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B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Retirement spree in SC may affect efforts to scale down pendency

Syllabus: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Prelims: Retirement of Supreme court Judges

Mains: Concerns with Judges retirement in Supreme court

Context: A number of judges of the supreme court are about to retire in recent months amidst the high pendency of cases in the Supreme court.

Retirement of Supreme court Judges:

- Judges on the Supreme Court retire when they reach the age of 65.
- Retired Supreme Court or High Court judges can be appointed to sit on the Court and act as judges.
- A person who has served as a Supreme Court Judge is barred from practicing law in any court in India or before any other authority.
- Know more about [Supreme Court of India](#)

Concerns with Judges retirement in Supreme court:

- The retirements come at a time when the court is attempting to regain its footing following particularly brutal pandemic waves.
- Even as the virus refuses to go away, the court continues to struggle with the issue of pendency.
- The Supreme Court is juggling Benches, with judges sitting on Special Benches in various combinations to expedite the hearing and disposition of pending matters, including death penalty cases.
- Seven impending retirements in seven months could stifle the recovery at a critical juncture. This is compounded by the fact that there are already two openings. The working judicial strength is 32 against the sanctioned strength of 34.
- If no new appointments are made till the retirement of Justice Lalit on November 8, the year may see nine vacancies in the court.
- Know more about [Pendency of cases in supreme court](#)

Nut Graf

The problem of pending cases before the country's apex court is a well-known reality of the Supreme Court of India's working process. With a large number of judges set to retire in the near future, a new reform model is required to alleviate the immense roadblock of pending cases and ensure timely justice.

C. GS 3 Related**Category: INTERNAL SECURITY****1. The status of India's National Cyber Security Strategy**

Syllabus: Basics of cyber security and its prevention.

Mains: Need of a cybersecurity strategy for India and recommendations

Context: The Data Security Council of India (DSCI) has prepared a report focussing on different areas to ensure a safe and vibrant cyberspace for India.

Need of a cybersecurity strategy for India:

- As per American cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks' 2021 report,
 - India is among the more economically profitable regions for hacker groups.

- Maharashtra faces 42% of all ransomware attacks.
- One in four Indian organizations suffered a ransomware attack in 2021.
- Indian organizations witnessed a 218% increase in ransomware.
- Increase in such attacks has brought to light the urgent need for strengthening India's cybersecurity.

National Cyber Security Strategy

- The National Cyber Security Strategy is conceptualized by the Data Security Council of India (DSCI).
- It focuses on 21 areas to ensure a safe, secure, trusted, resilient, and vibrant cyberspace for India.
- The main sectors of focus of the report are:-
 - **Large scale digitisation of public services:**
 - Security in the early stages of design in all digitisation initiatives
 - Developing institutional capability for assessment, evaluation, certification, and rating of core devices.
 - **Supply chain security:**
 - Robust monitoring and mapping of the supply chain
 - Product testing and certification.
 - **Critical information infrastructure protection:**
 - Integrate supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) security with enterprise security.
 - Maintain a repository of vulnerabilities.
 - **Digital payments:**
 - Mapping and modeling of devices and platforms deployed, transacting entities, payment flows, interfaces and data exchange.
 - Threat research and sharing of threat intelligence.
 - **State-level cyber security:**
 - Develop State-level cybersecurity policies and guidelines for security architecture, operations, and governance.

Recommendations:

To implement cybersecurity in the above-listed focus areas, the report lists the following recommendations:

Budgetary provisions:

- Minimum allocation of 0.25% of the annual budget for cyber security.
- Setting up a Fund of Funds for cybersecurity
- Provide Central funding to States to build capabilities in the same field.

Research, innovation, skill-building and technology development:

- Investing in digitisation of ICTs and deep-tech cyber security innovation.
- Setting up a short and long term agenda for cyber security via outcome-based programs.

Policy Measures

- Devise a national framework in collaboration with institutions like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and ISEA (Information Security Education and Awareness) to provide global professional certifications in security.
- Creating a 'cyber security service' with cadre chosen from the Indian Engineering Services.

Crisis management:

- Holding cybersecurity drills and simulation exercises for cross-border scenarios to experience real-life scenarios.

Cyber insurance:

- Developing cyber insurance products for critical information infrastructure and to quantify the risks involving them.

Cyber diplomacy:

- Cyber diplomacy plays a huge role in shaping India's global relations.
- Promote brand India as a responsible player in cyber security.
- Create 'cyber envoys' for the key countries/regions.

Cybercrime investigation:

- Unburdening the judicial system by creating laws to resolve spamming and fake news.
- Charting a five-year roadmap factoring possible technology transformation
- Setting up exclusive courts to deal with cybercrimes
- Remove backlog of cybercrimes by increasing centres providing opinion related to digital evidence under section 79A of the IT act.

Technological Advancement

- Advanced forensic training for agencies to keep up in the age of AI/ML, blockchain, IoT, cloud, automation.
- Law enforcement and other agencies should partner with their counterparts abroad to seek information from service providers overseas.

Nut Graf

Amid a surge in cyberattacks on India's networks, the Center is yet to implement the National Cyber Security Strategy which has been in the works since 2020. India should implement a national framework to look at addressing the issues of security of national cyberspace. Besides there is a need to coordinate with other countries to develop a global legal framework on cyber terrorism.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials**Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****1. A north pole for science and technology**

Syllabus: Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Prelims: Dr. Y. Nayudamma.

Mains: Goals and objectives for the use of science and technology

Background:

- Mankind's evolution into modern civilisation has been propelled by rapid strides in the fields of science and technology. However, this rapid development has also thrown up some serious issues about the values, the purpose, the relevance, and the consequences of a blind-folded pursuit and application of science and technology.
- Hence it becomes extremely critical for setting the right goals and objectives for the use of science and technology and the values that should guide this process.
- In this direction, the article authored by Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, prescribes the following agenda while pursuing science and technology.

People centric:

- Science and technology should adapt to the people. As against the import of technology and solutions, there is the need for domestic solutions given that they would be more effective. Western remedies may not solve India's problems, which are different and context-specific.
- The new developments should be able to **meet the needs and concerns of the common people**. Science should be for society and technology should be driven by the needs of the people.
- The undesirable consequences of the application of the science and technological developments should be avoided and taken care of.

Sustainable:

- As against the values of 'materialism and consumerism' guiding the human society currently, Science and technology should enable development that is in harmony with nature and society.

Dr. Y. Nayudamma:

- The article reminisces the role played by **noted scientist and former Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Dr. Y. Nayudamma.**
- Nayudamma's work and contributions demonstrated how scientists and technologists could (and can) be effective agents of social change. His role in changing the nature of the tannery industry in India by infusing science and technology is laudable. This not only improved the quality of products but also improved the lives of the people involved in the job. Thus his contributions had both **economic as well as social impacts.**
- Nayudamma emphasized on **women empowerment, national self-reliance in science and technology and importance of education in national development.**

Recommendations:

Education:

- Given the emergence of **knowledge economy**, empowering all with education and knowledge is the best path to growth and development of the nation.
- Education should release the inner potential of all to make everyone self-reliant and self-confident and also contribute to the development of the nation. There is the need to develop and adopt suitable education systems in the country.

Sustainable development models:

- The rapid resource depletion, and ecological imbalances and inequities should be taken care of. There is the need to have **alternative development models to ensure sustainable and harmonious development.**

Community/ collective endeavour:

- Given the potential of community and collective efforts in realizing the true potential of every individual and the society and the role of nationalism in ensuring such an ecosystem, there is the need to promote nationalism in the mainstream agenda of the country.

Nut Graf

While undertaking strides in the fields of science and technology, mankind should also take care of the serious issues about the values, the purpose, the relevance, and the consequences of pursuit and application of science and technology. There is the need to adopt a people centric as well as sustainable approach in this direction

Category: GEOGRAPHY

1. Time for change

Syllabus: Important Geophysical Phenomena

Prelims: Indian Ocean Dipole and El Nino- their impact on Indian Monsoon

Mains: Lacunae in IMD forecasts and recommendations

Context:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a '**normal**' monsoon for the current year.

Details:

- IMD estimates rainfall of 99% of the **Long Period Average (LPA)** of 87 cm for the current year.

- The normal monsoon forecast for the current year is based on the **absence of an El Niño and a neutral Indian Ocean Dipole**.
- The IMD has changed its definition of the LPA. The new interval to be considered would be for the **1971-2020 period**. The LPA for this period is taken as 87 cm.
 - The **LPA is an indication of the average rainfall over a 50-year interval**.
- Notably the **LPA has been decreasing by around 1 cm for the revised time intervals**. The IMD explains the decrease in LPA as part of a natural cycle of the monsoon where 30 years of less rain, or a 'dry' epoch, is followed by 30 years of a 'wet epoch'.

Lacunae in April forecast:

- The April forecast has little detail on how much rain is expected during each of the monsoon months, and the spatial distribution of the monsoons. Thus this forecast is only a **general indicator** and of little public utility.

Concerns:

- Though the absolute decrease in LPA with revision seems negligible, it conceals **wide shifts in rainfall** when computed at the State and district levels as the monsoon rain is highly uneven.

Recommendations:

- The IMD must focus on **shorter forecasts**, like a month or a fortnight rather than long-range forecasts that are neither accurate nor useful.
- Also there is the need to have **more localized forecasts** down to sub-district levels.

Nut Graf

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) should focus on shorter and more localized forecasts to make the monsoon forecasts more useful.

F. Prelims Facts

1. The functioning of the Enforcement Directorate

Syllabus: GS-2: Polity and Governance: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.

Prelims: Enforcement Directorate (ED): Functioning of ED

Context: This article examines the powers and functioning of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Enforcement Directorate (ED):

- In 1956, the Department of Economic Affairs established a 'Enforcement Unit' to deal with violations of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act's Exchange Control Laws (FERA).
- The ED is a multi-faceted organization that investigates economic crimes under
 - the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA),
 - the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act,
 - the Foreign Exchange Management Act, and
 - the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA).
- Know more about **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**

Sources of Powers of ED:

- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002:**
 - The PMLA was brought to control and prevent the laundering of money.
 - As per the Act, the ED got its power to investigate under Sections 48 (authorities under act) and 49 (appointment and powers of authorities and other officers).
 - If money has been laundered abroad, the PMLA court has the right to send a letter of rogatory under Section 105 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
 - The said government can then share the documents and evidence needed by the agency.

Know more about Prevention of Money Laundering Act**Working of the ED:**

- The investigating police officer forwards the details of the case to the ED if the offense generates proceeds over and above ₹1 crore.
- If the offense comes under the knowledge of the Central agency, they can then call for the First Information Report (FIR) or the charge sheet if it has been filed directly by police officials.

Other roles and functions of the ED:

- After determining that the money has been laundered, the ED can conduct searches (property) and seizures (money/documents).
- The ED can also conduct a search and seizure without summoning the individual for questioning. It is not necessary to first summon the individual before beginning the search and seizure.
- If the person is arrested, the ED has 60 days to file a chargesheet because the maximum penalty under the PMLA is seven years.
- If no one is arrested and only the property is attached, the prosecution complaint must be filed with the adjudicating authority within 60 days, along with the attachment order.

2. Elon Musk's cat and mouse saga with Twitter

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Prelims: What is "poison pills"

Context: Recently, Elon Musk offered to buy Twitter. However, Twitter's board is blocking the take-over bid with "poison pills".

What is "poison pills"?

- A poison pill is a strategy for making a company less appealing to a potential acquirer by making it more expensive for the acquirer to buy shares of the target company above a certain price point.
- The strategy also gives a company more time to consider an offer and gives the board of directors leverage in attempting to force a direct negotiation with a potential acquirer.
- A shareholder rights plan is the official name for a poison pill. It can be found in a corporation's charter or bylaws, or as a contract between shareholders.

- Poison pills allow existing shareholders to buy more shares at a lower price, effectively diluting the ownership stake of a new, hostile party.

Types of poison pills

- **Flip-in poison pill:** Allowing all shareholders, excluding the acquirer, to purchase additional shares at a discount is known as a flip-in poison pill strategy. While purchasing additional shares offers stockholders with immediate profits, the strategy dilutes the value of the acquiring company's limited number of shares already owned.
- **Flip-over poison pill:** The flip-over strategy allows shareholders of the target company to purchase shares of the acquiring company at a significantly reduced price. Because it threatens to dilute and devalue the stock of the corporation attempting to take over the target, the tactic functions as a hostile takeover defense.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following is/are the initiatives of UNESCO?

1. Global Geopark Network
2. World Heritage Education Programme
3. Man and Biosphere Programme
4. Creative Cities Network

Options:

- a. 2 and 3 only
- b. 2 and 4 only
- c. 1 and 4 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: d

Explanation:

- **UNESCO Global Geoparks** are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. At present, there are 169 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 44 countries.
- The **UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme**, initiated as a UNESCO special project in 1994, gives young people a chance to voice their concerns and to become involved in the protection of our common cultural and natural heritage.
- **UNESCO's MAB programme** is an intergovernmental scientific programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments.
- The **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN)** was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- **Hence option D is correct.**

Q2. Which of the given statement/s is/are INCORRECT?

1. A government resorts to a reduction of Repo rate to reduce inflation.
2. A government cuts its spending to reduce inflation.
3. Inflation target to be set by the Reserve Bank of India, in consultation with the Government of India, once every five years.

Options:

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Inflation is the general rise in the prices of goods and services in an economy, over a period of time. It reduces the purchasing power of consumers, because each unit of currency can purchase fewer products with an increase in the general price levels.
- In the event of inflation, **central banks increase the repo rate** as this acts as a disincentive for banks to borrow from the central bank. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- The government resorts to **Cuts in government spending to reduce inflation. Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- The amended RBI Act provides for the inflation target to be set **by the Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank**, once in every five years. **Hence Statement 3 is not correct.**

Q3. Which of the given statements with respect to INSV Tarini is/are correct?

1. It is an indigenously-built sailing vessel, which was inducted in the Indian Navy in 1971.
2. The first Indian all-woman crew circumnavigated the globe in INSV Tarini.
3. It was inducted in the Indian Navy with the objective of ocean surveillance.

Options:

- a. 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The INSV Tarini is 55 feet in length and built in India in line with the 'Make in India' initiative of the Indian Navy, fructified by M/s Aquarius Shipyard, Goa.
- The Tarini vessel was handed over to the Indian Navy on 18 February 2017, christened INSV Tarini, after the Tara Tarini temple. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- INSV Tarini is being inducted into the Navy and is slated to be the platform for the First Indian **All Women Circumnavigation** of the Globe expedition of the Indian Navy. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- Tarini aims to promote a spirit of adventure and camaraderie amongst the young Naval personnel in the years ahead. **Hence Statement 3 is not correct.**

Q4. Which of the given statements with respect to National Technical Research Organization (NTRO) is/are correct?

1. NTRO was created after the 1999 Kargil war as a dedicated technical intelligence agency.
2. It has the right to lawfully intercept and monitor communications externally.
3. National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Center (NCIIPC) is a unit under NTRO.
4. The National Technical Textiles Mission was launched by NTRO.

Options:

- a. 4 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: c

Explanation:

- India's technical intelligence gathering agency is the National Technical Research Organization (NTRO).
- On the recommendations of the Girish Chanda Saxena task force, NTRO was established in 2004 as a dedicated technical intelligence agency following the Kargil war. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- It has been fighting tooth and nail to get included in the list as it has the right to lawfully intercept and monitor communications externally. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- The National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre is designated as the National Nodal Agency in terms of Critical Information Infrastructure Protection. It is a unit of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and therefore comes under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**
- The National Technical Textiles Mission is operational in the **Ministry of Textiles**. **Hence Statement 4 is not correct.**

Q5. What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram?

1. Both were built in the same period.
2. Both belong to the same religious denomination.

3. Both have rock-cut monuments.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 1 and 3 only
- d. None of the statements given above is correct

Answer: b

Explanation:

- The Ajanta caves have evolved during the period of the 2nd century BC to the 6th Century AD. The Imperial Pallavas ruled from the 6th century AD for about 400 years. Their capital city was Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram was their seaport. The word 'Pallava' in Sanskrit means 'sprout'. **Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Buddhist religion was practised in Ajanta. Scenes from Mahabalipuram include Arjuna's penance, the Jala-Sayana Perumal temple, and others. It is primarily associated with Vaishnavites. **Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**
- Both are rock-cut monuments, as Ajanta has cave-cut Chaityas, Viharas, and Stupas. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Discuss the powers of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Polity and Governance]
2. Discuss the key recommendations of the Data Security Council of India with respect to framing a robust and holistic cyber security policy. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-3, Cyber security]