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Important News Articles

GS II

1. Ahead of roll-out of the new criminal laws, Union Home Ministry tests eSakshya App - The Hindu

Relevance: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Prelims Takeaway

- BNS, 2023
- NCRB

News:

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is testing eSakshya (e-evidence), a mobile-phone application to help police record scenes of crime, search and seizure in a criminal case and upload the file on the cloud-based platform.

Highlights:

- The police official will have to upload a selfie after the procedure is complete.
- Each recording could be a maximum four minutes long and several such files could be uploaded for each First Information Report (FIR), according to the details shared with State police departments.
- The Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) that replaces the Indian Penal Code, 1860; the Bharatiya Sakshya (BS) which replaces the Indian Evidence Act, 1872; and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) that replaces the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 are all set to come into force from July.

Conviction rate

- The BNSS mandates compulsory audiovisual recording of search and seizure in each criminal case and mandatory forensic examination in all cases where an offense attracts punishment of seven years or more.
- Procuring hardware and cloud space is an expensive affair and many States do not have enough resources, adding that it will also help uniformity in investigations, thereby increasing the conviction rate.
- The mobile application developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) will be available to all police stations which register and download the app.
- A senior government official said the app was under final stages of trial and the police were given two options.
- If there is a connectivity issue, the police can record the crime scene on their own device such as personal mobile phones and generate a hash value, come back to the police station and upload the file.
- The other method is they can directly upload through eSakshya for which good Internet speed is required.
- Another police officer cautioned that the sanctity of the chain of evidence submission will have to be adhered to, else, it could benefit an accused.
- Many accused escape the clutches of law due to procedural infirmities.
- The new laws make everything digital; if there is slightest issue in procuring digital evidence, it could lead to criminals walking free.
- Forensic evidence is not always challenged on the grounds of quality but on the chain of command.

2. Urban Affairs Ministry to revamp affordable housing scheme - The Hindu

Relevance: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

News: The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) would be revamped with new features

Highlights:

- The **PMAY (Urban)**, launched in 2015, has been given an extension till December 2024.
- The mission aims to address **urban housing shortage** among the poor and middle-income groups, including slum dwellers, by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households.
- the revamp would focus on ensuring that there are no delays on reaching out to beneficiaries who have signed up for the scheme.

Prelims Takeaway

- PMAY
- Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment

- The Ministry had also announced a scheme for **Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24 and 2022-23** and for improving and speeding up basic urban planning ecosystems in the cities by incentivising the States.
- Both the schemes among other things also incentivised States for creating an enabling ecosystem for affordable housing for built up area up to 66 sq m through favourable bye-laws and adoption of enabling policy by the States.
- Under the scheme, the States have reported that through the enabling provisions under their affordable housing policy, approximately 5,00,000 dwelling units have been constructed in the last four to five years
- Further, under urban planning reforms, projects for in-situ slum rehabilitation have also been incentivised.

GS III

3. Railways to bring down speed of select Vande Bharat, Gatiman Express trains- THE HINDU

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

News:

- The Indian Railways will soon cut down the maximum speed of premium trains, including Vande Bharat and Gatiman Express, from the present 160 kmph to 130 kmph on select routes to ensure safety.

Prelims Takeaway

- Gatiman Express
- Vande Bharat Express

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Going by the proposal that was “desired to ensure safety”, the speed of Gatiman and Vande Bharat Express trains will be reduced from 160 kmph to 130 kmph while that of Shatabdi Express will be cut down from 150 kmph to 130 kmph.
- This will result in an increase in running time by 25-30 minutes and lead to changes in the timings of at least 10 superfast express trains on these routes, the sources said.

TPWS failure

- A Northern Railway proposal to dispense with TPWS or reduce speed of trains to 130 kmph was pending with the Board since November 6, 2023.
- As repair or maintenance of TPWS was not possible, according to a report of the Divisional Railway Manager, the Railway Board was requested to downgrade the premium trains to be operated “at a much safer speed of 130 kmph

4. Cost of future wars is enormous, resources should be optimised: Chief of Defence Staff

Relevance: Various Security Forces and Agencies and their Mandate.

News:

- Saying that the cost of future wars would be “enormous”, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan stressed the need to optimise resources and manpower and bring in efficiencies to afford weapons and systems of the future.
- Before talks of fusion between civil and military resources, there should be fusion within the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

Prelims Takeaway

- CDS
- WASP

Highlights:

- 170-odd initiatives where the three Services can work together in an integrated manner.
- “Forces will be capable of optimizing time, resources, processes, infrastructure and manpower,” CDS said at the Air Force seminar of Warfare & Aerospace Strategy Program (WASP) course.

Strategic programme

- WASP is a strategic education programme of 15 weeks that was started in 2022 to provide participants with a deep understanding of geopolitics, grand strategy and comprehensive national power,

- It is conducted by the IAF along with the College of Air Warfare and Centre for Air Power Studies.
- Integration within the three Services, the logical step would be to take the approach forward to other Services.
- For instance, the Navy and Coast Guard can get the inventories and maintenance, repair and overhaul together.
- We can also involve the Central Armed Police Forces into whatever logistics and infrastructure need to be.

Alternate ways

- It is important to
 - help the government to reduce costs.
 - Because the cost of future wars is enormous, weapon systems and platforms are going to be very costly.
 - We need to think of alternative ways of doing things. It has to be very practical and time bound.
- A scholar warrior is a military professional who combines intellectual acumen with combat prowess in today's increasingly complex and dynamic security environment.
- Talking of India's strategic culture, the Air Force chief said it is shaped by historical experiences and the ever-evolving geopolitical environment.
- It emphasizes strategic autonomy, caution and a strong focus on territorial integrity.

5. Chinese probe returns to Earth with first samples from far side of 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.

Prelims Takeaway

- Artemis Accords
- Moon Missions

News:

- China's Chang'e 6 probe returned to earth with rock and soil samples from the little-explored far side of the moon in a global first.

Highlights:

- Chinese scientists anticipate the returned samples will include 2.5 million-year-old volcanic rock and other material
 - That scientists hope will answer questions about geographic differences on the moon's two sides.
- The near side is what is seen from Earth, and the far side faces outer space. The far side is also known to have mountains and impact craters, contrasting with the relatively flat expanses visible on the near side of the moon.

High hopes

- The probe had landed in the moon's **South Pole-Aitken Basin**,
 - an impact crater created more than 4 billion years ago.
- The samples scientists are expecting will likely come from different layers of the basin, which will bear traces of the different geological events.
- While past U.S. and Soviet missions have collected samples from the moon's near side, the Chinese mission was the first that has collected samples from the far side.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

6. What is Enemy Agents Ordinance, tough law applicable in Jammu and Kashmir?

Relevance: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

Context:

- J&K DGP said those found assisting militants in J&K should be tried by investigating agencies under the Enemy Agents Ordinance, 2005.

- The law is more stringent than the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and has the punishment of either a life term or a death sentence.
 - The fighters who can't be brought under investigation, are shot dead.
 - Those who support them, will be treated as enemy agents.

What is the Enemy Agents Ordinance?

- The J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance was first issued in 1917 by the then Dogra Maharaja of J&K. It is referred to as an 'ordinance' since laws made during the Dogra rule were called ordinances.
- According to the ordinance,
 - "whosoever is an enemy agent or, with an intent to aid the enemy,
 - or impedes the military or air operations of Indian forces or endangers life shall be punishable with death or imprisonment for life or with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to 10 years and shall also be liable to fine".
- After Partition in 1947, the ordinance was incorporated as a law in the erstwhile state and was also amended.
- In 2019, when Article 370 of the Constitution was repealed, J&K's legal framework also underwent several changes.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act was passed, which listed out state laws that were to continue while several others were repealed and replaced with Indian laws.
- While the security laws such as Enemy Agents Ordinance and Public Safety Act remained;
 - The Ranbir Penal Code was replaced with the Indian Penal Code.
 - Other laws including Forest Act, 2006 and The SC ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 were extended to J&K as well.

How are trials conducted under the ordinance?

- The trial under the Enemy Agents Ordinance is conducted by a special judge who is appointed by the "government in consultation with the High Court".
- Under the ordinance, the accused cannot engage a lawyer to defend herself unless permitted by the court.
- There is no provision for appeal against the verdict, and the decision of the special judge can only be reviewed "by a person chosen by the Government from the judges of the High Court and the decision of that person shall be final".
- There are scores of Kashmiris who are or have been tried and sentenced under the Enemy Agents Ordinance.

7. Analyzing Maharashtra's water crisis - The Hindu

Relevance: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Context:

- After the deficient monsoon last year, the Maharashtra government declared many parts of the State to be drought-hit.
- This situation is in sharp contrast with the State's coastal areas, where rainfall has often been in excess, leading to severe flooding.

Rain-shadow effect

- Marathwada lies in the rain-shadow region of the Western Ghats.
- When moist winds from the Arabian Sea encounter these mountains, they rise and cool, causing heavy rainfall (2,000-4,000 mm) on the western side.
- But by the time these winds cross the Ghats and descend into Western Maharashtra and Marathwada, they lose most of their moisture, leaving Marathwada much drier (600-800 mm).
- A **2016 study by IIT Gandhinagar** researchers said climate change is worsening the situation in central Maharashtra.
- The region has experienced an increasing trend in drought severity and frequency of late.
- As a result, Marathwada and North Karnataka have emerged as the second driest regions in India after Rajasthan.

Sugarcane Crop in Marathwada region

- Marathwada's agricultural practices are not well suited to its low rainfall.
- A major contributor to the region's water crisis is sugarcane cultivation.
- **Sugarcane requires 1,500-2,500 mm of water** in its growing season it also needs to be irrigated almost every day.
- The area under sugarcane increased steadily between the 1950s and the 2000s, plateauing in the last decade.
- Today, the crop occupies **4% of the total cropped area** in the region and consumes 61% of the irrigation water.
- As a result, the average river outflow in the upper Bhima basin has almost halved.
- Long-standing government support for sugarcane pricing and sales has expanded sugarcane irrigation, restricting the irrigation of more nutritious crops.
- Since December 2023, the government has been promoting sugarcane-juice-based **ethanol production**, which may be unwise for this water-starved area
 - 82% of the sugar grown in Maharashtra comes from low-rainfall areas.
- Marathwada has predominantly clayey black soil, locally called "regur".
- It is fertile and retains moisture well. However, it has a low infiltration rate: when it rains, the water is either logged or runs off, but doesn't percolate down to recharge groundwater.
- Even within Marathwada, water scarcity is not uniform.
 - This is because groundwater slowly moves underground from upland areas to the valleys.
 - The wells in upland areas dry up a few months after the monsoons, and is where the water scarcity is most acute.

Suggestive Measures

- **Classical watershed management work** (such as building water-conserving structures like contour trenches, earthen bunds, gully plugs, etc.).
- Funds under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** could be used to design silt-trapping mechanisms and organise training programmes for farmers on periodic desilting.
- In a low-rainfall region, managing water demand includes practising **water-efficient irrigation**, cultivating drought-resistant crops, and diversifying livelihoods.
- Marathwada must also shift to other **high-value, low-water-using crops**, while sugarcane production must move to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal.

8. Why India needs to build disaster resilience in its critical infrastructure - Indian Express

Relevance: Disaster and Disaster Management.

Context:

- This past month, amidst relentlessly high temperatures, electricity demand in Delhi repeatedly broke records.
- Several places in central and eastern India faced similar or worse situations.

Related Data

- While early warnings and quick response have significantly reduced human casualties in disasters, economic and other losses from extreme weather events and disasters have been rising.
- This is mainly due to the increase in frequency and intensity of such events.
- Government data show that in the five years between 2018 and 2023, states together spent more than Rs 1.5 lakh crore on dealing with the aftermath of disasters and natural calamities.
- Long-term costs, in terms of livelihood losses for example, or because of a reduction in the fertility of agricultural land, are much bigger and projected to worsen over time.
- A 2022 World Bank report projected that the decline in productivity due to heat-related stress could take away around 34 million jobs in India by 2030.
- The damage caused to critical infrastructure like transportation, telecommunications, and power supply by disasters and extreme weather events is often not counted in government figures, particularly when these services are privately owned.

Incorporating resilience

- Almost all the infrastructure sectors now have disaster management plans in place to prepare and respond to these events.
- For instance, hospitals in disaster-prone areas are equipping themselves with backup power supplies, airports and railways are taking steps to avoid, or quickly drain out, waterlogging, and telecommunication lines are being taken underground.
- But progress on this front has been slow and a bulk of India's infrastructure remains extremely vulnerable to disasters.
- In the first of its kind exercise in any Indian state, the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**, carried out a study of the electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure in Odisha, a state at high risk from cyclones.
 - It found that the state's infrastructure was extremely fragile.
- India is still in the process of developing its infrastructure. Most of the infrastructure that has been proposed to stand in India by 2030 is still to be built.

CDRI

- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), an international organisation set up on India's initiative in 2019.
 - With the objective of making critical infrastructure resilient to natural disasters.
- An international body headquartered in India, CDRI is supposed to develop into a knowledge hub for implementing these transitions.
- More than 30 countries are now part of this coalition and are working with CDRI to strengthen their infrastructure.
- But only a few states in India have so far sought the expertise and collaboration of CDRI.

Way Forward

- It is much easier, and cost-effective, to incorporate disaster resilience at the time of building than to retrofit these features at a later stage.
- All the upcoming infrastructure projects need to be climate smart, not just sustainable and energy efficient, but also resilient to disasters.
- Having taken the initiative to create CDRI to serve the entire world, India needs to build the right templates for the most resilient infrastructure, ones that can withstand multi-hazard disasters.

9. Half of Indians physically unfit, says Lancet study - Indian Express

Relevance: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

News:

- According to new data published in the Lancet Global Health half the adult Indian population does not meet the World Health Organisation's (WHO) guidelines on sufficient physical activity.

Highlights:

- Most alarmingly, the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has risen sharply from 22.3 per cent in 2000 to 49.4 per cent in 2022.
 - More women than men are physically inactive.
- This means unchecked, 60 percent of our population would be unfit by 2030 and at risk of disease from not doing enough physical activity.

WHO Recommendations

- WHO recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week for all adults.
- Insufficient physical activity is defined as not doing 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination per week.
- According to the WHO, physical inactivity puts adults at greater risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes, Type 2 diabetes, dementia and cancers of the breast and colon.

Key Findings of Study

- Estimates indicate that India has the 12th highest prevalence of insufficient physical activity among 195 countries.
- Worldwide, nearly one third of adults did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022.
- The highest rates of physical inactivity were observed in the high-income Asia-Pacific region and South Asia
- Physical inactivity is increasing globally because of many factors, including changes in work patterns, changes in the environment, making active transport more difficult and changes in leisure time activities

Physical Inactivity in India

- The status sheet is of particular concern in India as people here are genetically more prone to developing non-communicable diseases like heart disease and diabetes at least a decade earlier than others.
- Several studies in India had shown low levels of physical activity at the population level, particularly women, who wrongly believe that household chores are a good form of physical exercise.
- Inactivity is most evident in middle aged urban women, even though it is manifest to some degree across all age and gender groups.
- Insufficient physical activity among women in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan is a worry as they lag behind men by over 14-20 percentage points.

Suggestive Measures

- While **Fit India and Let's Move India** have been launched in recent years, we need settings-based group activity promotion efforts at school, worksite and community settings.
- Protected cycling lanes, safe pedestrian pathways, green community spaces and reduced air pollution will enable safe and pleasurable outdoor activity

10. The myth of India's Muslim population 'explosion- INDIAN EXPRESS

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

Context:

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India stayed the release of the film Hamare Baarah (Our Twelve), and directed the Bombay High Court to take a final decision.

The myth Of India's Muslim population 'explosion

- The latest National Family Health Survey, 2019–20 (NFHS-5), conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), shows that
 - Many states have already attained a replacement level of fertility, and there is a steady decline in India's total fertility rates (TFR).
 - According to the NHFS-5 data, the TFR in India is 2.0 children per woman up until 2021, which is slightly lower than the replacement level of fertility of 2.1 children per woman.
- The Economic Survey 2018-19 and the Sample Registration System (SRS) data from 2017 also had similar findings about the deceleration of India's population growth.
- According to the 2011 Census of India, the growth rate of the Muslim population was higher than the Hindu population.
- The controversy surrounding this single interpretation obscured the fact that the gap between the two growth rates had significantly reduced between 2001 and 2011
- When comparing the fertility differentials between the two communities using the 2001 and 2011 data, this convergence of fertility between Hindus and Muslims is evident.
 - It comes with the caveat that since different states and groups are at different points in this transition
 - there are variations between regions in this process of convergence — a fact evidenced by earlier studies.
- Another recent analysis taking into account the drop in fertility and the rate of decline in population growth found that the drop in Hindu fertility was five per cent less than the drop in Muslim fertility in the last two decades
 - Where Muslim population growth declined at a faster rate than that of Hindus. This analysis suggested that there may be "absolute convergence" in Hindu-Muslim fertility rates by 2030.
- Data from the NFHS shows that the fertility rates of all religious communities have declined over the past two decades.
- The sharply decreasing family size of Muslims, particularly, is evident since the fertility rate for Muslims has decreased by almost half from 4.4 in 1992–93 to 2.4 in 2020–21.
- The Population Foundation of India observed that education, healthcare, and socio-economic development significantly impact fertility rates, with states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu showing lower TFRs than Bihar
 - which had less access to these resources. Thus, what influenced levels of fertility rates was not religion, but rather better socio-economic status and development.

Challenging misinformation

- The NFHS 5 data also shows that the higher the level of the mother's education, the lower the fertility.
- Across religious groups, Muslims are the most disadvantaged economically, with poorer education and health levels — evident from their lower enrollment levels in higher education.
- The Sachar Committee Report in 2006 emphasised such socio-economic disparity among Muslims.
- Thus, the population growth debate should focus on investments in education, economic development, livelihoods, food, nutrition, healthcare, sexual and reproductive health services, and gender justice.
- Furthermore, women, particularly from marginalised communities, have limited freedom to make fertility decisions and controlled access to contraception and reproductive care.
- The rhetoric about the fertility of the Muslim community directly affects Muslim women's right to have or not have children.
- This not only violates Muslim women's right to life and dignity but also affects their subjectivities.
- Hence, the discussion concerning population growth and fertility must shift focus and centre on sexual and reproductive health rights, individual choice, and resist attempts at co-optation for politically motivated propaganda.

Quick Look

1. Inland Waterways Authority of India

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Shipping established in 1986 for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It is headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh and its main function is to build necessary infrastructure in inland waterways, surveying economic feasibility of new projects and also carrying out administration and regulation.
- As per the National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as NWS.

2. SBM-U 2.0

- Aims to make Indian cities garbage free and all urban local bodies (ULBs) open defecation free.
- It will focus on source segregation of solid waste, utilizing the principles of 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), scientific processing of municipal solid waste and remediation of legacy dumpsites.
- The scheme has an outlay of Rs. 1.41 lakh crore.
- It focuses on transitioning to a circular economy that treats solid and liquid waste as a resource.
- It also aims for 100% tap water supply in about 4,700 urban local bodies and sewerage and septage in 500 AMRUT cities.

3. The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

- The Federation of Indian Export Organisations represents the Indian entrepreneurs spirit of enterprise in the global market. It was set up in 1965.
- It is an Apex body of the export promotion councils, community boards and development authorities in India.
- It provides the crucial interface between the international trading community of India & the Central and State Governments, financial institutions, ports, railways and all engaged in export trade facilitation.
- It serves the interests of over 100000 exporters from every goods and services sector in the country.

4. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

- Set up in November 1945 as a national-level Apex Advisory Body to conduct a survey on the facilities available for technical education and to promote development in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner.
- AICTE attained statutory status in the year 1987 under the AICTE Act.
- AICTE under the Ministry of Education provides proper planning and development of the technical education system in India.
- It accredits graduate and postgraduate programs at Indian institutions.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

5. Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)

- It is an autonomous body under Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India
- It is an apex body in India for undertaking, coordinating, formulating, developing and promoting research on scientific lines in Ayurvedic Sciences.
- Aims To develop scientific evidence in Ayurvedic Principles, drug therapies by way of integrating ancient wisdom with modern technology and to bring Ayurveda to the people through scientific innovations related to diagnostics, preventive, promotive as well as treatment methods
- Introduces scientific research for sustained availability of quality natural resources, to translate them into products and processes and in synergy with concerned organizations to introduce these innovations into public health systems

Prelims Track Question

Q1. With reference to the recent reforms in criminal laws in India, consider the following statements:

1. The new laws aim to provide more discretion to law enforcement agencies in the detention and interrogation of suspects without judicial oversight.
2. One of the significant changes is the introduction of stringent penalties for cybercrimes, including identity theft and financial fraud.
3. It will come into effect from June 1, 2024.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q2. Consider the following statement regarding Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

1. It includes a component of in-situ slum redevelopment using land as a resource.
2. PMAY (Urban) is available only to the economically weaker sections (EWS)
3. This scheme has been extended till 2026

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

1. The Scheme aims to establish fueling stations for electric vehicles across major highways in India.
2. Under the scheme, the emphasis is on promoting the use of clean and green energy, such as compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

3. The Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to address air pollution caused by vehicular emissions.

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

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

Q4. With reference to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The CDS acts as the principal military advisor to the Prime Minister on all tri-service matters.
2. The CDS is the head of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Ministry of Defence.
3. The CDS has the authority to command the three services: the Indian Army, the Indian Navy, and the Indian Air Force.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q5. With reference to the Artemis mission, consider the following statements:

1. The Artemis program is led by the European Space Agency (ESA) in collaboration with NASA and other international partners.
2. One of the primary goals of the Artemis mission is to return humans to the Moon and establish a sustainable presence by the end of the 2020s.
3. The Artemis mission plans to land the first woman and the next man on the Moon's South Pole.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q6. Consider the following statements with reference to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the National Security Act (NSA):

1. The UAPA allows the central government to designate an individual as a terrorist, whereas the NSA allows for preventive detention of individuals.
2. Both UAPA and NSA provide for the detention of individuals without trial for a maximum period of 180 days.
3. The NSA can be invoked by both the central and state governments, but the UAPA is only under the jurisdiction of the central government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q7. Consider the following statement regarding Sugarcane crop in India

1. India is the largest producer of sugarcane after Brazil.
2. The sugar industry is the second largest agro-based industry in India
3. Uttar Pradesh is the largest producer of sugarcane in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q8. Consider the following statement regarding Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

1. It is an international body headquartered in France
2. More than 30 countries are now part of this coalition and are working to strengthen their infrastructure.
3. India is not a member of this organization

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q9. Consider the following statement regarding Physical activity in India

1. India has the 12th highest prevalence of insufficient physical activity among 195 countries.
2. Household chores are a good form of physical exercise that's why women are particularly fit.
3. Insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has risen sharply in the last two decades.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Q10. With reference to the National Family Health Survey-5, consider the following statements:

1. International Institute for Population Sciences(IIPS) Mumbai, is the nodal agency for providing technical guidance for the survey.
2. According to the findings of NFHS-5, for the first time in India, between 2019-21, there were 1,020 adult women per 1,000 men.

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The new laws aim to balance the powers of law enforcement with the protection of individual rights and do not seek to provide more discretion to law enforcement agencies in the detention and interrogation of suspects without judicial oversight. Instead, the reforms focus on ensuring accountability and transparency in the criminal justice process.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** One of the significant changes includes the introduction of stringent penalties for cybercrimes, including identity theft and financial fraud, reflecting the evolving nature of crimes in the digital age.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** New Criminal Laws Replacing IPC, CrPC & Evidence Act To Come Into Force From **July 1, 2024**

Answer 2 Option A is correct

Explanation:

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is a credit-linked subsidy scheme initiated to provide affordable housing to low and moderate-income residents across the country.
- It includes Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme, In-Situ Slum Redevelopment, Affordable Housing in Partnership and Beneficiary-Led Construction. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- Beneficiaries of PMAY-Urban include Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low-Income Group (LIG), and Middle-Income Group (MIG). **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The PMAY (Urban), which was launched in 2015, has been given an extension till December 2024. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

Answer 3 Option A is correct

Explanation

- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme does not specifically focus on establishing fueling stations for electric vehicles.
- Instead, it primarily aims to set up retail outlets for providing clean and green fuels like compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect**

- The emphasis of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is on promoting the use of clean and green energy, including compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).
- These fuels are considered environmentally friendly alternatives to conventional fuels. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is not an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It falls under the purview of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 4 Option A is Correct

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The CDS acts as the principal military advisor to the Defence Minister on all tri-service matters.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The CDS is the head of the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA) in the Ministry of Defence.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The CDS does not have the authority to command the three services. The CDS functions to integrate and coordinate among the three services but each service (Army, Navy, and Air Force) continues to be headed by its respective Chief.

Answer 5 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Artemis program is led by NASA (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) with international collaboration, including the European Space Agency (ESA), but it is not led by the ESA.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** One of the primary goals of the Artemis mission is to return humans to the Moon and establish a sustainable presence by the end of the 2020s.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The Artemis mission plans to land the first woman and the next man on the Moon's South Pole.

Answer 6 Option A is Correct**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The UAPA allows the central government to designate an individual as a terrorist. The NSA allows for preventive detention of individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner prejudicial to the security of India or to maintain public order.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Under the UAPA, a person can be detained without charge for a maximum of 180 days, but the NSA allows preventive detention for up to 12 months without trial, which can be extended further.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** Both the central and state governments can invoke the NSA. The UAPA is also primarily enacted by the central government but can be enforced by state governments as well.

Answer 7 Option B is correct**Explanation:**

- India is the second largest producer of sugarcane after Brazil. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- After cotton, the sugar industry is the second-largest agro-based industry in India. **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Uttar Pradesh is the leading state in sugarcane production, contributing significantly to the overall production in the country. **Statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 8 Option B is correct**Explanation:**

- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), an international organisation set up on India's initiative in 2019. **Statement 3 is incorrect.**
 - With the objective of making critical infrastructure resilient to natural disasters.
- An international body headquartered in India, CDRI is supposed to develop into a knowledge hub for implementing these transitions. **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- More than 30 countries are now part of this coalition and are working with CDRI to strengthen their infrastructure. **Statement 2 is correct.**

Answer 9 Option C is correct**Explanation:**

- Estimates indicate that India has the 12th highest prevalence of insufficient physical activity among 195 countries. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- Several studies in India had shown low levels of physical activity at the population level, particularly women, who wrongly believe that household chores are a good form of physical exercise. **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Most alarmingly, the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among Indian adults has risen sharply from 22.3 per cent in 2000 to 49.4 per cent in 2022. **Statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 10 Option C is correct**Explanation****National Family Health Survey (NFHS):**

- The NFHS is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.

Conducted By:

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has designated the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, as the nodal agency for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- IIPS collaborates with a number of Field Organizations (FO) for survey implementation.

Key Findings of NFHS-5

- Sex Ratio at Birth: For the first time in India, between 2019-21, there were 1,020 adult women per 1,000 men. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- However, the data shall not undermine the fact that India still has a sex ratio at birth (SRB) more skewed towards boys than the natural SRB (which is 952 girls per 1000 boys).
- Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Maharashtra are the major states with low SRB.



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