

**1. Consider the following statements regarding the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

1. It will provide or facilitate financing to any entity or enterprise operating in the territory of a member country
2. For each member country, the voting share is based on their authorised capital share to the Bank

**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

**Ans: A**

**Explanation**

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a **multilateral development bank** with a mission to **improve social and economic outcomes in Asia**.
- **Headquartered in Beijing**, it began operations in January 2016 and has now grown to 102 approved members worldwide.
- By investing in **sustainable infrastructure** and other productive sectors in Asia and beyond, it will better connect people, services and markets that over time will impact the lives of billions and build a better future
- AIIB was officially **established in December 2015** and opened for business in January 2016. **India is among 57 founding members of AIIB**, among these 37 are regional and 20 are non-regional.

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- It has an authorised initial capital of US \$100 billion and subscribed capital of US \$ 50 billion
- **Statement 1 is correct:** According to the **Articles of Agreement (AOA)** of AIIB, the Bank will “provide or facilitate financing to any member, or any agency, instrumentality or political subdivision thereof, or any **entity or enterprise operating in the territory of a member**, as well as to international or regional agencies or entities concerned with economic development of the Asia region.”
- Furthermore, the AOA permits the Bank to provide financing in a variety of ways, including, inter alia, making **loans, investing in the equity capital of an enterprise**, and guaranteeing, whether as primary or secondary obligor, in whole or in part, loans for economic development.
- **China, India and Russia are the three largest shareholders** of AIIB, taking 30.34%, 8.52%, 6.66% stake respectively. Their voting shares are 26.6%, 7.6% and 6% respectively. China’s voting shares in AIIB gives **Beijing effective veto power**, as major bank decisions require at least 75% support
- **Asian countries account for 75 percent of AIIB’s shares** and non-Asian countries altogether account for 25 percent, which translate to voting power, but three out of the bank’s five vice presidents are European
- Two features make AIIB a distinct entity
- **Regional character of the Bank:** Its regional members (Asian) will be the holding around 75 percent of shares i.e. they will be **majority shareholders**. They have been **allocated their capital share on quota basis i.e. based on their economic size**
- **Statement 2 is incorrect: Voting share:** For each member country it is based on the **size of their economy** and not on authorised capital share to the Bank

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- ❖ Recently, the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** has approved US\$ 500 million for '**Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project**' initiated by India.

**Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project**

- The project will be implemented by the **National Health Mission (NHM)**, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- This new support will cover **all States and Union Territories across India** and address the needs of infected people, at-risk populations, medical and emergency personnel and service providers, medical and testing facilities, and national and animal health agencies
- The project will enable the government slow and limit as much as possible the spread of COVID-19 in India by providing immediate support to enhance disease detection capacities, oxygen delivery systems and medicines among others

<https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html>

<https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/who-we-are/membership-status/.content/index/download/20160930035841674.pdf>

<http://enviroicsindia.in/2018/06/26/asian-infrastructure-investment-bank-aiib-an-overview/>

**2. Consider the following pairs**

<b>Mountain passes</b>		<b>Located in</b>
1. Lipulekh	-	Uttarakhand
2. Nathu La	-	Arunachal Pradesh
3. Zoji La	-	Nagaland

**Which of the above given pairs is/are correctly matched?**

- a) 1 and 3 only

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

**Ans: B**

**Explanation**

**Lipulekh**

- Lipulekh is a **Himalayan pass** on the border between **India's Uttarakhand state** and the Tibet region of China, near their trijunction with Nepal.
- Nepal has ongoing claims to the southern side of the pass, called **Kalapani territory**, which is controlled by India.
- The pass is near the **Chinese trading town of Taklakot (Purang)** in Tibet and used since ancient times by traders, mendicants and pilgrims transiting between India and Tibet.

**Nathu La**

- Nathu La is a mountain pass which connects the **Indian state of Sikkim with China's Tibet Autonomous Region**.
- On the Indian side, the pass is 54 km east of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Only citizens of India can visit the pass, and then only after obtaining a permit in Gangtok.
- **Nathu La is one of the three open trading border posts between China and India**; the others are **Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh** and Lipulekh at the trisection point of Uttarakhand-India, Nepal and China.

**Zoji La**

- Zoji La is a high mountain pass in the Himalayas in the **Indian union territory of Ladakh**. Located in the Drass, the pass **connects the Kashmir Valley to its west** with the Drass and Suru valleys to its northeast and the Indus valley further east.
- **The National Highway 1 between Srinagar and Leh** in the western section of the Himalayan mountain range traverses the pass

- ❖ Recently, the Defence Minister **dedicated to the nation a new 80-km road in Uttarakhand** which opens a **new route for Kailash Mansarovar yatra** via Lipulekh Pass, significantly reducing the travel time for yatris

#### **Kailash Mansarovar yatra**

- The pilgrimage to Kailash and to the **sacred Mansarovar lake** that lies 30 km to its south, is run exclusively by a government organization, the **Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN)**
- The organization works in collaboration with the Government of India's Ministry of External Affairs and the Government of China

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rajnath-singh-inaugurates-new-road-to-kailash-mansarovar/article31533372.ece>

#### **3. "The principle of Absolute Liability" is a part of which of the following?**

- a) Right to constitutional remedies
- b) Right to Life and Personal Liberty
- c) Right against Exploitation
- d) Right to freedom of speech and expression

**Ans: B**

#### **Explanation**

- ❖ Recently, the **National Green Tribunal's** order in the **Visakhapatnam gas tragedy** found LG Polymers prima facie liable under the 19th century English law **principle of "strict liability"**, which was made redundant in India by the Supreme Court in 1986. Lawyers say the term "**absolute liability**" should have been used instead

- Even though the NGT directed the company to **deposit an initial amount of 50 crore** and formed a fact-finding committee, its use of the term “strict liability” has been questioned.
- Under the “strict liability principle”, **a party is not liable and need not pay compensation** if a hazardous substance escapes his premises by accident
- The Supreme Court, while deciding the **Oleum gas leak case of Delhi**, found **strict liability woefully inadequate to protect citizens’ rights** in an industrialised economy like India and replaced it with the ‘**absolute liability principle**’.
- The country was then reeling under the shock of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy. The court under then Chief Justice P.N. Bhagwati wanted corporations to be made fully liable for future “**undeserved suffering of thousands of innocent citizens**”
- So, under the absolute liability principle, the **apex court held that a company in a hazardous industry cannot claim any exemption**. It has to **mandatorily pay compensation**, whether or not the disaster was caused by its negligence. The court said a hazardous enterprise has an “absolute non-delegable duty to the community”
- The court found that strict liability, evolved in an **1868 English case called Rylands versus Fletcher**, provided companies with several exemptions from assuming liability.
- Absolute liability, on the other hand, provided them with **no defence or exemptions**. The **principle of absolute liability is part of Article 21 (right to life)**.

#### **Absolute Liability**

- If an industry or enterprise is engaged in some **inherently dangerous activity** from which it is deriving commercial gain and that activity is capable of causing catastrophic damage then the **industry officials are absolutely liable to pay compensation** to the aggrieved parties.

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- The **industry cannot plead** that all safety measures were taken care of by them and that there was negligence on their part. They will **not be allowed any exceptions** neither can they take up any defence like that of 'Act of God' or 'Act of Stranger'
  - The **National Green Tribunal Act of 2010** has wholeheartedly adopted 'absolute liability'. **Section 17 mandates** that the Tribunal should apply the '**no fault principle**' even if the disaster caused is an accident
- ✓ Right to constitutional remedies is dealt by Article 32
  - ✓ Right to Life and Personal Liberty is dealt by Article 21
  - ✓ Right against Exploitation is dealt by Article 23 and 24
  - ✓ Right to freedom of speech and expression is dealt by Article 19

<http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/2155/Strict-and-Absolute-Liability.html>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/visakhapatnam-gas-tragedy-ngt-cites-obsolete-law-in-gas-leak-case/article31537617.ece>

**4. With reference to Smallpox, consider the following statements**

1. It is an acute contagious disease that can be transmitted from person to person by infected aerosols and air droplets spread in face-to-face contact with an infected person
2. The last known natural case of smallpox was recorded in Somalia in 2017

**Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?**

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

**Ans: B**

**Explanation**

- Smallpox is an **acute contagious disease caused by variola virus**, a member of the Orthopoxvirus family.
- Smallpox, which is believed to have originated over 3,000 years ago in India or Egypt, was one of the most devastating diseases known to humanity.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Smallpox is **transmitted from person to person by infected aerosols** and air droplets spread in face-to-face contact with an infected person.
- The disease can also be **transmitted by contaminated clothes** and bedding, though the risk of infection from this source is much lower
- Following an incubation period of about 12-14 days there is a sudden onset of influenza-like symptoms including **fever, malaise, headache, prostration, severe back pain** and, less often, abdominal pain and vomiting.
- Two forms of the disease are recognized, **variola minor with a mortality rate of approximately 1%**, and the more common variola major with a mortality rate of 30%. Between 65–80% of survivors are marked with deep pitted scars (pockmarks), most prominent on the face
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** In 1967, **WHO launched an intensified plan to eradicate smallpox**. Following a successful campaign to achieve high levels of immunization globally, **the last known natural case of smallpox was recorded in Somalia in 1977**.
- In 1979, WHO recommended that vaccination against smallpox be stopped in all countries, the only exception being special groups, such as researchers working with smallpox and related viruses
- The **global eradication of smallpox was certified in December 1979** and endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 1980, marking one of the most successful collaborative public health initiatives in history.

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- **Following eradication, smallpox, vaccine production was halted.** A large stock of the smallpox vaccine was retained around the world although the storage conditions and potency of these stocks are not known
- ❖ World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN's postal agency **released a commemorative postage stamp on the 40th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox.**

<https://www.who.int/biologicals/vaccines/smallpox/en/>

**5. The New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) is the largest public-private-partnership effort within the R&D domain in the country. The responsibility of conceptualising, evolving and implementing the programme has been assigned to**

- a) NITI Aayog
- b) Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)
- c) Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)
- d) National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)

**Ans: C**

**Explanation**

- The **New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)** is the **largest public-private-partnership effort within the R&D domain** in the country.
- It looks beyond today's technology and thus seeks to **build, capture and retain for India a leadership position** by synergising the best competencies of publicly funded R&D institutions, academia and private industry.

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- The Government finances and plays a catalytic role. It is based on the **premise of consciously and deliberately identifying**, selecting and supporting potential winners.
- The responsibility of conceptualising, evolving and implementing the programme has been assigned to the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**
- NMITLI has so far **evolved 60 largely networked projects in diverse areas** viz. Agriculture & Plant Biotechnology, General Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals, etc

**Objective**

- NMITLI seeks to **catalyze innovation centered scientific and technological developments** as a vehicle to attain for Indian industry a global leadership position, in selected niche areas in a true **'Team India' spirit**, by synergising the best competencies of publicly funded R&D institutions, academia and private industry
- The strategy adopted for NMITLI is to obtain an **inverse risk-investment profile** i.e. low investment - **high-risk technology areas** (with global leadership potential) with investments increasing as developments take place and the projects move up on the innovation curve with reduction in risks
- ✓ **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** through its New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) programme has approved a project towards **development of human monoclonal antibodies (hmAbs)** that can neutralize SARS-CoV-2 in patients

**The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**

- The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), known for its cutting edge R&D knowledgebase in **diverse S&T areas, is a contemporary R&D organization.**
- Having a **pan-India presence**, CSIR has a dynamic network of 38 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 3 Innovation Complexes and 5 units. CSIR's R&D expertise and

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experience is embodied in about 4600 active scientists supported by about 8000 scientific and technical personnel.

<https://www.csir.res.in/sites/default/files/NMITLI%20Information%20in%20brief.pdf>

