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Important News Articles

GS II

1. West Bengal suit against CBI probes maintainable: SC

Relevance: Functions and Responsibilities of the Union and the States, Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure

News:

- The Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the maintainability of an original suit filed by West Bengal, which accuses the Centre of “constitutional overreach” and violating federalism by unilaterally employing the Central Bureau of Investigation without the State’s prior consent.

Prelims Takeaway

- Original Jurisdiction of Supreme Court
- CBI

Highlights:

- The SC Bench refused to accept the Union government’s preliminary objection that it was wrongly made a defendant in the suit as it did not control the CBI.
 - “The very establishment, exercise of powers, extension of jurisdiction, the superintendence of the DSPE [Act], all vest with the Government of India.
- The court reminded the Centre that the DSPE Act mandated the State’s prior consent to a CBI probe within its jurisdiction.
- The judgment noted that the Union government was “vitaly concerned” with the CBI, saying that this was plainly evident from the fact that only offenses notified by the Centre could be investigated by the CBI under the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, the statute which governs the premier probe agency.
- Under Section 4 of the DSPE Act, except the offenses under the Prevention of Corruption Act, the superintendence of the DSPE in all other matters would vest with the Central government.
- Original suits filed directly in the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Constitution exclusively deal with disputes involving the Union and the States,
- The Solicitor General had pressed the court to dismiss the West Bengal suit on these preliminary grounds without going into its merits.
 - However, the Bench on Wednesday said the suit raised “serious questions concerning the wider ramifications of federalism”.
 - West Bengal, had made specific contentions that the CBI had acted on the Centre’s directions.

2. Divorced Muslim women entitled to maintenance under secular statute: SC-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 on Wednesday held that divorced Muslim women are entitled to maintenance under the “secular” Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Prelims Takeaway

- Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.

Key Highlights

- The court agreed with amicus curiae,, that a remedy under the secular statutory provision of Section 125 of the Cr.PC cannot be foreclosed for divorced Muslim women by virtue of enactment of a personal law remedy under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
- A divorced Muslim woman is entitled to all rights of maintenance available to other equally situated women in the country.

- Besides, the court pointed out that Section 3 of the 1986 Act requires a man to provide for a “reasonable and fair provision of maintenance” to his divorced Muslim wife only during the iddat period.
- Once the iddat period expires, the personal law obligation to maintain the divorced Muslim woman ceases.
- On the other hand, Section 125 mandates a husband to provide monthly maintenance to his divorced wife, irrespective of her faith.

Children’s maintenance

- Further, the 1986 Act holds a Muslim man liable to pay his divorced wife maintenance for their children for only a period of two years from birth.
- Whereas Section 125 requires a husband to pay for their children till they attain the age of majority.

3. Centre asks States to raise awareness of cadaver donations- The Hindu

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Angdaan Jan Jagrukta Abhiyan

News:

- Amidst shortage of human cadavers for academic and research purposes in medical colleges across the country, the Union Ministry of Health has appealed to States/Union Territories to encourage people to donate dead bodies in the event of deaths happening outside hospitals.
- The Union Government was committed to promote and augment organ donation for saving lives of those suffering from various organ failures.
- In most of the cases, organ donation was feasible only from the brain stem dead patients (before the heart stops).
- On many occasions it was noted that organ donations were not possible in situations where deaths happened outside the hospital, cardiac deaths occurring before the patient got admitted to the Intensive Care Unit and deaths before the completion of the brain stem death certification process.

Body donation

- The donated human bodies are required for academic and research purposes, which aids in better teaching of medical professionals.
 - We have a shortage of human cadavers required for teaching in the country.
- State Health Secretaries should instruct the stakeholders accordingly, the option of body donation could be explored and family members encouraged and facilitated for the same.
- Which will go a long way in offsetting the shortage of human cadavers in medical institutions.

Nationwide campaign

- The Health Ministry informed that as part of the Indian Organ Donation Day on August 3, 2024, it had been decided to organize a public awareness campaign in the name of “**Angdaan Jan Jagrukta Abhiyan**”.
- Stating that strengthening the healthcare systems to facilitate organ donation and transplantation was among the top priorities of the Government of India, the Union Health Secretary said organ donation was a noble act that offered hope and new lease of life to those suffering from end-stage organ failures.

Huge gap between donors and patients

- One organ donor can save up to 8 to 9 lives. However, a huge gap exists between patients who require organ transplants and the organ donors that are available.
- The campaign was intended to reduce the demand for organ transplantation by promoting healthy lifestyles and wellness, to spread awareness about brain stem death and deceased organ donation.
- The focus would also be on busting myths and misconceptions related to organ donation and transplantation.

4. India Leads Global Maritime Discourse at IMO Council Session in London- PIB

Relevance: Important International Institutions, agencies and fora - their Structure, Mandate.

Prelims Takeaway

- IMO
- Red Sea

News:

- A high-level Indian delegation is participating in the 132nd session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London.

Highlights:

- India, an elected member of the IMO Council in the category of countries with the largest interest in international seaborne trade, emphasized the urgent issue of seafarer abandonment.
- The delegation pointed out that despite efforts, there are currently 44 active cases involving 292 Indian seafarers.
- India's strong stance on the need for effective measures and oversight to resolve such issues was well received.
- In recognition of its continued commitment to addressing seafarers' issues, India secured its position as one of the eight governments representing IMO in the Joint Tripartite Working Group.
 - This group is dedicated to identifying and tackling seafarers' issues and the human element in maritime operations. Other proposed members include the Philippines, Thailand, Liberia, Panama, Greece, the US, and France.
- India remains deeply committed to addressing the issue of seafarer abandonment and ensuring the safety and welfare of our maritime workforce.
- India's participation in the IMO Council session underscores dedication to international maritime cooperation and innovation.
- The establishment of the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport is a testament to India's leadership in promoting environmentally sustainable and technologically advanced maritime practices.
- The Indian delegation also addressed concerns over disruptions in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and adjoining areas, which have been impacting shipping and trade logistics.
- Furthermore, India reiterated its proposal for the South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMarT).
- This regional hub aims to transform the maritime sector in India and South Asia into a technologically advanced, environmentally sustainable, and digitally proficient industry.
- The centre will focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering technical cooperation, capacity-building, and digital transition.
- India's leadership in evolving the SACE-SMarT in collaboration with the IMO's global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs) was highlighted as a significant step towards sustainable maritime development.

5. Russia, India agree to go ahead with trade in national currency - The Hindu

Relevance: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Prelims Takeaway

- India Russia Relations
- Oil Imports

News:

- India and Russia have decided to establish a system for national currency settlement,
- A day after the Prime Minister of India ended his two-day visit to Russia, described as "historic and game-changing", he slammed the Western powers for supporting Ukraine.

Highlights:

- The Russian Ambassador described the recently concluded peace conference in Switzerland as a tamasha (charade).
 - He said that Russia's friendship with China should not be a cause of concern for India.
 - Russia is the fourth largest trading partner of India, and in a very optimistic scenario we will continue our successful and mutually beneficial partnership with India.
- The most important point of the Joint Statement was that we have decided to go ahead with the establishment of the national currencies settlement system,"presenting an overview of the discussion between the Indian and Russian delegations in Moscow during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister.
- Mr. Modi visited Moscow on July 8 and 9 and held both delegation-level talks as well as one-on-one discussions with President Vladimir Putin.
- The discussions were focused on economic aspects as Russia's trade with India has grown many times in the past two years especially because of the trade in energy that rapidly expanded after Western sanctions were imposed on Russia following the launch of the "special military operation" against Ukraine in February 2022.
- The two leaders also discussed the issue of Indian nationals who were fraudulently inducted into the Russian fighting forces and deployed for action on the Russia-Ukraine border.

GS III

6. Almost half of India's soil cover prone to floods, a third to droughts: Study-DOWN TO EARTH

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

Prelims Takeaway

- Soil Moisture Anomaly

News:

- With the severity of heatwaves intensifying and the rainfall pattern getting more erratic with every passing year, a new study has found that about 32.8 per cent of the total land area in India experienced a negative Soil Moisture Anomaly (SMA) in 2023.
- This means that about 1.08 million square kilometres (sq. km) is vulnerable to drought stress.

India's Soil Moisture Challenges: A Breakdown

Uneven Water Distribution:

- **Drought Risk:** Over one-third (32.8%) of India's land, roughly 1.08 million sq km, faces drought threats due to below-average soil moisture (negative anomalies).
- **Flood Potential:** Nearly half (47.7%) of the country experiences wetter-than-usual conditions (positive anomalies) across 1.57 million sq km, raising flood risks.

Seasonal Shifts:

- **Monsoon (June-Sept):**
 - Punjab thrived with ample soil moisture, promoting healthy crop growth and potentially avoiding floods.
 - Odisha's average moisture levels suggest potential for improved agricultural output by learning water management strategies from Punjab.
 - Bihar and Jharkhand struggled with drier soils, highlighting the need for better irrigation and water conservation practices.

State-Wise Implications

- Punjab: Benefits from positive soil moisture anomalies, supporting robust agriculture.
- Odisha: Faces challenges with negative SMA during specific periods, suggesting the adoption of efficient irrigation practices from other states.
- Bihar, Jharkhand: Require improved water conservation and irrigation techniques to address drought impacts.
- Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh: Showed variability in soil moisture levels, necessitating stable water management policies.
- Andhra Pradesh, Kerala: Require customized water management plans due to varying soil moisture conditions.

Policy Recommendations

- There is need to develop tailored water management policies based on regional soil moisture conditions.
- The state must implement drought management plans in deficit areas and flood management strategies in surplus moisture areas.
- Farmers should invest in advanced soil moisture monitoring systems using remote sensing and ground-based sensors for real-time data.
- Punjab continued to enjoy above-average moisture, while Odisha faced slight deficits. This suggests potential benefits from collaborative water management strategies between the two states.

7. NGO working on rights issues loses FCRA registration -THE HINDU

Relevance: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

News:

- The Union Home Ministry cancelled the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration of the parent entity of the non-profit Centre for Financial Accountability (CFA)
- NGO monitors and critically analyses the role of financial institutions and their impact on development, human rights, and the environment.

Prelims Takeaway

- Foreign Contribution Regulation Act

Key Highlights

- In a recent report, the CFA had highlighted how additional projects sanctioned in a Special Economic Zone operated by the Adani Group in the Kutch region of Gujarat “will compound environmental hazards and increase health risks for the people while further polluting the environment and accelerating degradation of the ecology”.
- Earlier in January, the Ministry cancelled the FCRA registration of Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a leading public policy research institution in New Delhi.
- Since 2015, the FCRA registration of more than 16,000 NGOs have been cancelled on account of “violation.”
- there were 15,946 FCRA-registered NGOs active in the country. The FCRA registration of nearly 6,000 NGOs had ceased to operate from January 1, 2022 as the Ministry either refused to renew their application or the NGOs did not apply for renewal.

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

8. 'MSMEs need outlays for technology upgrades, to aid in green transition' - The Hindu

Relevance: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context:

- Union Minister for MSMEs said six pillars were identified as focus areas for the growth of the MSME sector — formalisation and access to credit, increased access to market and e-commerce adoption, higher productivity through modern technology, enhanced skill levels and digitalisation in the service sector, support to Khadi, Village and Coir industry to globalise them, and empowerment of women and artisans through enterprise creation.

Highlights:

- The upcoming Budget must strike a balance to fuel growth, curb inflation, generate employment, promote MSMEs, support ease of doing business, and promote the manufacturing sector.
- The other important area that must be prioritised is infrastructure development for sustainable economic growth, especially in industrial clusters.

Raising employment

- The Government did well for the economy with exports clocking a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.5% in the last six years moving from \$478 billion in FY18 to \$778 billion in FY24.
- We are now aiming to reach \$2 trillion by FY30, which requires a CAGR of 14.4%. This is a challenge in the current geopolitical situation but within the realm of reach. It requires supporting exporters and the MSME sector by providing an enabling and supportive ecosystem.
- The importance of bolstering MSMEs is more important in the current situation as the sector is the backbone of the Indian economy and a key employment generator.
- For this sector to sustain and grow in the current challenging situation, one strong demand by the MSMEs is that the non-performing asset (NPA) timeline be extended to 180 days from 90 days.
- It will provide relief to the sector as many MSMEs are struggling because of this. The Credit Guarantee Scheme for micro and small enterprises in the manufacturing sector must also be revamped.
- The Interest Equalisation Scheme emphatically supports exports. This scheme may be extended for a period of five years. Coming to the rise in interest rates consequent to the increase in repo rate from 4.4% to 6.5% in the last two years, the subvention rates may be restored from 3% to 5% for manufacturers in MSMEs and from 2% to 3% for all in respect of 410 tariff lines.
- For the textile and garment sector, which is dominated by MSMEs, and the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products [RoDTEP] and Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies [ROSCTL] schemes should be extended for another five years for the sector.
- The Budget must consider reintroducing the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for MSME exporters for another two years. This supported most MSME units with their exports.
- The timeline for payments to MSME jobwork must be extended to 120 days from the current 45 days as the RBI permits a time limit of 180 days for the realisation of export proceeds.
- Unless the payment from buyers are realised by exporters, it will be difficult to pay MSME workers, which will create fund flow issues for exporters.
- For the textile and garment sector, the investment limit under the PLI scheme must be pared to ₹25 crore and the turnover limit must be reduced to ₹70 crore. This will help MSME exporters to upgrade their technologies and compete in the international market.

Green transition, R&D

- Another significant area of concern is climate change. This has impacted MSMEs severely. Hence more soft funds must be made available for MSMEs to attempt a green transition and to fuel growth with green resources. MSME clusters like Tiruppur can tap into significant export potential with this support.
- Research development and innovation are key to sustaining exports. R&D globally is incentivised and 35 out of 38 OECD countries provide either lower taxes or higher deductions on R&D expenditure.
- We expect that the weighted tax deduction under Section 35(2AB) may be increased to 300% and the benefit under Section 35(2AB) also be extended to limited liability partnerships (LLP), partnership firms and proprietary firms, as MSME units largely fall in these categories.
- With schemes that provide funds for infrastructure creation, technology upgradation and climate change adaptation, the MSME sector will be able to contribute even more for the economy

9. Even the odd jobs- The Hindu

Relevance: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Context:

- Gig workers need a comprehensive national law on their employee status
- For India's gig workers, who are increasing in numbers but are perched precariously on the edge of the unregulated labor pool, the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024, offers a welcome reprieve, but still stops short of providing them with the security of being employees.

Gig Incomes	Legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When app-based gig work was introduced a decade ago, courtesy ride-sharing and food delivery apps, the absence of the word 'employee' was actually seen as a positive; it supposedly offered a chance for 'partners' to retain their autonomy and earn good money without being locked into a contract with rigid timings. • That illusion soon dissolved as incomes crashed and working hours lengthened, and the lack of a formal 'employee' status left workers at the mercy of the aggregator and all-powerful algorithms, in the absence of safety nets or governmental regulation. • Despite this, the gig economy is growing. According to a NITI Aayog report, India had 77 lakh gig workers at the beginning of the decade, and by 2029-30, they are projected to account for 4.1% of income, and 6.7% of the non-agricultural workforce. • A rights-based legislation, the draft Bill aims to prevent arbitrary dismissals, provide human grievance redress mechanisms, and to bring more transparency into the opaque tangle of automated monitoring and algorithm-based payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a step up from the Union government's Code on Social Security, 2020. Karnataka's law also offers social security through a welfare board and fund, with contributions from the government and the aggregator, either through a cut from every transaction on the app, or as a percentage of the platform's turnover in the State. • Noting that many of the firms that own these platforms report minimal profits, workers' unions have rightly demanded that the welfare fee is charged as a cess on each transaction. • Skeptics note the moribund nature of other unorganized sector welfare boards, but one advantage of mandatory registration with such a board is that it will make gig workers visible in the eyes of the law. • The Karnataka government aims to enact the Bill in the monsoon session of the Assembly, and it must quickly formulate rules and establish the welfare board to ensure that the law is in force before the end of the year. • A similar legislation in Rajasthan, enacted by the predecessor government, but has been effectively put into cold storage. • At the national level, comprehensive legislation is needed not just to set minimum wages, reasonable working hours and conditions and robust social security but also to provide gig workers with the coveted status of 'employees'.

10. Why is India drilling a 6-km deep hole in Maharashtra?- The Hindu

Relevance: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

Context:

- Scientists don't yet have a way to predict when and where an earthquake will occur.
- We know powerful earthquakes at the boundaries of tectonic plates, which measure more than 7.5 on the Richter scale, are almost certainly associated with a severe loss of infrastructure and life.
- In the ocean, these geological events trigger tsunamis. However, more minor earthquakes that occur in a plate's interior are more challenging to predict because they occur at the least expected sites and could strike densely populated habitats.
- This is why scientific deep drilling is an indispensable tool for progress in the earth sciences.

What is scientific deep drilling?

- Scientific deep-drilling is the enterprise of strategically digging boreholes to analyse deeper parts of the earth's crust.
- It offers opportunities and access to study earthquakes and expands our understanding of the planet's history, rock types, energy resources, life forms, climate change patterns, and more.

Benefits of a deep-drilling mission

- Earthquakes are challenging to study. Surface-level observations can't make complete sense of them.
- The recurrent earthquakes in Koyna are synchronous with the dam's loading and unloading during the monsoon and post-monsoon periods, offering an opportunity to widen our understanding of earthquakes.
- Scientifically drilled boreholes can be a hub of direct, unique in situ experiments and observations and monitor a region's fault lines and seismic behavior.
- They also provide exact and fundamental knowledge of the composition of the earth's crust, structure, and processes, and help validate models based on surface studies.
- Thus, it can inform a range of societal problems related to geohazards and geo-resources.
- Investing in scientific deep-drilling can also help expand scientific know-how and technological innovation, especially in seismology (the study of earthquakes).
- It can also spur the development of tools and equipment for drilling, observation, data analysis, sensors, etc.
- Scientific deep drilling is the best tool to study the earth's interior. Other ways include geophysical measurements of seismic wave speed, gravitational and magnetic fields, and electrical conductivity from the near surface. Scientists can also examine crust fragments brought from deep underground to the surface.
- But scientific deep-drilling remains the most reliable method because it helps get direct (in situ) and near-source measurements. The earth's interior is a hot, dark, high-pressure region that hinders long and continuous operations.
- Aside from earthquakes, this is because many surface phenomena, the composition of water and air, their availability, and the resulting interactions with climate-affected phenomena are linked to what happens inside the earth's crust.

What have scientists found?

- The pilot drilling mission was a success and has yielded significant new information about the subsurface geological environment.
- For one, it revealed 1.2-km thick, 65 million-year-old Deccan trap lava flows, and below them 2,500-2,700-million-year-old granitic basement rocks.
- Downhole measurements of core samples and conditions from a depth of 3 km have also provided new information about the physical and mechanical properties of rocks, the chemical and isotopic composition of formation fluids and gasses, temperature and stress regimes, and fracture orientations.
- It is expected that these experiments will be useful for many years, especially to understand the reasons for recurrent earthquakes in specific geographies.
- In sum, the Koyna exercise is establishing a firm footing in scientific deep-drilling for India. Its lessons will inform future deep-drilling experiments and expand academic knowledge in multiple ways.

Quick Look

1. National Gopal Ratna Award

- It is one of the highest National Awards in the field of livestock and dairy sector.
- Its objective is to recognize and encourage all individuals like Farmers rearing indigenous animals, AI Technicians and Dairy cooperative societies / Milk Producer Company / Dairy farmers Producers Organizations working in this sector.
- The Award is conferred in three categories, namely, Best Dairy Farmer Rearing Indigenous Cattle/buffalo Breeds, Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) and Best Dairy Cooperative/ Milk Producer Company/ Dairy Farmer Producer Organization)

2. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- IPCC assessments provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate-related policies, and they underlie negotiations at the UN Climate Conference – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

3. Channapatna Toys

- Channapatna toys are a particular form of wooden toys and dolls that are manufactured in the town of Channapatna in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka.
- Channapatna is also known as Gombegala Ooru (toy-town).
- The history of Channapatna toys can be traced back to Tipu Sultan's reign as the former ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore in the 18th century.
- According to legend, Tipu Sultan was so impressed with the craftsmanship of Persian artisans that he invited them to train local craftsmen in toy-making.
- This marked the beginning of the Channapatna toy industry, which has ever since flourished.

4. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant:

- India's largest nuclear power plant is located in Tamil Nadu.
- Construction commenced in March 2002 with technical assistance from Russia.
- The first power unit has been operational since February 2016, operating at a capacity of 1,000 MW.
- Full operational capacity expected by 2027
- Nuclear energy is the fifth-largest source of electricity in India, contributing about 2% of the country's total electricity generation.
- India currently has over 22 nuclear reactors in 7 power plants across the country, which together produce 6,780 MW of nuclear power.

5. Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)

- It is a law enacted by Parliament to regulate foreign contributions (especially monetary donations) provided by certain individuals or associations to NGOs and others within India.
- The Act, in its consolidating form, was originally passed in 1976 and majorly modified in 2010.
- The Act aims to prevent foreign organisations from influencing electoral politics, social, political, economic, or religious discussions in India for wrong purposes and activities detrimental to the public interest.
- The Act falls under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Prelims Track Question

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):

1. The CBI was established by a resolution of the Government of India in 1963.
2. The CBI derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.
3. The Director of the CBI is appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Muslim Personal Law in India

1. "Talaq-e-Bid'ah" refers to the instant and irrevocable divorce pronounced in a single sitting.
2. Mehr" in Islamic law refers to the mandatory gift or financial settlement that a husband must give to his wife at the time of marriage.
3. Sharia courts in India have the authority to adjudicate on matters related to Muslim Personal Law.

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

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

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding blood donation in India:

1. The minimum age required to donate blood in India is 18 years.
2. An individual can donate blood once every 3 months.
3. Blood donation is considered safe, and the risk of contracting diseases through blood donation is minimal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding the International Maritime Organization (IMO):

1. The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping.
2. The headquarters of the IMO is located in Geneva, Switzerland.
3. The IMO's primary purpose is to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for shipping, including safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, and maritime security.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the geography of Russia:

1. Russia shares a border with 16 countries.
2. The Ural Mountains are considered the natural boundary between Europe and Asia in Russia.
3. Lake Baikal, located in Russia, is the deepest freshwater lake in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q6. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The water and moisture in the soil to a depth of 39 inches is called root zone moisture

Statement II: the root zone moisture does not depend on rain

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

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

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA):

- 1. FCRA registration can be suspended by the Union Home Ministry on grounds of violation for a maximum initial period of 180 days.
- 2. FCRA prohibits organizations from publishing reports on current affairs programs.
- 3. The cancellation of FCRA registration for an organization is subject to a thorough hearing and an opportunity to present its case.

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 regarding Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and related schemes in India:

- 1. The Ministry of MSME launched the Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM) to simplify the registration process for MSMEs.
- 2. The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) aims to provide financial support to micro-enterprises through three products: Shishu, Kishor, and Tarun.
- 3. The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) provides collateral-free credit to MSMEs.

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

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding the gig economy:

- 1. The gig economy refers to a labor market characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.
- 2. Gig workers are entitled to the same employment benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans as traditional employees.
- 3. The rise of digital platforms and technology has significantly contributed to the growth of the gig economy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q10. Consider the following statements regarding earthquakes:

- 1. The point within the Earth where an earthquake originates is called the epicenter.
- 2. The Richter scale measures the magnitude of an earthquake.
- 3. The Ring of Fire is an area in the Pacific Ocean basin known for its high earthquake and volcanic activity.

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is Correct

Explanation:

- The CBI was indeed established by a resolution of the Government of India in 1963. **Statement 1 is Correct**
- The CBI derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. **Statement 2 is Correct**
- The Director of the CBI is appointed by a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him, as per the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, not the Chief Justice of India directly. **Statement 3 is Correct**

Answer 2 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Talaq-e-Bid'ah, or triple talaq in one sitting, was a prevalent practice in Muslim Personal Law where a husband could divorce his wife by pronouncing talaq three times in a single session. However, in 2019, the Indian government enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, making this practice illegal and punishable. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- Mehr is indeed a mandatory payment or gift that a husband must give to his wife at the time of marriage in Islamic law. It is meant to provide financial security to the wife, and its amount is agreed upon during the marriage contract. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Sharia courts in India, also known as Dar-ul-Qaza, do not have legal sanction, and their decisions are not binding. The Indian legal system, including family matters, is governed by Indian laws. However, individuals can approach religious authorities for dispute resolution, but the final legal authority lies with the Indian judiciary. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 3 Option D is Correct

Explanation:

- The minimum age required to donate blood in India is indeed 18 years. **Statement 1 is Correct**
- An individual can typically donate blood once every 3 months (12 weeks) for males and once every 4 months (16 weeks) for females. **Statement 2 is Correct**
- Blood donation is generally considered safe, and the procedures followed ensure minimal risk of contracting diseases through blood donation. **Statement 3 is Correct**

Answer 4 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- The IMO is indeed a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping. **Statement 1 is Correct**
- The headquarters of the IMO is located in London, United Kingdom, not Geneva, Switzerland. **Statement 2 is Incorrect**
- The IMO's primary purpose is to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for shipping, including safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, and maritime security. **Statement 3 is Correct**

Answer 5 Option C is Correct

Explanation:

- Russia shares a border with 14 countries, not 16. **Statement 1 is INCORRECT**
- The Ural Mountains are considered the natural boundary between Europe and Asia in Russia. **Statement 2 is Correct**
- Lake Baikal, located in Russia, is the deepest freshwater lake in the world. **Statement 3 is Correct**

Answer 6 Option C is correct

Explanation

Root Zone Moisture

- The water and moisture in the soil to a depth of 39 inches is called root zone moisture. It takes a lot of time for the aquifers to recover from droughts in the absence of rain. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- The aquifers rely on surface moisture to percolate through soil and rocks. When there are no rains and surface moisture, the root zone moisture might vanish completely. This eventually will make the soil unfit for trees and plants. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**

Answer 7 Option A is correct

Explanation

- FCRA registration can be suspended by the Union Home Ministry on grounds of violation. The initial suspension period is for a maximum of 180 days. This provides the government with a tool to temporarily restrict an organization's ability to receive foreign contributions in case of alleged violations. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
- FCRA does not explicitly prohibit organizations from publishing reports on current affairs programs. The act primarily regulates the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions to ensure they are not detrimental to national interest. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**
- The cancellation of FCRA registration is not always subject to a thorough hearing and an opportunity to present the case. In some instances, the cancellation may occur without adequate opportunity for the organization to be heard, leading to concerns about due process. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect**

Answer 8 Option D is Correct

Explanation:

- The Ministry of MSME indeed launched the Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM) to simplify the registration process for MSMEs. **statement 1 is correct**

- The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) aims to provide financial support to micro-enterprises through three products: Shishu (loans up to ₹50,000), Kishor (loans from ₹50,001 to ₹5 lakh), and Tarun (loans from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh). **statement 2 is correct**
- The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) provides collateral-free credit to MSMEs. **statement 3 is correct**

Answer 9 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- The gig economy indeed refers to a labor market characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs. **statement 1 is correct**
- Gig workers typically do not have the same employment benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans as traditional employees; they often lack such benefits. **statement 2 is INcorrect**
- The rise of digital platforms and technology has significantly contributed to the growth of the gig economy, enabling more people to find gig work. **statement 3 is correct**

Answer 10 Option B is Correct

Explanation:

- The point within the Earth where an earthquake originates is called the focus or hypocenter, not the epicenter. The epicenter is the point on the Earth's surface directly above the focus. **statement 1 is INcorrect**
- The Richter scale measures the magnitude of an earthquake. **statement 2 is correct**
- The Ring of Fire is indeed an area in the Pacific Ocean basin known for its high earthquake and volcanic activity. **statement 3 is correct**



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