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Daily MCQs: 09-06-2024

1. Consider the following statements about Special Economic Zones

- 1) It is a geographical region that has economic laws that are more liberal than a country's domestic economic laws.
- 2) The main objectives of the SEZ Scheme is to promote exports and imports goods and services.

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

2. With reference to sickle cell anemia, consider the following statements

- 1) It is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder.
- 2) It primarily affects the shape and function of red blood cells.
- 3) Blood transfusion with normal red blood cells is a potential treatment option for sickle cell anemia.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

3. Consider the following statements about the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

- 1) It addresses the issue of workplace sexual harassment faced by women in government organisations only.
- 2) According to the Act, every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.

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

4. Which of the following countries is not part of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)?

- A) Switzerland
- B) Norway
- C) Iceland
- D) Poland

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5. In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)?

- a) Singapore, Australia, Vietnam and Russia
- b) Australia, India, Malaysia and United States
- c) Brunei, Japan, United States and Canada
- d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and China

Solutions:

1. Answer: A

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct:** A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a geographical region that has **economic laws that are more liberal** than a country's domestic economic laws.
- The main objectives of the SEZ Scheme is
 - generation of additional economic activity,
 - promotion of exports of goods and services, (not imports) Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**
 - promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources,
 - creation of employment opportunities along with the development of infrastructure facilities.
- **Financial incentives** are granted to those setting up SEZs and cover a wider gamut of benefits for investors across taxation, customs, labor regulations, etc.
- Each Zone is headed by a **Development Commissioner** and is administered as per the **SEZ Act, 2005 and SEZ Rules, 2006.**
- It should be noted that **all Goods and services supplied by SEZ units to Domestic Tariff Area** (whole of India but does not include the areas of the SEZ) are **treated as imports** into India and subject to all procedures and rules applicable in case of normal imports into India.

Salient Features

- The salient features of the SEZ scheme are:-
 - A **designated duty free enclave to be treated as a territory outside the customs territory of India** for the purpose of authorized operations in the SEZ;
 - **No license required for import;**
 - **Manufacturing or service** activities allowed;
 - The Unit shall achieve **Positive Net Foreign Exchange** to be calculated cumulatively for a **period of five years** from the commencement of production;
 - **Domestic sales are subject to full customs duty and import policy in force;**
 - SEZ units will have freedom for subcontracting;
 - No routine examination by customs authorities of export/import cargo;
 - SEZ Developers /Co-Developers and Units enjoy tax benefits as prescribed in the SEZs Act, 2005.

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2. Answer: C

Explanation

- The Government of India has launched the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission** to address the pressing health challenges posed by sickle cell disease, particularly among the tribal population.
- The launch will mark a crucial milestone in the Government's ongoing efforts to **eliminate sickle cell disease as a public health problem by 2047**.
- The mission aims to cover 7 crore people with screening, counseling for prevention and care for people with sickle cell disease in three and half years.

What is sickle cell anemia?

- Sickle cell anemia (SCA) is an **autosomal recessive genetic disease. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
 - An autosomal recessive disorder requires two copies of the mutated gene (one from each parent) to cause the disorder.
- **Hemoglobin** which is tasked with carrying oxygen to all parts of the body has **four protein subunits — two alpha and two beta**. In some people, **mutations in the gene** that creates the beta subunits **impact the shape of the blood cell and distort it to look like a sickle**, similar to the letter C. Hence **statement 2 is correct**.
- A round red blood cell can move easily through blood vessels because of its shape but sickle red blood cells **end up slowing and even blocking the blood flow**. Moreover, sickle cells **die early**, resulting in a **shortage of red blood cells that deprive the body of oxygen**.
- These obstructions and shortages may cause **chronic anemia, pain, fatigue, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and a host of other serious health complications**.

Prevalence

- **India is the second-worst affected country in terms of predicted births with SCA — i.e. chances of being born with the condition.**
- The disease burden from Sickle Cell anemia in India is **prevalent in tribal populations**. Tribes like **Pawara, Bhil, Madia, Gond and Pardhan from Maharashtra** have a very high prevalence.
- Sickle cell anemia is **most prevalent in the central India belt covering states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and parts of Bengal**. There are **pockets in the south, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and parts of Telangana**.
- There is a **lack of screening awareness and inadequate screening centers/facilities** in tribal and rural areas. Also, **failure to access primary healthcare** is a concern.

Treatment

- Sickle cell anemia is a **genetic disorder, making complete "elimination" a challenge** that requires a major scientific breakthrough.
- The only cure comes in the form of **gene therapy and stem cell transplants — both costly and still in developmental stages**.
- In gene therapy, the DNA inside the hemoglobin gene is edited to stop the disease while in stem cell transplants, the bone marrow affected by sickle cell anemia is replaced with

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healthy bone marrow from a donor. Both interventions are currently being tested in **clinical trials** globally.

- **Blood transfusion**, wherein red blood cells are removed from donated blood and given to a patient, is also a trusted treatment in the absence of permanent cures. But challenges include a **scarcity of donors, fears around safe supply of blood, risk of infection etc.** Hence statement 3 is correct.

3. Answer: B

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 addresses the issue of workplace sexual harassment faced by women in **private institutions and government organisations.**
- The act superseded **Vishakha Guidelines** laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997.
- The Act defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

- The Act defines **sexual harassment** to include **unwelcome acts** such as physical contact and sexual advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Definition of Workplace

- Under the Act, a **workplace** is defined as “any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey.”
- As per this definition, a workplace covers **both the organized and unorganized sectors.**
- It also includes all workplaces **whether owned by Indian or foreign company having a place of work in India.**
- As per the Act, workplace includes:-
 - Government organizations, including Government company, corporations and cooperative societies;-
 - Private sector organizations, venture, society, trust, NGO or service providers etc. providing services which are commercial, vocational, educational, sports, professional, entertainment, industrial, health related or financial activities, including production, supply, sale, distribution or service;-
 - Hospitals/Nursing Homes;-
 - Sports Institutes/Facilities;-
 - Places visited by the employee (including while on travel) including transportation provided by employer;
 - A dwelling place or house.

ICC & LCC

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee** at each office or branch with **10 or more employees.**

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- Every district will have a **Local Complaints Committee (LCC)** so as to enable women in the unorganised sector or small establishments to work in an environment free of sexual harassment.
- The LCC will receive complaints:
 - From women working in an organization having less than 10 workers;
 - When the complaint is against the employer himself;
 - From domestic workers.
- At least **50 percent** of the nominated members in any Internal or Local Committee must be women.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of **civil courts** for gathering evidence.
- The Complaints Committees are required to provide for **conciliation** before initiating an inquiry, if requested by the complainant.

4. Answer: D

Explanation

- EFTA is an **intergovernmental organization of four member countries that are not part of the European Union (EU): Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.**
- The association was set up in **1960** for the promotion of free trade and economic integration for the benefit of its four Member States.



5. Answer: B

Explanation

- In May 2022, United States President Joe Biden launched a new Asia-Pacific trade initiative known as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) in Tokyo.
- The framework includes 14 countries — **Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Fiji and the United States.** Hence option B is correct.
- **China, Russia and Canada are not part of the framework.**
- Together, the participants account for about 40 percent of global GDP and there are other countries that could join the initiative.

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What would IPEF do?

- IPEF is **neither an agreement nor a trade bloc, but a framework.**
- It seeks to **strengthen economic partnership among participating countries** with the objective of enhancing resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness and competitiveness in the region.
- IPEF foresees **integrating partners through agreed standards in four key pillars: fair and resilient trade, supply chain resiliency, clean energy decarbonisation, and tax and anti-corruption** - to deepen economic engagement in the region.
- The primary objective of the IPEF is to **ensure a high degree of regulatory coherence** and to make market access contingent upon realization of regulatory standards.

Significance

- The IPEF is part of the U.S.'s more than a decade old **"Pivot to Asia" programme**, re-imagining the Indo-Pacific as a geographic construct including America.
- The **Quad**, consisting **India, Australia, Japan and the U.S.**, is part of the same pitch made by the U.S. administration.
- IPEF is intended to offer US allies an alternative to China's growing commercial presence across the Asia-Pacific.
- The IPEF's **non-specific and flexible nature** also suits India, which has held strong views on a range of issues like labor standards, environmental restrictions on fossil fuels, and data localisation.
- India's inclusion also comes from a **geopolitical need to counter China's virtual control over Asian trade.**

India and IPEF

- India has chosen to **stay out of the Trade Policy Pillar** - which deals with issues pertaining to labor, environment, digital, and agriculture - at the Indo-Pacific Economic Forum (IPEF).
- IPEF has **four pillars — trade, supply chain, tax and anti corruption and clean energy.** The forum gives flexibility to the 14 member countries to choose which pillar/s they want to be part of.
- While India has not joined the trade pillar, it is **engaging in three other areas.** India was the only one of the 14 IPEF countries not to join the declaration on trade.
- **India has joined Pillars II to IV of IPEF while it has an observer status in Pillar-I.**