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1. Exercise Desert Knight-21 is a bilateral Air Force exercise between which of the following countries?

- a) India and France
- b) India and UK
- c) India and Somalia
- d) India and Japan

Answer: A

Explanation:

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and **French Air and Space Force** are set to participate in Exercise Desert Knight-21.
- The bilateral air exercise will be held at **Jodhpur Air Force station in Rajasthan, India**, from 20 to 24 January.
- Exercise Desert Knight-21 aims to improve **interoperability** between the forces while exchanging 'ideas and best practices' gained from operational experience.
- Platforms such as **Rafale, Airbus A-330 multi-role tanker transport (MRTT)**, A-400M tactical transport aircraft and about 175 personnel from the French Air and Space Force will take part in the military drill.
- According to the Indian Ministry of Defence, the exercise will see the **deployment of Rafale aircraft** by both countries.
- IAF assets participating in the exercise will also include Mirage 2000, Su-30 MKI, IL-78 flight refuelling aircraft, AWACS and AEW&C aircraft.
- The joint drill marks a significant milestone 'in the series of engagements' between the two nations.

2. Consider the following statements with respect to the National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- 1) National Investigation Agency (NIA) was constituted as an executive body.
- 2) The officers of NIA will also have the power to investigate scheduled offences committed outside India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

National Investigation Agency

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is a **central agency** established by the Indian Government to **combat terror** in India.
- NIA was constituted under the NIA Act, 2008. Thus, it is called as a “**Statutory Body (Any body created by law or an act of Parliament)**”. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.
- It was **established after the 2008 Mumbai terror** attacks as a central agency to combat terrorism

National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019

- It amended the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008

The Amendment act provides for

- A national-level agency to investigate and prosecute offences listed in a schedule (scheduled offences).
- Allows for **creation of Special Courts** for the trial of scheduled offences.

Jurisdiction of the NIA

- The officers of the NIA have the same powers as other police officers in relation to investigation of Scheduled offences, across India.
- In addition, officers of the NIA will have the **power to investigate scheduled offences committed outside India**, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- The central government may direct the NIA to investigate such cases, as if the offence has been committed in India.
- The Special Court in New Delhi will have jurisdiction over these cases.

Scheduled Offences

- The schedule to the Act **specifies a list of offences** which are to be investigated and prosecuted by the agency. These include offences under Acts such as the
 - Atomic Energy Act, 1962,
 - the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.

The Act will allow the NIA to investigate additional offences such as

- **human trafficking**
- offences related to **counterfeit currency** or bank notes
- manufacture or sale of prohibited arms,
- cyber-terrorism,
- offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

3. Which of the following wildlife sanctuaries is/are embraced by the Western Ghats?

1. Eravikulam National Park
2. Nagarahole National Park
3. Borivali National Park
4. Namdapha National Park

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Fourth statement is wrong - Namdapha National park is in Arunachal Pradesh.**

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- Other wildlife sanctuaries embraced in the Western Ghats - Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve, Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, Eravikulam National Park, Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary

4. The Parliament of India exercises control over the functions of the Council of Ministers through

1. Adjournment motion
2. Question hour
3. Supplementary questions

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The Constitution provides for the legislature to make laws, the government to implement laws, and the courts to interpret and enforce these laws.
- While the judiciary is independent from the other two branches, the government is formed with the support of a majority of members in the legislature.
- Therefore, the government is collectively responsible to Parliament for its actions. This implies that Parliament (i.e. Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) can hold the government accountable for its decisions, and scrutinise its functioning.
- The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha is empowered to pass a vote of censure against the ministry. Whenever such a motion is passed, the ministry has to resign.

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- Both the houses exercise control over the executive through asking questions, discussing matters of urgent public importance, moving call- attention notices and adjournment motions, and also by appointing various committees such as public accounts committee, estimates committee, committee on public undertakings, committee on government assurances, the committee on privileges, the committee on subordinate legislation etc.

Question hour:

- The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is slotted for the Question Hour. During this one hour, Members of Parliament (MPs) ask questions to ministers and hold them accountable for the functioning of their ministries.
- The questions can also be asked to the private members (MPs who are not ministers).
- The questions are of three types, namely,

Starred questions:

These are distinguished by an asterisk. It requires an oral answer and hence supplementary questions can follow.

Unstarred questions:

It requires a written answer and hence, supplementary questions cannot follow.

Short notice questions:

The matters of public importance and of urgent character are considered under this type of questions. It is asked by giving a notice of less than ten days. It is answered orally.

Adjournment motion

- Adjournment motion is introduced only in the Lok Sabha to draw the attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance.

5. 'Hunar haat' initiative is related to which of the following?

- a) Encourage and promote traditional master artisans and craftsmen
- b) Provide incubation and handholding to startups in their first five years.
- c) Encourage learning through creative activities in primary schools.
- d) Promote linkage of handlooms-based textile industry with the global market.

Answer: A

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Explanation

- **National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC)**, on behalf of the Ministry of Minority Affairs organises **HUNAR HAAT exhibitions** under the **USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts / Crafts for Development)** scheme of Ministry.
- HUNAR HAAT provides a platform **to the artisans / crafts-persons from the Minority communities** for marketing their products. **NMDFC is intending to create a data-bank of crafts**, artisans / crafts-persons belonging to the notified Minority communities
- “Hunar Haat” has become a **“Mega Mission” of indigenous Craft, Cuisine & Culture** and economic empowerment of master artisans, craftsmen
- The success of “Hunar Haat” can be gauged from the fact that about **3 lakh needy master artisans**, craftsmen & culinary experts have **been provided employment** through “Hunar Haat” in the last about 3 years. These beneficiaries include a **large number of women artisans**.

USTTAD

- USTTAD scheme aims **to preserve heritage of traditional arts and crafts of minority communities** and build capacity of traditional crafts persons and artisans and **establish linkages of traditional skills** with the global market
- It aims to **provide training and upgrade skills of craft persons** belonging to the minority communities thereby preserving traditional ancestral arts/crafts being practiced by them.