

1. Consider the following statements about Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

1. It functions under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
2. It is engaged in road construction to provide connectivity to inaccessible regions in the border areas of the country.
3. It also maintains operations in neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Border Roads Organisation develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and functions under the **Ministry of Defence**.
- **Statements 2 and 3 are correct:** It is engaged in road construction to provide connectivity to difficult and inaccessible regions in the border areas of the country. Officers from the Border Roads Engineering Service and personnel from the General Reserve Engineer Force form the parent cadre of the Border Roads Organisation. Currently, the organisation maintains operations in twenty-one states, one UT (Andaman and Nicobar Islands), and **neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka**.

Role of the BRO

In Peace

- Develop & Maintain the Operational Road Infrastructure of General Staff in the Border Areas.
- Contribute to the Socio-Economic Development of the Border States.

In War

- To Develop & Maintain Roads to Keep Line of Control through in Original Sectors and Re-Deployed Sectors.
- To Execute Additional Tasks as laid down by the Govt Contributing to the War Effort.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Defence-Minister-Rajnath-Singh-reviews-ongoing-projects-of-Border-Road-Organisation&id=393164>

2. With reference to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), consider the following statements.

1. It is an act made by the US legislature which mandates the U.S. administration to impose sanctions on any country carrying out significant defence and energy trade with sanctioned entities.
2. In 2019, the US evoked sanctions against India under CAATSA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is an act made by the **US legislature** which mandates the U.S. administration to impose sanctions on any country carrying out significant defence and energy trade with **sanctioned entities** in North Korea, Iran and Russia.
- India and Russia signed a \$5 billion contract for the procurement of S-400 air defense systems during the 2018 annual bilateral summit.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The U.S. had expressed deep concern over the deal and threatened to impose sanctions on India under CAATSA. However, the US is yet to evoke sanctions against India under the law.
- In June last year, India had assertively told the US that it would go by its national interest while dealing with other countries, including sanctions-hit Russia.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-position-on-caatsa-unchanged-despite-chinas-actions-in-neighbourhood/article32010144.ece>

3. Consider the following statements about the Essential Commodities Act (ECA).

1. The act empowers both the Central and state governments to control production, supply and distribution of certain commodities in view of rising prices.
2. Recently, the Centre removed cereals, edible oil, oil seeds, pulses, onions and potato from the purview of ECA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **C**

Explanation:

- The Essential Commodities Act (ECA) was enacted by the Central Government in 1955 to control and regulate trade and prices of commodities declared essential under the Act.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Act empowers the Central and state governments concurrently to control production, supply and distribution of certain commodities in view of rising prices.
- The measures that can be taken under the provisions of the Act include, among others, licensing, distribution and imposing stock limits. The governments also have the power to fix price limits, and selling the particular commodities above the limit will attract penalties.
- Some of the major commodities that are covered under the act:
 - Petroleum and its products
 - Drugs- prices of essential drugs are still controlled by the DPCO
 - Fertilisers
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved an amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, removing cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-face-masks-hand-sanitisers-no-more-essential-items-centre/article32012107.ece>

4. With reference to International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs), consider the following statements.

1. An IFSC caters to customers outside the jurisdiction of the domestic economy.
2. India's 1st IFSC has been set up in Mumbai.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** An IFSC caters to customers outside the jurisdiction of the domestic economy. Such centres deal with flows of finance, financial products and services across borders. London, New York and Singapore can be counted as global financial centres.
- **Services provided by an IFSC:**
 - Fund-raising services for individuals, corporations and governments
 - Asset management and global portfolio diversification undertaken by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual funds
 - Wealth management

- Global tax management and cross-border tax liability optimization, which provides a business opportunity for financial intermediaries, accountants and law firms.
- Global and regional corporate treasury management operations that involve fund-raising, liquidity investment and management and asset-liability matching
- Risk management operations such as insurance and reinsurance
- Merger and acquisition activities among trans-national corporations
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** India's 1st IFSC has been set up at the **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar**. It is intended to provide Indian corporates with easier access to global financial markets, and to complement and promote the further development of financial markets in India.
- It seeks to bring to India, those types of financial services and transactions that are currently carried on outside India by overseas financial institutions and overseas branches/subsidiaries of Indian financial institutions.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/gift-sez-provides-approval-to-28-entities/articleshow/76822108.cms>

5. Which of the following categories of voters are allowed to avail postal voting facility?

1. Members of the armed forces
2. Government officers on poll duty
3. Convicted and under trials prisoners
4. Absentee voters employed in essential services

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- A. 1, 2 and 3 only
- B. 1, 2 and 4 only
- C. 1, 3 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

What is postal voting?

- A restricted set of voters can exercise postal voting. Through this facility, a voter can cast her vote remotely by recording her preference on the ballot paper and sending it back to the election officer before counting.

Who can avail this facility?

- **Members of the armed forces** like the Army, Navy and Air Force, members of the armed police force of a state (serving outside the state), government employees posted outside India and their spouses are entitled to vote only by post.

- In other words, they can't vote in person. **Voters under preventive detention** can also vote only by post. **(Convicted and under trials prisoners are not eligible for postal voting)**
- Special voters such as the President of India, Vice President, Governors, Union Cabinet ministers, Speaker of the House and **government officers on poll duty** have the option to vote by post. But they have to apply through a prescribed form to avail this facility.
- Recently, the Law Ministry, at the Election Commission's behest, introduced a new category of '**absentee voters**', who can now also opt for postal voting. These are voters employed in essential services and unable to cast their vote due to their service conditions.
- Currently, officials of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Northern Railway (Passenger and Freight) Services and media persons are notified as absentee voters.
- Last month, senior citizens above the age of 65 and voters who test positive for COVID19 or are suspected to be COVID-affected were allowed to cast their vote by post.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/postal-ballots-political-controversy-explained-6495861/>