

1. With reference to the electoral bonds, consider the following statements.

1. They are interest-free bearer instruments which allows individuals and domestic companies to present these bonds to political parties of their choice.
2. Only the Political Parties which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, are eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
3. A company's contribution cannot be more than 7.5% of its average net profit in the three preceding years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Finance Bill, 2017 introduced “Electoral bonds” as interest-free bearer instruments (like Promissory Notes) that will be available for purchase from the State Bank of India within a designated window of 10 days in every quarter of the financial year.
- The scheme, which was notified on January 2, 2018, allows individuals and domestic companies to present these bonds — issued in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore — to political parties of their choice, which have to redeem them within 15 days. Buyers of the bonds have to submit full KYC details at the time of buying. But the beneficiary political party is not required to reveal the identity of the entity that has given it the bond(s).

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** One of the major criticisms on electoral bonds is that it eliminated the cap on companies to contribute more than 7.5% of its average net profit in the three preceding years.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/owning-up-to-criminalisation-in-politics/article32035186.ece>

2. “Bhashan Char” island sometimes seen in the news is located in

- A. Myanmar
- B. Bangladesh
- C. Nepal
- D. Bhutan

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- The Bhashan Char, also known as Thengar Char is an island located at the **Meghna river estuary.**
- It belongs to **Bangladesh.**
- The Bangladesh government has sheltered over 300 Rohingya refugees in Bhashan Char.



Who are Rohingyas?

- Rohingyas are an ethnic group, largely comprising Muslims, who predominantly live in the **Western Myanmar province of Rakhine**. They speak a dialect of Bengali, as opposed to the commonly spoken Burmese language.
- Though they have been living in the country for generations, Myanmar considers them as persons who migrated to their land during the Colonial rule. So, it has not granted Rohingyas full citizenship.
- Since they are not citizens, their movements are restricted within the Rakhine state.

2017 attack:

- In 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a Rohingya insurgent group, attacked police posts and an army base in Rakhine state.
- The response by the Myanmar security forces has sent over 7,00,000 Rohingyas fleeing into Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries including India. Reports of villages being torched and civilian deaths have followed the militant attack.
- The UN has termed the Rohingya's situation as the "world's fastest growing refugee crisis".

India's stand:

- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there are approximately 40,000 Rohingyas living in India. They have reached India from Bangladesh through the land route over the years.
- The government had previously informed that all the Rohingyas in India were “**illegal immigrants**” and they will be deported soon.

Legal provisions:

- India doesn't have a specific law regarding refugees.
- India has also **not been a signatory** of the **1951 UN Convention or the 1967 Protocol** – both relating to the Status of Refugees and included in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statute.
- However, UNHCR had earlier stated that the ‘**principle of non-refoulement**’ is considered part of customary international law and therefore binding on all states whether they have signed the Refugee Convention or not.
- In addition, India is party to major international human rights instruments such as the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Illegal immigrant:

- A foreigner is considered to be an illegal immigrant under two circumstances.
 - One, if they come into India without valid travel documents, or
 - two, having come in legally, they stay beyond the time period permitted to them under their travel documents.
- Illegal migrants may be imprisoned or deported.

Principle of non-refoulement:

- Non-refoulement is a principle in international law that stops a country from returning a person to a place where they would be at risk of persecution.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/rohingya-refugees-cant-leave-island/article32035334.ece>

3. Which of the following countries are part of the Malabar naval exercise?

1. India
2. Japan
3. The U.S.
4. Australia

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: A

Explanation:

- Malabar began as a bilateral naval exercise between **India and the U.S.** in 1992, and was expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of **Japan** in 2015.
- Australia has been requesting for observer status in the trilateral exercise.
- However, India did not include Australia in the exercises in 2018 and 2019.

- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-take-a-call-on-australias-inclusion-in-malabar-exercises-with-japan-us/article32034664.ece>

4. With reference to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), consider the following statements.

1. It is a statutory body.
2. NGT has jurisdiction over all civil cases involving a substantial question relating to the environment.
3. The decision of NGT can be challenged before the Supreme Court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a **statutory body** that was established in 2010 by the National Green Tribunal Act.
- It is a **specialised judicial body** equipped with expertise solely for the purpose of adjudicating environmental cases in the country.
- The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide **speedy environmental justice** and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.
- **New Delhi** is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai are the other four places of sitting of the Tribunal.

Composition of Tribunal:

- The Tribunal shall consist of-
 - a full time **Chairperson**;
 - not less than ten but subject to a maximum of twenty full time **Judicial Members**;
 - not less than ten but subject to a maximum of twenty full time **Expert Members**.
- The chairperson of the panel is appointed by the central government in consultation with the chief justice of India.
- The members, judicial and expert, are picked by the government on the recommendation of a selection committee.

Powers and Jurisdiction:

- The **Tribunal's orders are binding** and it has power to grant relief in the form of compensation and damages to affected persons.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Tribunal has jurisdiction **over all civil cases** involving a substantial question **relating to the environment**.
- The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, but shall be **guided by principles of natural justice**.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The Tribunal has **powers to review its own decisions**. If this fails, the decision can be challenged before the **Supreme Court within ninety days**.
- Any person seeking relief and compensation for environmental damage involving subjects in the legislations mentioned in **Schedule I of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010** may approach the Tribunal. The statutes in Schedule I are:
 - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974;
 - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977;
 - The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
 - The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981;
 - The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986;
 - The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991;
 - The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2020/jul/09/neyveli-boiler-blast-ngt-slaps-interim-penalty-of-rs-5-crore-on-nlc-india-ltd-2167567.html>

5. Consider the following statements about the FAME India Scheme.

1. The main objective of the scheme is to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology.
2. It is an initiative of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

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:** In 2015, the government formulated the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (**FAME India**) Scheme to **promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology** and to ensure sustainable growth of the same.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It is an initiative of the **Department of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises under the Ministry of Heavy Industries.**

The Scheme operates in two phases.

Phase I: started in 2015 and was completed on March 31st, 2019.

Phase II: started from April 1st, 2019, will be completed by March 31st, 2022.

FAME - Phase I

- The 1st Phase of FAME India Scheme was implemented through **four focus areas namely (i) Demand Creation, (ii) Technology Platform, (iii) Pilot Project and (iv) Charging Infrastructure.**
- Market creation through demand incentives was aimed at incentivizing all vehicle segments i.e. 2-Wheelers, 3-Wheelers Auto, Passenger 4-Wheeler vehicles, Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses.

FAME - Phase II

- The outlay of 10,000 crore has been made for three years till 2022 for FAME 2 scheme.
- The centre has sanctioned investment in setting up charging stations for electric vehicles in India
- The government will offer the incentives for electric buses, three-wheelers and four-wheelers to be used for commercial purposes.
- Plug-in hybrid vehicles and those with a sizeable lithium-ion battery and electric motor will also be included in the scheme and fiscal support offered depending on the size of the battery.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/eesl-signs-agreement-with-noida-authority-to-install-ev-charging-units/articleshow/76875312.cms?from=mdr>