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Articles of the day - THE HINDU (13-12-2019)

INDEX

I

- 1. CAG hints at massive diversion of LPG...GS-2**
- 2. SC, ST quota in Parliament extended...GS-2**
- 3. Should the creamy layer norm be extended to SC/STs?...GS-2**
- 4. IIP shrinks again, inflation accelerates...GS-3**
- 5. Not many lessons learnt from water planning failures...GS-3**
- 6. IRDAI forms group to study loss prevention...GS-3**

II

Prelims & Mains daily practice questions

1. CAG hints at massive diversion of LPG...GS-2

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) - Diversion of LPG

In News

- The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in a report on the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), has highlighted the risk of diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial use,

PMUY

- Objective: Providing clean-cooking fuel to the poor households, which are otherwise vulnerable to health hazards associated with indoor air pollution(which annually causes 10 lakh deaths in India)
- It is implemented by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas through its Oil Marketing Companies (i.e., IOC, BPCL and HPCL) and their distributors network.
- As on 31 March 2019, the oil marketing companies had issued 7.19 crore connections, which is about 90% of the target of 8 crore connections to be achieved till March 2020.

Some of the findings of the CAG report are:

- 1.98 lakh beneficiaries had an average annual consumption of more than 12 cylinders.The CAG said this level of consumption seemed improbable in view of the BPL (below poverty line) status of such beneficiaries.
- To rule out existing LPG connections in beneficiaries' household, de-duplication was to be carried out based on Aadhaar of all family members.
- Data analysis also revealed that 8.59 lakh connections were released to beneficiaries who were minor as per the SECC-2011 data, which was in violation of PMUY guidelines and LPG Control Order, 2000.
- It also exposed a mismatch in the name of 12.46 lakh beneficiaries between the PMUY database and SECC-2011 data.
- The audit also highlighted the delay of more than 365 days in the installation of 4.35 lakh connections against the stipulated time period of seven days.

2. SC, ST quota in Parliament extended...GS-2

Context:

- Parliament recently passed a Constitution amendment bill to extend quota to SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state assemblies by another 10 years.
- Govt also asserted that the Central government will never stop the reservation system
- Also Revoked the provision for nomination of Anglo-Indians to the Lok Sabha and 14 state Assemblies
- The bill would now be sent to the states for ratification by 50 per cent of the assemblies before it comes into force.

Background

- Reservation for members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), given for the past 70 years in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, is due to end on January 25, 2020.
- The reservation for Anglo-Indians in the form of “nomination” is set to expire on January 25 2020 as the bill does not extend the facility to the community.

Amendment of the Constitution

- Amending the Constitution of India is the process of making changes to the nation’s fundamental law or supreme law.
- The procedure of amendment in the constitution is laid down in **Part XX (Article 368)** of the Constitution of India which ensures the sanctity of the Constitution of India and keeps a check on arbitrary power of the Parliament of India.
- There have been conflicts between the Supreme Court and Parliament, where Parliament wants to exercise discretionary use of power to amend the constitution while the Supreme Court wants to restrict that power.
- This has led to the laying down of various doctrines; the most famous among them is the **Basic structure doctrine** as laid down by the Supreme Court in the case of **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala**.

Procedure

- An amendment of the Constitution can be initiated only by the introduction of a Bill in either House of Parliament.
- The Bill must then be passed in each House by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than **two-thirds** of the members of that House present and voting. **(special majority)**
- There is no provision for a joint sitting in case of disagreement between the two Houses.
- The Bill, passed by the required majority, is then presented to the President who shall give his assent to the Bill.
- If the amendment seeks to make any change in any of the provisions mentioned in the provision to article 368, it must be ratified by the Legislatures of not less than one-half of the States.
- Although there is no prescribed time limit for ratification, it must be completed before the amending Bill is presented to the President for his assent

Do you know?

- Parliament is free to enact any number of constitutional amendments in any given year. Although Parliament must preserve the basic framework of the Constitution,

there is no other limitation placed upon the amending power, meaning that there is no provision of the Constitution that cannot be amended.

- Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are among the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups in India. Hence, the Government of India has enacted progressive legislation, programmes and schemes for the development and empowerment of the SCs and STs.
- Article 366(2) of the Constitution Of India states: “An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only...”

3. Should the creamy layer norm be extended to SC/STs?...GS-2

Why reservation was given to SC/STs?

- Reservation in politics, services and institutions is given to SCs particularly because they were denied the right to property, education and industries for nearly 2,000 years. Besides they were treated as untouchables.
- Discrimination continues even today in society. The argument was that to provide them the safeguard [against discrimination] and compensate them to some extent for past exclusions, they should be given representation as per their population share.
- Because otherwise, due to persisting discrimination in services, enterprises and agriculture, they won't get their due share.

What is creamy layer?

- According to the 1993 order, sons and daughters of Group A/Class I Officers of the All India Central and State Services (direct recruits), Group B/Class II Officers of Central and State Services (direct recruits), employees of Public Sector Undertakings, etc. and armed forces fall within the creamy layer, and, therefore, they would not be entitled to reservation benefits.

Why creamy layer concept should be applied to SC/STs?

- Creamy layer is required because a majority of seats reserved in the central and state institutions and the employment opportunities are taken away by the established and the economically better. By taking away these seats the poor in the community miss the opportunity of moving up the economic ladder.

Creamy layer should not be applied to SC/STs

- We have to recognise that while both OBCs and SCs get reservations, the social reality under which Dalits live and the situation under which OBCs live are very different.
 - For the OBCs it is only economic backwardness but for the Dalits, it is social discrimination.
- The reservation policy is against discrimination; it is not based on economic consideration because discrimination is independent of economic standing.
- Women are asking for reservations. Have they ever raised the issue that relatively better-off women should not get political reservations? Because they are discriminated based on gender, poor or non-poor.

- The point is that the reason for reservations for Dalits is not economic backwardness. It is the stigma that comes on account of the untouchable status. And even though legally untouchability has been abolished, there is a lot of data that show that people still practise untouchability. So for the stigma that comes on account of an untouchable status, reservation is only a tiny remedial measure for that.
- The economically better-off also face discrimination, in service and many other spheres. They also need a safeguard and that safeguard is the affirmative action policy.
 - Since they are economically better-off, don't give them economic advantages like subsidies. They can afford that but one cannot extend this argument to say reservation should be withdrawn for the better-off.

Reservation in Promotion

- According to statistics, there is huge discrimination once a person gets into service.
- There are about 12,000 cases lying with the SC/ST Commission, complaining about discrimination in service. Therefore, they need protection in promotion.
- The Supreme Court and government should further undertake a study.

Way forward

- Under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, it is the government's responsibility to undertake a study every five years, to bring out the nature of discrimination and untouchability faced by Dalits. The government's SC/ST Commission report is supposed to have a separate chapter on untouchability.
- Therefore we need a data-based, evidence-based approach to judging reservations. We need to have greater transparency and data-based evidence to support any claims.

4. IIP shrinks again, inflation accelerates

A combination of contraction in industrial activity and rising inflation has led experts to fear that India is entering a phase of stagflation (a situation in which there is persistent high inflation combined with stagnant or declining demand).

Index of Industrial Production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that indicates the performance of various industrial sectors of the Indian economy.
- It is calculated and published by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) every month.
- It is a composite indicator of the general level of industrial activity in the economy.

IIP - Explanation

- This index gives the growth rates of different industry groups of the economy over a specified time period.
- The industry groups that it measures are classified under the following:
 - **Broad sectors** like manufacturing, mining and electricity.
 - **Use-based sectors** like capital goods, basic goods, intermediate goods, infrastructure goods, consumer durables and consumer non-durables.
- The eight core industries of India represent about 40% of the weight of items that are included in the IIP. The **Eight Core Sectors/Industries** are:
 - Electricity
 - Steel
 - Refinery products
 - Crude oil
 - Coal
 - Cement
 - Natural gas
 - Fertilisers
- The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) recommends including quarrying, gas steam and air-conditioning supply, sewerage, water supply, waste management and remediation in the broad sectors. But this is not done due to the problems in data availability on a monthly basis for all these sectors. So, the data has been restricted to mining, electricity and manufacturing.

Index of Industrial Production Importance

- The Index is used by government agencies and departments such as the Finance Ministry and the RBI for policy making.

- It is also used for estimating the Gross Value Added of the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis.
- In addition, the Index is also used by business analysts, financial experts and the private industry for multiple purposes.
- It is the only measure on the physical volume of production.
- It is also extremely useful for the projection of advance GDP estimates.

IIP Latest Change

- The latest change in the IIP was made in 2017.
- Any index is to be subject to changes and modifications like changing the base year, including more items in the basket, etc.
- The new and current base year for IIP is 2011 - 12. The previous base year was 2004 - 05.
- Another change was the inclusion and deletion of certain items in the data series.
- Some items introduced:
 - Refined palm oil
 - Surgical accessories
 - Cement clinkers
- Some items removed:
 - Chewing tobacco
 - Tooth brush
 - Calculators
 - Fans
 - Watches
 - Pens
- This is the 9th base year revision ever since IIP was first published in 1950. The first base year was 1937.

5. Not many lessons learnt from water planning failures

Background

- The Central government had launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) which is a time-bound, mission-mode water conservation campaign.
- It is not a funding programme and did not create any new intervention on its own.
- Its only aim was to make water conservation a 'people's movement' through ongoing schemes like the MGNREGA and other government programmes.
- The JSA is partly modelled and driven by some **sporadic success stories** such as NGO Tarun Bharat Sangh's experiment in Alwar, Rajasthan and Anna Hazare-led efforts in Ralegan Siddhi, Maharashtra. These projects primarily involved building tanks and ponds to capture rainwater and building recharge wells to recharge groundwater.

Concerns around JSA

- Water planning should be based on hydrological units, namely river basins. And, political and administrative boundaries of districts rarely coincide with the hydrological boundaries or aquifer boundaries.
 - However, contrary to this principle of water management, JSA was planned based on the boundary of the districts, and to be carried out under the overall supervision of a bureaucrat.
 - This resulted in the division of basins/aquifers into multiple units that followed multiple policies.
- The JSA's portal displays impressive data, images and statistics.
 - For example, it claims that there are around 10 million ongoing and completed water conservation structures; 7.6 million recharge structures. The website also says that one billion saplings have been planted and that six million people participated in awareness campaigns.
- But, data and statistics can deceive or lie.
 - For example, the data displayed on the JSA portal do not speak anything about the pre-JSA water levels, the monthly water levels and the impact of monsoons on the water levels across the 255 districts with critical and over-exploited blocks. They also don't convey anything about the quality of the structures, their maintenance and sustainability.
- Moreover, it is difficult to say whether measures like JSA can provide long-term solutions. Most of the farm bunds are built with soil which can collapse within one monsoon season.
- Further, there are issues like **lack of proper engineering supervision of these structures**, involvement of multiple departments with less or no coordination, and limited funding under MGNERGA and other schemes.
- Finally, there have hardly been any efforts undertaken to dissuade farmers from growing water-intensive crops such as paddy, sugarcane, and banana, when it is widely known that agriculture consumes 80% of freshwater.

Shallow Assumptions

True, the aim and intent of JSA are noble. But the assumptions are distorted.

- For example, it assumes that **common people in rural areas are ignorant and prone to wasting water**; on the contrary, they are the ones who first bear the brunt of any water crisis.
- The per capita water allocation to those living in **rural areas is 55 litres**, whereas the same for urban areas **like Delhi and Bengaluru is 135-150 litres**.
- Therefore, the JSA's move to reach out to poor people and farmers, asking them to 'save water', appears hypocritical, particularly when district administrations blatantly allow the sewage generated from towns and cities to pollute village **water** sources such as tanks, ponds and wells.

Conclusion

- The steps taken by Central Government under this program indicate a good start but it will require addressing of the above-mentioned issues to find a solution to the water crisis prevalent in India.

6. IRDAI forms group to study loss prevention.

What's in News?

A ten-member working group has been constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to suggest segment-wise ways and means to improve loss prevention and loss minimization in the general insurance industry.

- The move is aimed at all stakeholders working together towards a common end on a common platform.
- It is opined that, though a crucial aspect for the insurance industry, loss prevention and loss minimization measures have remained very company-specific. There may be considerable overlap in the way companies approach the issue, yet there is little in terms of knowledge-sharing, something that the working group sought to formalise.
- Steps for loss prevention and loss mitigation not only help the insured and the insurer but also help mitigate economic losses in a larger context.
- The working group is expected to evaluate current practices followed by the insurance industry in the area of loss prevention and loss minimization.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is an apex regulatory body involved in regulating and developing the insurance and reinsurance industry in India. It was constituted as a statutory body as per the provisions of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act 1999. The body was created on the recommendations of the Malhotra Committee Report. All the companies wanting to run the insurance business in India are to be registered with the IRDAI.

IRDAI is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Organisational Set-up:

The authority is a ten member body consisting of

- A chairman
- Five whole time members
- Four part time members

All the members to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India are appointed by the Government of India.

Functions of IRDAI:

- IRDAI is responsible for the registration, renewal, modification, withdrawal, suspension or cancellation of such registration to the applicants wanting to start Insurance business in India.
- Protection of the interests of the policy holders
- Control and regulation of the rates, advantages, terms and conditions that may be offered by insurers in respect of general insurance business not so controlled and regulated by the Tariff Advisory Committee
- Regulating and maintenance of margin of solvency
- Specifying qualifications, the code of conduct and training for intermediaries and agents
- Specifying the code of conduct for surveyors and loss assessors
- Adjudication of disputes between insurers and intermediaries or insurance intermediaries
- Supervising the functioning of the Tariff Advisory Committee
- Calling for information from, undertaking inspection of, conducting inquiries and investigations including audit of the insurers, intermediaries, insurance intermediaries and other organizations connected with the insurance business
- Promotion of competition so as to enhance customer satisfaction through increased consumer choice and lower premiums

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements with respect to Inner Line Permit (ILP)

1. ILP is issued by the central government.
2. ILP is obligatory for all those who reside outside the protected states.
3. ILP can solely be issued for travel purposes.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document to allow inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. It can be issued for travel purposes solely. The ILP is obligatory for all those who reside outside the protected states. An ILP is issued by the state government concerned.

2. An economy is said to be experiencing 'stagflation' when

1. Economic growth stagnates or slows down.
2. General prices in the economy rise.
3. General prices in the economy fall.

Choose the correct option:

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

Explanation:

Stagflation is a condition of slow economic growth and relatively high unemployment, or economic stagnation, accompanied by rising prices, or inflation. It can also be defined as inflation and a decline in the gross domestic product (GDP).

3. With reference to **Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)**, consider the following statements:

1. Through this Centre, information on commercial shipping will be exchanged with countries in the region to improve maritime security.

2. This initiative was started by the Indian Army.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : a

IFC-IOR is established with the vision of strengthening maritime security in the region and beyond, by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a maritime information hub for the region. The IFC has been established at Gurugram, India and is collocated with Information Management and Analysis Centre which is jointly administered by the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Through this Centre, information on —white shipping, or commercial shipping, will be exchanged with countries in the region to improve maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

The setting up of IFC-IOR underscores the governmental approach and effort in line with the vision of India towards Security and Growth of All in the Region (**SAGAR**).

4. Consider the following statements with respect to Cyber Swachhta Kendra

- 1. Cyber Swachhta Kendra is a part of the Government of India's Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.
- 2. It was set up to create a secure cyber space by detecting botnet infections in India and to notify, enable cleaning and securing systems of end users.

3. It is being operated by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

The “Cyber Swachhta Kendra ” (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) is a part of the Government of India’s Digital India initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to create a secure cyber space by detecting botnet infections in India and to notify, enable cleaning and securing systems of end users so as to prevent further infections. The Cyber Swachhta Kendra is set up in accordance with the objectives of the “National Cyber Security Policy”, which envisages creating a secure cyber eco system in the country. This centre is being operated by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under provisions of Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

5. Consider the following statements:

1. Citizenship signifies the relationship between an individual and the government.
2. The provisions relating to citizenship are dealt with in Articles 5 to 11 in Part II of the Constitution of India.
3. The Constitution of India provides for a single citizenship for the entire country.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Explanation: Answer: c

Citizenship signifies the relationship between the individual and the state.

6. Consider the following statements:

1. The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 contains a provision allowing for Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) to be tried as adults under certain circumstances.
2. The Juvenile Justice Act defines a child as someone who is under the age of 14.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Explanation:

The Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 contains a provision allowing for Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) to be tried as adults under certain circumstances. The Act defines a child as someone who is under the age of 18. "Child in Conflict with Law" has been defined under Section 2 (13) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 as a child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and has not completed eighteen years of age on the date of commission of such offence.

DAILY MAINS QUESTION

(GS3: Environment: Environmental Degradation).

**1. India's rivers are enriched with heavy metals by the human actions. What are the effects of on both human beings and wildlife? Discuss the suitable measures to be taken in this regard.
(150 Words) (12 Marks).**

Reference: "Heavy metals contaminating India's rivers" - The Hindu, Page 7- Dec 12, 2019 Edition.

Approach:

1. Give a brief introduction about the status of river pollution in India.
2. Explain the reasons for such a situation. Ex: mining, industries etc.

3. Discuss about the impact of heavy metals on human health and wildlife.
4. Elaborate on the relation between wild human beings with the help of food chain.
5. Give suitable suggestions and a futuristic way forward for the same.

2. Unscientific use of irrigation water is giving rise to a variety of ecological problems in India. Elucidate.

(GS3: Environment: Environmental Degradation).

Approach:

1. Introduce the answer by giving a brief highlight of present scenario of irrigation in India.
2. Explain in brief the issue of unscientific use of irrigation water.
3. Enlist the ecological hazards resulting from the same.
4. Conclude by giving a way forward.