

- India's PRATUSH telescope, built by RRI and ISRO, aims to unlock the secrets of the universe's early days.
- This radio telescope will be positioned on the far side of the moon. To avoid Earth's interference, it will first orbit Earth before being launched towards the moon.
- PRATUSH will listen for faint radio signals from the very first stars and galaxies. **Hence, statement D IS correct**

Answer 6 Option C is correct

Explanation

- These are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries ensuring a stable supply of crude oil even during times of geopolitical uncertainty or supply disruptions.
- These underground storage facilities play a crucial role in maintaining a steady flow of energy resources for the nation's growth and development.
- as per the terms of the International Energy Programme (I.E.P.) agreement, every nation belonging to the International Energy Agency (IEA) is required to maintain emergency reserves of oil amounting to a minimum of 90 days' worth of their net oil imports.

- In 2017, India attained the status of an associate member within the International Energy Agency. **Hence all statements are correct**

Answer 7 Option C is correct

Explanation

- The Indian government has introduced the EMPS 2024 to promote the purchase of electric two-wheelers (e2W) and three-wheelers (e3W).
- With a budget of Rs 5 billion, it will replace the FAME-2 scheme and will be effective from April to July 2024, with the possibility of being replaced or extended thereafter.
- The main goal is to increase the adoption of e2Ws and e3Ws while gradually reducing industry reliance on subsidies.
- The scheme does not cover electric four-wheelers (e4Ws) and e-buses. **Hence all statements are correct**

Answer 8 Option A is correct

Explanation

- Papikonda National Park is located in the Eastern Ghats, not the Western Ghats. It is known for dry deciduous forests, not evergreen.
- Papikonda National Park is situated on the banks of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh and is known for its dry deciduous forests. **Hence, statement 2 is correct. ONLY**
- Papikonda National Park does not have the highest number of tiger species in India.
- Papikonda National Park is not currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Answer 9 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Under this article, the legislative powers of the Union and the State are demarcated. The 7th schedule of Indian constitution contains a State List of 59 subjects (Originally 66) items. Article 246 divides the subject matter of laws made by the Parliament and the State Legislature under three lists.

- The Constitution divides spending responsibilities between India's federal government (Union) and state governments.
- Raising taxes: Mostly done by the Union government.
- Spending: Mostly done by state governments, particularly on social services like education and healthcare (₹19,182 billion in 2022-23 compared to the Union's ₹2,230 billion).
- Focus on Social Services vs. Other Areas:
- The Union government spends more on defense (roughly twice social services) and infrastructure & energy (2.4 times social services).
- State governments have significantly increased social spending over the past 20 years. This spending has helped address slow rural income growth.
- **Hence all statements are correct**

Answer 10 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Devtal, India's highest glacial lake, is located in Uttarakhand's Garhwal district.
- South Lhonak Lake is a glacial-moraine-dammed lake, located in Sikkim's far northwestern region.
- Kolleru Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes in India located in state of Andhra Pradesh and forms the largest shallow freshwater lake in Asia. 15 kilometers away from the Eluru and 65 km from Rajamahendravaram, the lake is located between the Krishna and Godavari deltas. **Hence, option 3 is incorrect.**



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