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SOURCES



Date: 10 Feb. 2024

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2. Can Preamble be amended keeping date intact, asks SC - The Hindu/ Can Preamble be amended without altering date, asks SC - Indian Express
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Important News Articles

GSI

1. Bharat Ratna for Swaminathan, Rao, Charan Singh - The Hindu/ Bharat Ratna PV Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh, MS Swaminathan - Indian Express

Relevance: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present – significant events, personalities, issues.

Prelims Takeaway

- Bharat Ratna
- M. S. Swaminathan

News:

- The Bharat Ratna will be conferred on former **Prime Ministers P. V. Narasimha Rao** and **Choudhary Charan Singh** along with agricultural scientist **M. S. Swaminathan**.
- This is in addition to the two awardees already announced - **socialist leader Karpooori Thakur** and former **Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani**.

P. V. Narasimha Rao's Legacy

- P. V. Narasimha Rao is credited with **liberalizing the Indian economy** during his tenure as Prime Minister (1991-1996).
- He had a complicated relationship with the Congress party due to controversies like the Babri Masjid demolition.
- The Prime Minister stated that P. V. Narasimha Rao's visionary leadership was instrumental in **making India economically advanced**.

Choudhary Charan Singh's Contribution

- Choudhary Charan Singh, former Prime Minister (1979-1980), is hailed for his **dedication to farmers and democracy**, particularly during the Emergency.

M. S. Swaminathan's Impact

- M. S. Swaminathan is recognized for his pivotal role in **achieving agricultural self-reliance and modernization** in India.

Bharat Ratna

- Bharat Ratna is the **highest civilian award** of the Republic of India.
- Instituted in 1954, the award is conferred in **recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order**, without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex.

Key Features

- There is no requirement for the Bharat Ratna to be **conferred annually**, nor is there a stipulation mandating that it **must be awarded exclusively to Indian citizens**.
- **Recommendations** for Bharat Ratna are made by the **Prime Minister of India** to the President.
- The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is **restricted to a maximum of three** in a particular year.
 - However, this year's tally of five awardees, one more than the four announced in 1999, is the highest that has ever been announced in a single year.
- On conferment of the award, the recipient receives a **Sanad (certificate)** signed by the President and a **medallion**.
 - The Award does not carry any monetary grant.
- In terms of **Article 18 (1)** of the Constitution, the award cannot be used as a **prefix or suffix** to the recipient's name.

GS II

2. Can Preamble be amended keeping date intact, asks SC - The Hindu/ Can Preamble be amended without altering date, asks SC - Indian Express

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

News:

- The Supreme Court recently probed whether the **Preamble of the Indian Constitution** could have been **amended without altering the date of its adoption** on November 26, 1949.

Prelims Takeaway

- Preamble
- Kesavananda Bharati Case

Background

- The Preamble underwent **one amendment** in December 1976, through the **42nd Constitutional Amendment**, during the Emergency, by the Indira Gandhi government.
- This amendment **introduced the terms 'socialist' and 'secular'** and replaced the phrase 'unity of the nation' with **'unity and integrity of the nation'**.
- Originally, the text of the Preamble declared India as a **'sovereign, democratic republic'**.

Legal Inquiry

- The Bench was hearing a petition filed to **delete the words 'socialist' and 'secular'** from the Preamble.
- The judges are questioning whether it would have been possible to **modify the Preamble** while keeping the **original date of adoption intact**.
- The **Kesavananda Bharati case** establishes the Preamble's amendability, provided it doesn't violate the Constitution's basic structure.
- The Supreme Court schedules further hearings on the matter for the week starting April 29, 2024.

3. BCI powers should be restricted to eligibility for practising: panel - Indian Express

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

News:

- Recently, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law And Justice presented a report titled **"Strengthening Legal Education in View of Emerging Challenges Before The Legal Profession"** in the Rajya Sabha.

Prelims Takeaway

- Bar Council of India (BCI)
- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

Restricting BCI's Role

- The report suggests restricting the Bar Council of India's (BCI) role to **granting basic eligibility for practising at the Bar**.
- It criticizes the BCI for reckless **proliferation of substandard law colleges** due to its unchecked power to inspect and grant recognition.

Independent Authority for Postgraduate Programs

- The panel recommends establishing an **independent authority for postgraduate legal programs**, emphasizing the need for relevance beyond courtrooms.
- It argues that the BCI lacks the power and expertise for necessary changes in legal education.

Creation of National Council for Legal Education and Research

- It also proposed the formation of a **"National Council for Legal Education and Research"** under the **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)**.
 - This suggests a separation from the BCI's jurisdiction.
- However, the HECI Bill, which excludes medical and law colleges, is yet to be introduced in Parliament.

Uniform Curriculum

- The panel advocates for a **uniform curriculum across law colleges** to replace the current practice of different syllabi by affiliating universities.

- It highlights the need for **consistency among law students** and recommends the BCI to define this uniform curriculum for undergraduate courses.

Quota Implementation

- The panel observed that premier law colleges have not implemented **quota for SCs, STs and OBCs in undergraduate and postgraduate courses** especially in all-India seats.
- Therefore, the report suggests that the BCI should consider **withdrawing recognition** if NLUs and other colleges fail to implement it.

GS III

4. Meet HAPS: India's very own UAV that can fly 20 km high and float for months - Indian Express

Relevance: Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

News:

- Recently, the **National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL)** in Bengaluru successfully completed the first test of a **solar-powered "pseudo satellite"**.
- The successful test flight in **Karnataka's Challakere testing range** marks India's foray into **advanced unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology**.

Key Features of HAPS

- The high-altitude pseudo satellite vehicle (HAPS) can fly at **18-20 km altitude**, surpassing commercial airplane heights.
- Powered by **solar energy**, HAPS can **sustain flight for months or even years**, resembling satellite capabilities at a fraction of the cost.
- HAPS also **eliminates the need for rocket launches**, reducing operational expenses compared to traditional satellites.

Rationale Behind HAPS Development

- The necessity for **continuous border surveillance** post-Doklam standoff in 2017 led to the development of **high-endurance, high-altitude flying instruments**.
- HAPS offers advantages over battery-powered UAVs and satellites in terms of **endurance** and **constant monitoring capabilities**.
- It can significantly increase India's surveillance and monitoring capabilities in the border areas.

Applications Beyond Surveillance

- HAPS can serve in **disaster management** and provide **mobile communication networks in remote areas**.
- A lot of other things that **satellites** are deployed to do can also be done by these vehicles.

Global Context and Competition

- Other countries like China, South Korea, and the UK are also exploring HAPS technology.
- Private companies, including Indian startups, are actively engaged in HAPS development.

5. Cabinet nod to spectrum for Railways without TRAI reply - The Hindu

Relevance: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

News:

- Recently, the Indian Railways has sought an additional 5 MHz of paired spectrum in the 700 MHz band **for safety purposes** following the Balasore incident.
- The Cabinet has decided to reserve the spectrum, keeping it out of auctions, pending allocation.

Prelims Takeaway

- High-Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS) Vehicle
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)

Prelims Takeaway

- Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)
- Train Collision Avoidance System
- TRAI

Previous Spectrum Grants

- Previous spectrum grants to Railways only provided **limited data transfer capacity**, not sufficient to allow trains to continuously upload video footage for safety purposes.
- This necessitated the **dumping of video footage** at railway stations with WiFi connections.
- Railways emphasised the need for **real-time data and video capture** from moving trains to **enhance safety measures**.

Request for Additional Spectrum

- Dumping data at stations with high-capacity WiFi does not fulfil the objective of real-time data capture, especially during emergencies.
- Telecom networks can become **congested during exigencies**, hindering relief and restoration operations.
- The spectrum allocation would enable the **implementation of various safety features and enhance passenger security, surveillance, and asset reliability**.

Opposition from Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)

- COAI opposed free handouts of spectrum in the 700 MHz band, arguing that it's used for **commercial telecom operations** globally.
- It also expressed concerns about the **adequacy of spectrum availability** for technologies like 5G if allocated for non-telecom purposes.

TRAI's Recommendation

- TRAI suggested allocating a **smaller slice of spectrum** to Railways than requested and allowing telecom operators to utilize the spectrum without interfering with railway communications.
- Trains require **limited spectrum capacity for data transmission** along tracks, allowing for shared use of spectrum resources.

6. Quality Council of India and Open Network for Digital Commerce launch DigiReady Certification Portal to empower MSMEs and small retailers - PIB

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

News:

- Recently, the Quality Council of India (QCI) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) announced the launch of the **DigiReady Certification (DRC) portal**.

DigiReady Certification Portal

- **Purpose:** Fostering digital inclusion in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.
- It aims to **assess and certify digital readiness** of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (**MSME**) entities.
- It is an **online self-assessment tool** for MSMEs to evaluate their preparedness.
- It will enable MSMEs to **seamlessly onboard as sellers on the ONDC platform**, thereby expanding their digital capabilities and business potential.
- **Assess various aspects of digital readiness**, including documentation, technology proficiency, workflow integration and order management.

Benefits of DigiReady Certification Portal

- It facilitates a **streamlined seller journey** for MSMEs and small retailers, ensuring they can integrate seamlessly into existing digitised workflows.
- It presents **additional business prospects** for sellers, allowing them to become integral to the digital ecosystem.
- It marks a pivotal moment in India's mission to **empower MSMEs and make e-commerce more inclusive and accessible**.

Prelims Takeaway

- DigiReady Certification (DRC) Portal
- Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

Editorials, Gists and Explainers

7. BITS IN PIECES - Indian Express

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

Context:

- The Finance Minister recently announced that India aims to **negotiate Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs)** with its trade partners to **enhance foreign direct investment (FDI)**.
- This move comes amidst a **decline in bilateral treaties** since the adoption of the Model BIT in 2016.

Background of BITS in India

- BITS are agreements between two countries for the reciprocal promotion and protection of investments in each other's territories by individuals and companies.
- India initiated BITS in the mid-1990s, aiming to provide favourable conditions and treaty-based protection for foreign investors.
- The first BIT signed by India was with the UK on March 14, 1994.

Challenges and Legal Issues

- India adopted the 2016 Model BIT, prompted by the burden on the public exchequer due to previous treaties.
- This resulted in the termination of 68 of the 74 treaties India had executed until 2015.
- However, this move was criticized for its protectionist stance and lack of key doctrines of international law, impacting India's ability to renegotiate terms with other countries.
 - The 2016 model BIT provided that an investor must exhaust local remedies before taking recourse to international arbitration.
 - The absence of well-established principles in public international law, such as "fair and equitable treatment" and "most favoured nation," was notable.
- India's struggles in renegotiating BIT terms have contributed to a decline in FDI.
- According to government data, FDI equity inflows in India declined 24% to \$20.48 billion in April-September 2023.

Efforts to Address Challenges

- India's decision to deviate from the 2016 model in negotiations with the UK for a free trade agreement (FTA) reflects a willingness to explore alternative approaches.
 - These include allowing international arbitration for dispute settlement without exhausting local remedies.
- In 2021, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs has proposed revisiting the BIT regime.
 - This included the timely settlement of disputes through pre-arbitration consultations and negotiations and the development of local expertise in investment arbitration.
- India's ranking in ease of contract enforcement is still abysmally low at 163 out of 190 countries.
- Therefore, it is critical that these recommendations are implemented in letter and spirit.

Conclusion

- India's aspiration for a **\$5-trillion economy** relies heavily on **robust international trade and stable investments**.
- A proactive approach to BITS is crucial for **attracting and sustaining long-term foreign investments**.
- While the government's renewed push is commendable, it should adopt a more **flexible approach** tailored to diverse needs to facilitate **sustainable growth in cross-border investment flows**.

8. He who rules the sea - Indian Express

Relevance: World Affairs

Context:

- Angus Maddison's research in **The World Economy: Historical Statistics (2003)** asserts **India as the largest economy globally in the first millennium**, holding about 33% of the world's GDP.
- It began to **decline with external invasions and colonisation** and touched a low point during the British era in the 18th and 19th century.

Naval Dominance and Economic Prosperity

- Indian rulers' control over oceans contributed significantly to economic prosperity and dominance in the first millennium.
- They established trade with the Arab lands in the West and ventured into South China Sea territories, crossing the Malayan Peninsula in the East.
- Kautilya's Arthashastra talks about the functions of officers like port commissioners and harbour masters, highlighting the importance attached to maritime activity in ancient India.
- The Board of Shipping was one of the six important departments of the Mauryan empire.

European Maritime Conquest

- European powers, including the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British, gained dominance in the seas during the second millennium, disrupting Indian maritime control.
- The Portuguese declared themselves "Lords of the Sea," initiating European colonization of Indian shores.
- Despite maritime prowess, British colonial rule in India did not prioritise naval development, focusing more on land-based warfare.
- Post-independence, India's neglect of maritime potential led to lagging in shipbuilding and naval strength compared to global counterparts.

Lack of Strategic Vision

- Diplomat K M Panikkar warned about the Indian Ocean's importance, but the Indian leadership failed to recognize and harness its potential.
- Despite initiatives like the Indian Ocean Rim Association in 1997, India's focus remained primarily westward.

Shift in Global Power Dynamics

- The 21st century witnessed a shift in global power from the Pacific-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific, with the Indian Ocean region gaining prominence.
- The Indo-Pacific emerges as a geopolitical construct, highlighting India's neighbourhood as a pivotal area.
- From the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca, this vast expanse of water is the world's third-largest ocean covering over 74 million square kilometres.

Significance for India

- The Indian Ocean serves as India's lifeline, facilitating 80% of external trade and 90% of energy trade.
- Additionally, the Indian Ocean maritime trade routes are the crucial supply chains managing almost 70% of the world's container traffic.
- The Indian Ocean, with its vast expanse and historical connections, symbolises a civilization beyond mere maritime geography.
- India's cultural and civilizational influence has spread across the region over millennia.

India's Proactive Engagement in the Indian Ocean Region

- India hosts the 7th Indian Ocean Conference in Perth, Australia, aiming to address common non-traditional challenges like climate change and natural disasters.
- There is an emphasis on collaborative efforts to tackle shared challenges rather than traditional security-related divisions.

9. If the sun doesn't shine - Indian Express

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

Context:

- India aims to achieve **net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2070**, aligning with its commitments under the Paris Agreement.
- **Renewable energy (RE)** is central to this goal, with a target of adding **500 gigawatts (GW) of RE capacity by 2030**.

Current Status of Renewable Energy

- India has made significant progress, adding 72 GW of solar and 44 GW of wind power capacity, alongside 32 GW of commercial and industrial (C&I) capacities.
- Long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs) with state discoms have characterized these arrangements.

Factors Driving Growth in Renewable Energy

- Must-run status for RE projects has ensured uninterrupted power evacuation.
- Favourable policies and incentives such as late payment surcharge waivers and renewable purchase obligations have supported growth.
- Capital cost reduction, increased competition among independent power producers (IPPs), and foreign investments have also played crucial roles.

Challenges and Solutions

- Storage capacities and deeper power exchanges are essential for achieving the 500 GW target.
- Growing power demand post-pandemic, especially during peak hours, necessitates innovative solutions.
 - Peak demand is expected to grow from 240 GW in FY24 (year to date) to 285 GW in FY28.
- Plain vanilla solar or wind projects with long-term PPAs are increasingly favoured to meet demand, with recent bids focusing on hourly demand matching.

Role of Storage Solutions

- Combination of solar, wind, and storage, such as battery or pumped hydro, is crucial for meeting demand variations.
- Over-sizing projects to store excess generation during the solar and wind hours is essential.
- Pumped hydro presents a cost-effective storage option, while battery storage holds promise with falling capital costs.

Market Dynamics and Merchant Sales

- Selling excess generation to commercial and industrial consumers or power exchanges is also a viable option for addressing the excess generation.
- However, developing vibrant power exchange markets is necessary, with potential for increased merchant sales.
- Structures ensuring guaranteed floor prices can enhance project bankability and competitiveness.

Implications for Green Hydrogen and Future Outlook

- Building capabilities for RTC green energy could also help meet India's ambitious green hydrogen targets.
- Cost competitiveness and storage solutions are critical for the viability of green hydrogen projects.
- Without robust storage solutions and a mature exchange market, India may struggle to meet its ambitious RE and green hydrogen targets.

10. Polygamy in India: What the data show - Indian Express

Relevance: Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Context:

- The Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly recently passed the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2024** after a two-day discussion.
- The Bill aims to bring **uniformity in personal laws** governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance across communities in the state, **except for tribals**.

<p>Monogamy Rule Extension to Muslims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UCC Bill extends the rule of monogamy to the Muslim community. • The condition for solemnizing a marriage states that neither party should have a living spouse at the time of marriage. • This clause already exists in the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, but Muslim personal law hitherto allowed men to have up to four wives. <p>Data Limitations on Polygamy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government data on polygamy is sourced from the decadal census and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), both with certain limitations. • The census does not directly collect data on polygamy; it indirectly infers polygamy from the difference in number of married men and women. • Moreover, the most recent census was held in 2011, more than a decade back. • The NFHS directly asks women about their husbands' other wives but samples less than 1% of Indian households. 	<p>Census Data Insights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the census of 2011, there are 28.65 crore married men in India, compared to 29.3 crore married women. • This discrepancy between married men and women in India, potentially indicates polygamy or men working abroad. • Hindus (who make up the largest number of Indians) and Muslims exhibit the highest gaps between married men and women. • Though in terms of proportion to their population, Muslims and Christians report the greatest difference. <p>NFHS Data Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NFHS-5 reveals polygamy prevalence was highest among Christians (2.1%), followed by Muslims (1.9%) and Hindus (1.3%). • Overall, Scheduled Tribes reported the highest incidence at 2.4%. • A 2022 study indicates a decrease from 1.9% in 2005-06 to 1.4% in 2019-21 in polygynous marriages across various religious groups, with Buddhists showing the sharpest decline. • The study titled Polygyny in India was conducted by the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS).
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Quick Look

1. Forever Chemicals

- Recently, the researchers demonstrated a new lab-based method to detect traces of Forever Chemicals in just three minutes or less.
- PFAS (Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances), also known as the Forever Chemicals, are a large chemical family of over 4,700 highly persistent man-made chemicals.
- These were first developed in the 1940s and are now found in a variety of consumer products.
- These include nonstick pans, water-resistant textiles, and fire suppression foams, due to their ability to repel both grease and water.
- PFAS are the most persistent synthetic chemicals to date and hardly degrade in the natural environment.
- They have been found in the blood of people and animals all over the world, and are present at low levels in a variety of food products.
- Exposure to PFAS is linked to cancers, weakened immune systems among children, weight gain, and a wide range of other health problems.

2. Sandbox for Agricultural and Rural Security, Technology and Insurance (SARTHI) Portal

- Recently, the Union Agriculture minister unveiled the 'Sarathi' platform.
- Purpose: To provide a full suite of insurance products, including PMFBY, geared specifically for farmers and rural populations in India.
- It is the comprehensive digital insurance platform launched in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India.
- The portal will be a single-window platform for viewing, purchasing, and availing insurance products.
- The platform has digital payment options and streamlined premium collection, effortless claim initiation, tracking and resolution besides user-friendly interfaces for stakeholders.

3. Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Model

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has come up with a list of high-traffic density corridors for private developers to build and operate under the build-operate-transfer (BOT) model.
- BOT is a type of agreement often used in infrastructure projects, particularly in the construction and operation of public facilities or utilities.
- It is a conventional public-private partnership (PPP) model in which a private entity is granted the rights and responsibilities to design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain a specific project or facility for a defined period of time.
- The private entity also bears the financial and operational risks associated with the project during the contract period.
- At the end of the contract period, the ownership and control of the facility are transferred back to the government or public authority, which may have been the original owner.
- The transfer is often accompanied by a predetermined valuation or compensation mechanism.

- The private company gains revenue during the concession period, while the government benefits from infrastructure development without upfront investment.
- BOT is particularly well-suited for greenfield projects (new projects without prior work) and large-scale, capital-intensive projects.

4. Zircon Missile

- In an attempt to hit a target in Kyiv, Russian forces recently launched a 3M22 Zircon missile.
- The 3M22 Zircon, or SS-N-33, is a scramjet-powered manoeuvring anti-ship hypersonic cruise missile developed in Russia.
- The missile is reportedly capable of flying with speeds up to Mach 9 and a range of 1000 km.
- It is a two-stage missile that uses solid fuel in the first stage and a scramjet motor in the second stage.
- The missile uses cooled supersonic combustion ramjet engines, which facilitate combustion by compressing air flowing at supersonic speeds due to the missile's forward motion.
- Guidance System: Active and Passive Radar Seeker.
- During flight, the missile is completely covered by a plasma cloud that absorbs any rays of radio frequencies and makes the missile invisible to radars.



Mentorship
India

Prelims Track Question

Q1. With reference to Bharat Ratna, consider the following statements

1. Bharat Ratna is a title under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India.
2. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.
3. Bharat Ratna is awarded exclusively to Indian citizens.

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

1. Statement of its objectives
2. Nature of Indian State
3. Date of its adoption
4. Source of the Constitution

The preamble of India gives an idea about how many of the above mentioned things/objects?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q3. Consider the following statements about the Bar Council of India (BCI)

1. It is a statutory body established under the Advocates Act 1961.
2. It conducts the All India Bar Examination (AIBE) to grant a 'Certificate of Practice' to advocates practising law in India.
3. It funds welfare schemes for economically weaker and physically handicapped advocates.

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

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

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to High-Altitude Pseudo Satellite Vehicle

1. It is a new-age unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that can increase India's surveillance and monitoring capabilities in the border areas.

2. It can remain in the air for months and even years.

3. It does not require a rocket to get into space.

4. It can even be used to provide mobile communications networks in remote areas.

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

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. Only three
- D. All four

Q5. Consider the following statements with reference to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

1. It is a regulatory body set up under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.

2. The recommendations made by the TRAI are binding on the Central Government.

3. The Central Government has to mandatorily ask for recommendations from TRAI with respect to the terms and conditions of the licence to be granted to the service provider.

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

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

Q6. The 'DigiReady Certification', seen in the news recently, is associated with which of the following?

- A. Public Distribution System (PDS)
- B. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME)
- C. Renewable Energy Industries
- D. Public Sector Units (PSUs)

Q7. Consider the following statements about Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs)

1. BITs are treaties between two countries aimed at protecting investments made by investors of both countries.

2. Model BIT widened the definition of investment that needed to qualify for BIT protection.

3. The Model BIT omitted the doctrines of 'fair and equitable treatment' standard and Most-Favored Nation (MFN).

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

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

Q8. Consider the following statements with reference to the Indian Ocean Conference

1. It is an annual international conference that focuses on the geopolitical, economic, and strategic importance of the Indian Ocean region.
2. The theme of the 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference is "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q9. Consider the following statements about Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs)

1. Under Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) bulk purchasers are required to buy a certain proportion of RECs.
2. In India, RECs are traded on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Q10. Consider the following statements about Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

1. Uniform Civil Code is mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution.
2. Goa is the only state in India with a Uniform Civil Code.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Prelims Track Answer

Answer 1 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the Republic of India.
- Instituted in 1954, the award is conferred in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order, without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex.
- There is no requirement for the Bharat Ratna to be conferred annually, nor is there a stipulation mandating that it must be awarded exclusively to Indian citizens. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- Recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister of India to the President.
- The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- On conferment of the award, the recipient receives a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion. The Award does not carry any monetary grant.
- In terms of Article 18 (1) of the Constitution, the award cannot be used as a prefix or suffix to the recipient's name. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**

Answer 2 Option D is correct

Explanation

- A preamble is an introductory statement in a document that explains the document's philosophy and objectives.
- Four important aspects can be ascertained from the preamble
 - Source of authority of the constitution: It derives its authority from the people of India
 - Nature of Indian state: It declares India to be a sovereign, socialistic, secular democratic and republican polity
 - Objectives of the constitution: It specifies justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as the objectives
 - Date of adoption: Nov 26th, 1949.**Hence, option D is correct.**
- The ideals behind the Preamble to India's Constitution were laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru's Objectives Resolution, adopted by the Constituent Assembly on January 22, 1947.

Answer 3 Option C is correct

Explanation

- Bar Council of India (BCI) is a statutory body established under the Advocates Act 1961 to regulate and represent the Indian bar. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It performs the regulatory function by prescribing standards of professional conduct and etiquette and by exercising disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar.
- It also sets standards for legal education and grants recognition to Universities whose degrees in law will serve as qualification for enrolment as an advocate.
- It conducts the All India Bar Examination (AIBE) to grant a 'Certificate of Practice' to advocates practising law in India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- BCI also funds welfare schemes for economically weaker and physically handicapped advocates. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

Answer 4 Option D is correct

Explanation

- Recently, the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) in Bengaluru successfully completed the first test of a solar-powered "pseudo satellite".
- The successful test flight in Karnataka's Challakere testing range marks India's foray into advanced unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology.
- The high-altitude pseudo satellite vehicle (HAPS) can fly at 18-20 km altitude, surpassing commercial airplane heights.
- Powered by solar energy, HAPS can sustain flight for months or even years, resembling satellite capabilities at a fraction of the cost. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- HAPS also eliminates the need for rocket launches, reducing operational expenses compared to traditional satellites. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- It can significantly increase India's surveillance and monitoring capabilities in the border areas. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- HAPS can serve in disaster management and provide mobile communication networks in remote areas. **Hence, statement 4 is correct.**

- A lot of other things that satellites are deployed to do can also be done by these vehicles.

Answer 5 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is a regulatory body set up by the Government of India under section 3 of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is the regulator of the telecommunications sector in India.
- It consists of a Chairperson and not more than two full-time members, and not more than two part-time members.
- The chairperson and the members of TRAI are appointed by the Central Government, and the duration for which they can hold their office is three years or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- The recommendations made by the TRAI are not binding on the Central Government. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The Central Government has to mandatorily ask for recommendations from TRAI with respect to the need and timing of new service providers and the terms and conditions of the licence to be granted to the service provider. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The TRAI Act was amended in 2000, establishing a Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

Answer 6 Option B is correct**Explanation**

- Recently, the Quality Council of India (QCI) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) announced the launch of the DigiReady Certification (DRC) portal.
- Purpose: Fostering digital inclusion in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. **Hence, option B is correct.**
- It aims to assess and certify digital readiness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) entities.
- It is an online self-assessment tool for MSMEs to evaluate their preparedness.
- It will enable MSMEs to seamlessly onboard as sellers on the ONDC platform, thereby expanding their digital capabilities and business potential.
- Assess various aspects of digital readiness, including documentation, technology

proficiency, workflow integration and order management.

Answer 7 Option A is correct**Explanation**

- BITs are treaties between two countries aimed at protecting investments made by investors of both countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- They protect investments by imposing conditions on the regulatory behaviour of the host state and thus, prevent undue interference with the rights of the foreign investor.
- Prior to 2015, India had BITs with 83 countries/regions.
- India suspended BITs with 68 countries/regions post-2015, urging renegotiations based on the 2016 model BIT.
- Model BIT narrowed the definition of investment that needed to qualify for BIT protection. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- It contains a clause mandating exhaustion of domestic remedy prior to initiating international arbitration proceedings.
- It also omitted the well-recognized doctrines of 'fair and equitable treatment' standard and Most-Favored Nation (MFN) etc. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- Six BITs are still in force, with the suspension triggered by high-profile defeats in investor-state disputes.

Answer 8 Option C is correct**Explanation**

- Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) is an annual international conference that focuses on the geopolitical, economic, and strategic importance of the Indian Ocean region. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The conference brings together policymakers, scholars, business leaders, and civil society representatives to discuss issues related to security, trade, and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.
- Organised by the India Foundation in partnership with other organizations in the region.
- The first edition of the Conference was held in Singapore in 2016.
- The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference is being held in Perth, Australia on 9-10 February, 2024.

- The theme of this edition of the conference is "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean". **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

Answer 9 Option B is correct

Explanation

- Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) is a market-based instrument to promote renewable sources of energy and development of the market in electricity.
- One REC is created when one megawatt hour of electricity is generated from an eligible renewable energy source.
- REC acts as a tracking mechanism for solar, wind, and other green energies as they flow into the power grid.
- Under Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) bulk purchasers like discoms, open access consumers and capacitive users are required to buy a certain proportion of RECs. They can buy RECs from renewable energy producers. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- In India, RECs are traded on two power exchanges viz. Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) and Power Exchange of India (PXIL). **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The price of RECs is determined by market demand, and contained between the 'floor

price' (minimum price) and 'forbearance price' (maximum price) specified by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC).

Answer 10 Option D is correct

Explanation

- The Uniform Civil Code is mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution, which is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- These principles are not legally enforceable but are meant to guide the state in making policies.
- The only state in India that has a UCC is Goa, which retained its common family law known as the Goa Civil Code after it was liberated from Portuguese rule in 1961. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The rest of India follows different personal laws based on their religious or community identity.
- UCC aims to bring uniformity in personal laws governing marriage, divorce, and inheritance across communities in the country.



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