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Thursday, 08 February 2024

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DR.G.S.GIRIDHAR SIR



Thursday, 08 February 2024

The Public Examinations (Prevention Of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024

- The Lok Sabha passed 'The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024' aimed at curbing leaks, malpractices as well as organised malpractices in recruitment examinations like UPSC, SSC etc and entrance tests such as NEET, JEE, and CUET.
- Prevention of Unfair Means Bill, 2024" will also cover entrance examinations held by the Union Public Service Commission, the Staff Selection Commission, the Railways, banking recruitment examinations and all computer-based examinations conducted by the National Testing Agency.
- Dr Jitendra Singh clarified that the students or the candidates appearing in these examinations have been kept out of the purview of Bill and assured that they will continue to be governed as per provisions of the agencies conducting the exams.
- All exams held by the UPSC and SSC will be conducted in 13 regional languages.
- The Bill proposes a punishment of a minimum of three to five years of imprisonment to curb cheating and for those involved in organised crimes of cheating will face five to 10 years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 1 crore.
- The Bill is aimed at preventing organised gangs and institutions that are involved in unfair means for monetary gains, but it protects candidates from its provisions.

Q. Lok Sabha passed the 'Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024'. To curb fraud, there is a provision for minimum imprisonment of how many years in the bill? **three to five years**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Maharashtra Proposes 40 Ropeway Projects, Inks MoU With NHAI For Execution

- The National Highways Logistic Management Limited (NHLML) has partnered with the Maharashtra government to implement ropeways as part of the National Ropeway Programme 'Parvatmala'.
- The Maharashtra Public Work Department and NHLML, a 100 per cent owned special purpose vehicle of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) for infrastructure development, formalised their collaboration by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this regard.
- NHLML is responsible for implementation of the ropeways projects.
- The state government has put forward a total of 40 ropeway projects for consideration under the scheme. These proposals are mainly from Mumbai, Satara, Raigad, Nashik, Nanded, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg, with an additional five projects from Pune.
- Some of the proposal entail providing ropeway connectivity to major tourist destinations such as Sinhagad Fort, Rajgad Fort, Shivneri Fort, Darya Ghat, and Lenyadri Ashtavinayak at Junnar in Pune.
- Note: Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Andhra Pradesh, have inked MoU with NHLML for construction of ropeways under the ambitious Parvatmala Yojana.

Q. National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) has partnered with the Government of Maharashtra to implement the ropeway as part of the National Ropeway Program '_____'.
'Parvatmala'



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Sri Lanka Pursues Free Trade Agreements with India to Boost Economic Growth

- Sri Lanka it has plans to establish a free trade agreement with India by the end of 2024, Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said as the cash-strapped island nation tries to spur economic growth.
- Similar Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) would be worked out for Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and China too by the year's end, Sabry told reporters here.
- These agreements will open up new markets for the cash-strapped Sri Lankan businesses, contributing directly to the nation's economic growth.
- Sri Lanka and India resumed talks on the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement in Colombo at the 12th round in October last year.
- Last week, Sri Lanka inked an FTA with Thailand.
- This has already provided Sri Lanka access to a USD 2.2 billion market, representing a significant advancement.
- In the 1990s, exports contributed a significant 30 per cent to Sri Lanka's GDP, compared to 15 per cent today.
- The main reason behind Sri Lanka's export struggles is its limited market access. While focusing primarily on the domestic market, countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh actively expanded into larger international markets through FTAs.
- In April 2022, after Sri Lanka declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948, the then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was thrown out through a public agitation and the incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe took over.
- He put in place unpopular economic reforms to supplement a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Q. Which country has signed a free trade agreement with India to boost economic growth? **Sri Lanka**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Leading Wi-Fi solutions provider Netgear appoints new CEO

- Global networking company Netgear appointed Charles (CJ) Prober as its CEO.
- Prober succeeds Patrick C.S. Lo, who is retiring from his position as CEO and Chairman of the board.
- Prober will also join Netgear's board of directors and Lo will remain as a strategic advisor to support a seamless leadership transition through July.
- Prober earlier worked as President of Life360, CEO at Tile (acquired by Life360), Chief Operating Officer at GoPro, and SVP of Digital Publishing at Electronic Arts (EA).
- Prior to his operating roles, Prober served as a consultant with McKinsey & Company where he helped to guide some of the world's leading business-to-business (B2B) technology companies.
- Leading Wi-Fi solutions provider Netgear offers advanced connected solutions ranging from mobile and cloud-based services for enhanced control and security, to smart networking products, video over Ethernet for Pro AV applications, and performance gaming routers to enhance online gameplay.

Q. Who was appointed by global networking company Netgear as its CEO? **Charles (CJ) Prober**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Chile's ex-President Sebastian Pinera dies in helicopter crash

- Chilean ex-President Sebastian Pinera died in a helicopter crash.
- The helicopter carrying Pinera, 74, and three others plunged into a lake in southern Chile.
- Pinera, also a successful businessman, oversaw quick economic growth and a steep fall in unemployment during his first 2010 to 2014 presidency, at a time when many of Chile's trade partners and neighbours were facing sharply slower growth.
- His second presidency from 2018 to 2022 was marked by violent protests against inequality that led to accusations of human rights violations and ended with the government promising to draft a new constitution.
- Pinera was the owner of the fifth largest fortune in Chile, estimated at some \$3bn.
- He worked as an academic in several universities for almost 20 years and as a consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.
- As a businessman in the 1970s through the 1990s, he worked in a variety of industries, including real estate.
- He held shares in major airlines as well as telecommunication, real estate and electricity companies. He also created one of the largest credit card companies in the country.
- In 2009, he handed over the management of his businesses to others.
- In 2006, he lost to socialist Michelle Bachelet; then in 2010, he defeated former President Eduardo Frei.
- Four years after his first term, in 2018, he won a second four-year term after defeating a leftist independent.

Q. Former Chilean President Sebastian Pinera died in a helicopter crash. How many times did he serve as President of Chile? **2**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

CCI approves acquisition of 70% stake by Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. in Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of 70 per cent stake in Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited by the Zurich Insurance Company.
- The proposed combination involves the acquisition of a majority stake in the Target by the Acquirer from Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited.
- Pursuant to the proposed combination, the Acquirer will acquire a 51 per cent stake in the Target (through a combination of fresh growth capital and share purchase).
- In addition to the above, the Acquirer will also acquire an additional stake of up to 19 per cent in the Target, over a period of time.
- The Acquirer is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zurich Insurance Group Ltd (Zurich Insurance Group), and is a leading multi-line insurer serving people and businesses in more than 200 countries and territories.
- The Acquirer, as part of the Zurich group, has about 60,000 employees and is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.
- The Acquirer is the principal operating insurance company of the Zurich Insurance Group. Besides being an insurance company, the Acquirer also acts as the holding company of many subsidiaries and other affiliates of the Zurich Insurance Group, except for the Group's property loans and banking activities.

Q. CCI approved the acquisition of how much % stake in Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited by Zurich Insurance Company Limited? **70%**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Rajya Sabha Clears Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024

- The Rajya Sabha passed a Bill which seeks to decriminalise minor offences related to water pollution, enable the Centre to prescribe service conditions of chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards, and exempt certain categories of industrial plants from statutory restrictions.
- The Bill was approved by the Rajya Sabha by voice vote.
- According to the statement of objects and reasons of the Bill, the amendment proposes to rationalise criminal provisions and ensure that citizens, businesses and companies operate without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural defaults.
- Also, the nature of penal consequence of an offence must be commensurate with the seriousness of offence, it added.
- According to the Bill, the central government will be empowered to exempt certain categories of industrial plants from the application of section 25 relating to restriction on new outlets and new discharges.
- According to the proposed law, the central government will prescribe the manner of nomination of chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards.
- It also empowers the central government to issue guidelines on the matters relating to the grant, refusal or cancellation of consent by any state board for establishment of any industry, operation or process, or treatment and disposal system or bringing into use of new or altered outlets.
- The Bill also seeks to decriminalise minor offences and replace it with monetary penalty in case of continuation of contravention.

Q. Rajya Sabha approved the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024. According to the Bill, the Central Government will be empowered to exempt certain categories of industrial plants from the application of _____ relating to restrictions on new outlets and new discharges. **Section 25**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

ICC Test Player Rankings: Jasprit Bumrah becomes first Indian fast bowler to be ranked No 1 bowler

- India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah became the first Indian pacer to claim the No.1 spot on the latest ICC Men's Test Bowler rankings.
- Bumrah rose to the top for the first time on the back of his tremendous match figures of 9/91 during his side's series-equalling 106-run victory over England in the second Test in Vizag.
- After taking nine wickets in the second Test, Bumrah was named Player of the Match.
- He also moved up three spots in the most recent Test bowler rankings, unseating teammate Ravichandran Ashwin.
- Despite missing the Proteas' Test series in New Zealand, South Africa's Kagiso Rabada, who leads the pace department, is still ranked second among Test bowlers.
- Ashwin, who has been ranked first since March of last year, took just three wickets for India in that same match and falls two spots to third.
- Bumrah is just the fourth player from India - and first fast bowler - to top the bowling charts, with Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Bishan Bedi, the only players from the Asian country to have done so previously.

Q. Who became the first Indian fast bowler to become the number 1 bowler in the ICC Test Player Rankings? **Jasprit Bumrah**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Nayib Bukele Secures Reelection As El Salvador President

- Nayib Bukele, the incumbent President of El Salvador, secured a thumping victory for a second consecutive term in elections in the Central American country.
- New Ideas, Bukele's party, is reportedly expected to win all of the 60 seats in the legislative body.

Who is Nayib Bukele?

- Born on July 24, 1981, Bukele is often called the 'world's coolest dictator', a tag which he has received from his followers on social media.
- A former publicist, Bukele earlier served as the Mayor of San Salvador from May 2015 to April 2018.
- He came into the limelight around the world in 2019 when his party, New Ideas, came to power trouncing traditional parties -- Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA).

El Salvador's economic woes:

- Despite securing a second term easily, Bukele's biggest challenge will be to save El Salvador's economy, which has recorded the slowest growth in the Central American region during his maiden term.
- As per reports, more than a quarter of people in El Salvador live in poverty.
- Last year, the IMF, which is currently negotiating a \$1.3 billion bailout with the country, described its fiscal situation as 'fragile'.

Q. Who was elected as the President of El Salvador? **Nayib Bukele**



Thursday, 08 February 2024

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launches EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme in New Delhi

- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, launched the EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme in New Delhi.
- Vidyanjali Scholarship Program symbolises a whole-of-society approach to empowerment through access and opportunities of education, particularly to students belonging to economically disadvantaged sections.
- He commended the efforts of students of NVS and mentioned that nearly 14,000 students have succeeded in getting admission to reputed institutes including IITs, NITs, etc. without joining any coaching centres.
- Many students come from marginalised families. He also added that 70 students are being bestowed upon the scholarship amounting to Rs.5 crore.

EDCIL VIDYANJALI SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME:

- The EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme, in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020, is a powerful force aimed at revolutionising opportunities for quality education and access to higher education institutions.
- Beyond mere enrolment, this initiative guarantees access to high-quality learning systems by facilitating a seamless transition from secondary to higher education and extending financial support for the meritorious Navodaya Vidyalaya students who lack means.

Q. Which Union Minister launched the EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Program in New Delhi? **Dharmendra Pradhan**



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