



CURRENT AFFAIRS QUIZ

**MCQs on important
news of the day
from Hindu &
Indian Express.**

JULY 2021

1) NATRAX- the High Speed Track (HST) is the longest such track in Asia. It is located in:

- a) Indore
- b) Kochi
- c) Mumbai
- d) Lucknow

Explanation: Union Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises inaugurated NATRAX- the High Speed Track(HST) in Indore which is the longest such track in Asia. It is a 11.3 km long High Speed Track.

NATRAX, developed in an area of 1000 acres of land, is a one stop solution for all sorts of high speed performance tests for widest categories of vehicles from 2 wheelers to heavy tractor trailers.

The NATRAX centre has multiple test capabilities like measurements of maximum speed, acceleration, constant speed fuel consumption, emission tests through real road driving simulation, high speed handling and stability evaluation during manoeuvred such as lane change, high speed durability testing, etc. and is a Centre of excellence for Vehicle Dynamics.

HST is used for measuring the maximum speed capability of high-end cars like BMW, Mercedes, Audi, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Tesla and so forth which cannot be measured on any of the Indian test tracks.

Being centrally located in Madhya Pradesh, it is accessible to most of the major OEMs. Foreign OEMs will be looking at NATRAX HST for the development of prototype cars for Indian conditions

Vehicle can achieve max speed of 375 Kmph on curves with steering control and it has less banking on ovals making it also one of the safest test track globally.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

2) With reference to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), consider the following statements:

1. It is under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
2. The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairperson of the NDMA, who chairs a 9-member board.

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

Explanation: The Supreme Court directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to frame guidelines for payment of ex-gratia compensation to family members of persons who succumbed to COVID-19.

It also directed the NDMA to ascertain within six weeks ex-gratia amount that can be paid to the family members of those who died due to the infection.

The court's order came in response to a plea seeking ex-gratia of four lakh rupees each to the families of all those who succumbed to the virus.

NDMA:

Parent body: Ministry of Home Affairs.

Primary Objective: To coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response.

HQ: Delhi.

Origin: NDMA was established through the Disaster Management Act enacted by the Government of India in 2005.

Organisation setup:

The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairperson of the NDMA, who chairs a 9-member board.

The remainder of the board consists of members nominated based on their expertise in areas such as, planning, infrastructure management, communications, meteorology etc.

The day-to-day management of the agency is overseen by the office of the Vice Chair.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

3) With reference to the Global Cyber Security Index (GCI) 2020, consider the following statements:

1. It is a composite index created, analyzed and published by the UNDP a specialized agency of the United Nations.
2. The top rank in the GCI was achieved by the US with a score of 100.
3. India ranked 10th in the fourth edition of the Global Cyber Security Index 2020 (GCI), a significant jump of 37 places from its previous GCI rank in 2018.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only**
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: According to a United Nations report released, India has jumped 37 places to 10th position in the Global Cyber Security Index (GCI) 2020.

The GCI is a composite index created, analyzed and published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialized agency of the United Nations.

It measures the commitment to cybersecurity of its 194 member countries to raise cybersecurity awareness.

The latest report is the fourth GCI edition by the ITU, the first version of which was launched six years ago.

Each country's development or engagement is assessed along five pillars – (i) Legal measures, (ii) Technical measures, (iii) Organizational measures, (iv) Capacity development, and (v) Cooperation- and then aggregated into a composite score.

Global rankings

The top rank in the GCI was achieved by the US with a score of 100.

The UK and Saudi Arabia finished second, tied for next place with a score of 99.54.

In the Asia Pacific region, South Korea and Singapore are on top with a score of 98.52, which ranks fourth globally.

Other countries at the top of the index include Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia (98.06) at fifth place, Lithuania at sixth, Japan at seventh and Canada, France and India at the subsequent positions.

Among other countries, Turkey (97.49) was ranked 11th, Germany (97.41) at 13th, China (92.53) at 33rd and Israel (90.93) at 36th position.

India's ranking

India ranked 10th in the fourth edition of the Global Cyber Security Index 2020 (GCI), a significant jump of 37 places from its previous GCI rank in 2018.

India also ranks fourth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

4) With reference to the Micro ATMs, consider the following statements:

1. They are card swipe machines through which banks can remotely connect to their core banking system.
2. They are similar to point of sale (PoS) terminals and are a doorstep mobile banking arrangement cum-mobile ATM device.

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

Explanation: In Ladakh, Cooperative Banking Service with Micro ATMs where both deposition and withdrawal of cash can be availed by the users will be introduced in far-flung areas.

Micro ATMs are card swipe machines through which banks can remotely connect to their core banking system. This machine comes with a fingerprint scanner attached to it.

In other words, micro ATMs are handheld point of sale terminals used to disburse cash in remote locations where bank branches cannot reach.

Micro ATMs are similar to point of sale (PoS) terminals and are a doorstep mobile banking arrangement cum-mobile ATM device.

Bank will assign a correspondent who will sign up customers in remote areas after verifying their identity (fingerprint can be used as an authentication tool for rural people).

The fingerprint and personal details may also be linked to the Aadhaar Card, which will then serve as the ID proof required to withdraw money.

Background:

In the aftermath of demonetisation event, Government of India introduced micro ATMs to ensure people can withdraw money.

Advantages

The cost of deployment of a micro ATM is lesser than that of an ordinary ATM. ATMs need at least 80-100 transactions a day to be viable as they cost several lakhs. A micro ATM costs less than Rs 20,000.

It is portable

Micro ATM has connectivity through GSM, hence it can travel from village to village

Disadvantages:

Micro ATM cannot provide 'anytime' money. Hence if the bank correspondent is unavailable or the shop keeper has shut his shop, the account holder will not be able to undertake any financial transaction.

Hence both statements are correct.

5) Which of the following is/are the salient features of India's first indigenous drone defence dome called "Indrajaal"?

1. Real-time situational awareness
2. Integrated and Intelligent meshed network
3. Honeycombed cell structure for seamlessly built

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3**

Explanation: Hyderabad-based technology R&D firm Grene Robotics has designed and developed India's first indigenous drone defence dome called "Indrajaal".

The drone defence dome has the capability to autonomously protect an area of 1000-2000

sq km against the aerial threats by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions, and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.

The ANTI-UAV systems will not only provide protection to defence bases but it will be beneficial for linear infrastructures like international borders against advanced weaponry.

Salient features of Indrajaal

Real-time situational awareness

Integrated and Intelligent meshed network

Integrated all current weapons suite and infrastructure

Honeycombed cell structure for seamlessly built

Synergic combination of 9-10 technologies

24x7 persistent and autonomous monitoring, action and tracking

Background

The path-breaking development is imperative because manual weapons and point-based defence systems can't defend modern warfares, which are operated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics.

For the first time in India and many times, globally rogue forces have adopted cutting-edge technologies such as UAVs, Smart Swarms, etc.

Jammu Air Base on June 27th was attacked by such technologies to drop explosives next to the Mi-17 hangar.

Capable of real-time situational awareness, Indrajaal comprises all current weapons suite and infrastructure along with a honeycombed cell structure to provide a seamlessly built over a combination of 9-10 technologies for 24x7 persistent monitoring, tracking and action.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

6) Consider following statements about Malaria.

1. Malaria is a life-threatening mosquito borne blood disease caused by plasmodium parasites.
2. The parasites spread through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
3. China is the only country in the Asia Pacific region to get the tag of Malaria free country.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 1 and 2

c) 2 only

d) 2 and 3

Explanation: Malaria is a life-threatening blood disease transmitted by mosquitos and caused by plasmodium parasites. It is mostly found in Africa's tropical and subtropical regions, as well as South America and Asia.

The parasites are transferred by female Anopheles mosquitoes that have been infected.

Parasites multiply within the liver cells after entering the human body and subsequently assault the Red Blood Cells (RBCs), causing them to rupture.

Human malaria is caused by five parasite species, two of which – Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax – are the most dangerous.

Malaria causes a fever and flu-like symptoms, as well as shaking chills, headaches, muscle aches, and exhaustion.

It is both avoidable and treatable. China was officially certified 'malaria-free' by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Tuesday, becoming the second country in the Asia

Pacific region to get the tag, after Sri Lanka in 2016.

7) Consider following statements about Bharatnet project:

1. BharatNet project originally aimed to provide broadband services at 100 Mbps to around 2.5 lakh gram panchayats of the country.
2. It is the world's largest rural connectivity scheme to be connected by the Optical Fibre network.
3. The project is being implemented by BSNL through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 3
- c) 2 and 3

d) 1 and 2

Explanation: The original goal of the BharatNet project was to bring 100 Mbps broadband to 2.5 lakh village panchayats across the country.

It is a highly scalable network infrastructure that is available to all Indian families, particularly in rural regions, on a non-discriminatory basis to provide on-demand, inexpensive broadband connectivity of 2 Mbps to 20 Mbps.

The Optical Fibre network will connect the world's largest rural connectivity initiative.

The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which was established to improve telecom services in rural and isolated areas of the country, is funding the entire project.

Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL) is implementing the project through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

The optical fibre network for broadband connections for the BharatNet project is being

provided by the Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) BSNL, RailTel, and PGCIL.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a viability gap funding support of up to ₹19,041 crore for the implementation of the BharatNet project through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in 16 States.

An estimated 3.61 lakh villages, including gram panchayats, would be covered via BharatNet.

8) Key Starting Materials" have been recently seen in news in context of -

a) Lithium-Ion Batteries

b) Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients

c) Diamonds

d) Crude Oil

Explanation: Key Starting Material (KSM) term is used for intermediates in the pharmaceutical industry. These are the building blocks of the drug industry. India imports KSM for many medicines from China and due to Coronavirus fears, the drug industry of the country is facing recession concerns.

9) Consider the following statements:

1. Diksha Portal was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).
2. Only government organisations can integrate DIKSHA into their respective teacher initiatives based on their goals, needs and capabilities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 & 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Diksha Portal was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

It is built considering the whole teacher's life cycle.

States, government bodies and even private organisations, can integrate DIKSHA into their respective teacher initiatives based on their goals, needs and capabilities. 2 is incorrect.

10) Consider the following statements:

1. India's new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions the establishment of an autonomous body, the National Education Technology Forum (NETF).

2. NETF will consist of members of the education ministry and state governments only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 & 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: India's new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions the establishment of an autonomous body, the National Education Technology Forum (NETF), to spearhead efforts towards providing a strategic thrust to the deployment and use of technology.

NETF will consist of members of the education ministry, state governments, institutes, as well as technology experts and IT sector veterans. 2 is incorrect.

11) Consider following statement about plasmid.

1. Plasmid is small in size, circular in shape and it is a piece of DNA that is not the same as chromosomal DNA.

2. There are some plasmids in which no effect is observed on the host phenotype. Such types are called cryptic plasmids

3. Recently, Zydus Cadila has made a vaccine which will be the world's first plasmid DNA vaccine for COVID-19.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 3 only

c) 1 and 2

d) All of the above

Explanation: Plasmids are little pieces of DNA that are circular in shape and are not the same as chromosomal DNA. It can reproduce without the help of chromosomal DNA.

They're most common in bacteria, although they can also be found in multicellular organisms.

Plasmids can be found in different numbers in a single cell, ranging from one to many hundreds.

Larger plasmids have fewer copies than smaller plasmids.

There are some plasmids that have no effect on the phenotypic of the host. Such types are called cryptic plasmids.

Zydus Cadila said it has applied to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) seeking Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for ZyCoV-D, its plasmid DNA vaccine to counter COVID-19.

It will be the world's first plasmid DNA vaccine for COVID-19, the company said.

12) Consider following statements about 103rd Constitution Amendment Act.

1. It provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.

2. The Act amends Article 14 and 16 to provide for reservation based on economic backwardness.

3. It mandates Article 46 of the Constitution of India, a Directive Principle that urges the government to protect the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of society.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 1 and 2

c) 1 and 3

d) All of the above

Explanation: It provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.

The Act amends Article 15 and 16 to provide for reservation based on economic backwardness.

For the purposes of this article 15 and article 16, “economically weaker sections” to be notified by the State from time to time on the basis of family income and other indicators of economic disadvantage.

The new clause (6) to Article 15 allows the government to carve reservation for the economically weaker sections of society in higher educational institutions, including private ones, whether they are aided or not by the State. Minority educational institutions are exempted.

Likewise, the new clause (6) to Article 16 provides for quota for economically deprived sections in the initial appointment in government services.

The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed the Centre’s plea seeking a review of its May 5 ruling that the power to identify Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) lies exclusively with the Central government and

not states for granting quota in jobs and education.

With the review plea dismissed, the Centre can now move a curative writ petition, the last legal resort available to remedy a judgment of the Supreme Court, or address the issue through Parliament.

13) With reference to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), consider the following statements:

1. NDMA is a statutory body for disaster management in India..

2. The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairperson of the NDMA, who chairs a 9-member board.

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

Explanation:

NDMA:

Parent body: Ministry of Home Affairs.

Primary Objective: To coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response.

HQ: Delhi.

Origin: NDMA was established through the Disaster Management Act enacted by the Government of India in 2005.

Organisation setup:

The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairperson of the NDMA, who chairs a 9-member board.

The remainder of the board consists of members nominated based on their expertise

in areas such as, planning, infrastructure management, communications, meteorology etc.

The day-to-day management of the agency is overseen by the office of the Vice Chair.

14) Financial Stability Report is released by-

a) NITI Aayog

b) Ministry of Finance

c) Reserve Bank of India

d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Explanation: Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its Financial Stability Report (FSR) for the month of July 2020.

The FSR reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC - headed by the Governor of RBI) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system.

The Report also discusses issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.

15) With reference to the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), consider the following statements:

1. It is conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008.

2. It seeks to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

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

Explanation: The 7th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), a biennial event,

was hosted by the French Navy at La Réunion from 28 June to 01 July 2021.

Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy, participated virtually in the inaugural session of the event and provided his congratulatory remarks to the Outgoing and Incoming Chairmen.

IONS, conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008, seeks to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of the littoral states of the IOR by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues that would lead to common understanding on the way ahead.

The chairmanship of IONS has been held by India (2008-10), UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21).

France has assumed the Chairmanship on 29 Jun 21 for a two-year tenure.

IONS Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) is the decision-making body at the level of Chiefs of Navies, which meets biennially. 6th IONS and CoC was conducted by Iran Navy in April 2018 at Tehran. Owing to the pandemic, the CoC 2021, will be hosted by French Navy later this year.

Hence both statements are correct.

16) With reference to the United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20, consider the following statements:

1. In 2019-20, total students in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary have crossed 26.45 crore.

2. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved at all levels of school education.

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

Explanation: Union Education Minister released the Report on United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20 for School Education in India.

In 2019-20, total students in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary have crossed 26.45 crore. This is higher by 42.3 lakh compared to 2018-19.

Gross Enrolment Ratio at all levels of school education has improved in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19. Gross Enrolment Ratio increased to 89.7% (from 87.7%) at Upper Primary level, 97.8% (from 96.1%) at Elementary Level, 77.9% (from 76.9%) at Secondary Level and 51.4% (from 50.1%) at Higher Secondary Level in 2019-20 (from 2018-19).

In 2019-20, 96.87 lakh teachers have been engaged in school education. This is higher by about 2.57 lakh compared to 2018-19.

The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved at all levels of school education. In 2019-20, the PTR for primary has become 26.5, PTR for upper primary and secondary has become 18.5 and PTR for higher secondary has become 26.1.

Enrolment of Divyang students has increased by 6.52% over 2018-19.

Gross Enrolment Ratio of girls has increased to 90.5% (from 88.5%) at Upper Primary level, 98.7% (from 96.7%) at Elementary Level, 77.8% (from 76.9%) at Secondary Level and 52.4% (from 50.8%) at Higher Secondary Level in 2019-20 (from 2018-19).

More than 80% schools in India in 2019-20 had functional electricity. This is an improvement by more than 6% over the previous year 2018-19.

Number of schools having functional computers increased to 5.2 lakh in 2019-20 from 4.7 lakh in 2018-19.

Number of schools having internet facility increased to 3.36 lakh in 2019-20 from 2.9 lakh in 2018-19.

More than 90% schools in India had handwash facility in 2019-20. This is a major improvement, as this percentage was only 36.3% in 2012-13.

Hence both statements are correct.

17) With reference to SERB-FIRE initiative, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to utilize the expertise available in academic institutions and national laboratories to solve industry-specific problems for the larger benefit of society.
2. SERB is a statutory body under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Science and Engineering Research Board- Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (SERB-FIRE) is a joint government-and-industry initiative with a co-founding mechanism to promote innovative technology solutions and strengthen academic research through collaboration with key research and development organisations in India.

It will increase research opportunities in the space of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML), platform systems, circuits & architecture, Internet of Things (IoT), materials & devices, security, and so on from edge to cloud.

Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) is a statutory body of the department of Science and Technology, Government of India. As the premier national research

funding agency its objective is to raise the quality and footprint of Indian science and engineering to the highest global levels in an accelerated mode, through calibrated support for research and development.

18) Which of the following mountain pass(s) is/are correctly matched to their State/UT?

1. Bomdila Pass – Arunachal Pradesh
2. Sela Pass – Ladakh
3. Zozila Pass – Himachal Pradesh

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Explanation: Option 1 is correctly matched: The Bomdi-La pass in Arunachal Pradesh connects it with Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet.

Option 2 is incorrectly matched: The Sela Pass is a high-altitude mountain pass located on the border between the Tawang and West Kameng Districts of Arunachal Pradesh state in India.

Option 3 is incorrectly matched: Zoji La pass in the Himalayas in the Union territory of Ladakh connects the Kashmir Valley to its west with the Drass and Suru valleys to its northeast and the Indus valley further east.

19) Consider the following pairs.

Types of hydrogen : Produced using

1. Green hydrogen : Electrolysis of water using renewable energy
2. Brown hydrogen : Produced from natural gas
3. Grey hydrogen : Coal where the emissions are released to the air

Which of the above pairs is matched correctly?

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

Explanation: According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), hydrogen will make up 12% of the energy mix by 2050. Hydrogen is one of the most abundant elements on earth for a cleaner alternative fuel option.

Type of hydrogen depend up on the process of its formation.

Green hydrogen: It is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.

Brown hydrogen: It is produced using coal where the emissions are released to the air.

Grey hydrogen: It is produced from natural gas where the associated emissions are released to the air.

Blue hydrogen: It is also produced from natural gas. But the emissions are captured using carbon capture and storage.

20) Consider the following statements

1. Black carbon is not harmful.
2. Black carbon is formed through the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuel, and biomass.
3. Blue carbon includes coastal carbon sink

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) All of the above

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect. A 10-point increase in air pollution from black carbon led to an average 5% increase in mortality.

Statement 2 is correct. Black carbon is formed through the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuel, and biomass.

Statement 3 is correct. Blue Carbon refers to coastal, aquatic and marine carbon sinks held by vegetation, marine organisms, and sediments.

21) With reference to the 15th Finance Commission Report, consider the following statements:

1. The share of states in the central taxes for the 2021-26 period is recommended to be 41%, same as that for 2020-21.
2. States should increase spending on health to more than 8% of their budget by 2022.

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

Explanation: The Supreme Court directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to frame guidelines for payment of ex-gratia compensation to family members of persons who succumbed to COVID-19, while considering the recommendations in the 15th Finance Commission Report.

The share of states in the central taxes for the 2021-26 period is recommended to be 41%, same as that for 2020-21.

The criteria for distribution of central taxes among states for 2021-26 period is same as that for 2020-21. However, the reference period for computing income distance and tax efforts are different (2015-18 for 2020-21 and

2016-19 for 2021-26), hence, the individual share of states may still change.

Fiscal deficit and debt levels: The Commission suggested that the centre bring down fiscal deficit to 4% of GDP by 2025-26. For states, it recommended the fiscal deficit limit (as % of GSDP) of: (i) 4% in 2021-22, (ii) 3.5% in 2022-23, and (iii) 3% during 2023-26.

Health: States should increase spending on health to more than 8% of their budget by 2022.

A dedicated non-lapsable fund called the Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security (MFDIS) will be constituted to primarily bridge the gap between budgetary requirements and allocation for capital outlay in defence and internal security.

Hence both statements are correct.

22) Recently seen in news, Freight Smart Cities initiative, is an initiative of:

- a) NITI Aayog
- b) Union Ministry of Finance
- c) Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- d) Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Explanation: Commerce Ministry's Logistics Division unveils plans for 'Freight Smart Cities' to improve the efficiency of urban freight and create an opportunity for reduction in the logistics costs.

Under the Freight Smart Cities initiative, city-level logistics committees would be formed.

These committees would have related government departments and agencies at the local level, state and from the related central ministries and agencies.

These would also include private sector from the logistics services and also users of logistics services.

These committees would co-create City Logistics Plans to implement performance improvement measures locally.

On the Freight smart city initiatives, the Logistics Division is working closely with GIZ (Germany) under Indo-German Development Cooperation, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and RMI India.

Significance

This is all the more relevant as the demand for urban freight is expected to grow by 140 per cent over the next 10 years.

Final-mile freight movement in Indian cities is currently responsible for 50 per cent of total logistics costs in India's growing e-commerce supply chains.

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

23) Global Peace Index (GPI), recently seen in news, is released by:

- a) World Economic Forum
- b) World Bank
- c) Amnesty International

d) Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)

Explanation: The 15th edition of the Global Peace Index (GPI) was released which ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. Global Peace Index (GPI) is a report produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP).

The GPI covers 99.7 per cent of the world's population, using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators and measures the state of peace across three domains:

- the level of Societal Safety and Security,
- the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict, and
- the degree of Militarisation.

Findings

India ranked 135/163 with an improvement of 2 ranks.

Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.

Afghanistan is the least peaceful country in the world for the fourth consecutive year, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

24) With reference to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal of global corporate tax, consider the following statements:

1. India has recently joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal of global corporate tax.
2. Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) refers to tax-avoiding strategies used by big multinational companies that exploit the gaps and mismatches in tax rules across the globe.

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

Explanation: India has joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G20 Inclusive Framework tax deal of global corporate tax.

Majority of the members OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (including India) adopted a high-level statement containing an outline of a consensus solution to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy.

The proposed solution consists of two components –

Pillar One which is about reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and

Pillar Two consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

Further, the technical details of the proposal will be worked out in the coming months and a consensus agreement is expected by October.

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) refers to tax-avoiding strategies used by big multinational companies that exploit the gaps and mismatches in tax rules across the globe.

Hence both statements are correct.

25) Bagram airfield which is recently in news, is located in:

- a) Rameswaram
- b) Ukraine
- c) Afghanistan
- d) Pakistan

Explanation: After nearly 20 years, the U.S. military left Bagram Airfield, the epicentre of its war to oust the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaeda perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, two U.S. officials said on Friday.

26) Consider following statements:

1. Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting is a statement containing an outline of a consensus solution to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy.
2. The proposed solution consists of two components- Pillar One which is about reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and Pillar Two consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

3. It is an initiative of BRICS countries.

Correct statement is/are:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 1 and 3
- c) 2 only
- d) All of the above

Explanation: Majority of the members OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (including India) adopted yesterday a high-level statement containing an outline of a consensus solution to address the tax challenges arising from the digitalisation of the economy.

The proposed solution consists of two components- Pillar One which is about reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and Pillar Two consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

Some significant issues including share of profit allocation and scope of subject to tax rules, remain open and need to be addressed.

27) Consider following statements about recently found settlement and ancient artefacts in Balasore district of Orissa.

1. The site is considered around 4000 years old.
2. It is located between the river Sona on south and the Burahabalang on its north-eastern borders.
3. The major discovery of the site was the base of a circular hut, black on red painted pottery, black slipped ware, red slipped ware and copper objects.

Correct statement is/are:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3

d) All of the above

Explanation: The Odisha Institute of Maritime and South East Asian Studies (OIMSEAS), the archaeological wing of the State government, has discovered a 4,000-year-old settlement and ancient artifacts in Balasore district.

After getting traces of fortified early historic sites near Balasore town, the OIMSEAS had sought permission from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to document Durgadevi village in Remuna Tehsil.

According to the ASI, the site has circular mud fortification of about 4.9 kms, in between the river Sona on south and the Burahabalong on its north-eastern borders.

the archaeologists have come across distinct traces of three cultural phases — Chalcolithic (2000 to 1000 BC.), Iron Age (1000 to 400 BC) and Early Historic Period (400 to 200 BC) — from the excavation site.

“The major discovery was the base of a circular hut, black on red painted pottery, black slipped ware, red slipped ware and copper objects.

28) Recently, the World Bank has approved a USD 500 million loan programme to support India’s informal sector through International Development Association (IDA) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). With this reference consider the following statements:

1. IDA provides loans, guarantees, advisory services to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries.
2. The main objective of IBRD is to provide grants and concessional loans to the world’s poorest countries.
3. India is classified as ‘blend country’ of World Bank.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) 1 and 2 only

c) 3 only

- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Together, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA) form the World Bank, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries.

IBRD is the world’s largest development bank. It provides loans, guarantees, advisory services, and risk management products to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries. India is a founding member of IBRD.

IDA was established with the signing of agreements between 15 countries. 173 countries are its members. Around 52 nations are donor countries. The main objective of the IDA is to provide grants and concessional loans to the world’s poorest countries. IDA funds are highly concessional or interest-free loans and grants aimed at improving living conditions of the poorest.

IBRD funds infrastructure projects in middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries at interest rates higher than those provided by IDA but lower than those offered by other commercial lending agencies.

India is currently classified as a “blend” country — defined as one in transition from lower middle-income to middle-income — and is creditworthy for lending from both IDA and IBRD.

29) Kalbeliya is a folk dance of:

- a) Karnataka
b) Uttarakhand
c) Rajasthan
d) Manipur

Explanation: Kalbelia dance is a folk dance of Rajasthan state of India. It is well known by

other names like 'Sapera Dance' or 'Snake Charmer Dance'.

Kalbelia dance is particularly performed by a Rajasthani tribe called 'Kalbelia'.

The popularity of this dance is so much worldwide that Rajasthan's Kalbelia dance and songs are now in UNESCO's representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from the year 2010.

In Kalbelia dance, males play various traditional instruments and females perform the dance. Kalbelia dance is one of the most sensuous dance among all Rajasthani dances.

30) "iLEAP", seen recently in news, is an initiative of:

a) Reserve Bank of India

b) Atal Innovation Mission

c) Securities and Exchange Board of India

d) Ministry of Education

Explanation: iLEAP (Innovative leadership for entrepreneurial agility and profitability) is an initiative of Atal Innovation Mission(AIM) in partnership with Startup Réseau and Visa.

The objective of the initiative is to invite technology start-ups across a broad range of functions and have them present their solutions to the corporate leadership and innovation team for enabling market access and industry partnerships.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is Government of India's flagship initiative to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across the length and breadth of our country. AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platforms and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation & entrepreneurship ecosystem of the country.

31) Recently seen in news, Bagram airbase is located in:

a) Afghanistan

b) Iraq

c) Iran

d) Qatar

Explanation: The last US and Nato forces have left Afghanistan's Bagram airbase, the centre of the war against militants for some 20 years. This was informed by the US officials.

The pull-out could signal that the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan is imminent.

The withdrawal from the sprawling base, north of Kabul, comes as the main jihadist group, the Taliban, advances in many parts of Afghanistan.

President Joe Biden has said US forces will be gone by 11th September. The 11th September deadline is the anniversary of the attacks on America in 2001, which killed nearly 3,000 people.

The attacks were carried out by Al-Qaeda, an international jihadist group then based in Afghanistan with the support of the Taliban, who had been in control of the country since the 1990s. A US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan later that year to defeat both the groups.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

32) Recently seen in news, "Last Ice Area" is located in:

a) Arctic region

b) Antarctic region

c) Hindu Kush mountain range

d) None of the above

Explanation: A part of the Arctic's ice called "Last Ice Area", located north of Greenland, has melted before expected. Scientists had

believed this area was strong enough to withstand global warming.

In an article published in 2015, the National Geographic noted that while climate projections forecast the total disappearance of summer ice in the Arctic by the year 2040, the only place that would be able to withstand a warming climate would be this area of ice called the “Last Ice Area”.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) notes that climate change is shrinking the extent of Arctic summer sea ice, which is not only important for animals but also the local Inuit communities.

But while this piece of ice above northern Canada and Greenland was expected to last the longest time, it is now showing signs of melting. WWF claims that WWF-Canada was the first to call this area ‘Last Ice Area’.

The area is important because it was thought to be able to help ice-dependent species as ice in the surrounding areas melted away. The area is used by polar bears to hunt for seals who use ice to build dens for their offspring. Walruses too, use the surface of the ice for foraging.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

33) Consider following statements.

1. Methane is produced by animals having rumen, in the first of their four stomachs.
2. Ruminants in India tend to produce 50-100% higher methane than their industrialised country counterparts.
3. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institute has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement, called ‘Harit Dhara’, which will cut down their methane emissions by 17-20 per cent.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3

- c) 1 and 3

d) All of the above

Explanation: Cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats in India emit an estimated 9.25-14.2 million tonnes of methane annually – a sizable proportion of the around 90 mt methane emitted by livestock across the world. This is a cause for serious concern, given that methane is a very potent greenhouse gas.

With this in mind, an Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institute has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement, called ‘Harit Dhara’.

When given to bovines and sheep, it not only cuts down their methane emissions by 17-20 per cent, but also results in higher milk production and bodyweight gain.

Methane is produced by animals having rumen, in the first of their four stomachs, where the plant material they eat – cellulose, fibre, starch and sugars – gets fermented or broken down by microorganisms prior to further digestion and nutrient absorption.

Being largely fed on agricultural residues – wheat/paddy straw and maize, sorghum or bajra stover – ruminants in India tend to produce 50-100% higher methane than their industrialised country counterparts that are given more easily fermentable/digestible concentrates, silages and green fodder.

34) Consider following statement about NIPUN BHARAT scheme.

1. It is one of the measures taken for implementation of the National Education Policy 2020.
2. The vision of NIPUN Bharat Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy, so that every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of Grade 3

3. The target year of the completion of the project is 2025.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 2 and 3

c) 1 and 2

d) 1 and 3

Explanation: The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education will launch National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) tomorrow i.e 5th July, 2021.

The launch of NIPUN Bharat marks an important step undertaken by the Department of School Education and Literacy, among a series of measures taken for implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, that was released on 29th July 2020.

The vision of NIPUN Bharat Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy, so that every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

NIPUN Bharat will be implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy and a five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs, under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha.

35) Consider following statement about China's Tianhe space station core module.

1. The module that was launched is called Tiangong while the Space Station China is building is called Tianhe.

2. The size of the Space Station will be a double the size of the International Space Station.

Correct statement is /are

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both and 2

d) None of the above

Explanation: China launched the core module of their Space Station on April 29, 2021. T

his is a significant step forward in the country's ambitious aim to create a long-term human presence in space.

Tianhe is the name of the module that was launched. Tiangong is the name of the space station that China is constructing.

To complete the space station, eleven additional modules must be launched and integrated.

The completed Space Station will resemble the "Mir Station," according to the Chinese government. Mir was a Russian space station that was in orbit from the 1980s to 2001.

Tiangong, the Chinese Space Station, will orbit the earth at a height of 400 to 450 kilometres in low earth orbit.

The space station has a fifteen-year lifespan.

It is above 90 tonnes in weight.

Tiangong Space Station will be around a quarter of the size of the International Space Station.

36) With reference to LEAF coalition, seen recently in news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a collective of the United States, United Kingdom and Norway governments

2. It is a step towards concretising the aims and objectives of the Montreal Protocol.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

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

Explanation: LEAF (Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance) Coalition was announced at the Leaders Summit on Climate, 2021.

LEAF coalition will be one of the largest ever public-private efforts to protect tropical forests and intend to mobilize at least USD 1 billion in financing to countries committed to protecting their tropical forests.

It is a collective of the United States, United Kingdom and Norway governments came up with a \$1 billion fund plan that shall be offered to countries committed to arrest the decline of their tropical forests by 2030.

The LEAF coalition initiative is a step towards concretising the aims and objectives of the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism.

REDD+ was created by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It monetised the value of carbon locked up in the tropical forests of most developing countries, thereby propelling these countries to help mitigate climate change.

37) Bonn Challenge sometimes seen in news is related to?

- a) Restoration of degraded land
- b) Conservation of Migratory Species
- c) Protection of Ozone layer
- d) Convention on Biological Diversity

Explanation: At the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (CoP) 2015 in Paris, the government of India made a Bonn Challenge pledge to bring 13 million hectares of degraded land into restoration by

2020 and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030.

38) Which of the following countries is/are a part of G4?

- 1. India
- 2. Germany
- 3. Australia

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Explanation: The G4 nations comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan are four countries which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.

39) Which of the following are among the nine pillars of Digital India Programme?

- 1. Broadband Highways
- 2. Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity
- 3. Information for all
- 4. Electronic Manufacturing
- 5. Early Harvest Programmes

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 2, 3 and 5 only
- c) 1, 3, 4 and 5 only

d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Explanation: Digital India is a programme launched in 2015 to transform India into digital empowered society and knowledge economy. It would also bring in public

accountability through mandated delivery of government's services electronically.

The Digital India programme has three vision areas:

digital infrastructure as a core utility to every citizen

governance & services on demand

digital empowerment of citizens

Digital India, an umbrella programme that covers multiple Government Ministries and Departments, is a consolidation of various smaller initiatives and ideas into a comprehensive vision. Each initiative is implemented as part of a larger goal under the overall coordination done by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY).

The programme was to provide thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas:

Broadband Highways

Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity

Public Internet Access Programme

e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology

e-Kranti – Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All

Electronics Manufacturing,

IT for Jobs

Early Harvest Programmes

40) Tillanchong Island, seen recently in news, is part of:

a) Andaman Islands

b) Lakshadweep Islands

c) Nicobar Islands

d) Cocos Islands

Explanation: The Tillangchong Island is a part of the Nicobar Islands chain, located in the northeast Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.

The island has the largest surviving populations of the endemic Nicobar megapode (*Megapodius nicobariensis*) and is a protected sanctuary.

This island harbours virtually all animal species found in the Nicobar archipelago, including endemic bird species such as the Nicobar Megapode, Nicobar Sparrowhawk, Glossy Swiftlet, Edible-nest Swiftlet, Andaman Wood Pigeon and Nicobar Parakeet.

41) With reference to the Unlawful Atrocities Prevention Act (UAPA), consider the following statements:

1. It permits detention without charge for up to 180 days.

2. UAPA prohibits a judge from granting bail to an accused unless that judge has "reasonable grounds to believe" that the accused is not guilty.

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

Explanation: Just two days before his death, Stan Swamy had moved the Bombay High Court challenging Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Atrocities Prevention Act (UAPA) — a provision Swamy termed "illusory". The provision makes grant of bail virtually impossible under UAPA since it leaves little room of judicial reasoning.

The UAPA, enacted in 1967, was strengthened by the Congress-led UPA government in 2008 and 2012.

The test for denying bail under the UAPA is that the court must be satisfied that a “prima facie” case exists against the accused.

In 2019, the SC defined prima facie narrowly to mean that the courts must not analyse evidence or circumstances but look at the “totality of the case” presented by the state.

Section 43D(5) reads: “Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, no person accused of an offence punishable under Chapters IV and VI of this Act shall, if in custody, be released on bail or on his own bond unless the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity of being heard on the application for such release.

UAPA permits detention without charge for up to 180 days. UAPA prohibits a judge from granting bail to an accused unless that judge has “reasonable grounds to believe” that the accused is not guilty.

Hence both statements are correct.

42) Hope spacecraft is an initiative of which of the following country?

- a) Germany
- b) China
- c) France
- d) U.A.E**

Explanation: The UAE’s Hope spacecraft, which is orbiting Mars since February this year, has captured images of glowing atmospheric lights in the Red Planet’s night sky, known as discrete auroras.

The data gathered by the orbiter “include far and extreme ultraviolet auroral emissions which have never been imaged before at Mars.”

Unlike auroras on Earth, which are seen only near the north and south poles, discrete auroras on Mars are seen all around the planet at night time.

The Hope Probe, the Arab world’s first mission to Mars, took off from Earth in July last year, and has been orbiting the Red Planet since February.

The primary objective of the mission is to study Martian weather dynamics

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

43) The “Net Zero Emission Roadmap” is released by which of the following?

- a) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- b) NITI Aayog
- c) International Energy Agency**
- d) Ministry of Power

Explanation: Recently, the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) released its Net Zero Emissions (NZE) Roadmap - named ‘Net Zero by 2050’.

It is the World's first comprehensive energy roadmap which comes ahead of the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 climate change convention in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021

‘Net zero emissions’ refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

Climate pledges by governments till date even if fully achieved would fall well short of what is required to bring global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to net zero by 2050 and give the world an even chance of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 °C.

Aim of the Roadmap:

Examine Impact:

To examine the impacts of announced NZE pledges and what they might mean for the energy sector.

New Energy Pathway:

To develop a new energy-sector pathway towards achieving NZE globally by 2050.

Significance:

It is supposed to provide a pathway to bridge the current gap between rhetoric and reality in reducing GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions from the energy and industry sectors. To set out key policy recommendations for governments to act upon in the near-term, and a long-term agenda for change to achieve net-zero goals, including with a view to reaching other Sustainable Development Goals.

44) Which of the following are correctly matched?

Places: Sometimes seen in News Country

1. Gorom Gorom
Burkina Faso
2. Sheikh Jarrah
Palestine
3. Swat Valley
Iran
4. Danakil Depression
Djibouti

Select the correct answer using the code below-

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 4 only
- d) 3 and 4 only

Explanation:

Gorom-Gorom- Burkina Faso
Sheikh Jarrah- Palestine
Swat Valley- Pakistan
Danakil Depression- Ethiopia

45) With reference to the One Stop Centres (OSCs), consider the following statements:

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme for addressing the problem of violence against women.
2. The Central Government provides 100% financial assistance to the State Governments and Union Territories administrations.

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

Explanation: The Ministry of Women and Child Development will set up One Stop Centres (OSCs) across 10 countries to provide assistance to Indian women who are survivors of gender-based violence.

It is a centrally sponsored scheme for addressing the problem of violence against women. It was launched in April 2015. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

One stop centre will be established across the country and at least one OSC in every mission around the world to provide integrated support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence.

It is funded through Nirbhaya Fund and the central government provides 100% financial assistance to the state governments /Union Territories administrations. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

46) Consider the following statements about Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF):

1. It has been set up with a corpus with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

2. Only Milk Unions are eligible for borrowing loans from the fund.

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

Explanation: Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund has been set up with a corpus of Rs. 8,004 crore with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Statement 1 is correct.

Implemented by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

Objectives of the DIF scheme: To modernize the milk processing plants and machinery and to create additional infrastructure for processing more milk.

The Scheme envisages providing loan assistance to State Dairy Federations, District Milk Unions, Milk Producers Companies, Multi State Cooperatives and NDDB subsidiaries across the country who are termed as Eligible End Borrowers (EEBs). Statement 2 is incorrect.

47) Recently, the Prime Minister addressed a virtual event to mark the completion of six years of Digital India. Which of the following government schemes have been launched under Digital India?

1. Diksha

2. e-NAM

3. e-Sanjeevani

4. DigiBunai

5. PM SVANidhi scheme

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

a) 1, 2 and 3 only

b) 2, 3 and 4 only

c) 1, 3, 4 and 5 only

d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Explanation: Schemes of Digital India programme: Recently, the Prime Minister spoke about various schemes of Digital India programme, including

Diksha: DIKSHA stands for Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing. It is a National Teacher Platform which is currently being used by teachers and students across the nation to provide school education through distance mode.

eNAM: National Agriculture Market or eNAM is an online trading platform for agricultural commodities in India. The market facilitates farmers, traders and buyers with online trading in commodities.

eSanjeevani solution for telemedicine: 'eSanjeevani', is a web-based comprehensive telemedicine solution. 'eSanjeevani' extends the reach of specialized healthcare services to masses in both rural areas and isolated communities.

DigiBunai: DigiBunai aids the weavers to create digital artwork and translate the saree design to be loaded to the looms. It is a first of its kind Open Source software for Jacquard and dobby weaving.

PM SVANidhi scheme: The PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme is a micro-credit facility that provides street vendors a collateral-free loan of Rs 10,000 with low rates of interest for a period of one year.

The contact tracing app, Aarogya Setu, has played a key role in containing the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

48) Recently, the Supreme Court agreed to hear plea seeking President's Rule in West Bengal. In this reference consider the following statements:

1. During President's rule the Parliament can delegate the power to make laws for the state to the President or to any other authority specified by him in this regard.
2. A law made by the Parliament or president or any other specified authority continues only till the proclamation of President's rule is in force in the state.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: When the President's Rule is imposed in a state, the President dismisses the state council of ministers headed by the chief minister. The state governor, on behalf of the President, carries on the state administration with the help of the chief secretary of the state or the advisors appointed by the President. This is the reason why a proclamation under Article 356 is popularly known as the imposition of 'President's Rule' in a state.

Further, the President either suspends or dissolves the state legislative assembly⁸. The Parliament passes the state legislative bills and the state budget. When the state legislature is thus suspended or dissolved:

The Parliament can delegate the power to make laws for the state to the President or to any other authority specified by him in this regard,

The Parliament or in case of delegation, the President or any other specified authority can make laws conferring powers and imposing

duties on the Centre or its officers and authorities,

The President can authorise, when the Lok Sabha is not in session, expenditure from the state consolidated fund pending its sanction by the Parliament, and

The President can promulgate, when the Parliament is not in session, ordinances for the governance of the state.

A law made by the Parliament or president or any other specified authority continues to be operative even after the President's Rule. This means that the period for which such a law remains in force is not coterminous with the duration of the proclamation. But it can be repealed or altered or re-enacted by the state legislature.

49) With reference to "WASH initiative", consider the following statements:

1. It is an initiative of World Health Organisation.
2. The aim of this initiative is to help member countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goal-6.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: WASH is an acronym that stands for "water, sanitation and hygiene". This is a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative considering the health and hygiene of people across the world.

Universal, affordable and sustainable access to WASH is a key public health issue within international development and is the focus of the first two targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6). Targets 6.1 and

6.2 aim at equitable and accessible water and sanitation for all.

“Access to WASH” includes safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education. Improving access to WASH services can improve health, life expectancy, student learning, gender equality, and other important issues of international development.

50) Which of the following is NOT a Ramsar Site?

a) Sasthamkotta Lake

b) Paravur Lake

c) Vembanad Lake

d) Ashtamudi Lake

Explanation: Sasthamkotta Lake, Vembanad Lake and Ashtamudi Lake are three Ramsar Sites of Kerala.

Sasthamkotta Lake, also categorized as a wetland, is the largest fresh water lake in Kerala.

Vembanad Lake is the largest lake in Kerala and the longest Lake in India. It is the second-largest Ramsar site in India only after the Sundarbans in West Bengal.

Ashtamudi Lake is the most visited backwater and lake in the state. It possesses a unique wetland ecosystem and a large palm-shaped (also described as octopus-shaped) water body, second only in size to the Vembanad estuary ecosystem of the state.

51) With reference to the ‘Ministry of Co-operation’, consider the following statements:

1. The ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
2. The Ministry will work to streamline processes for ‘Ease of doing business’ for co-

operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

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

Explanation: In a historic move, a separate ‘Ministry of Co-operation’ has been created by the NDA Government for realizing the vision of ‘Sahkar se Samridhi’.

This ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.

It will help deepen Co-operatives as a true people based movement reaching upto the grassroots.

The Ministry will work to streamline processes for ‘Ease of doing business’ for co-operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

Creation of a separate Ministry for Co-operation also fulfils the budget announcement made by the Finance Minister.

Hence both statements are correct.

52) With reference to the “Matsya Setu” app, consider the following statements:

1. The app was developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, with the funding support of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.
2. The online course app aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country.

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

Explanation: Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Giriraj Singh launched the Online Course Mobile App “Matsya Setu” for Fish Farmers.

The app was developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, with the funding support of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.

The online course app aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country.

Matsya Setu app has species-wise/ subject-wise self-learning online course modules, where renowned aquaculture experts explain the basic concepts and practical demonstrations on breeding, seed production and grow-out culture of commercially important fishes like carp, catfish, scampi, murrel, ornamental fish, pearl farming etc.

Hence both statements are correct.

53) Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project, often mentioned in news, is located in:

- a) Sikkim
- b) Himachal Pradesh
- c) Ladakh
- d) Uttarakhand**

Explanation: SJVN, a CPSE under Ministry of Power has completed the Tunnel Excavation work of its Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project in Uttarakhand.

Naitwar Mori HEP has the potential to generate 265.5 million units of electricity

every year and the State of Uttarakhand will get 12% free Power as a Royalty.

The project will also lead to the achievement of the Shared vision of SJVN, for becoming a 25000 MW Company by 2040.

The Project which is targeted to be completed by April 2022.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

54) White flag movement, recently seen in news, has taken place in which of the following country?

- a) China
- b) Singapore
- c) Vietnam
- d) Malaysia**

Explanation: In Malaysia, some residents of low-income families have started waving white flags as part of the so-called “White Flag Campaign”, or the #benderaputi (white flag) movement.

They are doing this to convey distress about the financial crunch they have had to deal with amid the lockdowns due to Covid-19. Malaysia enforced another lockdown on June 1 in order to control another surge of Covid infections.

As part of the movement that was initiated last week, families that are facing hunger or need any other kind of assistance are encouraged to wave a white flag or put a piece of white cloth outside their homes to signal that they need help.

The idea is that by spotting the white flag, neighbours and good samaritans can reach them.

Alongside the white flag movement, there is the black flag movement as well, in order to express dissatisfaction with the Malaysian government.

Specifically, this movement is demanding that Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin resign.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

55) With reference to the Lambda variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, consider the following statements:

1. It is the seventh and newest “variant of interest”, meaning it was something to watch out for.

2. It has been the dominant variant in India.

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

Explanation: Even as the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus continues to drive the rise in infections around the world, another variant, Lambda, is increasingly being seen by scientists and health experts as a new emerging threat.

On June 14, the World Health Organization designated the Lambda variant, previously known by its formal scientific name C.37, as the seventh and newest “variant of interest”, meaning it was something to watch out for.

Like the Delta variant, the Lambda variant, which has now been detected in more than 25 countries, is feared to be more transmissible than the original virus.

It has been the dominant variant in Peru and other countries of South America.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

56) Recently, Rajasthan Government took decision to develop corridor connecting 3 tiger reserves. Find out these tiger reserves from the following.

1. Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary

2. Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

3. Sariska Tiger Reserve.

4. Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

Correct answer is

a) 1, 2 and 3

b) 2, 3 and 4

c) 1, 3 and 4

d) 1, 2 and 4

Explanation: After the Centre’s nod for creation of the Ramgarh Vishdhari sanctuary, the Rajasthan government is hoping to develop a tiger corridor connecting three tiger reserves passing through districts including Sawai Madhopur, Kota and Bundi.

“Happy to sanction one more tiger Sanctuary, Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary which will link Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the Northeast & Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve on the southern side.

Increasing numbers of Tigers and other apex predators certify our robust biodiversity,” Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar had tweeted on Monday.

While the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve at present has a population of more than 65 tigers, the Mukundra reserve is presently left with just one big cat, after a series of deaths inside the reserve.

57) What is social media intermediary, recently in news?

a) NGO’s helping government to reach deprived people in remote areas with the help of social media.

b) Authorised NGOs by Government of India to help on Khoya-Paya portal.

c) Social media companies with more than 50 lakh registered users

d) A type of Ransomware

Explanation: New IT laws to regulate digital material have gone into effect, including a code of ethics and a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism.

According to the new rules, social media firms with more than 50 lakh registered members will be designated "major social media intermediaries."

If social media companies like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp Messenger do not comply with the new Information Technology standards, they may face a ban.

If they do not comply with the amended regulations, they risk losing their status as "intermediaries" and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

58) Consider following statements about the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

1. It is being constructed on White Nile River.
2. It set to be Africa's largest hydroelectric project when completed.
3. It has created dissatisfaction due to water access issue in future in the states of Egypt and Sudan.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3**
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Explanation: Ethiopia has started the second phase of filling a mega-dam's reservoir on the upper Blue Nile, said Egypt and Sudan, raising tensions Tuesday ahead of an upcoming UN Security Council meeting on the issue.

Both Cairo and Khartoum said they had been notified by Addis Ababa that the second phase of filling had begun at the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The huge dam, set to be Africa's largest hydroelectric project when completed, has sparked an almost decade-long diplomatic stand-off between Addis Ababa and downstream nations Egypt and Sudan.

Ethiopia says the project is essential to its development, but Cairo and Khartoum fear it could restrict their citizens' water access.

Both governments have been pushing Addis Ababa to ink a binding deal over the filling and operation of the dam, and have urged the UN Security Council to take up the matter.

59) The Minsk Group spearheads the efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which is an ethnic and territorial conflict between:

- a) Belarus and Ukraine
- b) Turkey and Syria
- c) Armenia and Azerbaijan**
- d) Yemen and Saudi Arabia

Explanation:

Minsk Group

The Minsk Group, the activities of which have become known as the Minsk Process, spearheads the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

The military confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the gravest since a fragile ceasefire was established in 1994, reflects the failure of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The Minsk Group put forward in 2007 the Madrid Principles as the basis for the formulation of a peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Drawn from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act principles, signed at the Conference on Security and Cooperation

in Europe, they provided for a prohibition on the use of force, respect for territorial integrity, and recognition of the equal right to self-determination.

60) Consider the following statements regarding Singapore Convention on Mediation:

1. The Convention allows for direct enforcement of mediated settlement agreements.
2. It can be resorted to only in cases of international commercial disputes.
3. India is not a party to this convention.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only**
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Statement 3 is incorrect: The Convention has 53 signatories, including India, China and the U.S.

Singapore Convention on Mediation

The Singapore Convention on Mediation came into force recently and will provide a more effective way for enforcing mediated settlements of corporate disputes involving businesses in India and other countries that are signatories to the Convention.

Also known as the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, this is also the first UN treaty to be named after Singapore.

With the Convention in force, businesses seeking enforcement of a mediated settlement agreement across borders can do so by applying directly to the courts of countries that have signed and ratified the treaty, instead of having to enforce the settlement agreement as a contract in

accordance with each country's domestic process.

The Singapore Convention can be resorted to only in case of an international commercial dispute, and specifically excludes disputes arising from personal, family, inheritance or employment matters.

61) An online database on spyware Pegasus' use was recently launched by:

- a) Human Right Council of India
- b) Human Rights Watch
- c) Human Rights Without Frontiers International
- d) None of the above**

Explanation: An online database on spyware Pegasus' use was recently launched by Forensic Architecture, Amnesty International and Citizen Lab to document attacks against human rights defenders.

The interactive platform — Digital Violence: How the NSO Group Enables State Terror — showed the connections between 'digital violence' of Pegasus spyware and the real-world harms faced by lawyers, activists, and other civil society figures.

Amnesty said the NSO Group, which makes the spyware, was a "major player in the shadowy surveillance company" and Pegasus had been used in some of the "most insidious digital attacks" on human rights activists in the world.

The spyware enabled an attacker to get complete access to a person's phone.

Bhima Koregaon case

The platform, available at digitalviolence.org, lists out "targets" of the spyware in India that include activists Bela Bhatia and Anand Teltumbde.

In 2020, Amnesty and Citizen Lab revealed that the spyware was used on nine human

rights defenders who were accused in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

62) With reference to the Council of Ministers, consider the following statements:

1. According to Article 75(2) the Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.
2. According to Article 75(5) a Minister must be a member of any of the houses within 6 months.

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

Explanation :

The President of India, as advised by the Prime Minister, has directed the allocation of portfolios among the new members of the Council of Ministers on 7 July 2021.

Articles 74 & 75 of the constitution of India deal with the Council of Ministers and Prime Minister. These articles have below provisions.

Article 74(1): There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice. The president may require the council of ministers to reconsider such advice and president shall act in accordance with such advice reconsidered.

Article 74(2): What advice was tendered to the president cannot be inquired into any court.

Article 75(1): The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Article 75(2): The Ministers shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.

Article 75(3): The Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People.

Article 75(4): Before a Minister enters upon his office, the President shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out for the purpose in the Third Schedule

Article 75(5): A Minister must be a member of any of the houses within 6 months.

Article 75(6): Parliament will decide the salary and allowances of the Ministers and until parliament decides, so shall be as specified in the Second Schedule.

Hence both statements are correct.

63) Which of the following products received GI certification tag?

1. Bhalia variety of wheat
2. Karbi Anglong Ginger
3. Naga Mircha

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: In a major boost to wheat exports, the first shipment of Geographical Indication (GI) certified Bhalia variety of wheat was exported today to Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat.

The GI certified wheat has high protein content and is sweet in taste. The crop is grown mostly across Bhal region of Gujarat which includes Ahmadabad, Anand, Kheda, Bhavanagar, Surendranagar, Bharuch districts.

The unique characteristic of the wheat variety is that grown in the rainfed condition without irrigation and cultivated in around two lakh hectares of agricultural land in Gujarat.

The Bhalia variety of wheat received GI certification in July, 2011. The registered proprietor of GI certification is Anand Agricultural University, Gujarat.

Assam Karbi Anglong Ginger has been Conferred with the Geographical Indication (GI) Status by Government of India in 2015.

Naga Mircha (Naga Morich) received the GI tag in 2008.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

64) Consider following statements about Pegasus.

1. It is a spyware developed by the US cyber arms firm NSO Group Technologies.
2. It mainly uses exploit links, clicking on which installs Pegasus on the target's phone.
3. The phones of affected people were reportedly compromised by using a vulnerability in WhatsApp which allowed the Pegasus spyware software to be installed, by initiating a WhatsApp voice call with the target.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 and 3
- b) 2 and 3**
- c) 3 only
- d) 1 and 2

Explanation: It's a spyware programme created by NSO Group Technologies, an Israeli cyber-arms company.

It primarily makes use of exploit links, which when clicked, instal Pegasus on the target's phone.

Citizen Lab, which has looked into multiple Pegasus infections, discovered that social engineering is a frequent method for delivering the most advanced malware.

Pegasus accomplishes this by taking advantage of flaws in the phone's operating system (OS).

Lookout, a cybersecurity firm, collaborated with Citizen Lab to examine Pegasus and discovered that it had successfully exploited three zero-day vulnerabilities in iOS to gain full user access to the phone.

A zero-day vulnerability is a weakness in software or hardware that the person responsible was previously unaware of.

A specifically constructed call was used in the WhatsApp case to cause a buffer overflow, which was then leveraged to take control of the device.

Pegasus is cutting-edge spyware, and NSO demands a hefty price for its goods and services.

65) Consider following statements about Genome Sequencing.

1. Genome sequencing is figuring out the order of DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a genome—the order of Adenine, Cytosine, Guanines, and Thymine that make up an organism's DNA.
2. The genome sequence will represent a valuable shortcut, helping scientists find genes much more easily and quickly.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2**
- d) None of the above

Explanation: Genome sequencing is figuring out the order of DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a genome—the order of Adenine, Cytosine, Guanine, and Thymine that make up an organism's DNA. Sequencing the genome is an important step towards understanding it.

The genome sequence will represent a valuable shortcut, helping scientists find genes much more easily and quickly. A genome sequence does contain some clues about where genes are, even though scientists are just learning to interpret these clues.

Scientists also hope that being able to study the entire genome sequence will help them understand how the genome as a whole works—how genes work together to direct the growth, development and maintenance of an entire organism.

Finally, genes account for less than 25 percent of the DNA in the genome, and so knowing the entire genome sequence will help scientists study the parts of the genome outside the genes.

This includes the regulatory regions that control how genes are turned on and off, as well as long stretches of "nonsense" or "junk" DNA—so called because significance of it hasn't been established.

66) "Harit Dhara" has been recently seen in the news is related to-

a) Reduction in Emissions from Cattle

b) New Plant Species found in Western Ghats

c) Illegal GM Crop Cultivated in Western Uttar Pradesh

d) None of the above

Explanation: Indian Council of Agricultural Research has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement 'Harit Dhara' (HD), which can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.

Key Points

About:

HD decreases the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea (structure similar to bacteria) for reduction of CO₂ to methane.

It has been made from tannin-rich plant-based sources. Tropical plants containing tannins, bitter and astringent chemical compounds, are known to suppress or remove protozoa from the rumen.

Fermentation after using HD will help produce more propionic acid, which provides more energy for lactose (milk sugar) production and body weight gain.

This leads to economic benefits for farmers.

67) With reference to Anti-Dumping Duties consider the following statements:

1. These are tariffs levied on imported goods to offset subsidies made to producers of these goods in the exporting country.

2. Directorate General of Trade Remedies is the apex organization in India for carrying out investigations and recommending the amount of anti-dumping duty.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value.

However, Countervailing Duties (CVDs) are tariffs levied on imported goods to offset

subsidies made to producers of these goods in the exporting country.

In order to protect their respective economy, many countries impose duties on products they believe are being dumped in their national market; this is done with the rationale that these products have the potential to undercut local businesses and the local economy.

In the long-term, anti-dumping duties can reduce the international competition of domestic companies producing similar goods.

In India Directorate General of Trade Remedies is responsible for carrying out investigations and recommending, where required, under the Customs Tariff Act, the amount of anti-dumping duty/countervailing duty on the identified articles as would be adequate to remove injury to the domestic industry.

68) Shetty Commission sometimes seen in news is related to?

a) Pay structure, allowances and conditions of service of Judicial Officers.

b) Development and Management of Social Sector/Services

c) introduction of carbon taxes and incentives for renewable energy

d) Reforming PSU banks' corporate lending mechanism.

Explanation: First National Judicial Pay Commission

It was constituted in 1996, pursuant to the order of the Supreme Court of India in All India Judges Association case.

It was headed by Justice K. Jagannatha Shetty, former Judge of the Supreme Court.

It was also referred to as the Justice Shetty Commission.

The commission gave a comprehensive report in the year 1999, covering not merely the pay structure, allowances and conditions of

service of Judicial Officers but also various other aspects concerning the Courts and judicial administration.

69) Navegaon Nagzira Tiger Reserve was recently seen in the news. In which of the following State the tiger reserve is located?

a) Bihar

b) Maharashtra

c) Uttar Pradesh

d) Madhya Pradesh

Explanation: Recently, a rare Melanistic Leopard (commonly known as Black Panther) has been recorded in Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) of Maharashtra.

Strategically, the Tiger Reserve is located in the heart of central Indian Tiger landscape which contributes almost one sixth of the total tiger population of the country.

Sightings of the black leopard were earlier reported in the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve and the Pench Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.

70) Consider the following statements regarding NIPUN Bharat Mission:

1. It aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy of children in the age group of three to nine years.

2. It emphasizes the importance of using a child's mother tongue in teaching.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: NIPUN Bharat Mission aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy of children in the age group of three to nine years.

Key Features of the Mission:

Implementation: The mission will be implemented by the Union Education Ministry in collaboration with states through the flagship school education program Samagra Shiksha.

Target: The mission has set a target that by 2026-27, every Class 3 child should be able to read with understanding at the rate of at least 60 words per minute. Further, the child should be able to read and write numbers up to 9,999 and solve simple multiplication problems.

Survey: A National Achievement Survey of Class 3 students will be conducted to set a baseline to track the future progress of the mission.

Mother Tongue: The mission also emphasizes the importance of using a child's mother tongue in teaching, a principle of the National Education Policy 2020. The Singapore Convention on Mediation came into force recently and will provide a more effective way for enforcing mediated settlements of corporate disputes involving businesses in India and other countries that are signatories to the Convention.

Also known as the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, this is also the first UN treaty to be named after Singapore.

With the Convention in force, businesses seeking enforcement of a mediated settlement agreement across borders can do so by applying directly to the courts of countries that have signed and ratified the treaty, instead of having to enforce the settlement agreement as a contract in accordance with each country's domestic process.

The Singapore Convention can be resorted to only in case of an international commercial dispute, and specifically excludes disputes

arising from personal, family, inheritance or employment matters.

71) With reference to the 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund', consider the following statements:

1. It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
2. Only State Agencies/APMCs are eligible under this scheme.

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

Explanation: The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the various modifications in Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund'.

Eligibility has now been extended to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs).

For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, et within the same market yard.

The power has been delegated to Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiary in such a manner so that basic spirit of the scheme is not altered

The period of financial facility has been extended from 4 to 6 years upto 2025-26 and overall period of the scheme has been extended from 10 to 13 upto 2032-33.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

72) SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)], recently seen in news, is an initiative of:

- a) Union Ministry of Home Affairs
- b) Union Ministry of Finance
- c) Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry

d) Union Ministry of Defence

Explanation: Ministry of Defence has implemented SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)], an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.

This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.

A Pensioner Portal is available for pensioners to view their pension related information, access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances, if any, relating to their pension matters.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

73) With reference to the cooperative societies, consider the following statements:

1. Cooperation is in the Union list.
2. In 2002, the Centre passed a Multistate Cooperative Societies Act that allowed for registration of societies with operations in more than one state.

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

Explanation: The government announced the formation of a separate Union Ministry of Cooperation, a subject that till date was

looked after by the Ministry of Agriculture. In the Cabinet reshuffle of July 7, Home Minister Amit Shah was given charge of the new Ministry.

Cooperatives are organisations formed at the grassroots level by people to harness the power of collective bargaining towards a common goal.

In agriculture, cooperative dairies, sugar mills, spinning mills etc are formed with the pooled resources of farmers who wish to process their produce. The country has 1,94,195 cooperative dairy societies and 330 cooperative sugar mill operations. Cooperative sugar mills account for 35% of the sugar produced in the country.

In banking and finance, cooperative institutions are spread across rural and urban areas. Village-level primary agricultural credit societies (PACs) formed by farmer associations are the best example of grassroots-level credit flow.

There are also cooperative marketing societies in rural areas and cooperative housing societies in urban areas.

Like agriculture, cooperation is in the concurrent list, which means both the central and state governments can govern them.

A majority of the cooperative societies are governed by laws in their respective states.

In 2002, the Centre passed a MultiState Cooperative Societies Act that allowed for registration of societies with operations in more than one state.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

74) Consider following statements about Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC).

1. APMC is the marketing board established by the union government in order to eliminate the exploitation incidences of the farmers by the intermediaries, where they are

forced to sell their produce at extremely low prices.

2. Agriculture is subject of concurrent list.

3. The e-NAM portal is a single-window service for any information and services related to APMC.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 1 and 3

c) 2 and 3

d) 3 only

Explanation: Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) is a system operating under the State Government since agricultural marketing is a State subject.

The APMC has Yards/Mandis in the market area that regulates the notified agricultural produce and livestock.

The introduction of APMC was to limit the occurrence of Distress Sale by the farmers under the pressure and exploitation of creditors and other intermediaries.

The National Agriculture Market (NAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal, which links the existing Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis across the country to form a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

The e-NAM portal is a single-window service for any information and services related to APMC that includes: Commodity arrivals and prices, Buy and sell trade offers, Provision to respond to trade offers, among other services.

75) Consider the following statements regarding PARISHPAE Project-

1. It will focus on capturing starlight polarisation of very faint stars that are so far away that polarisation signals from there have not been systematically studied.

2. It will be used to perform magnetic tomography of the Milky Way Galaxy.

Select the correct answer using the code below-

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: About the PASIPHAE Survey:

It is an opto polarimetric survey aiming to measure the linear polarization from millions of stars.

The survey will use two high-tech optical polarimeters to observe the northern and southern skies, simultaneously.

The survey will be conducted concurrently from the South African Astronomical Observatory in Sutherland, South Africa in the southern hemisphere, and the Skinakas Observatory in Crete, Greece, in the north.

It will focus on capturing starlight polarisation of very faint stars that are so far away that polarisation signals from there have not been systematically studied. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

Importance of the Project:

Since its birth about 14 billion years ago, the universe has been constantly expanding, as evidenced by the presence of Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation which fills the universe.

The Milky Way Galaxy contains a lot of dust clouds that are present in the form of clusters. When starlight passes through these dust clouds, they get scattered and polarised.

The PASIPHAE polarimetric map will be used to perform magnetic tomography of the Milky Way Galaxy. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

76) With reference to the 'Ministry of Co-operation', consider the following statements:

1. The Ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
2. The Ministry will work to streamline processes for 'Ease of doing business' for co-operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

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

Explanation: Both Statements are correct.

In a historic move, a separate 'Ministry of Co-operation' has been created by the NDA Government for realizing the vision of 'Sahkar se Samridhi'.

This ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.

It will help deepen Co-operatives as a true people based movement reaching upto the grassroots.

The Ministry will work to streamline processes for 'Ease of doing business' for co-operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

Creation of a separate Ministry for Co-operation also fulfils the budget announcement made by the Finance Minister.

77) With reference to Indian Agriculture, consider the following statements about Farmer Producer's Organisation-

1. They provide education and training to their members
2. They help farmers to collectively pursue state of art technology products.
3. They will help in increasing the penetration of digitisation of agriculture.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Explanation: All statements are correct.

What are FPOs?

FPOs are voluntary organizations controlled by their farmer-members who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.

They are open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

FPOs operatives provide education and training for their farmer-members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their FPOs.

FPOs in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and some other states have shown encouraging results and have been able to realise higher returns for their produce.

Negotiating With Corporates: FPO can help farmers compete with large corporate enterprises in bargaining, as it allows members to negotiate as a group and can help small farmers in both input and output markets.

Economics of Aggregation: The FPO can provide low-cost and quality inputs to member farmers. For example, loans for crops, purchase of machinery, input agri-inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) and direct marketing after procurement of agricultural produce.

This will enable members to save in terms of time, transaction costs, distress sales, price fluctuations, transportation, quality maintenance, etc.

78) Consider the following statements regarding Central Information Commission (CIC).

1. It was established by the Right to Information Act (2005).
2. The Chief Information Commissioner is eligible for reappointment.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: The Supreme Court has directed the Union of India and all States to file status reports on the latest developments regarding vacancies and pendency in the Central Information Commission (CIC) and State Information Commissions (SICs). About Central Information Commission (CIC):

The CIC was established by the Central Government in 2005, under the provisions of the Right to Information Act (2005). It is not a constitutional body.

It consists of a Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.

The Chief Information Commissioner and an Information Commissioner shall hold office for such term as prescribed by the Central

Government or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. They are not eligible for reappointment.

They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

79) Consider the following statements.

1. A hot spell is labelled as a 'Heat Wave' only when temperatures are above the historical average in an area for more than one week.
2. Heat waves begin when high pressure in the atmosphere moves in and pushes warm air toward the ground.
3. When heat waves occur, the wind and cloud cover are minimised, which makes the air hotter.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1, 2
- b) 1, 3
- c) 2 only

d) 2, 3

Explanation: Temperatures must be above the historical average in an area for two or more days before the label "heat wave" is applied to a hot spell. But the definition can vary by region;

Heat waves begin when high pressure in the atmosphere moves in and pushes warm air toward the ground. That air warms up further as it is compressed, and we begin to feel a lot hotter.

The high-pressure system pressing down on the ground expands vertically, forcing other weather systems to change course. It even minimizes wind and cloud cover, making the air more stifling. This is also why a heat wave

parks itself over an area for several days or longer.

80) Consider the following statements.

1. Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD) is India's first uncrewed flying testbed developed for ISRO's Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstration Programme.

2. GSLV Mark II uses an Indian cryogenic engine and is capable of launching 2500 kg into geostationary transfer orbit.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: RLV-TD is India's first uncrewed flying testbed developed for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstration Programme.

RLV-TD was developed by ISRO under the RLV Technology Demonstration Programme. The Technology Demonstration Programme consists of development of hypersonic rocket with air-breathing engines and the reusable launch vehicle.

GSLV Mark II: This variant uses an Indian cryogenic engine, the CE-7.5, and is capable of launching 2500 kg into geostationary transfer orbit.

81) Consider following statements about zoonotic diseases.

1. They are disease that passes into the human population from an animal source directly or through an intermediary species.

2. According to a report published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Livestock

Research Institute (ILRI), about 60% of known infectious diseases in humans and 75% of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) None of the above

Explanation: A zoonotic disease is one that spreads from an animal source to humans directly or through an intermediary species.

Zoonotic infections can be bacterial, viral, or parasitic, and animals play an important part in keeping them alive.

HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Malaria, and the current Covid-19 disease are examples of zoonoses.

According to a report published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), about 60% of known infectious diseases in humans and 75% of all emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic.

The report was released on 6th July 2020, observed as 'World Zoonoses Day'.

82) Consider following statements about Wild Yak.

1. The Yak (*Bos grunniens*) is endemic to the Tibetan Plateau and the adjacent high-altitude regions.

2. It is in endangered category of IUCN red list.

3. The National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) is located in Leh.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 1 and 2

c) 1 and 3

d) All of the above

Explanation: The Yak (*Bos grunniens*) is endemic to the Tibetan Plateau and the adjacent high-altitude regions.

Yaks belong to the Bovine tribe, which also includes bisons, buffaloes, and cattle.

It can tolerate temperatures as low as -40 degrees Celsius

IUCN Red list status: Vulnerable

Listed under Appendix I of CITES

The National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) at Dirang in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring their livestock.

A four-year-old report said the number of yaks across the country declined by almost 24.7% between 2012 and 2019.

The total yak population in India is about 58,000. The Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir have some 26,000, followed by 24,000 in Arunachal Pradesh, 5,000 in Sikkim, 2,000 in Himachal Pradesh and about 1,000 in West Bengal and Uttarakhand.

83) Consider following statement about Lymphatic filariasis.

1. it is Caused by infection with parasitic worms living in the lymphatic system.
2. The parasites are transmitted by four main types of mosquitoes: Culex, Mansonia, Anopheles and Aedes.
3. Maharashtra is the first state in country to be declared as folarisis free.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 2**
- d) 1 and 3

Explanation: Lymphatic filariasis also called as elephantiasis, it is Caused by infection with parasitic worms living in the lymphatic system. The larval stages of the parasite (microfilaria) circulate in the blood and are transmitted from person to person by mosquitoes.

It may Cause abnormal enlargement of body parts, and leading to severe disability and social stigmatization of those affected.

The parasites are transmitted by four main types of mosquitoes: Culex, Mansonia, Anopheles and Aedes.

The Maharashtra government has flagged off its mass drug administration drive for the elimination of lymphatic filariasis and become the first State in the country to resume giving rounds of the drug after the second wave of COVID-19.

A combination of two drugs, diethylcarbamazine (DEC) and albendazole, or three — Ivermectin, DEC, and Albendazole — will be administered during the drive.

84) The “Harmonised system of Nomenclature” is related to which of the following

- a) The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021
- b) Goods and services tax**
- c) Draft Rules under Consumer Protection Act, 2019
- d) Food Safety and Standards Rules, 2011

Explanation: An HSN code or Harmonized System Nomenclature code number is an internationally adopted commodity description and coding system developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO). The Indian Government has decided to adopt the use of HSN code for the classification of goods under GST and levy of GST.

Under GST, all goods transacted in India under the purview of GST are classified under each of the HSN code, and an appropriate GST rate is fixed for the HSN Code. GST rates have been fixed in five slabs, namely NIL, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%.

85) One-District One Product Scheme has been recently introduced to increase the export potential of products. It was implemented by which ministry?

- a) Ministry of Finance
- b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry**
- c) Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
- d) Ministry of Food Processing Industry

Explanation: One District - One Product (ODOP)

The program aims to encourage more visibility and sale of indigenous products/crafts, generating employment at the district level.

The presence of aggregators is imperative to bring about economies of scale for the small and marginal farmers.

86) Regarding the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers of 19 years of age or above.
- 2. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- 3. The PMMVY beneficiaries are not eligible to receive cash incentives under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only**

- d) 1,2 and 3

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a maternity benefit Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

PMMVY is a conditional cash transfer scheme for Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW& LM) of 19 years of age or above. It meets enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensates for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and provides conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices.

PMMVY is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The eligible beneficiaries of PMMVY can also receive cash incentives under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY). Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

87) India is the second-largest producer of this crop after China. It needs fertile clayey and loamy soil to grow. Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan are major producers of this crop. It needs 75-100 cm rainfall and sown in October-December Period. Recently the Bhalia variety of this crop got a Geographical Indication Tag.

Which of the following matches the description?

- a) Paddy
- b) Wheat**
- c) Maize
- d) Sugarcane

Explanation: Wheat

Wheat is a Rabi crop. It is sown in October-December and harvested during April-June.

Temperature: Between 10-15°C (Sowing time) and 21-26°C (Ripening & Harvesting) with bright sunlight.

Rainfall: Around 75-100 cm.

Soil Type: Well-drained fertile loamy and clayey loamy (Ganga-Satluj plains and black soil region of the Deccan).

Major wheat-growing states in India are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Gujarat.

India is the second-largest producer after China.

The success of the Green Revolution contributed to the growth of Rabi crops, especially wheat.

88) Which of the following mineral has been estimated to be found in abundance in Buxawaha forest?

a) Iron Ore

b) Bauxite

c) Dolomite

d) Kimberlite

Explanation:

Kimberlite is an igneous rock that is a major source of diamonds.

Buxwaha forest lies in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh. It is estimated that the forest contains around 53.70 million tonnes of kimberlite ore containing about 34 million carats of rough diamonds.

It is estimated that the proposed Diamond mining project in this area will have a greater ecological impact on the region than projected so far. The project threatens to further deplete the already scarce water reserve of the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.

Under the project five metric tonnes of kimberlite ore will be excavated per annum. Its mining would generate about 3.70 metric tonnes of soil waste, 16.34 metric tonnes of OB waste and 5 metric tonnes of tailing waste annually.

89) Silambam, seen recently in news, is:

a) Folk Painting of Maharashtra

b) Martial Art of Tamil Nadu

c) Handicraft of Punjab

d) Folk Dance of Gujarat

Explanation: Silambam is an ancient weapon-based martial art that emerged in Tamilakam, which is now Tamil Nadu region of India. It is one of the oldest martial arts in the world. This style is mentioned in Tamil Sangam literature. It is closely linked to the Kerala martial art kalaripayattu.

Silambam incorporates various types of weapons and methods of movement training. Silambam includes the weapons traditionally made of bamboo. The footwork in Silambam is enormously important for learning various spinning techniques and methods of executing them in the flow and without stopping the motion of the sticks.

90) Consider the following statements regarding Council of Ministers:

1. The advice tendered by ministers to the President cannot be enquired by any court.

2. A minister who is a member of one House of Parliament has the right to speak, vote and to take part in the proceedings of the other House also.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Article 74 of the Indian Constitution provides for a council of ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions. The 42nd and 44th

Constitutional Amendment Acts have made the advice binding on the President. Further, the nature of advice tendered by ministers to the President cannot be enquired by any court. This provision emphasises the intimate and the confidential relationship between the President and the ministers.

Article 88 of the Indian Constitution provides that every minister shall have the right to speak and take part in the proceedings of either House, any joint sitting of the Houses and any Committee of Parliament of which he may be named a member. But he shall not be entitled to vote.

91) The proposed Lemru Elephant Reserve, recently seen in news, is located in:

- a) Nagaland
- b) Sikkim
- c) Mizoram

d) Chhattisgarh

Explanation: The proposed Lemru Elephant Reserve in Chhattisgarh, in the pipeline for 20 years, has become the subject of yet another controversy.

The state Forest and Environment Department asked the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) to make a presentation for decreasing the area of the proposed reserve from 1,995 sq km to 450 sq km.

Lemru is one of two elephant reserves planned to prevent human-animal conflict in the region, with elephants moving into Chhattisgarh from Odisha and Jharkhand.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) described the reserve as part of an elephant corridor that connects Lemru (Korba), Badalkhol (Jashpur), Tamorpingla (Surguja).

Why does the government want to reduce the size of the reserve? The area proposed under the reserve is part of the Hasdeo Aranya

forests, a very diverse biozone that is also rich in coal deposits.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

92) With reference to the Speaker, consider the following statements:

1. The Speaker presides over the joint sittings of the Parliament.
2. The Deputy Speaker is subordinate to the Speaker.

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

Explanation: The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly has been without a Speaker for most of this year. Last week, it concluded its two-day Monsoon Session without electing a Speaker.

Article 93 for Lok Sabha and Article 178 for state Assemblies state that these Houses “shall, as soon as may be”, choose two of its members to be Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

The Constitution neither sets a time limit nor specifies the process for these elections. It leaves it to the legislatures to decide how to hold these elections.

In Lok Sabha and state legislatures, the President/Governor sets a date for the election of the Speaker, and it is the Speaker who decides the date for the election of the Deputy Speaker.

The legislators of the respective Houses vote to elect one among themselves to these offices.

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh specify a time-frame for holding the election to the Speaker and Deputy Speaker’s offices.

The Constitution provides that the office of the Speaker should never be empty. So, he continues in office until the beginning of the next House, except in the event of death or resignation.

Their roles

The Speaker presides over the House proceedings and joint sittings of the two Houses of Parliament. It is the Speaker's decision that determines whether a Bill is a Money Bill and therefore outside of the purview of the other House.

The Deputy Speaker is independent of the Speaker, not subordinate to him, as both are elected from among the members of the House.

Since Independence, the Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker's position has grown in importance. In addition to presiding over the House in the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker chaired committees both inside and outside of Parliament.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

93) What is Soberana 2, recently seen in news?

- a) Newly found exoplanet
- b) Cryptocurrency

c) Covid-19 vaccine

- d) None of the above

Explanation: Cuba has said its homegrown Covid-19 vaccine Soberana 2 (Sovereign 2), when delivered with a booster shot of Soberana Plus, is about 91 percent effective against symptomatic Covid-19 cases as demonstrated in its late stage clinical trials.

If approved, Cuba will become the first Latin American country to manufacture and produce a vaccine against Covid-19.

The Soberana 2 is delivered through a three dose regimen. Two shots of Soberana 2 and one of Soberana Plus, when taken in a 0-28-56

day regimen, have an efficacy of 91.2 percent, the Cuban government's Covid-19 task force announced.

It is a protein vaccine, which is to say that these vaccines are made up of a protein derived from the virus, which then binds to human cells to trigger an immune response.

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

94) With reference to the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF), consider the following statements:

- 1. FATF is a Paris based UN watchdog.
- 2. Philippines and Malta are the only countries in the recent grey list published by FATF.

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

Explanation: The Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) plenary session ended its five-day deliberation and put out the list of countries that it has identified to have "strategic deficiencies".

The Paris based UN watchdog that looks after issues like terrorism financing, money laundering and the flow of black money at the global level has retained Pakistan in the list of countries with "strategic deficiencies". The list is generally referred to as the "grey list".

The grey listing by FATF shows that the issue of money laundering and consequent funding of illicit activities is fast spreading to other countries as well. The latest grey list includes countries like the Philippines, Malta, South Sudan and Haiti.

The 39 member grouping works in close coordination with the UN Security Council which evaluates countries for commitment to

anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT).

Pakistan

The FATF has noted that Pakistan has made progress in addressing several of the issues that the watchdog has been raising in its plenary sessions. However, Pakistan failed to implement the most crucial of the 27 action items: to act against terror masterminds facing UN sanctions.

The latest move from FATF is expected to keep Pakistan under pressure to come clean on its links with the UN-designated terror masterminds Hafiz Saeed, the chief of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Mohammad. Both LeT and JeM are a threat to India as well as to Afghanistan.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

95) With reference to the Uttar Pradesh population policy for 2021-2030, consider the following statements:

1. The new policy aims at decreasing the total fertility rate from 2.7 to 2.1 by 2026 and 1.7 by 2030.

2. It aims to increase male methods of contraception use from 10.8% to 15.1% by 2026 and 16.4% by 2030.

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

Explanation: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the State's population policy for 2021-2030.

The new policy aims at

decreasing the total fertility rate from 2.7 to 2.1 by 2026 and 1.7 by 2030,

increase modern contraceptive prevalence rate from 31.7% to 45% by 2026 and 52% by 2030,

increase male methods of contraception use from 10.8% to 15.1% by 2026 and 16.4% by 2030,

decrease maternal mortality rate from 197 to 150 to 98, and infant mortality rate from 43 to 32 to 22, and under 5 infant mortality rate from 47 to 35 to 25.

Targeting stabilisation, the draft of the policy also said the State would attempt to maintain a balance of population among the various communities.

Hence both statements are correct.

96) Fazil Mango has GI tag from

a) West Bengal

b) Bihar

c) Uttar Pradesh

d) Manipur

Explanation: India has expanded its footprint of mango exports to the newer countries this season, notwithstanding logistical challenges posed by COVID19 pandemic.

In a major initiative which would boost mango export potential from the eastern region especially to middle east countries, a consignment of Geographical Identification (GI) certified Fazil mango variety sourced from Malda district of West Bengal was exported today to Bahrain.

The nine varieties which were exported includes GI certified Khirsapati (Malda, West Bengal), Lakkhanbhog (Malda, West Bengal), Fazli (Malda, West Bengal), Dusshheri (Malihabad, Uttar Pradesh) and Amrapali and Chausa (Malda, West Bengal) and Langda (Nadiya, West Bengal).

In June, 2021, a week-long Indian mango promotion programme was organised in Bahrain where 16 varieties of the fruit

including three GI certified Khirsapati&Lakshmanbhog (West Bengal), Zardalu (Bihar) were displayed.

97) What is 'Kamran Line'?

a) the boundary between Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

b) a boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.

c) a line in earth's core where NIFE get solidified

d) None of the Above

Explanation: Mr. Bezos' Blue Origin company intends to send tourists past the so-called Karman line 100 kilometres above earth, which is recognised by international aviation and aerospace federations as the threshold of space.

The Kármán line is an attempt to define a boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space, which is important for legal and regulatory purposes: aircraft and spacecraft fall under different jurisdictions and are subject to different treaties.

But NASA, the Air Force, the Federal Aviation Administration and some astrophysicists consider the boundary between the atmosphere and space to begin 80 kilometres up.

98) What is the meaning of the term 'Learning Poverty' sometimes seen in the news?

a) the percentage of 10-year-olds who cannot read and understand a simple story

b) the percentage of people aged seven and above who cannot read or write with understanding in any language

c) the percentage of people aged seven and above who cannot read or write with understanding in Hindi language only

d) a new method of determining poverty developed by United Nations

Explanation: The World Bank recently introduced an ambitious new Learning Target, which aims to cut by at least half the global rate of Learning Poverty by 2030. Learning Poverty is defined as the percentage of 10-year-olds who cannot read and understand a simple story.

99) With reference to the 'Exercise Kavach', consider the following statements:

1. It will be conducted under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC).

2. The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is the only Joint Forces Command of the country.

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

Explanation: Both statements are correct.

A large-scale Joint Military exercise 'Exercise Kavach' involving assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard is being conducted in the coming week under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) which is the only joint-command forces in the country.

The exercise involves synergised application of maritime surveillance assets, coordinated air and maritime strikes, air defence, submarine and landing operations.

Concurrently Joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) exercise involving various technical, electronic and human intelligence from three services will be conducted.

100) "dbGENVOC", seen recently in news, is:

a) Monoclonal antibody drug for Covid-19

b) Database of entire human genome

c) Database of genomic variations in oral cancer

d) New variant of Covid-19

Explanation: dbGENVOC is world's first browsable online database of GENomic Variants of Oral Cancer.

It is developed by DBT-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani an Autonomous Institute funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

Oral cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among men in India, largely fuelled by tobacco-chewing. Tobacco-chewing causes changes in the genetic material of cells in the oral cavity. These changes (mutations) precipitate oral cancer. Researches to identify those genetic mutations that drive oral cancer are ongoing. Such driver mutations may be variable across populations.

101) The Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project is located in:

a) Bhutan

b) Nepal

c) Myanmar

d) Pakistan

Explanation: A MoU has been signed for execution of 679 MW Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project in Nepal between Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Central Public Sector Enterprise under Ministry of Power, Government of India & Investment Board of Nepal (IBN) in Kathmandu Nepal.

The Lower Arun HEP (679 MW) is a downstream development of Arun-3 HEP.

The Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project is located in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur Districts of Nepal.

The project will not have any reservoir or dam and will be a tail race development of 900 MW Arun3 HEP.

The project will have four Francis type turbines.

On completion the Project will generate 2970 million units of electricity per annum.

It is scheduled to be completed in four years after commencement of construction activities and has been allocated to SJVN for 25 years on Build Own Operate Transfer basis.

Arun 3 Hydro Electric Project

This is the second project awarded to SJVN in Nepal, the first one being the 900 MW Arun 3 Hydro Electric Project in Sankhuwasabha District.

Arun-3 Project is being implemented through wholly owned subsidiary company of SJVN i.e. SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company Limited (SAPDC) incorporated in Nepal.

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

102) Kongu Nadu is a commonly used name for part of:

a) Northern Kerala

b) Western Karnataka

c) Southern Telangana

d) Western Tamil Nadu

Explanation: A list of new Union Cabinet ministers issued by the BJP has triggered a debate in political circles in Tamil Nadu, as well as on social media, by referring to 'Kongu Nadu', the informal name for a region in the western part of the state.

The list mentions new minister L Murugan as hailing from 'Kongu Nadu'.

This has led to allegations that the BJP of trying to bifurcate the state, with the ruling DMK-Congress alliance saying the "agenda" will not succeed.

It has also been considered an AIADMK stronghold in the recent past, and is also where the BJP's limited influence in the state is concentrated.

'Kongu Nadu' is neither a place with a PIN code nor a name given formally to any region. It is a commonly used name for part of western Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil literature, it was referred to as one of the five regions of ancient Tamil Nadu. There were mentions of 'Kongu Nadu' in Sangam literature as a separate territory.

In the present state of Tamil Nadu, the term is informally used to refer to a region that includes the districts of Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Karur, Namakkal and Salem, as well as Oddanchatram and Vendasandur in Dindigul district, and Pappireddipatti in Dharmapuri district.

The name derives from Kongu Vellala Gounder, an OBC community with a significant presence in these districts.

The region includes prominent businesses and industrial hubs at Namakkal, Salem, Tirupur and Coimbatore.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

103) With reference to the lightning, consider the following statements:

1. Lightning is the biggest contributor to accidental deaths due to natural causes.
2. People are most commonly struck by "ground currents".

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

Explanation: At least 30 people were killed in separate incidents of lightning in various parts of the country in the past 24 hours.

As a whole, India sees 2,000-2,500 lightning deaths every year on average. Lightning is the biggest contributor to accidental deaths due to natural causes.

And yet, lightning remains among the least studied atmospheric phenomena in the country.

Just one group of scientists, at the Indian Institute of Tropical Management (IITM) in Pune, works full-time on thunderstorms and lightning.

Ground currents

Lightning rarely hits people directly — but such strikes are almost always fatal.

People are most commonly struck by what are called "ground currents". The electrical energy, after hitting a large object (such as a tree) on Earth, spreads laterally on the ground for some distance, and people in this area receive electrical shocks.

It becomes more dangerous if the ground is wet (which it frequently is because of the accompanying rain), or if there is metal or other conducting material on it.

Hence both statements are correct.

104) Mekedatu hydroelectric project is recently in news. It is located in

- a) Karnataka
- b) Andhra Pradesh
- c) Telangana
- d) Tamil Nadu

Explanation: Mekedatu, meaning goat's leap, is a deep gorge situated at the confluence of the rivers Cauvery and Arkavathi, about 100 km from Bengaluru, at the Kanakapura taluk in Karnataka's Ramanagara district.

In 2013, then Karnataka announced the construction of a multi-purpose balancing reservoir project.

The project aimed to alleviate the drinking water problems of the Bengaluru and Ramanagara districts.

It was also expected to generate hydroelectricity to meet the power needs of the state.

105) Festival of 'Ashadhi Bij' is celebrated in

a) Maharashtra

b) Rajasthan

c) Gujarat

d) Madhya Pradesh

Explanation: Ashadhi Bij falls on the second day of Shukla paksha of Ashada month of Hindu calendar.

The festival is associated with the beginning of rains in the Kutch region of Gujarat.

During Ashadhi Bij, the moisture in the atmosphere is checked to predict which crop would do best in the coming monsoon.

106) Section 126A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 is often seen in the news during the elections with reference to

a) conduct of exit poll and dissemination of their results.

b) seeking votes on grounds of religion.

c) indulging in paid news.

d) promote enmity or hatred between different classes of citizen

Explanation: Section 126A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951: It prohibits conduct of exit poll and dissemination of their results during the period mentioned therein, i.e., the hour fixed for commencement of polls in the first phase and half hour after the time fixed for close of

poll for the last phase in all the States and Union Territories.

107) "NASAMS" have been frequently seen in news is related to-

a) Anti-Missile Defence System

b) A warship vessel

c) Nuclear Submarine

d) Artillery Gun

Explanation: Integrated Air Defence Weapon System

The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) is called the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS-II).

It is an upgraded version of the NASAMS developed by the US firm Raytheon in partnership with Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace of Norway.

The IADWS system provides integrated air missile defence and is currently deployed around Washington, DC.

It includes launchers, targeting and guidance systems, advanced medium-range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) and Stinger missiles, 3D Sentinel radars, fire-distribution centres and command-and-control units.

The US has recently approved the sale of an Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) to India at an estimated cost of \$1.9 billion.

The objective of the deal is to modernise India's armed forces and to expand its existing air defence architecture to counter threats posed by air attacks.

108) Which of the following is/are recommendations of MS Swaminathan Commission?

1. Distribution of Ceiling Surplus and Waste Lands

2. Shifting agriculture from state list to concurrent list.

3. Establish Land -Use Advisory Service

Select the correct answer using the code below-

a) 1 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1,2 and 3

Explanation: All are correct.

M.S. Swaminathan-headed National Commission on Farmers in his fifth and final report submitted in October 2006 has recommended shifting agriculture from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Constitution.

This would allow the Union government to have a greater and a relatively more decisive say in the matters related to agriculture and farmers without majorly diluting the powers of the state governments.

Key recommendations of the Commission:

Distribute ceiling-surplus and wasteland among farmers, prevent the non-agricultural use of farmland, secure grazing rights and seasonal forest access to forest tribals.

Establish a National Land Use Advisory Service, which would link land use decisions with ecological and marketing factors of season and geography-specific basis.

Reform irrigation resources and its distribution among farmers. Use rainwater harvesting, water level recharging to increase water supply.

Spread outreach of institutional credit by reducing crop loan interest rates, provide a moratorium on debt recovery, agricultural risk fund and a separate Kisan Credit Card for women farmers.

To address the growing farmer suicides, provide affordable health insurance at primary health centres in rural areas. The recommendations included an extension of national rural health mission to suicide-prone areas. Restructuring of microfinance policies, covering all crops by insurance and social security net for support were also sought.

Give farmers a minimum support price at 50% profit above the cost of production classified as C2 by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

109) Consider the following statements about Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme:

1. AEO is a programme under the guidance of the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework.

2. It is a mandatory compliance programme.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme:

AEO is a programme under the guidance of the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate Global Trade. 1 is correct.

The programme aims to enhance international supply chain security and facilitate the movement of legitimate goods.

The AEO encompasses various players in the International supply chain.

Under this programme, an entity engaged in international trade is approved by WCO as compliant with supply chain security

standards and granted AEO status & certain benefits.

It is a voluntary compliance programme. 2 is incorrect.

110) Consider the following statements about Lok Sabha speaker:

1. The Constitution neither sets a time limit nor specifies the process for the election of Lok Sabha speaker.
2. The House can remove the Speaker through a resolution passed by an effective majority.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: Both statements are correct.

Lok Sabha Speaker:

Article 93 for Lok Sabha and Article 178 for state Assemblies state that these Houses “shall, as soon as may be”, choose two of its members to be Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

The Constitution neither sets a time limit nor specifies the process for these elections.

It leaves it to the legislatures to decide how to hold these elections. The House can remove the Speaker through a resolution passed by an effective majority which means more than 50% of the total strength needs to vote for removing the Speaker.

This is done as per Articles 94 and 96.

The Speaker can also be removed on getting disqualified from being a Lok Sabha member under sections 7 and 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

111) India’s first Green Hydrogen Mobility project, recently seen in news, will be set up in:

- a) Ladakh**
- b) Hyderabad
- c) Kochi
- d) Kolkata

Explanation: REL, a 100% subsidiary of NTPC, signed a MoU with Union Territory of Ladakh and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) to setup the country’s first Green Hydrogen Mobility project.

The signing of the MoU was also marked with the inauguration of NTPC’s first solar installations in Leh in form of solar trees and a solar car port.

The MoU will enable NTPC to help Ladakh develop a carbon free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen. This is also in line with the Prime Minister’s vision of a ‘carbon neutral’ Ladakh.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

112) With reference to the Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account, consider the following statements:

1. Only non-resident retail investors will be eligible to invest in Government securities.
2. The same account will be valid for bidding in primary auctions as well as secondary market trading in Negotiated Dealing System – Order Matching (NDS-OM).

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

Explanation: RBI announces RDG account for hassle-free trading in govt bonds for retail investors.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that retail investors can open an account with the central bank to start trading in government bonds.

The online portal for retail investors will provide access to the bond trading platform available to institutional investors as well, and retail investors can also bid for bonds in primary auctions like larger institutions.

The starting date for the Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account is yet to be announced by the RBI, but other modalities have been spelt out.

Salient features

Both resident Indian retail investors and non-resident retail investors will be eligible to invest in Government securities.

The RDG account can be opened singly or jointly with any other retail investor who fulfills the eligibility criteria.

The same account will be valid for bidding in primary auctions as well as secondary market trading in Negotiated Dealing System – Order Matching (NDS-OM).

Hence both statements are correct.

113) With reference to the Kármán line, consider the following statements:

1. The most widely accepted boundary of space is known as the Kármán line, 1000km above mean sea level.
2. Above this level, there would be free space.

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

Explanation: On July 11, British businessman Richard Branson beat rival Jeff Bezos to reach the edge of space, giving space tourism an official kickstart. But experts and space enthusiasts are in doubt whether the height to which he travelled can be termed 'space'.

The most widely accepted boundary of space is known as the Kármán line, 100km above mean sea level. But the United States uses 80km as the cutoff point. Branson's Virgin Galactic flight reached a height of 86km while Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin flight is expected to go about 106km high.

The Kármán line has been compared to international waters, as there are no national boundaries and human laws in force beyond the line. Above this level, there would be free space.

It was named after aerospace pioneer Theodore von Kármán

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty says that space should be accessible to all countries and can be freely and scientifically investigated.

Defining a legal boundary of what and where space is can help avoid disputes and keep track of space activities and human space travel.

Layers of the atmosphere

The Earth's atmosphere has been divided into various layers, with the troposphere starting at the Earth's surface and extending about 14.5 km high, stratosphere extending to 50 km, mesosphere to 85 km, thermosphere to 600 kilometers and exosphere to 10,000 km.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

114) Which of the following countries adopted UPI system invented by India for digital payment.

1. Bangladesh
2. Bhutan
3. Nepal

4. Maldives

Correct choices is/are

a) 1 and 2

b) 2 only

c) 2 and 4

d) all of the above

Explanation: While speaking on the occasion, Smt. Sitharaman said that the services have started in Bhutan under India's neighbourhood first policy and India is proud of our achievement and feel pleasure in sharing it with our valued neighbour.

The Finance Minister said that BHIM UPI is one of the brightest spot and an achievement for digital transactions in India during the time of COVID-19 pandemic with more than 100 million UPI QRs have been created in last 5 years and BHIM UPI in 2020-21 has processed 22 billion transactions worth value Rs 41 lakh crore.

Bhutan is the first country to adopt UPI standards for its QR deployment, and the first country in our immediate neighbourhood to accept mobile based payments through the BHIM App.

115) "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" has frequently appeared in the news. It is a partnership agreement between-

a) China and Russia

b) United States and Israel

c) India and Japan

d) ASEAN

Explanation: Asia-Africa Growth Corridor: The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) is an economic partnership agreement between India and Japan. It intends to improve infrastructure and digital connectivity in Africa within Indo-Japan collaboration.

116) "Dard Tribe" who follows Aryan Culture has been frequently seen in news. They are found in-

a) Ladakh

b) Sikkim

c) Delhi

d) Arunachal Pradesh

Explanation: Dard Tribe

It is a Buddhist tribal group in Ladakh.

The Dard Aryans inhabit Dha, Hanu, Beema, Darchik and Garkone villages in Leh and Kargil districts. The 5 villages are together called the Aryan valley.

o Their culture is the Aryan Culture.

o Dard Aryan' is not among the list of notified Schedule Tribes.

117) With reference to (Sustainable Development Goals) SDG Index, consider the following statements-

1. It is released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

2. Tamil Nadu has topped the index since the inception of it.

3. Palma Ratio is a measure of inequality.

4. Odisha and Andaman & Nicobar Islands are most prepared to tackle climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code below-

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 3 and 4 only

d) 1,2 and 4 only

Explanation: The third edition of the SDG India Index and Dashboard 2020–21 was released by NITI Aayog. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.

Since its inaugural launch in 2018, the index has been comprehensively documenting and ranking the progress made by States and Union Territories towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG India Index computes goal-wise scores on the 16 SDGs for each State and Union Territory.

The Palma ratio is a measure of inequality. It is the ratio of the richest 10% of the population's share of gross national income (GNI) divided by the poorest 40%'s share. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

Kerala has been top of the index since the inception of SDG Index in 2018. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect. Tamil Nadu has achieved 2nd place and Bihar is last in ranking.

Odisha and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were the most prepared among India's states and Union territories (UTs) to reach the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on Climate Action, the SDG India Index & Dashboard 2020-21 has showed. Hence, statement 4 is correct.

118) The Kesariya Buddha Stupa, seen recently in news, is located in:

- a) Uttar Pradesh
- b) Bihar**
- c) Jharkhand
- d) Maharashtra

Explanation: Kesariya Buddha Stupa is located in the Champaran (east) district of Bihar.

Kesariya Stupa has a circumference of almost 400 feet (120 m) and raises to a height of about 104 feet (32 m).

The site's exploration reportedly started in the early 19th century, from its discovery led by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814 to General Cunningham's proper excavation in 1861–62.

The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE. The original Kesaria stupa probably dates to the time of Ashoka

(circa 250 BCE), as the remains of a capital of a Pillar of Ashoka were discovered there.

The discovery of gold coins bearing the seal of the famous emperor Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty (AD 30 to AD 375) goes on to further establish the ancient heritage of Kesaria.

119) *vicennia marina* sometimes seen in news is a?

- a) A cold-blooded marine reptilian species
- b) Wetland inhabiting species of sparrow
- c) salt-secreting salt-tolerant mangrove species.**
- d) Frog species endemic to western ghats

Explanation: *Avicennia marina* is also called Banhi in Odia. It is one of the most prominent mangroves species found in all mangrove formations in India.

Features: It is a salt-secreting and extraordinarily salt-tolerant mangrove species that grows optimally in 75% seawater and tolerates >250% seawater.

Significance: It is among the rare plant species which can excrete 40% of the salt through the salt glands in the leaves, besides its extraordinary capacity to exclude salt entry to the roots.

120) Consider the following statements regarding Lightning

1. Increasing global temperature will increase the frequency of lightning
2. Intercloud or intracloud (IC) lightning is more dangerous than the Cloud to ground (CG) lightning

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: A study published in 2015 found out that, an increase of one degree Celsius would increase the frequency of lightning strikes by 12 percent. Urbanisation, increased population and a warmer climate guarantee an intensification of human exposure to lightning hazards. What is lightning?

Lightning is a very rapid and massive discharge of electricity in the atmosphere. It is the process of occurrence of a natural 'electrical discharge of very short duration and high voltage between a cloud and the ground or within a cloud.

There are two types of lightning. Such as,

Intercloud or intracloud (IC) lightning: These are visible and harmless.

Cloud to ground (CG) lightning: This is harmful as the 'high electric voltage discharge for very short time leads to electrocution.

121) With reference to the National AYUSH Mission (NAM), consider the following statements:

1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. It was launched in 2020.

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

Explanation: The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of National AYUSH Mission (NAM) as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme from 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2026 with financial implication of Rs. 4607.30 crore (Rs 3,000 crore as Central Share and Rs. 1607.30 crore as State Share).

The Mission was launched on 15-09-2014.

Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National AYUSH Mission is being implemented by Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.

Its objectives are providing cost effective AYUSH Services, with a universal access through

upgrading AYUSH Hospitals and Dispensaries,

co-location of AYUSH facilities at Primary Health Centers (PHCs), Community Health Centers (CHCs) and District Hospitals (DHs),

strengthening institutional capacity at the State level through upgrading AYUSH educational institutions,

setting up of new upto 50 bedded integrated AYUSH Hospital,

AYUSH Public Health programmes and

operationalization of 12,500 AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

122) Spin Boldak is a place located on which border?

a) Afghanistan-Pakistan

b) Afghanistan- China

c) Afghanistan- Iran

d) Afghanistan - Tajikistan

Explanation: The Taliban captured the strategic border crossing of Spin Boldak on the frontier with Pakistan on Wednesday, continuing sweeping gains made since foreign forces stepped up their withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's Interior Ministry denied the insurgents had taken the area even as social media was flooded with pictures of Taliban fighters relaxing in the frontier town.

Spin Boldak is the latest in a string of border crossings and dry ports seized by the Taliban in recent weeks, with the insurgents looking to choke off much-needed revenue from the

government in Kabul while also filling their own coffers

123) Consider following statement about Section 66A of the IT Act 2000.

1. Section 66A dealt with information related crimes in which sending information, by means of a computer resource or a communication device, which is inter alia offensive, derogatory and menacing is made a punishable offence
2. Section 69A provided power to govt. to issue directions to block public access of any information through any computer source.
3. Supreme Court has declared both Section 66A and Section 69 of the IT act 2000 unconstitutional.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2**
- c) 2 and 3
- d) 2 only

Explanation: Section 66A dealt with information related crimes in which sending information, by means of a computer resource or a communication device, which is inter alia offensive, derogatory and menacing is made a punishable offence.

In *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* judgement, Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and J. Chelameswar had observed that the weakness of Section 66A lay in the fact that it had created an offence on the basis of undefined actions: such as causing “inconvenience, danger, obstruction and insult”, which do not fall among the exceptions granted under Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of speech.

The judgment had found that Section 66A was contrary to both Articles 19 (free speech) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution. The entire provision was struck down by the court.

After that government had appointed an expert committee (T.K. Viswanathan committee) which proposed a legislation to meet the challenge of hate speech online.

Section 69A provided power to govt. to issue directions to block public access of any information through any computer source.

124) The Supreme court has recently ruled that Right to Privacy is a fundamental right. What is/are the consequences of this judgment?

1. Citizens can move both the High Courts and Supreme Court for violation of this right.
2. It reconciles India’s legal position on privacy with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
3. This right will be recognized under the ‘Right to Equality in India pending statutory approval by the Parliament.

Select the correct answer using the codes below:

- a) 1 and 2 only**
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 2 only

Explanation: This is as per A32 and A226 of the constitution under the Right to constitutional remedies.

The Supreme Court of India's judgment gains international significance as privacy enjoys a robust legal framework internationally. It is now aligned with A12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966, which legally protects persons against the arbitrary interference with one's privacy, honour and reputation, family, home and correspondence.

It was recognized as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty under Article 21 and entire Part III of the Constitution.

Parliament does not recognize FRs different from the constitution.

125) The famous Indra Sawhney and others vs. Union of India case under the Supreme Court of India concerns with:

- a) Reservation of backward classes community**
- b) Protection of basic structure of the constitution
- c) Acquisition of properties from marginalized communities by the state
- d) Provisions related to detention of a subject under Section 144 of Cr. PC

Explanation: When our own Constitution was framed the framer of the constitution made a special provision with intention to provide equal opportunity in the public employment to all the citizens within India.

The same was inserted in the Article 16 of the Indian Constitution.

But considering the backward classes a special provision was inserted in the same Article.

In clause 4 i.e., in A16(4). This section empowers the State to make a special provision for those backward classes who in the opinion of the State are not adequately represented in the service under the State.

126) Consider the following statements regarding 'National Automotive Testing and Research and development Infrastructure Project (NATRIP)':

1. NATRIP is the initiative in the automotive sector which comprises representatives from the Government of India and State Governments.
2. It is a flagship project of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct ?

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

Explanation: National Automotive Testing and Research and development (R&D) Infrastructure Project (NATRIP) is the largest and most significant initiative in the automotive sector which comprises representatives from the Government of India, a number of State Governments and Indian Automotive Industry. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

It is a flagship project of the Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

NATRIP aims to create a state of the art testing, validation and R&D infrastructure in the country.

127) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding RBI Retail Direct scheme?

The objective of this scheme is to facilitate investment in government securities by institutional investors.

It will give registered users access to primary issuance of government securities.

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Explanation: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the 'RBI Retail Direct' scheme.

It will be a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by individual investors.

Retail investors (individuals) will have the facility to open and maintain the 'Retail Direct Gilt Account' (RDG Account) with the RBI.

The online portal will give registered users access to primary issuance of G-secs and access to Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching system (NDS-OM). NDS-OM is an electronic, screen based, anonymous, order driven trading system for dealing in G-secs.

With this scheme RBI seeks to democratize the ownership of government debt securities beyond banks and managers of pooled resources such as mutual funds.

The current G-sec market is dominated by institutional investors which are large market actors such as banks, mutual funds and insurance companies. These entities trade in lot sizes of Rs 5 crore or more.

This scheme will make the process of G-sec trading smoother for small investors therefore it will raise retail participation in G-secs and will improve ease of access.

128) Bryum bharatiensis, seen recently in news, is:

a) New species of moss in Antarctica

b) Salt tolerant mangrove species

c) A new species of skittering frog

d) Tree belonging to the genus of the coffee family

Explanation: Indian scientists have discovered a new plant species in Antarctica. The species is named Bryum bharatiensis – after the country's name and India's Antarctic station Bharati.

Polar biologists of the Central University of Punjab were on Indian Antarctic Mission 2016-17 when Felix Bast, Associate Professor and Head of Department of Botany, stumbled

upon a new native species of moss on rocks near Bharati station at Larsemann Hills, East Antarctica.

Since plants need nitrogen, along with potassium, phosphorus, sunlight and water to survive, scientists wondered how did the moss survive in the Antarctic landscape of rock and ice.

This is the first time a plant species has been discovered in the four decades of the Indian Antarctic mission, which began in 1981.

129) Consider the following statements regarding Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (VIPER) Mission

1. It will be the resource mapping mission on Martian Terrain

2. The Mission will be launched by NASA in 2023.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: NASA has announced the launch of the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover(VIPER) Mission in 2023. About VIPER Mission:

VIPER Mission is a mobile robot to be launched by NASA in the year 2023.

It will be the first resource mapping mission on any other celestial body.

Celestial Body is any natural body outside the Earth's atmosphere. Easy examples are the Moon, Sun, and the other planets of our solar system.

Objectives of the Mission:

To get a closer view of the Moon's South Pole

To evaluate the concentration of water as well as other potential resources on its surface

To understand if it is possible for human life to sustain there, by using locally available resources.

130) Consider the following statements regarding Kesaria Buddha Stupa:

1. It is regarded as the tallest and the largest Buddhist stupa in the world.
2. The current Kesaria Stupa belongs to Ashoka dynasty.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct

Statement 2 is incorrect: The original Kesariya stupa probably dates to the time of Ashoka (circa 250 BCE) as the remains of a capital of a Pillar of Ashoka were discovered there. The current stupa dates to the Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD and may have been associated with the 4th century ruler Raja Chakravarti.

131) In which of the following judgements Supreme Court had struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000?

- a) Lily Thomas Vs. Union of India
- b) Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India
- c) Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug vs. Union of India

d) Shreya Singhal Vs. Union of India

Explanation: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has requested States and Union Territories (UTs) to direct all police stations under their jurisdiction not to register cases

under the repealed Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

It has also asked the States and UTs to sensitize law enforcement agencies for the compliance of the order issued by the Supreme Court on 24.03.2015.

The MHA has also requested that if any case has been booked in States and UTs under section 66A of the IT Act, 2000, such cases should be immediately withdrawn.

The Supreme Court in its judgment on 24.03.2015 in the matter of Shreya Singhal Vs. Union of India, had struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

This made Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 null and void with effect from the date of the order, therefore 24.03.2015 and hence no action could be taken under this section.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

132) With reference to the draft Drone Rules, 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The Drone Rules, 2021 will replace the UAS Rules 2021
2. No flight permission required upto 400 feet in green zones and upto 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.

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

Explanation: Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has released the updated – The Drone Rules, 2021 for public consultation. The Drone Rules, 2021 will replace the UAS Rules 2021 (released on 12 March 2021).

Key takeaways from the Draft Drone Rules, 2021 include:

Approvals abolished: unique authorisation number, unique prototype identification number, certificate of conformance, certificate of maintenance, import clearance, etc.

Number of forms reduced from 25 to 6.

Fee reduced to nominal levels. No linkage with the size of the drone.

Safety features like 'No permission – no take-off' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. to be notified in future. A six-month lead time will be provided for compliance.

Digital sky platform shall be developed as a business-friendly single-window online system.

Interactive airspace map with green, yellow, and red zones will be displayed on the digital sky platform. Yellow zone reduced from 45 km to 12 km from the airport perimeter.

No flight permission required upto 400 feet in green zones and upto 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter.

No pilot licence required for micro drones (for non-commercial use), nano drone and for R&D organisations.

No restriction on drone operations by foreign-owned companies registered in India.

Coverage of drones under Drone Rules, 2021 increased from 300 kg to 500 kg. This will cover drone taxis also.

Maximum penalty under Drone Rules, 2021 reduced to INR 1 lakh. This shall, however, not apply to penalties in respect of violation of other laws.

Drone corridors will be developed for cargo deliveries.

Drone promotion council to be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.

Hence both statements are correct.

133) Afghan-India Friendship Dam is located on which river?

a) Kabul

b) Hari

c) Helmand

d) Panjshir

Explanation: Already, there has been fighting in the area where one of India's high-visibility projects is located — the 42MW Salma Dam in Herat province.

The hydropower and irrigation project, completed against many odds and inaugurated in 2016, is known as the Afghan-India Friendship Dam.

In the past few weeks, the Taliban have mounted attacks in nearby places, killing several security personnel. The Taliban claim the area around the dam is now under their control.

134) Consider the following statements:

1. Ultraviolet (UV) rays cover a wavelength range of 100-400 nm.

2. UV-A and UV-C rays from the Sun are transmitted through our atmosphere.

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

Explanation: Ultraviolet (UV) is a type of light or radiation naturally emitted by the Sun.

It covers a wavelength range of 100-400 nm.
1 is correct.

The human visible light ranges from 380–700 nm.

Types of UV bands and their effect on humans:

UV-C (100-280 nm),

UV-C radiation from man-made sources has been known to cause skin burns and eye injuries.

UV-B (280-315 nm) and

UV-B rays can only reach the outer layer of our skin or epidermis and can cause sunburns and are also associated with skin cancer.

UV-A (315-400 nm).

UV-A rays can penetrate the middle layer of your skin or the dermis and can cause ageing of skin cells and indirect damage to cells' DNA.

UV-A and UV-B rays from the Sun are transmitted through our atmosphere and all UV-C is filtered by the ozone layer. 2 is incorrect.

135) Consider the following statements:

1. Wasting is defined as low weight-for-age.
2. A child who is underweight may be stunted, wasted or both.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: Wasting is defined as low weight-for-height. It often indicates recent and severe weight loss, although it can also persist for a long time.

Statement 2 is correct: Underweight is defined as low weight-for-age. A child who is underweight may be stunted, wasted or both.

136) Mukundra Tiger Reserve sometimes seen in news is located in?

a) Maharashtra

b) Rajasthan

c) Uttarakhand

d) Gujarat

Explanation: The Rajasthan government will develop a tiger corridor connecting the newly proposed 'Ramgarh Tiger Reserve', Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve.

137) Consider the following statements regarding transgenic crop.

1. In India there is no commercial cultivation of transgenic crops.
2. Transgenic crops are more toxic and always proliferate in the environment.
3. Transgenic crops can bring new gene combinations which are not found in nature.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

***a) 3 only**

b) 1, 3

c) 2, 3

d) 1, 2, 3

Explanation: Plant genetic engineering methods were developed over 30 years ago, and since then, genetically modified (GM) crops or transgenic crops have become commercially available and widely adopted in many countries.

In India, Bt cotton was approved by Government of India in March 2002 as the first transgenic crop for commercial cultivation.

Though, it is widely claimed that transgenic crops offers dramatic promise for meeting some of greatest challenges but like all new technologies, it also poses certain risks, because of the fact that transgenic crops can bring together new gene combinations which are not found in nature having possible harmful effects on health, environmental and non-target species.

Transgenic crops are not toxic nor are likely to proliferate in the environment. However, specific crops may be harmful by virtue of novel combinations of traits they possess.

138) Rare earth elements, sometimes seen in news are used in

1. Air pollution control
2. Illuminated screens on electronic devices
3. Defence equipments
4. Space shuttle components

Select the correct answer code:

- a) 1, 2, 3
- b) 1, 3, 4
- c) 1, 2
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4**

Explanation: Rare Earth Elements or Rare Earth Metals are a set of 17 chemical elements in the periodic table — the 15 lanthanides, plus scandium and yttrium, which tend to occur in the same ore deposits as the lanthanides, and have similar chemical properties.

Despite their classification, most of these elements are not really “rare”. One of the Rare Earths, promethium, is radioactive.

These elements are important in technologies of consumer electronics, computers and networks, communications, clean energy, advanced transportation, healthcare, environmental mitigation, and national defence, among others.

Scandium is used in televisions and fluorescent lamps, and yttrium is used in drugs to treat rheumatoid arthritis and cancer.

Rare Earth elements are used in space shuttle components, jet engine turbines, and drones. Cerium, the most abundant Rare Earth element, is essential to NASA’s Space Shuttle Programme.

China’s Rare Earths deposits account for 80% of identified global reserves.

139) Consider the following statements regarding Indo-Taiwan relations.

1. India and Taiwan do not have formal diplomatic ties.
2. India has endorsed the “one-China” policy.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Explanation: China has claimed Taiwan through its “one China” policy since the Chinese civil war forced the defeated Kuomintang, or Nationalist, to flee to the island in 1949 and has vowed to bring it under Beijing’s rule, by force if necessary.

Indo- Taiwan relations:

Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, Taiwan and India have been cooperating in various fields.

India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy since 2010.

140) The Union Cabinet has approved MoU with which country, on cooperation regarding Coking Coal?

- a) Russia**
- b) Sweden

- c) Japan
- d) Australia

Explanation: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Steel of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation on cooperation regarding Coking Coal.

Coking Coal is used for Steel making. The MoU shall benefit the steel sector in India by reducing their input cost and cost of steel in domestic market. The Cabinet also approves MoU between India and Denmark for cooperation in health and medicine.

141) With reference to the card payment network companies, consider the following statements:

1. The Reserve Bank of India has barred all foreign card payment network companies from taking new customers on board over the issue of storing data in India.
2. Under the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007 the Union Ministry of Finance is the authority for the regulation and supervision of payment systems in India.

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

Explanation: The Reserve Bank of India has so far barred three foreign card payment network companies — Mastercard, American Express and Diners Club — from taking new customers on board over the issue of storing data in India.

By the RBI circular on Storage of Payment System Data dated April 6, 2018, all system providers were directed to ensure that within six months the entire data (full end-to-end

transaction details, information collected or carried or processed as part of the message or payment instruction) relating to payment systems operated by them is stored in a system only in India.

They were also required to report compliance to the RBI and submit a board-approved system audit report conducted by a CERT-In empanelled auditor within the timelines specified.

However, credit and card firms with global operations have been resisting the move, citing costs, security risk, lack of clarity, timeline, and the possibility of data localisation demand from other countries.

Firms such as Mastercard, Visa and National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) are Payment System Operators authorised to operate a card network in India under the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007.

Under the Act, the RBI is the authority for the regulation and supervision of payment systems in India. The RBI's payment system enables payments to be effected between a payer and a beneficiary and involves the process of clearing, payment or settlement, or all of them.

Hence both statements are incorrect.

142) Zaranj-Delaram highway built by the Border Roads Organisation is located in:

- *a) Afghanistan
- b) Iran
- c) Sri Lanka
- d) Nepal

Explanation: As the Taliban push ahead with military offensives across Afghanistan, preparing to take over after the exit of US and NATO forces, India faces a situation in which it may have no role to play in that country, and in the worst case scenario, not even a diplomatic presence.

The 42MW Salma Dam in Herat province was inaugurated in 2016 and is known as the Afghan-India Friendship Dam.

The other high-profile project was the 218-km Zaranj-Delaram highway built by the Border Roads Organisation. Zaranj is located close to Afghanistan's border with Iran.

The Afghan Parliament in Kabul was built by India at \$90 million. It was opened in 2015. A block in the building is named after former PM AB Vajpayee.

In 2016, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the restored Stor Palace in Kabul, originally built in the late 19th century, and which was the setting for the 1919 Rawalpindi Agreement by which Afghanistan became an independent country.

At the Geneva Conference in November, India announced that it had concluded with Afghanistan an agreement for the construction of the Shatoot Dam in Kabul district, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents.

Last year, India pledged \$1 million for another Aga Khan heritage project, the restoration of the Bala Hissar Fort south of Kabul, whose origins go back to the 6th century. Bala Hissar went on to become a significant Mughal fort, parts of it were rebuilt by Jahangir, and it was used as a residence by Shah Jahan.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

143) Recently seen in news, 'Fit for 55' package is an initiative of:

- a) United Nations
- b) World Bank
- c) World Economic Forum

d) European Commission

Explanation: The European Commission unveiled its 'Fit for 55' package of revised climate and energy laws on 14 July - aiming to

align key EU policies with the new 55-percent net-emissions reduction by 2030.

Cars with internal combustion engines will disappear from European showrooms by 2035.

Steel producers and cement makers will pay for every ton of carbon dioxide their factories emit.

Cargo ships may not be able to dock in ports like Rotterdam, Netherlands, or Hamburg, Germany, unless they run on cleaner fuels. Commercial airliners will be required to fill up with synthetic fuel produced with green energy.

The European Union's plan to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by more than half by the end of the decade will touch almost every industry in the trade bloc, with profound consequences for jobs and the bloc's economy.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

144) With reference to the Article 311, consider the following statements:

1. Article 311 of the Constitution deals with 'Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State'.
2. Under Article 311(2), no civil servant can be "dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which he has been informed of the charges and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges".

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

Explanation: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has dismissed 11 Jammu and Kashmir government employees for alleged terror links under provisions of Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution. The employees include two sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin.

Article 311 of the Constitution deals with 'Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State'.

Under Article 311(2), no civil servant can be "dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which he has been informed of the charges and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges".

Subsection (c) of the provision, however, says this clause shall not apply "where the President or the Governor, as the case may be, is satisfied that in the interest of the security of the State it is not expedient to hold such inquiry".

The safeguard of an inquiry also does not apply in cases of conviction on a criminal charge [311(2)(a)], or "where the authority...is satisfied that for some reason, to be recorded by that authority in writing, it is not reasonably practicable to hold such inquiry". [311(2)(b)]

Hence both statements are correct.

145) In which one of the following States Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) is located?

- a) Arunachal Pradesh
- b) Odisha
- c) Karnataka

d) Kerala

Explanation: The recent attempt of Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) to reintroduce into the wild an abandoned nine-month-old cub named Mangala after rearing it in 'captivity' for two years has once again brought the

controversial concept of 're-wilding' of abandoned or injured animals under the lens.

As per the Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines laid down by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under Section 38(O) of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, there are three ways to deal with orphaned or abandoned tiger cubs.

The first is to make an effort to reunite the abandoned cubs with their mother.

Second, if a reunion of the cub with its mother is not possible, then shift the cub to a suitable zoo.

Third, reintroduction of the cub into the wild after a certain time when it appears that the cub is capable of surviving in the wild independently. This is what is known as 're-wilding'.

NTCA stresses that the tiger cub should be reared in an in situ enclosure for a minimum of two years, and during this time, each cub should have a successful record of at least 50 'kills'.

Periyar National Park also known as Periyar Tiger Reserve is located in the Western Ghats of Kerala.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

146) Mangar Bani Forest where prehistoric paintings are found recently, is located in:

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Haryana**
- c) Uttar Pradesh
- d) Uttarakhand

Explanation: Archaeologists in Haryana have estimated that a prehistoric site Faridabad's Mangar Bani hill forest, from where cave paintings were discovered recently, may be up to a lakh years old.

"On the basis of tool topology, it can be said that the date of prehistoric habitation at the

site may be from about 1,00,000 to about 15,000 years ago.

But we have also found evidence of later habitation, even up to 8th-9th century AD,” said Banani Bhattacharyya, Deputy Director of Haryana Archaeology & Museums Department.

147) Consider the following statements about PRASHAD Scheme:

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
2. It is a Central Sector Scheme fully financed by the Government of India.

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

Explanation: The ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD) is a Central Sector Scheme fully financed by the Government of India. 2 is correct.

It was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15. 1 is incorrect.

Earlier it was known as the ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive’ (PRASAD).

After the discontinuation of the HRIDAY scheme of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the development of Heritage destinations was included in the PRASAD Scheme, changing it to PRASHAD.

Objectives:

Integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.

Infrastructure development such as entry points (Road, Rail and Water Transport),

Last mile connectivity,

Basic tourism facilities like Information/ Interpretation Centers, ATM/ Money exchange

Implementation Agency: The projects identified under this scheme shall be implemented through the identified agencies by the respective State/ Union Territory Government.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes are those that are funded directly by the central ministries/ departments and implemented by states or their agencies.

This assistance is deliberately in areas that are State subjects, with the centre wishing to motivate the States to take up such programs.

Additional Central Assistance (ACA) linked schemes provide central assistance to the states for the state plan schemes.

This assistance is meant for special programs as per the needs of the State, sectoral priorities and cover subjects not on the union list.

The ACA linked schemes are funded by the ministry of finance and administered by the sectoral ministry concerned.

Central Sector Schemes are those that are implemented by a central agency and 100% funded by the center on subjects within the union list.

148) Ranthambore Tiger Reserve was recently seen in the news. Which of the following state the reserve is located in?

- a) Tamil Nadu
- b) Madhya Pradesh
- c) Rajasthan**
- d) Maharashtra

Explanation: The Rajasthan government will develop a tiger corridor connecting the newly proposed ‘Ramgarh Tiger Reserve’,

Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve. About the Proposed Tiger Corridor

The Proposed Tiger Corridor will be developed by relocating eight villages.

The corridor is being developed to deal with the issue of overpopulation of tigers, which Ranthambore tiger reserve is facing currently.

Ranthambore Tiger Reserve has a population of around 65 tigers currently. On the other hand, Mukundra reserve is left with just one Tiger.

Thus, this tiger corridor is proposed to balance the population distribution.

About Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

Ranthambore National Park and Tiger Reserve is located in Rajasthan. It is located at the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges.

River: The park is bounded to the north by the Banas River and to the south by the Chambal River.

Named after: The park is named after the historic Ranthambore Fort, which lies within the park.

Comprises: Two protected areas namely Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary and Sawai Mansingh Wildlife Sanctuary are linked by narrow corridors to the core of Ranthambore NP and all these together comprise the Tiger Reserve.

149) Consider the following statements regarding Nyaya-Vikas-2.0:

1. It is an online monitoring system to track the pendency of cases in the Supreme Court.
2. It has been developed with technical assistance of ISRO.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: Portal monitors the physical and financial progress of such judicial infrastructure projects by geo-tagging completed and ongoing infrastructure projects.

Statement 2 is correct: It has been set up by Deptt of Justice with technical assistance from ISRO.

150) Consider the following statements regarding different types of Ultraviolet (UV) light:

1. UV-B has the ability to penetrate deeply into the dermis.
2. UV-C has the shortest wavelength and is the most harmful UV radiation.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: UV A has the ability to penetrate deeply into the middle layers of our skin i.e. dermis

Statement 2 is correct: UV C has the shortest wavelength and is almost completely absorbed by the Ozone.

151) With reference to the 'zero-click' attacks, consider the following statements:

1. A zero-click attack helps spyware like Pegasus gain control over a device without human interaction or human error.
2. Zero-click attacks are hard to detect given their nature and hence even harder to prevent.

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

Explanation: One of the worrying aspects of the Pegasus spyware is how it has evolved from its earlier spear-phishing methods using text links or messages to 'zero-click' attacks which do not require any action from the phone's user.

A zero-click attack helps spyware like Pegasus gain control over a device without human interaction or human error.

So all awareness about how to avoid a phishing attack or which links not to click are pointless if the target is the system itself. Most of these attacks exploit software which receive data even before it can determine whether what is coming in is trustworthy or not, like an email client.

Zero-click attacks are hard to detect given their nature and hence even harder to prevent. Detection becomes even harder in encrypted environments where there is no visibility on the data packets being sent or received.

One of the things users can do is to ensure all operating systems and software are up to date so that they would have the patches for at least vulnerabilities that have been spotted.

Hence both statements are correct.

152) With reference to the Conjugal rights, consider the following statements:

1. Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage.
2. Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 recognises one aspect of conjugal rights, the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right.

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

Explanation: In the coming week, the Supreme Court is expected to begin hearing a fresh challenge to the provision allowing restitution of conjugal rights under Hindu personal laws. In 2019, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court had agreed to hear the pleas.

Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage, i.e. right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

The law recognises these rights— both in personal laws dealing with marriage, divorce etc, and in criminal law requiring payment of maintenance and alimony to a spouse.

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 recognises one aspect of conjugal rights — the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right.

The concept of restitution of conjugal rights is codified in Hindu personal law now, but has colonial origins and has genesis in ecclesiastical law. Incidentally, in 1970, the United Kingdom repealed the law on restitution of conjugal rights.

Similar provisions exist in Muslim personal law as well as the Divorce Act, 1869, which governs Christian family law.

The law is being challenged now on the main grounds that it violative of the fundamental right to privacy.

Hence both statements are correct.

153) Consider following statements about bad bank.

1. A bad bank is a bank set up to buy the bad loans and other illiquid holdings of another financial institution.
2. Large debtors have many creditors. Hence bad bank could solve the coordination problem, since debts would be centralised in one agency.
3. K V Kamath Committee opposed setting up of bad banks.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 and 2**
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) All of the above

Explanation: A bad bank is a financial institution that was formed to purchase the bad loans and other illiquid assets of another financial institution.

The organisation with a large number of nonperforming assets will sell them to the bad bank at market value.

The original institution may be able to clear its balance sheet by transferring such assets to the bad bank, albeit it will still be compelled to take write-downs.

According to the K V Kamath Committee, enterprises in industries such as retail, wholesale, roadways, and textiles are under difficulty. NBFCs, power, steel, real estate, and construction were all under pressure prior to Covid.

In this context, establishing a bad bank is considered as critical.

154) Consider the following statements regarding United Nation General Assembly-

1. Out of 193 members of United Nation, 190 members represent in General Assembly.

2. President of Assembly is elected each year to serve a three-year term of office.

3. Decisions regarding admission of new members, budgetary matters require a two-third of majority of General Assembly.

Which of the following statements are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only**
- d) 1,2 and 3

Explanation: General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the UN.

All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.

Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and general debate, which many heads of state attend and address.

Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Hence statement 3 is correct.

Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.

The President of the General Assembly is elected each year by assembly to serve a one-year term of office. Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.

155) Consider the following statements regarding 'Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative'?

1. The initiative is proposed by G7 countries to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
2. It aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower income countries.

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

Explanation: The G7 (Group of Seven) Countries proposed a 'Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative' at the recent 47th G7 summit to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Hence, statement 1 is correct.

It aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower income countries - the space which has been increasingly captured by China through 2,600 BRI projects with trillions of dollars of investment. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

This infrastructure plan is being led by the United States.

B3W initiative will provide a transparent infrastructure partnership to help narrow about \$40 trillion needed by developing nations by 2035.

It calls for spending hundreds of billions of dollars in collaboration with the private sector while adhering to climate standards and labour practices.

However, the announcement is yet to be made about how exactly the plan would work or how much capital it would ultimately allocate.

156) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the 'Fit for 55 package'?

1. It is a new climate proposal released by the European Commission.
2. The package attempts to deliver the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and carbon neutrality goal.
3. It includes a new emissions trading system for transport and buildings and a carbon border price on imported goods.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Recently, the European Commission released a new climate proposal, the Fit for 55 package. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union, responsible for proposing legislation, enforcing EU laws and directing the union's administrative operations.

The EU in December 2020 submitted a revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% below 1990 levels by 2030.

It also set a long-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

The new package attempts to deliver the NDC and carbon neutrality goal through proposed changes that would impact the economy, society and industry, as well as ensure a fair, competitive and green transition by 2030 and beyond. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

It claims to achieve a balance between “regulatory policies” and market-based carbon pricing to avoid the pitfalls of each.

It includes a new emissions trading system for transport and buildings, a ban on the sale of polluting cars from 2035 and a carbon border price on imported goods. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

157) Consider the following statements:

1. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) are a part of National Agricultural Research System (NARS).
2. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra scheme is 100% financed by the Government of India.

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

Explanation: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) is an agricultural extension center in India. Usually associated with a local agricultural university, these centers serve as the ultimate link between the ICAR and farmers, and aim to apply agricultural research in a practical, localized setting.

It is an integral part of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS). Hence, statement 1 is correct.

The first KVK was established in 1974 at Puducherry.

The mandate of KVK is technology assessment and demonstration for its application and capacity development.

KVKs also produce quality technological products (seed, planting material, bio-agents, livestock) and make it available to farmers.

The KVK scheme is 100% financed by the Government of India and the KVKs are

sanctioned to Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutes, related Government Departments and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) working in Agriculture. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

158) In its present form, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act contains which of the following?

1. Punishment for terrorist acts and activities.
2. Punishment for acts threatening India’s security, including its economic security.
3. Provisions to prevent the use of funds for terrorist purposes, including money laundering.

Select the correct answer code:

- a) 1, 2
- b) 1, 3
- c) 1 only
- d) 1, 2, 3

Explanation: In its present form, the Act, after the amendments in 2004 and 2013, covers the declaration of associations as unlawful, punishment for terrorist acts and activities, acts threatening the country’s security, including its economic security (a term that covers fiscal and monetary security, food, livelihood, energy ecological and environmental security), and provisions to prevent the use of funds for terrorist purposes, including money laundering.

Under Section 43D (5) of the Act, bail cannot be granted to a suspect if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the charges are prima facie true.

159) Tyrrhenian Sea, seen recently in news, is considered as part of:

- a) East China Sea
- b) Bering Sea
- c) Arabian Sea

d) Mediterranean Sea

Explanation: The Tyrrhenian Sea is located along the western shoreline of Italy and is considered part of the larger Mediterranean Sea. It covers an area of approximately 106,000 square miles, which is situated over the boundary between the Eurasian and African tectonic plates.

The sea is a major trade and transportation route, receiving a significant number of vessels on a daily basis. It has also become a popular tourist destination given that it is home to several islands within its boundaries and a number of cities along its shorelines. Some of the most popular attractions in the Tyrrhenian Sea include Sicily, the Aeolian Islands, the city of Palermo, and the city of Naples.

Recently, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar, the Navy's Talwar-class Russian built frigate, has just concluded a two-day naval exercise with the Italian Navy in the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Labelled "Maritime Partnership Exercise", INS Tabar participated in the military exercises with along with a front line frigate of the Italian Navy.

160) With reference to UMANG app, consider the following statements:

1. It brings major government services on a single mobile app, with a larger goal to make the government accessible on mobile phones of citizens.
2. It is the digital India initiative of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: The UMANG mobile app (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) is a Government of India single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app, providing access to high impact services of various organizations (Central and State).

UMANG brings major government services on a single mobile app, with a larger goal to make the government accessible on mobile phones of citizens.

It is a Digital India initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for access to central and state government services.

161) DB Shekatkar committee, often mentioned in news, is related to:

- a) defence Reforms
- b) reducing malnutrition among girls
- c) banking system reforms
- d) None of the above

Explanation: Raksha Mantri informed Rajya Sabha about the status of Implementation of CoE Recommendations Related to Defence Reforms.

The Committee of Experts (CoE) constituted by the Ministry of Defence under the chairmanship of Lt Gen (Retd) DB Shekatkar to recommend measures to enhance combat compatibility and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces, submitted its report in December 2016.

The Report was taken up by the Ministry of Defence to frame key action points and roadmap for implementation.

Measures recommended by the Committee and taken up for the implementation include:

Optimisation of Signals Establishments to include Radio Monitoring Companies, Corps Air Support Signal Regiments, Air Formation Signal Regiments, Composite Signal Regiments

and merger for Corps Operating and Engineering Signal Regiments.

Restructuring of repair echelons in the Army to include Base Workshops, Advance Base Workshops and Static/Station Workshops in the field Army.

Redeployment of Ordnance echelons to include Vehicle Depots, Ordnance Depots and Central Ordnance Depots apart from streamlining inventory control mechanisms.

Better utilisation of Supply and Transportation echelons and Animal Transport Units.

Closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments in peace locations.

Enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army.

Improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

162) With reference to the Green National Highway Corridor Project, consider the following statements:

1. The Government had recently signed loan agreement with the World Bank to develop Green National Highway Corridors (GNHCP).

2. The project include Upgradation of about 781 km length of various National Highways passing through the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

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

Explanation: Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways informed Rajya

Sabha about the status of Green National Highway Corridor Project.

The Government had signed loan agreement with the World Bank to develop Green National Highway Corridors (GNHCP).

The project include Upgradation of about 781 km length of various National Highways passing through the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Out of total length of 781 km, work on 287.96 km having Civil Cost of Rs. 1664.44 cr. has been awarded.

The schedule date of completion is December, 2025.

Hence both statements are correct.

163) Prompt Corrective Action Framework, recently seen in news, refers to:

a) An initiative of finance ministry to control NPAs of banks

b) A measure to correct the unevenness of minimum support price regime

c) An action by the RBI to pose certain restrictions on a bank when certain limits are breached

d) A regime to shift from high voltage DC (HVDC) to high voltage AC (HVAC) transmission

Explanation: Prompt Corrective Action allows the RBI to pose certain restrictions on a bank when certain limits are breached.

These restrictions may include halting branch expansion, stopping dividend payments, special audit and more.

The risk thresholds that are taken into account are asset quality, profitability, NPA limit and the like.

The Reserve Bank of India has come across some misinformed communication circulating in some section of media including social

media, about the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.

The Reserve Bank has clarified that the PCA framework is not intended to constrain normal operations of the banks for the general public.

164) Which of the following reports are released by the World Economic Forum?

1. Global IT Report
2. Global Risk Report
3. Global Travel and Tourism Report

Select the correct answer using the code below-

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1,2 and 3

Explanation: Major reports published by WEF:

Global Competitiveness Report

Global IT Report

Global Gender Gap Report

Global Risk Report

Global Travel and Tourism Report

165) CoRe” Competitiveness and Resilience Partnership was recently seen in the news, It is announced by-

- a) India and Japan
- b) India and United States

c) United States and Japan

d) India and Sri-Lanka

Explanation: The United States and Japan pledge to revitalize an Alliance and make practical commitments to fulfil its potential. Together they will advance innovation, end this pandemic and protect the world from future ones, combat the climate crisis, and

enhance our people-to-people ties. Through these concrete initiatives, the United States and Japan will deliver results for the people, the Indo-Pacific, and the world.

Together, the United States and Japan will:

Advance secure and open 5G networks, including Open Radio Access Networks (“Open-RAN”), by fostering innovation and by promoting trustworthy vendors and diverse markets.

Strengthen competitiveness in the digital field by investing in research, development, testing, and deployment of secure networks and advanced ICT including 5G and next-generation mobile networks (“6G” or “Beyond 5G”). The United States has committed \$2.5 billion to this effort, and Japan has committed \$2 billion.

Build on successful U.S.-Japan cooperation in third-countries and launch a Global Digital Connectivity Partnership to promote secure connectivity and a vibrant digital economy while building the cybersecurity capacity of our partners to address shared threats.

Strengthen collaboration and information exchange between U.S. and Japanese ICT experts in global standards development.

Cooperate on sensitive supply chains, including semi-conductors, and on the promotion and protection of critical technologies.

Advance biotechnology for the global good by focusing on genome sequencing and the principles of openness, transparency, collaboration, and research integrity.

Reinforce collaboration and partnerships between research institutions on quantum information science and technology through joint research and exchange of researchers.

166) Consider the following statements regarding Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) device-

1. It has been recently created by Russia.
2. The goal of the device is to replicate nuclear fusion carried out in sun.
3. EAST Project is a part of International Thermonuclear Experiment Reactor (ITER).

Select the correct answer using the code below-

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 2 only

d) 1,2 and 3

Explanation: China's "artificial sun" set a record after it ran at 120 million degrees Celsius for 101 seconds, according to the state media. The Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) device designed by China replicates the nuclear fusion process carried out by the sun. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect and 2 is correct.

The ultimate goal of EAST is to create nuclear fusion like the Sun, using deuterium abundant in the sea. Deuterium from one-litre of seawater can produce energy equivalent to 300 litres of gasoline through a nuclear fusion reaction.

For nuclear fusion to occur, tremendous heat and pressure are applied to hydrogen atoms so that they fuse together. Unlike fission, nuclear fusion is considered a safer process with no nuclear waste. Nuclear fusion could potentially provide unlimited clean energy at very low costs.

China's EAST project is part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) facility that will become the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor after it becomes operational in 2035. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

167) Which of the following are related to separation of powers between the executive and judiciary?

1. Article 50
2. Article 122 and 212
3. Articles 121 and 211
4. Article 361

Select the correct code:

a) 1, 2 and 3

b) 2, 3 and 4

c) 2 and 4 only

d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Explanation: The Constitution of India lays down a functional separation of the organs of the State in the following manner:

Article 50: Article 50: This article puts an obligation over the State to separate the judiciary from the executive. This falls under the Directive Principles of State Policy

Article 122 and 212 of the Constitution mandates the courts not to inquire into proceedings of Parliament

Article 121 and 211: Judicial conduct of a judge of the Supreme Court and the High Courts' cannot be discussed in the Parliament and the State Legislature.

Article 361: the President or the Governor shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office.

168) Which of the following statements correctly define B3W?

a) Proposal by G7 to address infrastructure investment deficit in developing & lower income countries.

b) Anti-money laundering initiative by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

c) Global coalition to build back a resilient environment by limiting global warming under 1.5oC.

d) A manufacturing and distribution initiative by WHO to provide COVID vaccines to low-income countries.

Explanation: G-7 leaders have proposed Build Back Better World (B3W) to counter China's rising influence across 100-plus countries through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. BRI projects are perceived as debt traps laid by China for its strategic dominance in trade, foreign policy and geopolitics in the world. The proposal, though at an early stage, aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower income countries. China has capitalized on this gap through its 2,600 BRI projects with trillions of dollars of investment.

169) Rajaji national park sometimes in news is located in which of the following states?

- a) Madhya Pradesh
- b) Himachal Pradesh
- c) Jammu & Kashmir

d) Uttarakhand

Explanation: Rajaji National Park is a national park and tiger reserve that encompasses the Shivaliks, near the foothills of the Himalayas.

It was declared as a tiger reserve in 2015 and is the second tiger reserve in the Uttarakhand and 48th Tiger Reserve of India.

The park extends over the Shivalik Range in the northwest to the Rawasan River in the southeast, with the Ganges dividing it into two parts.

Some of the basic features of the Shivalik formations are to be seen in the park and is rightly known as a veritable storehouse of Shivalik biodiversity and ecosystems.

The western part of the Park consists of the Ramgarh, Kansrao, Motichur, Hardwar, Dholkhand and Chillawali Ranges.

170) Conjugal Rights was sometimes seen in news. Which of the following correctly explains this right?

a) This is the right granted to undertrial persons.

b) This is the right granted to a vaccine manufacturer to provide immunity from vaccine impacts.

c) This is the right created by marriage such as right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

d) This is the right granted to persons arrested under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

Explanation: The Supreme Court (SC) is going to hear a fresh challenge to the provision allowing restitution (recovery) of conjugal rights under Hindu personal laws (Hindu Marriage act 1955). Conjugal Rights:

Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage, i.e. right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act recognises one aspect of conjugal rights — the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right.

Similar provisions exist in Muslim personal law as well as the Divorce Act, 1869, which governs Christian family law.

171) With reference to the thermoelectric material, consider the following statements:

1. The thermoelectric material can generate electricity by using a temperature difference between its two sides.

2. Thermoelectric materials convert thermal energy directly into electricity through a process that involves a solid-state electron and phonon diffusion process.

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

Explanation: Researchers have developed a new low-cost electrical contact material for thermoelectric devices that is stable at high temperature.

Researchers from the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, GoI, have designed and developed thermoelectric modules using lead telluride (PbTe) and magnesium stannite silicide ($\text{Mg}_2\text{Si}_{1-x}\text{Sn}_x$) compounds, which gives more than 10% conversion efficiency.

The ARCI team explored various metallization methods and diffusion barrier materials with a systemic approach to make a stable bismuth-doped $\text{Mg}_2(\text{Si}_{1-x}\text{Sn}_x)\text{-Cu}$ joint to fabricate a thermoelectric generator.

The thermoelectric material can generate electricity by using a temperature difference between its two sides. The thermoelectric device can also function as a small heat pump, moving heat from one side of the device to the other.

Thermoelectric materials convert thermal energy directly into electricity through a process that involves a solid-state electron and phonon diffusion process.

Hence both statements are correct.

172) Which of the following country recently unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour?

a) China

b) India

c) Pakistan

d) Sri Lanka

Explanation: China has unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour. It is stated to be the world's fastest ground vehicle.

The new maglev transportation system made its public debut in the coastal city of Qingdao, China's east Shandong province.

Launched in October 2016, the high-speed maglev train project saw the development of a magnetic-levitation train prototype with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour in 2019, and conducted a successful test run in June 2020.

The train fills the speed gap between aviation and high-speed trains.

Compared with traditional vehicles running on wheels, high-speed maglev trains do not have contact with rail tracks. They have advantages in terms of efficiency and speed and produce very little noise.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

173) What is Ti-10V-2Fe-3Al?

a) Protein by delta variant of COVID-19 virus impacting lungs

b) Genetically modified variety of mustards

c) Indigenously developed high strength titanium alloy

d) Codename for algorithm breaching bitcoin security

Explanation: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has indigenously developed a High Strength Metastable Beta Titanium Alloy containing Vanadium, Iron and Aluminium, Ti-10V-2Fe-3Al on industrial scale for applications in aerospace structural forgings.

It has been developed by Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL), a

premier Hyderabad based laboratory of DRDO.

These alloys are already being used by many developed nations in recent times as beneficial substitute for the relatively heavier traditional Ni-Cr-Mo structural steels to achieve weight savings.

174) Consider following statements about China-South Asia grouping’.

1. The creation of the China-South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve, and a Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Centre set up in China.
2. India is one of the founding member of it.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both
- d) None of the above

Explanation: India can join the China-led South Asian initiative for COVID-19 vaccines and poverty alleviation too if it so desires, said Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen, denying that a six-nation grouping launched earlier this month was meant to exclude India.

The creation of the China-South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve, and a Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Centre set up in China on July 8, the outcome of a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of China, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in April, had raised eyebrows in New Delhi, as it appeared to leave out only India, Bhutan and the Maldives.

175) Consider following statements about Nano urea.

1. It is a nutrient (liquid) to provide nitrogen to plants as an alternative to the conventional urea.

2. It is developed to replace conventional urea and it can curtail the requirement of the same by at least 50%.

3. It has been indigenously developed at Nano Biotechnology Research Centre, Kalol, Gujrat

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 1 and 2

d) All of the above

Explanation: It is a nutrient (liquid) that is used to deliver nitrogen to plants as an alternative to urea.

It was created to replace traditional urea, and it has the potential to reduce urea usage by at least 50%.

In a 500 mL container, it contains 40,000 mg/L of nitrogen, which is similar to the nitrogen nutrient impact of one bag of ordinary urea.

Conventional urea is only 30-40% effective at delivering nitrogen to plants, however the Nano Urea Liquid is over 80% effective.

Over 11,000 farmers' fields, including rice and wheat, have been used to assess its efficacy.

A yield increase of 8% on average has been seen. It was created in accordance with Atmanirbhar Bharat and Atmanirbhar Krishi at the Nano Biotechnology Research Centre in Kalol, Gujarat.

India relies on imported urea to meet its urea needs.

176) Justice Amitava Roy panel was seen in news recently. The committee has been formed towards which of the following objective?

- a) Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes
- b) Digital payments

c) Prison reforms

d) Co-operative societies

Explanation: Justice Amitava Roy panel on prison reforms: In 2018, the Supreme Court appointed this panel. The committee submitted its report on February 2020 with major recommendations includes

For overcrowding

Special fast-track courts should be set up to deal with petty offences.

Lawyers – prisoners ratio: there should be at least one lawyer for every 30 prisoners.

For Understaffing

The Supreme Court should pass directions to start the recruitment process against vacancies

There should be the use of video-conferencing for trial.

For Prisoners

Every new prisoner should be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail.

Alternative punishments should be explored.

177) Brandenburg Test often in news is related to?

a) Right to diplomatic immunity

b) Right to free speech

c) Right to free legal aid

d) Right against self-incrimination

Explanation: The Brandenburg test was established in *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, to determine when inflammatory speech intending to advocate illegal action can be restricted.

Detail: In *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969), the 'clear and present danger' test was expanded, and the 'imminent lawless action' test was laid down by the U.S. Supreme Court, which

the court has followed since. This test states, "The constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press do not permit the state to forbid or proscribe advocacy of the use of force or of law violation, except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action".

The word 'imminent' used in the judgment is very important. Imminent means 'likely to happen very soon,' 'at hand,' or 'fast approaching.'

178) Consider the following statements:

1. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the only tripartite United Nation (UN) agency.

2. The ILO became an affiliated agency of the United Nations (UN) by the Treaty of Versailles.

3. The International Labour Conference is organized by ILO every year.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

a) 1 and 3 only

b) 2 only

c) 3 only

d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the only tripartite United Nation (UN) agency. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States (India is a member), to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.

ILO was established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

It became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.

It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) also known as the 'labour parliament' of the country formed on the lines of International Labour Conference is the apex level tripartite (Government, Employers and Workers) consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

International Labour Conference also known as International Parliament of Labour is a conference organized by ILO every year. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

179) Consider the following statements:

1. The law recognises conjugal rights in personal laws as well as criminal laws.
2. Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 empowers a spouse to apply in court if the other spouse has withdrawn from his/her society without reasonable excuse.
3. In the case of Saroj Rani v Sudarshan Kumar Chadha (1984), the Supreme Court declared Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 as null and void for the first time.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 only

c) 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage, i.e. right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

The law recognises these rights— both in personal laws dealing with marriage, divorce etc, and in criminal law requiring payment of maintenance and alimony to a spouse. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act recognises one aspect of conjugal rights — the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right. It reads:

When either the husband or the wife has, without reasonable excuse, withdrawn from the society of the other, the aggrieved party may apply, by petition to the district court. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

In 1984, the SC had upheld Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act in the case of Saroj Rani v Sudarshan Kumar Chadha, holding that the provision serves a social purpose as an aid to the prevention of break-up of marriage.

In 1983, a single-judge bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court had for the first time struck down the provision in the case of T Sareetha v T Venkatasubbaiah and declared it null and void. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

It cited the right to privacy among other reasons. The court also held that in “a matter so intimately concerned the wife or the husband the parties are better left alone without state interference”.

The court had, most importantly, also recognised that compelling “sexual cohabitation” would be of “grave consequences for women”.

180) Consider the following statements regarding Midday Meal Scheme:

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme (CSS) launched under the Ministry of Education.
2. All government and government aided schools and Madarsa supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are covered under the scheme.
3. The Central Government pays food security allowance in case of the non availability of Midday Meal on any school day.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3 only**
- d) 3 only

Explanation: The Midday meal scheme (under the Ministry of Education) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which was launched in 1995. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

It is the world's largest school meal programme aimed to attain the goal of universalization of primary education.

The scheme provides cooked meals to every child within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.

AGMARK quality items are procured, tasting of meals by two or three adult members of the school management committee.

If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

Cooked meal having nutritional standards of 450 calories and 12 gm of protein for primary (I-V class) and 700 calories and 20 gm protein for upper primary (VI-VIII class)

All government and government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are covered under the Midday Meal Scheme. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

181) Which of the following cities have been selected by UNESCO under 'Historic Urban Landscape Project'?

- 1. Gwalior
- 2. Orchha

3. Chandigarh

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only**
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: In Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior and Orchha cities have been selected by UNESCO under 'Historic Urban Landscape Project', which was started in the year 2011, for the inclusive and well-planned development of fast-growing historical cities while preserving the culture and heritage.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan virtually launched UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' project for Gwalior and Orchha cities of the state through video conferencing.

Six cities of South Asia, including Ajmer and Varanasi in India are already involved in this project.

Orchha and Gwalior have been included as the 7th and 8th cities.

The cities will be jointly developed by UNESCO, Government of India and Madhya Pradesh by focusing on their historical and cultural improvement.

This project will help MP tourism get a new dimension. Additional employment opportunities will also be created along with the development of tourism.

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

182) With reference to the New Generation Akash Missile, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is an air-to-air Missile.
- 2. The new version of the Akash missile (Akash-NG) can strike targets at a distance of

around 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5.

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

Explanation: Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO successfully flight-tested the New Generation Akash Missile, a surface-to-air Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.

The missile system has been developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.

The new version of the Akash missile (Akash-NG) can strike targets at a distance of around 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5.

The New Generation Akash Missile will prove to be a force multiplier for the air defence capability of the Indian Air Force.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

183) With reference to the Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM), consider the following statements:

1. The missile is incorporated with state-of-the-art Miniaturized Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics.

2. The man-portable missile is launched using a tripod is designed for a maximum range of 2.5 km with a launch weight of less than 15 Kg.

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

Explanation: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested indigenously developed low weight, fire and forget Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).

The missile is incorporated with state-of-the-art Miniaturized Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics.

The man-portable missile is launched using a tripod is designed for a maximum range of 2.5 km with a launch weight of less than 15 Kg.

Control Flight Tests have been successfully carried out and Guided Flight Tests (with IIR Seeker) are planned.

Hence both statements are correct.

184) With reference to the Pegasus, consider the following statements:

1. Pegasus is a constellation in the northern sky.

2. The brightest star in Pegasus is the orange supergiant Epsilon Pegasi, also known as Enif.

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

Explanation: Back in 2019, when most people first heard of the spyware Pegasus, the NSO Group described the company's flagship creation as the "Trojan horse" that could be sent "flying through the air to [break into] devices". Before this, Pegasus had always been the constellation.

Pegasus is a constellation in the northern sky, named after the winged horse Pegasus in Greek mythology.

It was one of the 48 constellations listed by the 2nd-century astronomer Ptolemy, and is one of the 88 constellations recognised today.

With an apparent magnitude varying between 2.37 and 2.45, the brightest star in Pegasus is the orange supergiant Epsilon Pegasi, also known as Enif, which marks the horse's muzzle

Hence both statements are correct.

185) With reference to the Bird flu, consider the following statements:

1. It is a disease caused by avian influenza Type B viruses found naturally in wild birds worldwide.
2. The first report of human H5N1 infection was in 1997.

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

Explanation: On July 21, an 11-year-old boy died of H5N1 avian influenza in Delhi. This is the first recorded death due to the bird flu in India this year. In January, bird flu was confirmed in several states with thousands of birds, including migratory species, being found dead.

Bird flu or avian influenza is a disease caused by avian influenza Type A viruses found naturally in wild birds worldwide.

The virus can infect domestic poultry including chickens, ducks, turkeys and there have been reports of H5N1 infection among pigs, cats, and even tigers in Thailand zoos.

Avian Influenza type A viruses are classified based on two proteins on their surfaces – Hemagglutinin(HA) and Neuraminidase(NA). There are about 18 HA subtypes and 11 NA

subtypes. Several combinations of these two proteins are possible e.g., H5N1, H7N2, H9N6, H17N10, etc.

There have been reports of avian and swine influenza infections in humans including A(H1N1), A(H1N2), A(H5N1), A(H7N9), etc. The first report of human H5N1 infection was in 1997.

The most common route of virus transmission is direct contact — when a person comes in close contact with infected birds, either dead or alive.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

186) Consider following statement about Bankruptcy and insolvency.

1. Bankruptcy is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.
2. Insolvency is a situation whereby a court of competent jurisdiction has declared a person or other entity insolvent, having passed appropriate orders to resolve it and protect the rights of the creditors.
3. The IBC code stipulates that the resolution process of a stressed company will have to be completed in a maximum of 270 days.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 3 only**
- d) All of the above

Explanation: Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.

Bankruptcy is a situation whereby a court of competent jurisdiction has declared a person or other entity insolvent, having passed appropriate orders to resolve it and protect the rights of the creditors.

It is a legal declaration of one's inability to pay off debts.

The IBC was enacted in 2016, replacing a host of laws, with the aim to streamline and speed up the resolution process of failed businesses.

The Code also consolidates provisions of the current legislative framework to form a common forum for debtors and creditors of all classes to resolve insolvency.

The code stipulates that the resolution process of a stressed company will have to be completed in a maximum of 270 days.

187) Seizure Information Management System (SIMS) is a term related to

a) Interpol's initiative for integrated database of criminals

b) Database of properties confiscated under Benami property act.

c) Tool for monitoring terror financing

d) database of drug offences and offenders.

Explanation: India has signed 26 bilateral pacts, 15 memoranda of understanding and two agreements on security cooperation with different countries for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic, drugs and psychotropic substances, besides chemical precursors, according to a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reply in the Lok Sabha.

"For digitisation of pan-India drug seizure data, the MHA has launched an e-portal called 'SIMS' (Seizure Information Management System) in 2019 for all the drug law enforcement agencies under the mandate of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS)...," the MHA noted.

188) Which of the following is the first continent in the world to complete collection of digital land use data?

a) Australia

b) Europe

c) Africa

d) South America

Explanation: Africa has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data under the Africa Open DEAL initiative.

DEAL stands for Data for the Environment, Agriculture and Land Initiative.

The data collection and analysis initiative is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the African Union Commission (AUC).

The continent survey revealed that there are around seven billion trees outside forests in Africa.

189) Consider the following statements:

1. The 97th constitutional amendment dealt with issues related to effective management of co-operative societies in the country.

2. The Co-operative sector is under the State List of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution.

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

Explanation: Current law that governs cooperative societies:

The 97th constitutional amendment, which dealt with issues related to effective management of co-operative societies in the country, was passed by Parliament in December 2011 and had come into effect from February 15, 2012. 1 is correct.

The co-operative sector is under Entry 32 of the State List to cover the co-operative sector. 2 is correct.

A majority of the cooperative societies are governed by laws in their respective states, with a Cooperation Commissioner and the Registrar of Societies as their governing office.

In 2002, the Centre passed a Multi State Cooperative Societies Act that allowed for the registration of societies with operations in more than one state.

The Central Registrar of Societies is their controlling authority, but on the ground, the State Registrar takes action on his behalf.

190) Consider the following statements:

1. The power to convene a session of Parliament rests with the government.
2. India has a fixed parliamentary calendar.

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

Explanation: The power to convene a session of Parliament:

Rests with the government: The decision is taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs. 1 is correct.

The decision of the Committee is formalised: By the President, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session.

India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar. 2 is incorrect

By convention, Parliament meets for three sessions in a year.

A general scheme of sittings was recommended in 1955 by the General Purpose Committee of Lok Sabha.

It was accepted by the government of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, but was not implemented.

191) With reference to the surveillance laws in India, consider the following statements:

1. Communication surveillance in India takes place primarily under two laws that is the Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.
2. While the Telegraph Act deals with interception of calls, the IT Act was enacted to deal with surveillance of all electronic communication, following the Supreme Court's intervention in 1996.

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

Explanation: In response to the finding by a global collaborative investigative project that Israeli spyware Pegasus was used to target at least 300 individuals in India, the government has claimed that all interception in India takes place lawfully.

Communication surveillance in India takes place primarily under two laws — the Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.

While the Telegraph Act deals with interception of calls, the IT Act was enacted to deal with surveillance of all electronic communication, following the Supreme Court's intervention in 1996.

Supreme Court intervention

In *Public Union for Civil Liberties v Union of India* (1996), the Supreme Court pointed out lack of procedural safeguards in the provisions of the Telegraph Act and laid down certain guidelines for interceptions.

Among the guidelines issued by the court were setting up a review committee that can look into authorisations made under Section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act.

The Supreme Court's guidelines formed the basis of introducing Rule 419A in the Telegraph Rules in 2007 and later in the rules prescribed under the IT Act in 2009.

Hence both statements are correct.

192) With reference to the 'dying declaration', consider the following statements:

1. Section 32 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 deals with cases in which statement of relevant fact is made by a person who is dead or cannot be found.

2. The victim being generally the only principal eye-witness to the crime cannot be a ground of admission under a dying declaration.

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

Explanation: A special CBI court on July 16 convicted two policemen and awarded them life sentences for the custodial death of a murder accused, who was burnt alive inside a police station in Karnal.

The judgment relied heavily on the 'dying declaration' made by the victim prior to his death.

The law presumes that no person will meet their maker with a lie in their mouth. So Section 32 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 deals with cases in which statement of relevant fact is made by a person who is dead or cannot be found.

The general rule under Section 60 of the Act is that all oral evidence must be direct — he heard it, saw it or perceived it.

The grounds of admission under a dying declaration have been based on two broad rules —

one, the victim being generally the only principal eye-witness to the crime; and

two, the sense of impending death, which creates a sanction equal to the obligation of an oath.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

193) Government of India is implementing Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP) as a sub scheme of:

a) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

b) Udaan

c) PM-Kisan Scheme

d) Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

Explanation: Government is implementing Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati (BPKP) as a sub scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) since 2020-21 for the promotion of traditional indigenous practices.

The scheme mainly emphasizes on exclusion of all synthetic chemical inputs and promotes on-farm biomass recycling with major stress on biomass mulching; use of cow dung-urine formulations; plant-based preparations and time to time working of soil for aeration.

Under BPKP, financial assistance of Rs 12200/ha for 3 years is provided for cluster formation, capacity building and continuous handholding by trained personnel, certification and residue analysis.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

194) The National Farmers Welfare Program Implementation Committee would act as a project monitoring unit for the implementation of which of the following schemes?

1. PM-Kisan Yojana
2. Kisan Maandhan Yojana
3. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister inaugurated the office of National Farmers Welfare Program Implementation Committee.

The National Farmers Welfare Program Implementation Committee would act as a project monitoring unit for the implementation of

PM-Kisan Yojana,

Kisan Maandhan Yojana,

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and

other schemes of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The Central Government has implemented the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme to make farmers self-reliant and to provide direct income support for agricultural expenditure.

Under this scheme, an amount of Rs 1.37 lakh crore has been transferred to the accounts of more than 11 crore farmer families so far.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

195) Identify incorrect statement about microplastics from the following.

- a) Microplastics are defined as shreds of plastic less than 5 mm in length.
- b) Microplastics are either manufactured or they are formed when larger pieces of plastic break down.
- c) Microplastics damage aquatic creatures including turtles and birds.

d) They are found in oceans only.

Explanation: Microplastics are defined as shreds of plastic less than 5 mm in length.

Microplastics are either manufactured — for instance, microbeads that are used in cosmetics and beauty products — or they are formed when larger pieces of plastic break down.

The small, shiny particles advertised as “cooling crystals” in certain toothpastes qualify as microplastics if the ingredients of the toothpaste mention “polyethylene”.

Even so, manufactured microbeads are not a major contributor to microplastic pollution.

One of the main contributors to this pollution, instead, is plastic waste, 90% of which is not recycled.

An analysis of the stretches of the river Ganga by a Delhi-based environment NGO, Toxics Link, has revealed pollution by microplastics, defined as synthetic solid particles sized ranging from 1 micrometre to 5 millimetre (mm), which are insoluble in water.

The Ganga flows across five States and has been at the centre of a massive multi-crore undertaking by the Union government, in the form of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, to rid it off contamination.

196) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding Stand Up India scheme?

1. It aims at promoting entrepreneurship among women and scheduled castes and tribes by providing institutional credit for setting up enterprise.
2. The loans are available only for Greenfield projects.
3. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

Explanation: The Stand up India scheme aims at promoting entrepreneurship among women and scheduled castes and tribes.

The scheme is anchored by Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Eligibility:

SC/ST and/or woman entrepreneurs, above 18 years of age.

Loans under the scheme is available for only green field project. Green field signifies, in this context, the first time venture of the beneficiary in the manufacturing or services or trading sector.

In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneur.

Borrower should not be in default to any bank/financial institution.

Greenfield project:

A greenfield project is one which is not constrained by prior work. It is constructed on unused land where there is no need to remodel or demolish an existing structure.

197) SMILE scheme has been launched by the government of India with an objective of:

- a) Assisting disabled people in the procurement of affordable, advanced, scientifically developed, aid and equipments.
- b) Assisting the manual scavengers for their rehabilitation in alternative professions.
- c) Providing physical aids and assisted living devices for all senior citizens belonging to BPL category.

d) Ensuring comprehensive rehabilitation of persons engaged in Begging.

Explanation: SMILE – Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise:

This scheme is formulated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which includes sub-scheme – ‘Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.

This scheme covers several comprehensive measures including welfare measures for persons who are engaged in the act of begging. The focus of the scheme is extensively on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages and so on.

The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) , institutions and others.

Scheme provides for the use of the existing shelter homes available with the State/UT Governments and Urban local bodies for rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of Begging. In case of non-availability of existing shelter homes, new dedicated shelter homes are to be set up by the implementing agencies.

198) Kapu community, seen recently in news, belongs to which of the following states?

- a) Gujarat
- b) Uttar Pradesh

c) Andhra Pradesh

- d) Kerala

Explanation: The Kapus are primarily an agrarian community based in the Andhra-Telangana region.

It is believed that they migrated from the Gangetic plains, probably from Kampilya (near Ayodhya) thousands of years ago.

They entered what is present-day Telangana and, after clearing the forests along the banks of the Godavari, settled down to farming.

Recently, the Andhra Pradesh government has announced 10% reservation for the Kapu community and other Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) for appointments in the initial posts and services in the State government in accordance with the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019.

199) "Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story" report was released recently. Which of the following organisation has released the report?

- a) Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)
- b) Oxfam India**
- c) NITI Aayog
- d) World Health Organization (WHO)

Explanation: Recently, Oxfam India released "Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story". Oxfam India's inequality report draws attention to the country's unequal healthcare story hit further by Covid-19. The report shows that the constant underfunding of the public healthcare system in the last decade have worsened health infrastructure.

200) Consider the following statements regarding serological survey conducted by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research)

1. The survey is used to detect active infections at present.
2. The survey was conducted using IgG Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) test.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: The ICMR has conducted the fourth round of the national blood serum survey which tests for antibodies, known as a serosurvey, for Covid-19. The aim of the survey was to estimate the sero-prevalence of SARS-COV-2 antibodies. Few important points to consider,

The survey only indicates past infections (which triggered an immune response) and is not used to detect active infections.

The survey was conducted using IgG Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay(ELISA) test which has been approved by ICMR.

201) With reference to a report "Renewables Integration in India 2021", consider the following statements:

1. It was jointly launched by NITI Aayog and International Energy Agency (IEA).
2. The report is based on the outcome of three states workshops held with the Governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat to understand the specific energy transition challenges faced by these renewable-rich states.

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

Explanation: A report on “Renewables Integration in India 2021” was jointly launched by NITI Aayog and International Energy Agency (IEA).

The report is based on the outcome of three states workshops held with the Governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat to understand the specific energy transition challenges faced by these renewable-rich states.

The report highlights that India’s power system can efficiently integrate renewables (175 GW by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030), but it would require identification of resources and proper planning, regulatory, policy and institutional support, energy storage and advance technology initiatives.

Indian states need to employ a wide range of flexibility options – such as demand response, more flexible operation of coal based power plants, storage, and grid improvements – to transition to cleaner electricity systems.

Larger shares of renewables can be better managed by shifting time of use in agriculture. Time of Use (ToU) tariffs will be an effective tool to incentivise demand side management and encourage flexible consumption.

Hence both statements are correct.

202) With reference to the United Nation’s Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific’s (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, consider the following statements:

1. India has scored 90.32% in the survey.
2. The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every five years by UNESCAP.

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

Explanation: India has scored 90.32% in United Nation’s Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific’s (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. The Survey hails this as a remarkable jump from 78.49% in 2019.

After evaluation of 143 economies, the 2021 Survey has highlighted India’s significant improvement in the scores on all 5 key indicators, as follows:

Transparency: 100% in 2021 (from 93.33% in 2019)

Formalities: 95.83% in 2021 (from 87.5% in 2019)

Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation: 88.89% in 2021 (from 66.67% in 2019)

Paperless Trade: 96.3% in 2021 (from 81.48% in 2019)

Cross-Border Paperless Trade: 66.67% in 2021 (from 55.56% in 2019)

India is the best performing country when compared to South and South West Asia region (63.12%) and Asia Pacific region (65.85%).

The overall score of India has also been found to be greater than many OECD countries including France, UK, Canada, Norway, Finland etc. and the overall score is greater than the average score of EU.

India has achieved a 100% score for the Transparency index and 66% in the “Women in trade” component.

CBIC, has been at forefront of path breaking reforms under the umbrella of 'Turant' Customs to usher in a Faceless, Paperless and Contactless Customs by way of a series of reforms. This has had a direct impact in terms of the improvement in the UNESCAP rankings

The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by UNESCAP.

The 2021 Survey includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

203) What is Akamai, recently seen in news?

a) A global content delivery network (CDN) and cloud services platform

b) Crypto currency

c) Satellite launched by China

d) None of the above

Explanation: Global internet infrastructure company Akamai suffered an outage that lasted over an hour, taking down several online applications across India and overseas.

Akamai is a global content delivery network (CDN) and cloud services platform that is rented by online content and commerce services apps.

Akamai faced a disruption on its Edge DNS service that took down platforms such as Zomato, Paytm, parts of Amazon, Airbnb, PlayStation Network, Steam, Disney+Hotstar, etc for a short while.

Edge DNS as a technology provides a shorter route for DNS, or domain name services, between a company's servers and its users, thereby drastically decreasing resolution times and providing low latencies.

This was the second major outage involving a delivery network in as many months that affected internet usage on a global scale.

In June, a major issue with the content delivery network of American cloud computing services provider Fastly caused several large websites to go down globally for about half an hour.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

204) Consider following statements about Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.

1. The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP).

2. India has achieved a 100% score for the Transparency index and 66% in the "Women in trade"

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) None of the above

Explanation: India has scored 90.32% in United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. The Survey hails this as a remarkable jump from 78.49% in 2019. The Survey notes that India is the best performing country when compared to South and South West Asia region (63.12%) and Asia Pacific region (65.85%).

The overall score of India has also been found to be greater than many OECD countries including France, UK, Canada, Norway, Finland etc. and the overall score is greater than the average score of EU.

India has achieved a 100% score for the Transparency index and 66% in the "Women in trade"

The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by UNESCAP.

The 2021 Survey includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

The Survey is keenly awaited globally as it evidences whether or not the trade facilitation measures being taken have the desired impact and helps draw comparison amongst countries.

A higher score for a country also helps businesses in their investment decisions.

205) Consider following statement about privileges of the parliamentarians.

1. Article 105 of the Constitution expressly mentions two privileges, that is, freedom of speech in Parliament and right of publication of its proceedings.
2. The parliamentary privileges extends to the President who is also an integral part of the Parliament.
3. The Constitution also extends the parliamentary privileges to those persons who are entitled to speak and take part in the proceedings of a House of Parliament or any of its committees. These include the Attorney General of India and Union ministers.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2
- c) 2 and 3

d) 1 and 3

Explanation: Parliamentary privileges are special rights, immunities and exemptions enjoyed by the two Houses of Parliament, their committees and their members.

The Constitution also extends the parliamentary privileges to those persons who are entitled to speak and take part in the

proceedings of a House of Parliament or any of its committees. These include the Attorney General of India and Union ministers.

The parliamentary privileges do not extend to the President who is also an integral part of the Parliament. Article 361 of the Constitution provides for privileges for the President.

Article 105 of the Constitution expressly mentions two privileges, that is, freedom of speech in Parliament and right of publication of its proceedings.

Apart from the privileges as specified in the Constitution, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, provides for freedom from arrest and detention of members under civil process during the continuance of the meeting of the House or of a committee thereof and forty days before its commencement and forty days after its conclusion.

It needs to be noted that the Parliament, till now, has not made any special law to exhaustively codify all the privileges.

206) The famous Snail darter case is related to

a) Environment conservation in USA

- b) Apartheid movement of South Africa
- c) LGBTQ rights in Hungary
- d) Illegal coal mines in Meghalaya

Explanation: The case of the "Snail darter" in the United States is a notable example of the application of anthropocentrism in the legal world.

In 1973, University of Tennessee biologist David Etnier discovered a new species of fish in the Little Tennessee River known as the "Snail darter."

Etnier claimed that the snail darter was an endangered species whose survival would be jeopardised if the Tellico Reservoir project's development work continued.

Following this revelation, a lawsuit was filed to stop the Tellico Reservoir project from moving forward.

The case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court of the United States of America ruled in Tennessee Valley Authority vs Hill that the executive could not proceed with the reservoir project because the "Snail darter" was a specifically protected species under the National Environmental Policy Act.

207) With reference to Adarsh Smarak Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It is a scheme for development of theme based tourist circuits in the country.
2. It is a scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Adarsh Smarak Scheme is a scheme of the Ministry of Culture launched in the year 2014.

It aims to provide basic tourist amenities such as rest rooms, drinking water, benches, souvenir shops, interpretation centres, and others at the 100 identified Adarsh Smarak, which also includes cafeterias.

Objectives of the Scheme are:

To make the monument visitor friendly.

To provide interpretation and audio-video centers.

To make the monument accessible to differently-abled people.

To implement Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Under the scheme Archaeological Survey of India had identified 100 monuments as "Adarsh Smarak" for upgradation.

208) Which of the following act provides legal basis for setting up of Asset Reconstruction Companies in India?

- a) Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
- b) Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
- c) The Banking Laws (Amendment) Act, 2012

d) SARFAESI Act, 2002

Explanation: An Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) is a specialized financial institution that buys the Non Performing Assets (NPAs) or bad assets from banks and financial institutions so that the latter can clean up their balance sheets. Or in other words, ARCs are in the business of buying bad loans from banks.

ARCs clean up the balance sheets of banks when the latter sells these to the ARCs. This helps banks to concentrate in normal banking activities. Banks rather than going after the defaulters by wasting their time and effort, can sell the bad assets to the ARCs at a mutually agreed value.

The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002; enacted in December 2002 provides the legal basis for the setting up ARCs in India.

The SARFAESI Act helps reconstruction of bad assets without the intervention of courts. Since then, large number of ARCs were formed and were registered with the RBI which has got the power to regulate the ARCs.

Setting up of National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL) the proposed bad bank for taking over stressed assets of lenders, was announced in the Budget for 2021-22.

The plan is to create a bad bank to house bad loans of ₹500 crore and above, in a structure that will contain an asset reconstruction

company (ARC) and an asset management company (AMC) to manage and recover dud assets.

The new entity is being created in collaboration with both public and private sector banks.

209) 'Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification' is an initiative of:

- a) ILO
- b) WTO
- c) WHO
- d) UNESCO

Explanation: Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification is a Scheme developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in response to the request of WHO Member States to facilitate international trade in pharmaceutical products between Member States.

It was first developed in 1975. Since then it has been revised in 1988, 1992 and in 1997.

The Scheme is an administrative instrument that requires a participating Member State (a certifying country), upon application by a commercially interested party (the applicant company), to certify/attest to the competent authority of another participating Member State (the recipient country) that:

A specific pharmaceutical product is authorized for marketing in the certifying country, or if not, the reason why authorization has not been accorded;

The manufacturing facilities and operations conform to good manufacturing practices (GMP) as recommended by WHO.

210) Consider the following statements regarding Microplastics

1. Microplastics are plastics that are less than 5 millimetres in size
2. These are bio-degradable plastics

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: Recently a Delhi-based non-profit Toxic Link stated that the Ganga is heavily polluted with microplastics at Varanasi, Haridwar and Kanpur. Microplastics are plastics that are less than 5 millimetres in size but are a major source of marine pollution. They are non-degradable plastics. Some examples are,

Polyacetylene is used as a doping agent in the electronics industry.

Polypropylene is also used in packaging, plastic sheets, fibre, fabrics, rope, etc.

PIP is mainly used in footwear and baby bottle nipples.

Polyamide, commonly known as nylon, is used as a natural fibre and as metal wires in clothing and industry.

221) With reference to the Rudreswara Temple at Palampet, consider the following statements:

1. It has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.
2. The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva.

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

Explanation: India's nomination of Rudreswara Temple, (also known as the Ramappa Temple) at Palampet, Mulugu district, near Warangal in the state of Telangana has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. This is India's 39th World Heritage Site.

The decision was taken at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO today.

Ramappa temple, a 13th century engineering marvel is named after its architect, Ramappa.

The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva. The presiding deity here is Ramalingeswara Swamy.

The temple complexes of Kakatiyas have a distinct style, technology and decoration exhibiting the influence of the Kakatiyan sculptor.

The foundation is built with the "sandbox technique", the flooring is granite and the pillars basalt. The lower part of the temple is red sandstone while the white gopuram is built with light bricks that reportedly float on water.

Hence both statements are correct.

222) What is PDS 70, recently seen in news?

a) A young star located 370 light years from Earth

b) A spyware developed by the Israeli cyber arms firm NSO Group

c) A dedicated portal for Public Distribution System in India

d) None of the above

Explanation: Scientists for the first time have spotted a moon-forming region around a planet beyond our solar system - a Jupiter-like world surrounded by a disc of gas and dust

massive enough that it could spawn three moons the size of the one orbiting Earth.

The researchers used the ALMA observatory in Chile's Atacama desert to detect the disc of swirling material accumulating around one of two newborn planets seen orbiting a young star called PDS 70, located 370 light years from Earth.

A light year is the distance light travels in a year, about 9.5 trillion km.

More than 4,400 planets have been discovered outside our solar system, called exoplanets. No circumplanetary discs had been found until now because all the known exoplanets resided in "mature" – fully developed – solar systems, except the two infant gas planets orbiting PDS 70.

The orange-coloured star PDS 70, roughly the same mass as our Sun, is about 5 million years old. The two planets are even younger. Both planets are similar (although larger) to Jupiter, a gas giant. It was around one of the two planets, called PDS 70c, that a moon-forming disc was observed.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

223) With reference to the caste census, consider the following statements:

1. Every Census in India from 1931 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.

2. The Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52%.

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

Explanation: The Government of India informed Lok Sabha that it has decided as a

matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population other than SCs and STs in Census. Subsequently many leaders demanded a caste-based census.

Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Before that, every Census until 1931 had data on caste.

However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published.

In the absence of such a census, there is no proper estimate for the population of OBCs, various groups within the OBCs, and others.

The Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52%, some other estimates have been based on National Sample Survey data.

Demand for a caste census usually come from among those belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBC) and other deprived sections, while sections from the upper castes oppose the idea.

Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC).

The UPA government decided to go for a full-fledged SECC, which was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas.

The SECC data excluding caste data was finalised and published by the two ministries in 2016.

The raw caste data was handed over to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which formed an Expert Group under former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Arvind Pangaria for classification and categorisation of data.

It is not clear whether it submitted its report; no such report has been made public.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

224) Consider following statements about the Great Indian Bustards.

1. It is the only bustard species found in India
2. It is health indicator species of dessert ecosystem.
3. It has been designated as endangered by IUCN.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 1 and 3
- c) All of the above

d) None of the above

Explanation: On Monday, the Central government informed the Rajya Sabha that there were no Great Indian Bustards (GIB) in Kutch Bustard Sanctuary (KBS) in Gujarat's Kutch district as on January 1 this year.

GIBs are the largest among the four bustard species found in India, the other three being MacQueen's bustard, lesser florican and the Bengal florican.

GIBs' historic range included much of the Indian sub-continent but it has now shrunk to just 10 per cent of it.

Among the heaviest birds with flight, GIBs prefer grasslands as their habitats. Being terrestrial birds, they spend most of their time on the ground with occasional flights to go from one part of their habitat to the other.

They feed on insects, lizards, grass seeds etc. GIBs are considered the flagship bird species of grassland and hence barometers of the health of grassland ecosystems. the GIB population in India had fallen to just 150.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has categorised GIBs as critically endangered, thus on the brink of extinction from the wild.

Scientists of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) have been pointing out overhead power transmission lines as the biggest threat to the GIBs.

225) Indian scientists discover materials that self-repair mechanical damages. It works on principle of

- a) Bose-Einstein Condensate
- b) Superconductivity

c) Piezoelectric effect

- d) 4th law of thermodynamics

Explanation: New materials may soon make it possible for damaged electronic components, such as in space crafts, to mend themselves.

The materials recently developed by scientists can repair their own mechanical damages with the electrical charges generated by the mechanical impact on them.

Keeping such necessities in mind, researchers from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata, teaming up with IIT Kharagpur, have developed piezoelectric molecular crystals that repair themselves from mechanical damages without need for any external intervention.

Piezoelectric crystals are a class of materials that generate electricity when it undergoes a mechanical impact.

The piezoelectric molecules developed by the scientists called bipyrazole organic crystals recombine following mechanical fracture without any external intervention, autonomously self-healing in milliseconds with crystallographic precision.

In these molecular solids, due to the unique property of generating electrical charges on mechanical impact, the broken pieces acquire electrical charges at the crack junction, leading to attraction by damaged parts and precise autonomous repair.

226) Which of the following temple was remarked as "brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan" by foreign travellers.

- a) Padmnabhschwamy Temple
- b) Rudreswara(Ramappa) Temple**
- c) Virupaksh Temple
- d) Minakshi Temple

Explanation: In a major diplomatic triumph, the 13th century Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana, was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on Sunday.

The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire by Recharla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva.

The presiding deity here is Ramalingeswara Swamy. It is also known as the Ramappa temple, after the sculptor who executed the work in the temple for 40 years.

The temple complexes of Kakatiyas have a distinct style, technology and decoration exhibiting the influence of the Kakatiyan sculptor.

The Ramappa Temple is a manifestation of this and often stands as a testimonial to the Kakatiyan creative genius.

The temple stands on a 6 feet high star-shaped platform with walls, pillars and ceilings adorned with intricate carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.

The sculptural art and decoration specific to the time and Kakatiyan Empire have an outstanding universal value.

The distinct style of Kakatiyas for the gateways to temple complexes, unique only to this region confirm the highly evolved proportions of aesthetics in temple and town gateways in South India.

European merchants and travelers were mesmerized by the beauty of the temple and one such traveler had remarked that the temple was the "brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan".

227) Consider the following statements-

1. Under Telegraph Act, 1885 government can intercept calls or messages under certain conditions only.
2. Information Technology Act does not have any provisions for interception of surveillance.

Which of the statements is/are not correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only**
- c) 1 only
- d) None of the above

Explanation: Statement 2 is not correct.

Telegraph Act: Under Section 5(2) of this law, the government can intercept calls only in certain situations:

Interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India,

Security of the state,

Friendly relations with foreign states or public order,

Preventing incitement to the commission of an offence.

These are the same restrictions imposed on free speech under Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

However, these restrictions can be imposed only when there is a condition precedent - the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of public safety.

Further, the grounds of selecting a person for surveillance and extent of information gathering has to be recorded in writing.

This lawful interception cannot take place against journalists.

IT Act, 2000:

Section 69 of the Information Technology Act and the Information Technology (Procedure for Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009 were enacted to further the legal framework for electronic surveillance.

However, the scope of Section 69 the IT Act is much broader and vague than the Telegraph Act as the only condition precedent for engaging electronic surveillance is for the "investigation of an offence".

These provisions are problematic and offer the government total opacity in respect of its interception and monitoring activities.

228) Consider the following statements-

1. In India, there are more than 50 UNESCO World Heritage sites.
2. Once declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it remains status quo.
3. The World Heritage Sites is maintained by World Heritage Programme.

Select the correct answer using the code below-

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only**
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are not correct.

World Heritage Site

A World Heritage Site is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance. The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the international 'World Heritage Programme', administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

It seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

It provides a framework for international cooperation in preserving and protecting cultural treasures and natural areas throughout the world.

Sites in India:

India has 38 world heritage sites, including 30 cultural properties, 7 natural properties and 1 mixed site.

Recently, the city of Liverpool, England has been removed from UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) list of world heritage sites.

Reasons for Delisting:

The new buildings including a football stadium undermine the attractiveness of its Victorian docks and were destroying the heritage value of its waterfront.

The over development would irreversibly damage the heritage of the historic port.

Other Delisted Sites:

Wildlife sanctuary in Oman in 2007.

Reason: poaching and habitat loss.

Dresden Elbe valley in Germany in 2009.

229) Consider the following statements regarding 'Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records' (FASTER) Scheme.

1. The scheme aims to ensure the timely release of prisoners from jail and uphold their dignity

2. The Government will instantly, directly, securely, and electronically transmit the bail orders to officials.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: The Chief Justice of India (CJI) announced the rollout of a new scheme called FASTER. It will ensure the timely release of prisoners from jail and uphold their dignity. About FASTER:

It stands for 'Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records'.

It would enable the Supreme Court (SC) to instantly, directly, securely, and electronically transmit bail and other orders to jail authorities, district courts, and High Courts.

230) Conjugal Rights was sometimes seen in news. Which of the following correctly explains this right?

a) This is the right granted to undertrial persons.

b) This is the right granted to a vaccine manufacturer to provide immunity from vaccine impacts.

c) This is the right created by marriage such as right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

d) This is the right granted to persons arrested under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

Explanation: The Supreme Court (SC) is going to hear a fresh challenge to the provision allowing restitution (recovery) of conjugal rights under Hindu personal laws (Hindu Marriage act 1955). Conjugal Rights:

Conjugal rights are rights created by marriage, i.e. right of the husband or the wife to the society of the other spouse.

Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act recognises one aspect of conjugal rights — the right to consortium and protects it by allowing a spouse to move court to enforce the right.

Similar provisions exist in Muslim personal law as well as the Divorce Act, 1869, which governs Christian family law.

231) The 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' report is in the news. Which of the following entities is not involved in preparing the report?

- a) FAO
- b) UNICEF
- c) WFP

d) UNEP

Explanation: It is produced jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

232) Who among the following is/are not factored in the labour force participation rate?

- 1. People who are undergoing studies
- 2. Housewives
- 3. Person above the age of 64 years

Select the answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: LFPR is the section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment. People who are still undergoing studies, housewives and persons above the age of 64 are not factored in the labour force.

The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), obtained by dividing the number of persons in the labour force by the working population, is an important parameter in employment projections and formulation of employment strategies.

233) Which of the following is/are the objectives of the Food Corporation of India (FCI)?

- 1. To provide farmers remunerative prices
- 2. To maintain buffer stocks as measure of Food Security
- 3. To intervene in market for price stabilization

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Food Corporation of India (FCI) is a Public Sector Undertaking, under the Department of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. It was set up in 1965 under the Food Corporations Act 1964.

FCI's Objectives are:

To provide farmers remunerative prices

To make food grains available at reasonable prices, particularly to vulnerable section of the society

To maintain buffer stocks as measure of Food Security

To intervene in market for price stabilization

234) Which of the following countries are members of Mekong–Ganga Cooperation (MGC)?

1. Thailand
2. Malaysia
3. Indonesia
4. Laos

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 and 4 only

d) 1 and 4 only

Explanation: The Mekong–Ganga Cooperation (MGC) was established on November 10, 2000, at Vientiane, Laos at the First MGC Ministerial Meeting.

It comprises six member countries, namely India (Look-East connectivity projects), Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

The four areas of cooperation are:

Tourism

Culture

Education

Transportation

The organization takes its name from the Ganga and the Mekong, two large rivers in the region. The Mekong region is very important for India's 'Act East Policy' for strengthening its economic integration with Southeast and East-Asian countries. India has accorded high priority to economic engagement with the MGC countries, working towards establishing seamless physical and digital connectivity, as well as capacity building under the Initiative

for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Development Gap.

235) "Nord Stream 2 Pipeline" is a system of offshore natural gas pipelines running under:

- a) Black Sea
- b) Baltic Sea**
- c) Mediterranean Sea
- d) Celtic Sea

Nord Stream 2 pipeline:

Explanation: In 2015, the Russian energy major Gazprom and five other European firms decided to build Nord Stream 2, valued at around \$11 billion. The 1,200-km pipeline will run from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany through the Baltic Sea, and will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year.

The under-construction pipeline will run along with the already completed Nord Stream 1 system, and the two together will supply an aggregate of 110 billion cubic metres of gas to Germany per year. The pipeline falls in the territory of EU members Germany and Denmark, and is about 98% complete.

Nord Stream projects have been opposed by Ukraine and the United States as well as by other Central and Eastern European countries because of concerns that the pipelines would increase Russia's influence in Europe, and because of the large reduction of transit fees for use of alternative pipelines in Central and Eastern European countries. The builders contend that the pipeline is more important to Germany than Russia, which could just as easily sell the gas to China.

236) Recently, Iran opened oil terminal in Gulf of Oman to bypass Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz connects:

- a) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
- b) Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman**
- c) Black Sea and Sea of Marmara

d) Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba

Explanation: The Strait of Hormuz is a channel linking the Persian Gulf (west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (southeast). The strait is 35 to 60 miles (55 to 95 km) wide and separates Iran (north) from the Arabian Peninsula (south).

It provides the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean and is one of the world's most strategically important choke points.

On the north coast lies Iran, and on the south coast the United Arab Emirates and Musandam, an exclave of Oman.

A third of the world's liquefied natural gas and almost 25% of total global oil consumption passes through the strait, making it a highly important strategic location for international trade.

237) With reference to the World Heritage Site, consider the following statements:

1. India has 59 sites on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.
2. UNESCO recently inscribed the 13th-century Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana as a World Heritage Site.

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

Explanation: UNESCO inscribed the 13th-century Ramappa temple in Palampet, Telangana as a World Heritage Site. With this, India now has 39 sites on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, and the Archaeological Survey of India is now the custodian of 23 world heritage sites.

A World Heritage Site is a location with an "outstanding universal value".

This signifies "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity".

To be included, sites must meet at least one of the ten selection criteria, such as representing a masterpiece of human creative genius, or exhibiting an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world.

The listing

The World Heritage Convention's operational guidelines say that a tentative list is like an inventory of properties a country thinks should be on the World Heritage Site.

After UNESCO includes a property in the tentative list, the country prepares a nomination document that will be considered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

In this case, the nomination was under Criterion I (Masterpiece of human creative genius) and Criterion III (bearing a unique or at least an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition, which is living or which has disappeared).

Earlier, the International Council of Historic Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) had evaluated Ramappa's heritage status.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

238) Consider the following statements regarding Biocentrism or Ecocentrism

1. The philosophy of this concept holds that the natural environment has its own set of rights apart from the rights of humans.
2. Indian Constitution explicitly provides Rights of Nature

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Explanation: Biocentrism: The philosophy of biocentrism or ecocentrism holds that the natural environment has its own set of rights, which is independent of its ability to be exploited by or to be useful to humans.

The Constitution of India declares that it is applicable to the territory of India. While making such a declaration, it very obviously refers to humans within that territory and its predominant aim was to give them rights, impose obligations and regulate human affairs.

But, the Constitution is significantly silent on any explicitly stated, binding legal obligations we owe to our fellow species and to the environment that sustains us.

239) Consider the following statements regarding Ramappa (Rudreswara) Temple:

1. Temple was built during the reign of Chola dynasty
2. The foundation of the temple is built using the sandbox technique.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect: Temple was built during the reign of Kakatiya empire

Statement 2 is correct: The foundation of the temple is built with the “sandbox technique”. The flooring of the temple is granite and the pillars are of basalt.

Sandbox technique involved filling the pit — dug up for laying the foundation — with a mixture of sand-lime, jaggery (for binding), and karakkaya (black myrobalan fruit) before the buildings were constructed on these ‘sandboxes’. This technique acts as a cushion in case of earthquakes.

240) ARMEX-21 was sometimes seen in the news. Which of the following correctly explains the term?

- a) It is a bilateral military exercise between India and the United Kingdom
- b) It is a multilateral naval exercise between BIMSTEC countries
- c) It is a Skilling Expedition conducted by the Indian Army
- d) It is the exercise between Indian and Australian Air Forces.

Explanation: Recently, Union Defence Minister has flagged-in the Indian Army Skiing Expedition (ARMEX-21) in New Delhi.

ARMEX-21 is an Army Skilling Expedition conducted by the Indian Army.

Purpose: It was conducted in the mountain ranges of the Himalayan region to promote the adventure activity in the country and the Indian Army.

During the expedition, the team covered 1,660 kms from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Malari in Uttarakhand. They also gathered information about several hitherto uncharted areas along the international boundary.

241) Which of the following space agency is set to launch the large infrared James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) touted as the “premier observatory” of the coming decade later this year?

- a) NASA
- b) European Space Agency
- c) ISRO

d) Blue Origin

Explanation: NASA is set to launch the large infrared James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) touted as the “premier observatory” of the coming decade later this year.

Considered the successor of the Hubble Space Telescope, JWST will study various phases in the history of the universe, from the formation of solar systems to the evolution of our own Solar System.

But before it launches, NASA has an important decision to make — whether to rename the \$8.8-billion telescope.

These considerations stem from allegations that NASA’s former government-appointed administrator James Webb, after whom JWST is named, had persecuted homosexuals when he had worked for the government.

In May, four prominent astronomers wrote that Webb (1906-92) purged LGBT individuals from the workforce after he arrived at NASA in 1961 (he served until 1968). The debate marks a rare instance of astronomers making a political statement.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

242) With reference to the Dholavira, consider the following statements:

1. It is the second site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to get the tag.
2. Cascading series of water reservoirs is one of the unique features of the Dholavira site.

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

Explanation: Dholavira, the archaeological site of a Harappan-era city, received the UNESCO world heritage site tag.

While Dholavira became the fourth site from Gujarat and 40th from India to make the list, it is the first site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to get the tag.

The IVC acropolis is located on a hillock near present-day Dholavira village in Kutch district, from which it gets its name.

Distinct features

After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of IVC.

The site has a fortified citadel, a middle town and a lower town with walls made of sandstone or limestone instead of mud bricks in many other Harappan sites.

Some of the unique features of the Dholavira site are a cascading series of water reservoirs, outer fortification, two multi-purpose grounds — one of which was used for festivities and as a marketplace — nine gates with unique designs, and funerary architecture featuring tumulus — hemispherical structures like the Buddhist Stupas.

While unlike graves at other IVC sites, no mortal remains of humans have been discovered at Dholavira.

Remains of a copper smelter indicate of Harappans, who lived in Dholavira, knew metallurgy.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

243) Assam does not have boundary dispute with which of the following state/states?

1. Mizoram
2. Meghalaya
3. Manipur
4. Arunachal Pradesh

Correct answer is

a) 1, 2 and 3

b) 2, 3 and 4

c) 1, 3 and 4

d) All of the above

Explanation: Assam has boundary dispute with all the states with which it shares boundary.

244) Which of the following is not part of Ramayana circuit under swadesh darshan scheme.

a) Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringverpur & Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh)

b) Nathdwara, Jaipur and Sikar (Rajasthan)

c) Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra)

d) Hampi (Karnataka)

Explanation: The Ministry has initially identified fifteen destinations for development under the Circuit theme namely:

Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringverpur & Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh)

Sitamarhi, Buxar & Darbhanga (Bihar)

Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh)

Mahendragiri (Odisha)

Jagdalpur (Chattisgarh)

Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra)

Bhadrachalam (Telangana)

Hampi (Karnataka)

Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu).

Nathdwara, Jaipur and Sikar (Rajasthan) is part of Krishna Circuit

245) Which of the following is/are the criteria on the basis of which a site is designated as the UNESCO World Heritage Site?

1. A site which represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

2. A site which represents significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems.

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: A World Heritage Site is a landmark or area with legal protection by an international convention administered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance. The sites are judged to contain “cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity”

For a property to be included on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Committee must find that it meets one or more of the following criteria:

to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological

ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;

to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

246) The conservation status of "Agarwood tree" according to IUCN Red List is:

- a) Extinct
- b) Extinct in Wild

c) Critically Endangered

d) Endangered

Explanation: Agarwood is an evergreen tree found in North Eastern India with Assam and Tripura as main region.

Agarwood is an aromatic plant producing highly valued resinous wood commonly used for medicinal, aromatic and religious purposes such as perfume making, agarbatti etc.

Due to rising demand for agarwood, as well as shortcomings in monitoring harvests and an increasing illegal trade, it is on the brink of extinction in the wild and is now considered critically endangered flora on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

247) Consider the following Statements:

1. Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary is designated as a 'Ramsar site'.
2. Wetlands include lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, rice paddies, and salt pans.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both

d) None

Explanation:

A proposal has been submitted to declare Thane creek Flamingo Sanctuary as a Ramsar site. It is not yet included in the Ramsar Convention.

Wetlands include lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, rice paddies, and salt pans.

248) "Azad Ki Shaurya Gatha" exhibition, which was inaugurated recently, is based on the life of which freedom fighter?

a) Chandrasekhar Azad

b) Bhagat Singh

c) Subhash Chandra Bose

d) Rani of Jhansi

Explanation: Union Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal recently inaugurated the exhibition “Azad Ki Shaurya Gatha” based on the life of the martyr ‘Chandrasekhar Azad’.

The exhibition was inaugurated at Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi. This is a part of “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”, to celebrate 75 years of our country’s freedom. A series of programs are being organised by Ministry of Culture for celebrating “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

249) INDRA 2021, a joint military Exercise between India and:

a) Russia

b) U.S.A.

c) France

d) U.K

Explanation: 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021 will be held at Volgograd, Russia from 01 to 13 August 2021.

The exercise will entail conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.

250 personnel from Army of both the nations will form part of the exercise.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

250) Periodic Labour Force Survey was seen in news recently. Which of the following organisation conducts the survey?

a) National Statistical Office (NSO)

b) National Sample Survey Organisation

c) Ministry of Labour

d) NITI Aayog

Explanation: The government released the latest annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The data was for the 12 months (or four quarters) between July 2019 and June 2020. The PLFS report shows unemployment rates are falling in a year when GDP growth hit a low. The PLFS is an annual survey conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO). It was started in 2017, and it essentially maps the state of employment. In doing so, it collects data on variables such as the level of unemployment, the types of employment and their respective shares, etc. Earlier, this job was done by Employment-Unemployment Surveys, but these were conducted once every five years.

251) With reference to the Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP), consider the following statements:

1. A pre-pack envisages the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through a direct agreement between secured creditors and the existing owners or outside investors, instead of a public bidding process.

2. Under the pre-pack system, financial creditors will agree to terms with the promoters or a potential investor, and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

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

Explanation: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021, passed by Lok Sabha has proposed ‘pre-packs’ or Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process (PIRP) as an insolvency resolution mechanism for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

A pre-pack envisages the resolution of the debt of a distressed company through a direct agreement between secured creditors and the existing owners or outside investors, instead of a public bidding process.

Under the pre-pack system, financial creditors will agree to terms with the promoters or a potential investor, and seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

The approval of at least 66 per cent of financial creditors that are unrelated to the corporate debtor would be required before a resolution plan is submitted to the NCLT.

The NCLTs will be required to either accept or reject an application for a pre-pack insolvency proceeding before considering a petition for a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

How are pre-packs better than CIRP?

One of the key criticisms of the CIRP has been the time it takes for resolution. The pre-pack in contrast, is limited to a maximum of 120 days with only 90 days available to stakeholders to bring a resolution plan for approval before the NCLT.

Another key difference between pre-packs and CIRP is that the existing management retains control in the case of pre-packs; in the case of CIRP, a resolution professional takes control of the debtor as a representative of financial creditors. This ensures minimal disruption of operations relative to a CIRP.

Hence both statements are correct.

252) Recently seen in news, Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts are part of which of the following state?

- a) Assam
- b) West Bengal
- c) Sikkim
- d) Nagaland

Explanation: At least five policemen in India have died after police from Assam and Mizoram fired at each other.

Assam shares a 164km (about 101 miles) border with Mizoram, and both states contest its demarcation.

Under colonial rule, Lushai Hills, as Mizoram was then known, was part of Assam. The region only gained recognition in 1972 - almost three decades after India's independence - when it became a separate federally administered area. In 1987, it became a fully-fledged state.

Three districts in Assam - Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj - share a 164km-long border with three districts of Mizoram.

The forested area is contested at several points, with both Assam and Mizoram accusing each other of encroaching on their land.

The federal government has been trying to mediate a truce between the states since 1994 but has failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Tensions escalated to an unprecedented level in October 2020 when residents of Assam and Mizoram clashed twice in a week. At the heart of the matter was an "eviction drive" carried out by Assam along a contested part of the border - authorities from the state reportedly burned a farmhouse and crops in the area.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

253) With reference to Supreme Court observation on vandalism in law making bodies, consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court held that lawmakers cannot indulge in criminal acts on the Parliament or Assembly floors and then take cover behind the right to free speech.
2. Parliamentary privileges and immunities are not "gateways" for legislators to claim

exception from the law of the land, especially criminal law.

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

Explanation: The Supreme Court held that lawmakers cannot indulge in criminal acts on the Parliament or Assembly floors and then take cover behind the right to free speech.

The court refused the Kerala government's plea to withdraw prosecution of top Left Democratic Front (LDF) leaders accused of vandalism and wanton destruction of public property on the Assembly floor during a Budget speech in 2015.

Acts of vandalism cannot be said to be manifestations of freedom of speech and be termed as 'proceedings' of the Assembly.

It was not the intention of the drafters of the Constitution to extend the interpretation of 'freedom of speech' to include criminal acts by placing them under a veil of protest.

Legislators cannot unleash violence, run riot in Parliament or a Legislative Assembly and then claim parliamentary privilege and immunity from criminal prosecution. Parliamentary privileges and immunities are not "gateways" for legislators to claim exception from the law of the land, especially criminal law.

The court explained that the purpose of bestowing privileges and immunities to elected members of the legislature was to enable them to perform their "essential functions" without hindrance, fear or favour. The 'essential' function of the House is collective deliberation and decision-making.

Hence both statements are correct.

254) Consider following statements about the proposed Deposit Insurance & Credit Guarantee Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2021.

1. It provides funds up to Rs 5 lakh to an account holder within 90 days in the event of a bank coming under the moratorium imposed by the RBI.

2. Deposits in public and private sector banks, local area banks, small finance banks, regional rural banks, cooperative banks, Indian branches of foreign banks and payments banks are all insured by the DICGC.

Correct statement is/are

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) None of the above

Explanation: Depositors in ailing banks such as PMC Bank may get some relief soon, with the Cabinet on Wednesday clearing amendments to the deposit insurance law to return up to ₹5 lakh of savings within 90 days of the RBI's imposition of a moratorium on a bank's operations.

"The Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation Bill 2021 has been cleared by the Cabinet today," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a briefing on Wednesday, adding that the Bill would be tabled in Parliament in the ongoing session.

As per the proposed process, a bank under moratorium would have to collect all the account details and balances and share it with the Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) within 45 days. The DICGC would get another 45 days to check the details and process the claims.

255) Consider following statements about The Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill, 2021.

1. Under the bill, Serious offences will also include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is of less than seven years.
2. The appointment of any member of the Child Welfare committee shall be terminated by the state government after an inquiry under certain conditions.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2**
- d) None of the above

Explanation: Serious offences: Serious offences will also include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is of less than seven years.

Serious offences are those for which the punishment under the Indian Penal Code or any other law for the time being is imprisonment between three and seven years.

Juvenile Justice Board inquires about a child who is accused of a serious offence.

Child Welfare Committees (CWCs): It provides that a person will not be eligible to be a member of the CWC if he/she

has any record of violation of human rights or child rights,

has been convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude,

has been removed or dismissed from service of the central government, or any state government, or a government undertaking,

is part of the management of a child care institution in a district.

Removal of Members: The appointment of any member of the committee shall be terminated by the state government after an inquiry if they fail to attend the proceedings of the CWCs consecutively for three months without any valid reason or if they fail to attend less than three-fourths of the sittings in a year.

256) With reference to International Finance Corporation, consider the following statements:

1. It is an arm of the International Monetary Fund.
2. It offers rupee denominated masala bonds.
3. It gives interest free loans to world's poorest countries.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only**
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: International Finance Corporation IFC—a sister organization of the World Bank and member of the World Bank Group is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector in developing countries. It was established in 1956, as the private-sector arm of the World Bank Group, to advance economic development by investing in for-profit and commercial projects for poverty reduction and promoting development.

The IFC's stated aim is to create opportunities for people to escape poverty and achieve better living standards by mobilizing financial resources for private enterprise, promoting accessible and competitive markets, supporting businesses and other private-sector entities, and creating jobs and

delivering necessary services to those who are poverty stricken or otherwise vulnerable.

Whereas the International Development Association (IDA) helps the world's poorest countries by providing loans and grants for programs that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people's living conditions. It is the part of the World Bank.

IFC issued 2 billion rupees—or nearly \$30 million—in 15-year Masala bonds in March, marking the longest-dated offshore rupee bond to be issued.

The issuance was listed on the London Stock Exchange and proceeds of the bonds will be used to advance private sector development in India. IFC's Masala Bond program has played an important role in deepening India's capital markets, prompting the Reserve Bank of India to authorize Indian companies to issue similar bonds in offshore markets.

Under the Masala bond program, IFC has issued bonds worth almost 110 billion rupees, including the first green Masala bond to support climate-smart investment in India. Fourteen private sector development projects in India have received Masala-bond financing so far.

257) "Nauka", seen recently in news, is:

- a) Scorpene class submarine of Indian Navy
- b) Seawolf class submarine of United States Navy

c) Space laboratory launched by Russia

- d) Ground-based missile-defense radar of Israel

Explanation: Nauka — meaning "science" in Russian — is the biggest space laboratory Russia has launched to date, and will primarily serve as a research facility.

It will replace Pirs, a Russian module on the International Space Station (ISS) used as a

docking port for spacecraft and as a door for cosmonauts to go out on spacewalks.

Now, Nauka will serve as the Russia's main research facility on the space station.

The new module is sent into orbit using a Proton rocket — the most powerful in Russia's space inventory.

258) With reference to Dholavira, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is the largest site of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- 2. It is located on the Tropic of Cancer.
- 3. It is the first Indus Valley site in India to be included in a world heritage site.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only**
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: The ancient city of Dholavira is an archaeological site at Kachchh District, in the state of Gujarat, which dates from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.

After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC). Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

Dholavira's location is on the Tropic of Cancer. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

Recently, UNESCO has announced the Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat as India's 40th world heritage site.

It is the first site of Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to be included on the coveted list. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

259) With reference to the 'Exercise INDRA', consider the following statements:

1. It is a joint military exercise between India and Russia.
2. The exercise is conducted under the mandate of the United Nations.

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

Explanation: The 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA will be held at Volgograd, Russia in August 2021. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

The INDRA series of exercises began in 2003 and was conducted as a bilateral naval exercise alternately between the two countries. However, the first joint Tri-Services Exercise was conducted in 2017.

Exercise INDRA will entail conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

260) Consider the following statements regarding Gamma Ray Bursts:

1. They are the most powerful events in the universe, detectable across billions of light-years.
2. Long Gamma Ray Bursts are associated with the demise of massive stars.

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

Explanation: Gamma-Ray Bursts (GRBs) are the most powerful events in the universe, detectable across billions of light-years. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

A light-year is the distance a beam of light travels in a single Earth year, or 9.5 trillion kilometers.

Astronomers classify them as long or short based on whether the event lasts for more or less than two seconds.

Long GRBs are observed in association with the demise of massive stars. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

Short GRB, on the other hand, forms when pairs of compact objects – such as neutron stars, which also form during stellar collapse – spiral inward over billions of years and collide.

261) With reference to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2021, consider the following statements:

1. Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
2. It provides deposit insurance that works as a protection cover for bank deposit holders when the bank fails to pay its depositors.
3. The Bill provides account holders security of their money by allowing access to up to Rs 5 lakh within 10 days of a bank coming under a moratorium.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Explanation: The Union Cabinet has approved the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and has

been introduced in Parliament's monsoon session.

Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It provides deposit insurance that works as a protection cover for bank deposit holders when the bank fails to pay its depositors.

It protects depositors' money kept in all commercial and foreign banks located in India; central, state, and urban co-operative banks; regional rural banks; and local banks, provided that the bank has opted for DICGC cover.

The agency's operations are performed as per the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 and The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation General Regulations, 1961.

Amendment bill

The Bill provides account holders security of their money by allowing access to up to Rs 5 lakh within 90 days of a bank coming under a moratorium.

Under the latest amendment in the DICGC Bill, 98.3% of all deposits will be covered and in terms of deposit value, 50.9% of deposits will be covered. While the Global deposit value is only 80% of all deposit accounts and covers only 20-30% of the deposit value.

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

262) With reference to the All-India Quota (AIQ) Scheme for medical education, consider the following statements:

1. The All-India Quota (AIQ) Scheme was introduced in 1986 under the directions of the Supreme Court.
2. All India Quota consists of 15% of total available UG seats and 50% of total available PG seats in government medical colleges.

3. Government of India decided to provide 27% reservation for OBCs and 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in the All-India Quota (AIQ) Scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical / dental courses from the current academic year 2021-22 onwards

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has taken a decision for providing 27% reservation for OBCs and 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in the All-India Quota (AIQ) Scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical / dental courses (MBBS / MD / MS / Diploma / BDS / MDS) from the current academic year 2021-22 onwards.

The All-India Quota (AIQ) Scheme was introduced in 1986 under the directions of the Supreme Court to provide for domicile-free merit-based opportunities to students from any State to aspire to study in a good medical college located in another State.

All India Quota consists of 15% of total available UG seats and 50% of total available PG seats in government medical colleges.

Initially, there was no reservation in AIQ Scheme up to 2007. In 2007, the Supreme Court introduced reservation of 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs in the AIQ Scheme.

When the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act became effective in 2007 providing for uniform 27% reservation to OBCs, the same was implemented in all the Central Educational Institutions viz. Safdarjung Hospital, Lady

Harding Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University and Banaras Hindu University etc.

However, this was not extended to the AIQ seats of State medical and dental colleges.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

263) With reference to the 'Chandrayaan-3', consider the following statements:

1. Chandrayaan-3 is a lander-and rover-specific mission.
2. The orbiter has an estimated lifespan of two years.

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

Explanation: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is likely to launch India's third lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-3' in the third quarter of 2022.

Chandrayaan-3 is a lander-and rover-specific mission, which will demonstrate India's capability of soft landing on a celestial body, with the rover then communicating with Earth via the existing orbiter from Chandrayaan-2 and taking images 100 km from Moon's orbit.

The orbiter has an estimated lifespan of seven years.

The unique exploration of Chandrayaan-3 aims at studying not just one area of the Moon but all the areas combining the exosphere, the surface as well as the sub-surface in a single mission.

The Lunar South pole is especially interesting because the lunar surface area that remains in shadow is much larger than that at the North Pole. Further, there could be a possibility of

the presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it.

In addition, the South Pole region has craters that are cold traps and contain a fossil record of the early Solar System.

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

264) Consider following statements.

1. The entire general insurance business in India was nationalised by General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972.
2. General Insurance Corporation of India has stopped its normal business and works only as a nationalised reinsurance company.

Correct statement is/are

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

Explanation: The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the insurance laws to help facilitate the privatisation of a state-owned general insurance company, a senior Finance Ministry official said on Thursday.

The government plans to introduce amendments to the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act in the ongoing Monsoon session of Parliament, the official said. Apart from the privatisation road map, this is one of the key reform proposals unveiled in the Budget.

There are four PSU general insurance companies: New India Assurance, United India Insurance (UII), National Insurance Company (NIC) and Oriental Insurance Company (OIC).

The government had earlier dropped its plan to merge UII, NIC and OIC and decided to recapitalise them. Besides, the government owns reinsurer General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re).

The Finance Ministry, in consultation with the NITI Aayog and a core group of secretaries on disinvestment, will finalise the insurance company that is to be privatised.

The entire general insurance business in India was nationalised by General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972.

265) In the context of Science and Technology, 'ANITA' recently seen in news is

a) a radio telescope used to detect ultra- high energy cosmic-ray neutrinos.

b) a satellite launched to measure the rate of melting of ice in Arctic.

c) an instrument used to detect gravitational waves

d) India's first humanoid robot.

Explanation: NASA's experiment with the Antarctic Impulsive Transient Antenna (ANITA) recently revealed the possibility of a parallel universe.

In a significant breakthrough, a team of researchers discovered "a fountain of high-energy particles erupting from the ice" in Antarctica, which could be proof of a parallel universe, according to the researchers.

The ANITA instrument is a radio telescope that detects cosmic-ray neutrinos with ultra-high energies from a scientific balloon flying over Antarctica.

ANITA is the first NASA neutrino observatory of any kind.

Neutrinos are subatomic particles with no electrical charge and a very small mass, and they are one of the universe's most abundant particles.

They can be difficult to track down because they have so little contact with physical matter. ANITA uses a balloon to fly over Antarctica with radio antennae pointing down.

266) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding Harappan Site Dholavira?

1. It is located on the island of Khadir.

2. Sophisticated water conservation system of channels and reservoirs is its unique feature.

3. It is the world's earliest attested ploughed field.

Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:

a) 1 only

b) 1 and 2 only

c) 3 only

d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation: The ancient city of Dholavira, the southern centre of the Harappan Civilization, is sited on the arid island of Khadir in the State of Gujarat.

Features of Dholavira:

It is one of the best preserved urban settlements from the period in Southeast Asia, comprises a fortified city and a cemetery.

Two seasonal streams provided water, a scarce resource in the region, to the walled city which comprises a heavily fortified castle and ceremonial ground as well as streets and houses of different proportion quality which testify to a stratified social order.

A sophisticated water management system demonstrates the ingenuity of the Dholavira people in their struggle to survive and thrive in a harsh environment.

The site includes a large cemetery with cenotaphs of six types testifying to the Harappan's unique view of death.

Bead processing workshops and artifacts of various kinds such as copper, shell, stone, jewellery of semi-precious stones, terracotta,

gold, ivory and other materials have been found during archaeological excavations of the site, exhibiting the culture's artistic and technological achievements.

Evidence for inter-regional trade with other Harappan cities, as well as with cities in the Mesopotamia region and the Oman peninsula has also been discovered.

Harappan Site of Kalibangan is distinguished by its unique fire altars and "world's earliest attested ploughed field". It is around 2900 BC that the region of Kalibangan developed into what can be considered a planned city.

267) Recently, Hubble Telescope found evidence of water vapour on Ganymede. Ganymede is a:

- a) Natural Satellite of Jupiter
- b) Minor planet in asteroid belt
- c) Moon of Mars
- d) Kuiper Belt object

Explanation: Ganymede is one of the moons of Jupiter. It is the largest moon in our solar system and the only moon with its own magnetic field.

The magnetic field causes auroras, which are ribbons of glowing, electrified gas, in regions circling the moon's north and south poles. When Jupiter's magnetic field changes, the aurora on Ganymede also change, "rocking" back and forth.

Recently, Hubble Space Telescope found the first evidence of water vapour in the atmosphere of Ganymede.

This new evidence for a water atmosphere on Ganymede is crucial in our search for extraterrestrial life and habitable worlds.

268) With reference to Dholavira, consider the following statements:

1. It is the largest site of the Indus Valley Civilization.

2. It is located on the Tropic of Cancer.

3. It is the first Indus Valley site in India to be included in a world heritage site.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Explanation: The ancient city of Dholavira is an archaeological site at Kachchh District, in the state of Gujarat, which dates from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE.

After Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan and Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India, Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC). Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

Dholavira's location is on the Tropic of Cancer. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

Recently, UNESCO has announced the Harappan city of Dholavira in Gujarat as India's 40th world heritage site.

It is the first site of Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to be included on the coveted list. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

269) "World Economic Outlook" is the flagship report of:

- a) World Bank
- b) World Economic Forum
- c) International Monetary Fund
- d) Asian Development Bank

Explanation: World Economic Outlook is the flagship report of International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a recently released report, IMF has sharply scaled down India's economic growth projection by 300 basis points to 9.5 per cent

for the current financial year from 12.5 per cent estimated earlier in April.

According to the report in countries with high vaccination coverage, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, the economic impact would be mild; meanwhile countries lagging in vaccination, such as India and Indonesia, would suffer the most among G20 economies.

The growth prospects for emerging market and developing economies have been marked down for 2021, especially for emerging Asia. By contrast, the forecast for advanced economies has been revised upwards.

IMF has kept the global economy projection of 6.0 percent unchanged in 2021. It has also projected global economy to grow by 4.9 per cent in 2022, up from the previous forecast of 4.4 per cent. The world output contracted 3.3 per cent in 2020.

270) Consider the following statements regarding Agristack:

1. The database will create a unified platform for farmers to provide them end-to-end services across the agriculture food value chain.
2. Each farmer will have a unique digital identification (farmers' ID) which will be linked to their Aadhaar number.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: Both statements are correct.

AgriStack is a proposed collection of technologies and digital databases focusing on farmers and the agricultural sector.

The database will create a unified platform for farmers to provide them end-to-end services across the agriculture food value chain.

Under the program, each farmer will have a unique digital identification (farmers' ID) which will be linked to their Aadhaar number.

Data to be collected by AgriStack may include personal details, the profile of land held, production details, and financial details.

271) With reference to the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The first amendment aims to omit the proviso to Section 10B of the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972.
2. The third amendment inserts a new Section 31A, making a director, who is not a whole-time director, liable only for acts of omission or commission committed with his knowledge and connivance by the insurer.

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

Explanation: The General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced in Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Bill will amend the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972. The Bill proposes three amendments.

The first aims to omit the proviso to Section 10B of the Act so as to remove the requirement that the Central government holds not less than 51 per cent of the equity capital in a specified insurer.

The second amendment is to insert a new Section 24B, providing for cessation of application of the Act to such a specified insurer from the date on which the Centre ceases to have control over it.

And, the third amendment is also to insert a new Section 31A, making a director, who is not a whole-time director, liable only for acts of omission or commission committed with his knowledge and connivance by the insurer.

Although the Bill has a provision that will allow the government to bring down its shareholding below 51 per cent, Sitharaman clarified that this is not a Bill for privatisation.

As on date, there are four public sector general insurance companies — National Insurance Company Limited, New India Assurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited, and United India Insurance Company Limited.

It is not yet known in one the government will lower its shareholding.

Hence both statements are correct.

272) With reference to the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The commission shall consist of a full-time chairperson having experience of not less than 15 years in the field of environment protection and pollution control or having administrative experience of not less than 25 years.

2. The chairperson or a member, other than an ex officio member, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier, and shall not be eligible for re-appointment.

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

Explanation: The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The bill aims for the constitution of a commission for better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems related to air quality in the national capital region and adjoining areas.

The commission shall consist of a full-time chairperson having experience of not less than 15 years in the field of environment protection and pollution control or having administrative experience of not less than 25 years.

The chairperson or a member, other than an ex officio member, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier, and shall be eligible for re-appointment.

Adjoining areas refers to Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan where any source of pollution may cause adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.

Once passed, the bill will replace an ordinance issued in the recent past.

According to the new Bill, "the commission may impose and collect environmental compensation from farmers causing air pollution by stubble burning, at such rate and in such manner, as may be prescribed".

Hence only statement 1 is correct.

273) India and which of the following country recently signed the Second Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for global development?

a) China

b) U.S.A

c) U.K

d) France

Explanation: India and the US signed the Second Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for global development.

The SGP Agreement, signed in November 2014, underscores the contribution of India-US partnership to global stability and prosperity.

It provides a framework for promoting cooperation between the two countries to meet the developmental aspirations of partner countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.

This triangular cooperation with the US will complement India's other ongoing and future development partnerships, capacity building and technical assistance with countries globally.

Second Amendment

The Second Amendment to the SGP Agreement extends the validity of the SGP Agreement up-to 2026.

It expands the scope of capacity building activities undertaken jointly by India and the United States under this framework.

It also provides a consultative mechanism for joint biannual monitoring and review of activities undertaken under the SGP.

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

274) With reference to the “creamy layer”, consider the following statements:

1. It is a concept that sets a threshold within which OBC reservation benefits are applicable.

2. While there is a 27% quota for OBCs in government jobs and higher educational institutions, those falling within the “creamy layer” cannot get the benefits of this quota.

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

Explanation: A proposal to revise the criteria for defining the “creamy layer” among OBCs has been pending for years, and MPs have raised the issue during the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.

It is a concept that sets a threshold within which OBC reservation benefits are applicable.

While there is a 27% quota for OBCs in government jobs and higher educational institutions, those falling within the “creamy layer” cannot get the benefits of this quota.

Based on the recommendation of the Second Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission), the government on August 13, 1990 had notified 27% reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs) in vacancies in civil posts and services that are to be filled on direct recruitment.

After this was challenged, the Supreme Court on November 16, 1992 (Indira Sawhney case) upheld 27% reservation for OBCs, subject to exclusion of the creamy layer.

Following the order in Indra Sawhney, an expert committee headed by Justice (retired) R N Prasad was constituted for fixing the criteria for determining the creamy layer.

In 1993, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) listed out various categories of people of certain rank/status/income

whose children cannot avail benefit of OBC reservation.

For those not in government, the current threshold is an income of Rs 8 lakh per year. For children of government employees, the threshold is based on their parents' rank and not income.

Hence both statements are correct.

275) With reference to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021, consider the following statements:

1. According to the bill adoption of a child is final on the issuance of an adoption order by the civil court.
2. The Bill adds that serious offences will include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is less than seven years.

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

Explanation: The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021, which seeks to amend the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, was passed in Rajya Sabha on July 28, 2021. It was passed in Lok Sabha on 24.03.2021.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 states that adoption of a child is final on the issuance of an adoption order by the civil court.

The Bill provides that instead of the court, the district magistrate (including additional district magistrate) will issue such adoption orders.

Serious offences

Under the 2015 Act offences committed by juveniles are categorised as heinous offences, serious offences, and petty offences. Serious offences include offences with three to seven years of imprisonment.

The Bill adds that serious offences will also include offences for which maximum punishment is imprisonment of more than seven years, and minimum punishment is not prescribed or is less than seven years.

Child Welfare Committees (CWCs)

The Act provides that states must constitute one or more CWCs for each district for dealing with children in need of care and protection. It provides certain criteria for the appointment of members to CWC.

The Bill adds certain criteria for a person to be ineligible to be a member of the CWC. These include: (i) having any record of violation of human rights or child rights, or (ii) being a part of the management of a child care institution in a district.

Hence only statement 2 is correct.

276) Which of the following are the salient features of Discovered Small Field (DSF) Bid Round-III?

1. Revenue Sharing Model
2. No upfront signature bonus
3. No cess

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched the Discovered Small Field (DSF) Bid Round-III.

Under the bid round, 75 discoveries across 32 Contract areas in 11 basins/locations are being offered. Estimated Hydrocarbon in place of approximately 232 MMTOE of oil and oil equivalent gas are on offer.

In the earlier two rounds, 54 contracts were awarded to 27 companies including 12 new entrants.

The salient features of DSF policy are:

Revenue Sharing Model,

Single License for Conventional & Unconventional Hydrocarbons,

No upfront signature bonus,

Reduced Royalty rate in line with HELP,

no cess,

Full marketing and Pricing freedom for gas produced,

Exploration allowed during entire contract period, and

100% participation from foreign companies/joint ventures.

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

277) Which of the following qualifications are required for the appointment of District Judges?

1. He should not already be in the service of the Central or the state government.

2. He should have been an advocate or a pleader for five years.

3. He should be recommended by the high court for appointment.

Correct option is/are

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 1 and 3 only

c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: The appointment, posting and promotion of district judges in a state are made by the governor of the state in consultation with the high court. A person to be appointed as district judge should have the following qualifications:

He should not already be in the service of the Central or the state government

He should have been an advocate or a pleader for seven years.

He should be recommended by the high court for appointment.

278) Consider the following statements:

1. Indra is the joint military exercise between India and USA.

2. Dharma Guardian is a bilateral army exercise between India and Japan.

3. Shinyuu Maitri is a Joint military exercise between India and Thailand.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 only

c) 1 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021 will be held at Volgograd, Russia from 01 to 13 August 2021. 1 is incorrect.

Dharma Guardian. It is a bilateral army exercise between India and Japan. 2 is correct.

Shinyuu Maitri. It is a Joint military exercise between Indian Air Force and Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF). 3 is incorrect.

279) Consider the following statements:

1. An ecological footprint is the total area of land required to sustain an activity or population.

2. Ecological footprint data is used to calculate Earth Overshoot Day.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation: The ecological footprint is a method promoted by the Global Footprint Network to measure human demand on natural capital, i.e. the quantity of nature it takes to support people or an economy.

It tracks this demand through an ecological accounting system. The accounts contrast the biologically productive area people use for their consumption to the biologically productive area available within a region or the world (biocapacity, the productive area that can regenerate what people demand from nature). In short, it is a measure of human impact on the environment.

The Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources (fish and forests, for instance) and services in a given year exceeds what the Earth can regenerate in that year.

Earth Overshoot Day is computed by dividing the planet's biocapacity (the amount of ecological resources Earth is able to generate that year), by humanity's Ecological Footprint (humanity's demand for that year), and multiplying by 365, the number of days in a year:

$$(\text{Earth's Biocapacity} / \text{Humanity's Ecological Footprint}) \times 365 = \text{Earth Overshoot Day}$$

In 2020 the calculated overshoot day fell on August 22 (more than three weeks later than 2019) due to coronavirus induced lockdowns around the world.

For the year 2021, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by 29th July, 2021.

Causes:

The prime driver was the 6.6% increase in the global carbon footprint in 2020.

There was also a 0.5% decrease in 'global forest biocapacity' due to a rise in deforestation of the Amazon's rainforests.

280) UNESCO recently removed which of the following site from the World Heritage List?

a) Colchic rainforests and wetlands

b) City of Liverpool

c) Korean Tidal Flats

d) Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls

Explanation: The UN's cultural agency removed Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City from the world heritage list, nine years after it was moved to the 'in danger' list.

The committee cited the "irreversible loss of attributes conveying the outstanding universal value of the property" as a reason for the removal of the site from the world heritage list.

The six areas in the historic centre and docklands of the maritime mercantile City of Liverpool were included on the World Heritage List in 2004. The areas of the heritage site were the world's major trading centres in the 18th and 19th centuries, a testimony to the development of maritime mercantile culture. The modern dock technology, transport systems and port management were the significant features of the maritime city.