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MCQ 07.12.2020 TO 12.12.2020

1. With reference to Bodo tribe in India, consider the following statements:

1. They are the single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam.
2. Bodoland Territorial Council is an autonomous body under the Sixth 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

Answer: C

Explanation:

- Bodos are the single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**
- Part of the larger umbrella of Bodo-Kachari, the Bodos constitute about 5-6% of Assam's population.
- Bodoland Territorial Council is an autonomous body under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Hence **statement 2 is correct.**
- There have been two Bodo Accords earlier, and the second one led to the formation of BTC.
- The ABSUled movement from 1987 culminated in a 1993 Bodo Accord, which paved the way for a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), but ABSU withdrew its agreement and renewed its demand for a separate state.
- In 2003, the second Bodo Accord was signed by the extremist group Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), the Centre and the state. This led to the BTC.
- The area under the jurisdiction of BTC, formed under the 2003 Accord, was called the Bodo Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD). Recently, BTAD was renamed Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). BTAD comprises Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts, accounting

for 11% of Assam's area and 10% of its population. BTAD comprises Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri districts, accounting for 11% of Assam's area and 10% of its population

Why in the news?

Voting begins for the 1st phase of Bodoland Territorial Council polls in Assam.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-takeaways-from-bodo-accord-6240082/>

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Voting-begins-for-1st-phase-of-Bodoland-Territorial-Council-polls-in-Assam&id=405640>

2. Consider the following statements with reference to Geographical indication (GI) tag

1. A GI tag conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.

2. Himachal Pradesh has the highest number of GI tagged products.

Which of the above given statements 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:** A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. Typically, such a name **conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin** in that defined geographical locality, region or country
- A geographical indication tag is used for an **agricultural, natural or a manufactured product** (handicraft and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

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- According to experts, the tag gives **protection to the producer of those genuine products** which command premium pricing in domestic as well as international markets. GI registration gives to the registered proprietor and its authorized users, the **legal right to the exclusive use of the GI** and also the right to obtain relief in case of its infringement.
- GI tag is valid for a **period of 10 years** following which it can be renewed. The **first product** to get a GI tag in India was the **Darjeeling Tea** in 2004.
- In India, GI is given under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**. The Act is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs & TradeMarks, GI (CGPDTM-India) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The **highest number of Geographical Indication (GI) tagged goods/products in the country are from Karnataka**, with 42 products of the state getting the tag. Among the 42 items, **18 are from Mysuru**, like Mysore betel leaf, Mysore Jasmine, Mysore paintings, Mysore Sandal Soap etc

Why in the news?

Himachal Pradesh seeks GI Tag for five products originating from the state.

What is special about these five products from Himachal?

Karsog Kulth: Kulthi or Kulth (horse gram) is a legume grown as a kharif crop in Himachal Pradesh. Kulth grown in the Karsog area of Mandi district is believed to be particularly rich in amino acids.

Pangi ki Thangi: It is a type of hazelnut which grows in Pangi valley located in the northwestern edge of Himachal. It is known for its unique flavour and sweetness.

Chamba metal crafts: These include items such as metal idols and brass utensils which, historically, were made by skilled artisans in the courts of kings of Chamba. There are efforts to revive the trade, and a plate made from a brass-like alloy and having carvings of gods and goddesses is still popular.

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Chamba Chukh: It's a chutney made from green and red chillies grown in Chamba, and prepared in traditional and unique ways. The practice has largely declined in rural households of Chamba, but survives to some extent at the small-scale industrial level.

Bharmouri Rajmah: It's more specifically called the Kugtaluh Rajmah, since it grows in the area around Kugti Pass in the Bharmour region of Chamba district. It is rich in proteins and has a unique flavour.

How many registered GIs does Himachal currently have?

Eight. These include four handicrafts (Kullu Shawl, Chamba Rumal, Kinnauri Shawl and Kangra Paintings), three agricultural products (Kangra Tea, Basmati and Himachali Kala Zeera) and one manufactured product (Himachali Chulli Oil).

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/himachal-pradesh-wants-gi-status-for-five-products-here-is-why-7093919/>

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is the first regulatory body set up by the Government of India.
2. One of the tasks of PNGRB is to ensure competitive markets for gas.
3. Appeals against the decisions of PNGRB go before the Appellate Tribunals for Electricity.

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was established under 'The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006' to

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protect the interests of consumers and organisations engaged in petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas sector. **It is not the first regulatory body.**

- The Act provide for the establishment of Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board to **protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas** and to promote competitive markets and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- **Statement 2 and 3 are correct.** The **Board works to foster fair trade and competition amongst the entities.** The **appeals against the decisions of the Board** go before the **Appellate Tribunal established under section 110 of the Electricity Act, 2003.**

Why in the news?

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has notified a new tariff structure for 14 natural gas pipelines.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-petroleum-boards-new-unified-tariff-structure-its-impact-and-challenges-in-implementation-7093848/>

4. Consider the following about Hayabusa 2:

1. It is a comet found by chinese space agency named after the God of War.
2. It is named so because of its resemblance to the mythological character.

Which of the above statements is/are Incorrect?

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

Answer: C

Explanation

Both the statements are incorrect.

- Hayabusa 2 is an asteroid sample-return mission operated by the Japanese space agency, JAXA.

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- It is in the process of surveying the asteroid for a year and a half . It will return to Earth in December 2020.
- Hayabusa2 carries multiple science payloads for remote sensing, sampling, and four small rovers that will investigate the asteroid surface
- The Hayabusa2 is scheduled to position an 'impactor' that will explode above the asteroid, shooting a two-kilo copper object to make it blast into a small crater on the surface. The probe will then collect samples from the artificial crater using an extended arm.
- The collected material could help answer many fundamental questions about life and the universe, including whether elements from space helped give rise to life on earth.
- The comet found by Chinese space agency is Hally's comet.
<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-japans-hayabusa2-mission-7092921/>

5. Which of the following is/are the components of the 'Sagarmala' programme?

1. Developing port-proximate industrial clusters and Coastal Economic Zones
2. Optimizing cost and time of cargo movement through multi-modal logistics solutions including domestic waterways
3. Promoting sustainable development of coastal communities through skill development and livelihood generation activities
4. Capacity expansion of existing ports and development of new greenfield ports

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- Presently, **Indian ports handle more than 90 percent of India's total Export-Import (EXIM) trade volume.** However, the current proportion of merchandise trade in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India is only 42 percent, whereas for some developed countries and regions in the world such as Germany and European Union, it is 75 percent and 70 percent respectively.
- Therefore, there is a **great scope to increase the share** of merchandising trade in India's GDP. Therefore **Sagarmala project has been envisioned** to provide ports and the shipping the rightful place in the Indian economy and to enable **port-led development.**

Sagarmala Programme

- The Sagarmala Project intends to **achieve the broad objectives of enhancing the capacity of major and non-major ports** and modernizing them to make them efficient, thereby enabling them to become **drivers of port-led economic development**, optimizing the use of existing and future transport assets and developing new lines/linkages for transport (including roads, rail, inland waterways and coastal routes), **setting up of logistics hubs**, and establishment of industries and manufacturing centres to be served by ports in EXIM and domestic trade.
- It should provide a platform for central, state governments and local authorities to work in tandem and coordination under the established principles of "**cooperative federalism**", in order to **achieve the objectives of the Sagarmala Project** and ensure port-led development.

Vision of the Sagarmala Programme is to **reduce logistics cost for EXIM** and domestic trade with **minimal infrastructure investment.** This includes

- **Reducing cost** of transporting domestic cargo through **optimizing modal mix**
- Lowering logistics cost of bulk commodities by locating **future industrial capacities** near the coast
- **Improving export competitiveness** by developing port proximate discrete manufacturing clusters

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- Optimizing time/cost of EXIM container movement

Components of Sagarmala Programme are

- **Statement 4 is correct - Port Modernization & New Port Development:** De-bottlenecking and **capacity expansion of existing ports** and development of new greenfield ports
- **Statement 2 is correct - Port Connectivity Enhancement:** Enhancing the connectivity of the ports to the hinterland, optimizing cost and time of cargo movement through **multi-modal logistics solutions** including domestic waterways (inland water transport and coastal shipping)
- **Statement 1 is correct - Port-linked Industrialization:** Developing **port-proximate industrial clusters** and **Coastal Economic Zones** to reduce logistics cost and time of EXIM and domestic cargo
- **Statement 3 is correct - Coastal Community Development:** Promoting sustainable development of coastal communities through **skill development & livelihood generation activities**, fisheries development, coastal tourism etc.
- **Coastal Shipping & Inland Waterways Transport:** Impetus to **move cargo through the sustainable and environment-friendly** coastal and inland waterways mode

<http://sagarmala.gov.in/about-sagarmala/vision-objectives>

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=117691>

6. Consider the following statements with respect to organic farming

1. Usage of organic manure and natural pesticides instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
2. Genetic modification is done to increase the yield of the crop
3. It aims to protect the long term fertility of soil by encouraging soil biological activity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

d) 1, 2 and 3.

Ans : B

Explanation

- Organic farming is a **method of farming system** which primarily aimed at cultivating the land and raising crops in such a way, as **to keep the soil alive and in good health** by use of organic wastes (crop, animal and farm wastes, aquatic wastes) and other biological materials along with **beneficial microbes (biofertilizers)** to release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco friendly pollution free environment.
- **Statement 1 is correct** : In this type of farming, **organic manure and natural pesticides are used instead of chemicals.**
- **statement 2 Is incorrect** : **No genetic modification is done** to increase the yield of the crop.

BENEFITS

- **Statement 3 Is correct** : Protecting the **long term fertility of soils by maintaining organic matter levels, encouraging soil biological activity,** and careful mechanical intervention
- Nitrogen self-sufficiency through the **use of legumes and biological nitrogen fixation,** as well as effective **recycling of organic materials** including crop residues and livestock manures
- Weed, disease and pest control **relying primarily on crop rotations, natural predators, diversity, organic manuring, resistant varieties** and limited (preferably minimal) thermal, biological and chemical intervention
- The **extensive management of livestock,** paying full regard to their evolutionary adaptations, behavioural needs and animal welfare issues with respect to nutrition, housing, health, breeding and rearing

Why in the news?

With the entire Lakshadweep group of islands being declared an organic agricultural area, the island administration is eyeing an expansion of the traditional business in coconuts and coconut products.

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http://agritech.tnau.ac.in/org_farm/orgfarm_introduction.html

7. Consider the following statements with respect to World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

1. It is a specialised agency of the United Nations.
2. It was initiated to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against drugs in sports.
3. Recently, WADA banned Russia from major international sporting events for four years, on charges of tampering with doping-related reports.

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:

WADA – World Antidoping Agency

- Established in **1999** as an **international independent agency**
- Its key activities include **scientific research, education, development of anti-doping capacities, and monitoring of the World Anti-Doping Code (Code)** – the document harmonizing anti-doping policies in all sports and all countries.
- The **38-member Foundation Board** is **WADA's supreme decision-making body**.
- It is composed equally of representatives from the **Olympic Movement** and **Governments**.
- The **Foundation Board delegates day-to-day running of the Agency** to the **Executive Committee, WADA's ultimate policy-making body**.
- The **12-member Executive Committee** is also composed **equally of representatives from the Olympic Movement and Governments**
- **WADA's Presidency** – a volunteer position – **alternates between the Olympic Movement and Governments**.

CAS

- CAS is an institution **independent of any sports organization**, which provides for services to facilitate the **settlement of sport-related disputes**, through arbitration or mediation.
- **WADA has a right of appeal to CAS** for doping cases under the jurisdiction of organizations that have implemented the Code.
- It is **located at Lausanne, Switzerland. Generally**, an arbitration is expected to take **six to 12 months**, which means that regardless of whether an appeal is filed, Russia will not be present at the Winter Youth Olympic Games that starts in Lausanne, Switzerland from January 9, 2020.

India:

- In India, WADA rules have been enforced by the Government-run **National Anti-Doping Agency**.
- It is mandated to conduct in-competition and out-of-competition tests on the athletes in its registered testing pool.

Why in the news?

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports reiterated that India will provide all support to the World AntiDoping Agency to ensure integrity of sport in a webinar held recently on Anti-Doping and Sports Science.

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1678848>

8. Consider the following pairs

Economic Integration - Meaning

1. Free Trade Area - Common external tariffs
2. Common Market - Factors of production are mobile among members
3. Economic Union - Integration of monetary and fiscal policies

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

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- Economic integration is an **arrangement among nations** that typically includes the **reduction or elimination of trade barriers** and the coordination of monetary and fiscal policies. Economic integration aims to reduce costs for both consumers and producers and to **increase trade between the countries involved in the agreement**.
- Economic integration takes the form of Free Trade Area, Customs Union, Common Market and Economic Union.
- A **free trade area** is the region encompassing a **trade bloc** whose member countries have signed a **free-trade agreement (FTA)**. Such agreements involve cooperation between at least two countries to **reduce/abolish trade barriers**. **Example:** The South Asian Free Trade Area (**SAFTA**)
- A **customs union** is defined as a type of trade block which is composed of a **free trade area with no tariffs among members** (zero tariffs among members) with a **common external tariff**.
- A **common market** has the same features as a customs union but in addition, **factors of production (labour, capital and technology) are mobile among members**. Restrictions on immigration and cross-border investment are abolished. **Example:** European Common Market (ECM)
- An **economic union** is the last step in an economic integration process. In addition to free movement of goods, services and production factors, it also **requires integration of economic policies, both monetary and fiscal**. Under an economic union, members harmonize monetary policies, taxation and government spending. **Example:** European Union

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9. Forest Fires pose a threat not only to the forest wealth but also to the entire regime to fauna and flora seriously disturbing the bio-diversity and the ecology and environment. Considering this, which of the following reasons could be the causes for Forest Fires?

1. Lightning
2. Low Atmospheric pressure
3. High Humidity
4. Jhum Cultivation
5. Swaying Bamboos

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: C

Explanation:

The most common hazard in forests is forest fire. Forests fires are as old as the forests themselves. They pose a threat not only to the forest wealth but also to the entire regime to fauna and flora seriously disturbing the biodiversity, ecology and environment of a region. Forest fire causes imbalances in nature and endangers biodiversity by reducing faunal and floral wealth.

Causes of Forest Fire

Forest fires are caused by Natural causes as well as Man made causes

- **Natural causes-** Many forest fires start from natural causes such as lightning which set trees on fire. However, rain extinguishes such fires without causing much damage. **High atmospheric temperatures and dryness (low humidity) offer favorable circumstances for a fire to start.**

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- **Man made causes-** Fire is caused when a source of fire like naked flame, cigarette or bidi, electric spark or any source of ignition comes into contact with inflammable material.

Causes of forest fires can be divided into two broad categories: environmental (which are beyond control) and human related (which are controllable).

Environmental causes are largely related to climatic conditions such as temperature, wind speed and direction, level of moisture in soil and atmosphere and duration of dry spells. Other natural causes are the **friction of bamboos swaying due to high wind velocity** and rolling stones that result in sparks setting off fires in highly inflammable leaf litter on the forest floor.

Human related causes result from human activity as well as methods of forest management. These can be intentional or unintentional, for example:

- graziers and gatherers of various forest products starting small fires to obtain good grazing grass as well as to facilitate gathering of minor forest produce like flowers of *Madhuca indica* and leaves of *Diospyros melanoxylon*
- **the centuries old practice of shifting cultivation (especially in the North-Eastern region of India and in parts of the States of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh).**
- the use of fires by villagers to ward off wild animals
- fires lit intentionally by people living around forests for recreation
- fires started accidentally by careless visitors to forests who discard cigarette butts.

Why in the news?

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) estimated that more than 60,000 koalas were killed, injured or displaced in Australian bushfires last summer.

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/australias-black-summer-bushfires-harmed-more-than-60000-koalas-wwf/article33268123.ece>

10. Which of the following is/are objectives of One District One Product Scheme?

- 1) Preservation and development of local crafts
- 2) Increase in the incomes and local employment

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- 3) Transforming the products in an artistic way
- 4) To connect the production with tourism
- 5) To resolve the issues of economic difference and regional imbalance.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The **Government of Uttar Pradesh** has initiated “One District, One Product” Scheme to **encourage indigenous and specialized products and crafts of the state.**
- The scheme aims to capitalize the rich heritage of Uttar Pradesh by reviving them through **modernization and publicisation** to enhance the reach of these products
- ODOP is aimed at giving a **major push to traditional industries** synonymous with the respective districts of the state.

The main objectives of the One District One Product Programme of Uttar Pradesh are as follows:

- **Preservation and development of local crafts / skills** and promotion of the art.
- **Increase in the incomes and local employment** (resulting in decline in migration for employment).
- Improvement in product quality and skill development.
- **Transforming the products in an artistic way** (through packaging, branding).
- **To connect the production with tourism** (Live demo and sales outlet – gifts and souvenir).
- To resolve the issues of economic difference and regional imbalance.
- To take the concept of ODOP to national and international level after successful implementation at State level.

11. Consider the following statements about United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- 1) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is a permanent intergovernmental body established to promote development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- 2) The World Investment Report is released by UNCTAD.

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 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 to promote development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.
- UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body headquartered at Geneva in Switzerland. Some of the reports published by it are:
 - Trade and Development Report
 - World Investment Report
 - The Least Developed Countries Report

Hence both the statements are correct.

Why in the news?

The Union Home Minister has greeted Invest India for winning the UNCTAD's 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.

12. The main objective of the 'one nation, one ration card' initiative is

- A. Implement recommendations of the Shantha kumar committee
- B. Moving towards universal public distribution system
- C. National portability in distribution of foodgrain to beneficiaries
- D. Linking fair price shops with the e-NAM portal

Answer: C

Explanation:

- The central government is working on a plan to launch a "One Nation One Ration Card" scheme for beneficiaries, especially migrant workers, to access the Public Distribution System from any PDS shop across the country.
- The scheme is aimed at providing freedom to beneficiaries, as they will not be tied to one PDS shop, reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail corruption.
- The biggest beneficiaries will be migrant workers who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.
- The ration shops/ fair price shops must use point of sale (PoS) machines which allows the one nation, one ration card scheme.
- There will also be creation of a Central Repository of all Ration Cards to help national level deduplication.

Present status:

- **Integrated Management of PDS (IMPDS)** is a system that is already operational in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura wherein a beneficiary can avail his share of food grain from any district in the State.

Why in the news?

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A total of nine states have completed the implementation process of One Nation One Ration Card System. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh have successfully completed the reforms in PDS.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Nine-states-complete-implementation-for-One-Nation-one-Ration-Card-System&id=405780>

13. Which among the following countries are members of SAARC but not of BIMSTEC?

- a) Thailand and Myanmar
- b) Pakistan and Maldives
- c) Nepal and Bhutan
- d) Bhutan and Bangladesh

Answer: B

Explanation:

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a **regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union consists of 8 member states-- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.**
<http://saarc-sec.org/about-saarc>
- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka**, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.

https://bimstec.org/?page_id=189

Why in the news?

SAARC can only be fully effective in the absence of “terror and violence”, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a message to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on its 36th Charter Day anniversary.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/saarc-potential-cant-be-realised-until-terror-ends-pm-modi/article33281688.ece>

14. SAFTA, sometimes in news is related to ;

- a.SASEC
- b.SAARC
- c.ASEAN
- d.BIMSTEC

Answer:B

Explanation:

The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is the free trade arrangement of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The agreement came into place in 2006, succeeding the 1993 SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement. SAFTA signatory countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The **basic principles** underlying SAFTA are as under;

- 1.overall reciprocity and mutuality of advantages so as to benefit equitably all Contracting States, taking into account their respective level of economic and industrial development, the pattern of their external trade, and trade and tariff policies and systems;
- 2.negotiation of tariff reform step by step, improved and extended in successive stages through periodic reviews;
- 3.recognition of the special needs of the Least Developed Contracting States and agreement on concrete preferential measures in their favour;
- 4.inclusion of all products, manufactures and commodities in their raw, semi-processed and processed forms

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15. Which are all the countries that share a border with the United Arab Emirates ?

- (1) Qatar
- (2) Bahrain
- (3) Saudi Arabia
- (4) Oman

Select the correct answer from the options given below

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

Answer : C

Explanation



16. With reference to Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), consider the following statements.

1. An exchange-traded fund is a basket of securities that trade on an exchange
2. The Government of India uses ETF to disinvest its holdings in public sector companies
3. Bharat-22 is an ETF launched by the government, which includes both public and private sector companies
4. Bharat-22 is managed by the RBI

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- An exchange-traded fund (ETF) is a basket of securities that trade on an exchange. ETFs can contain all types of investments including stocks, commodities, or bonds. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- ETFs are in many ways similar to mutual funds; however, they are listed on exchanges and ETF shares trade throughout the day just like ordinary stock.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Government of India uses ETF to disinvest its holdings in public sector companies. According to the Department of Investment & Public Asset Management (DIPAM), the total subscription received by the Centre from various ETFs launched so far stands at Rs 1.87 lakh crores.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Bharat 22 is an open-ended Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) which allows investors to invest in a basket of government-owned and private sector entities. Bharat 22 ETF invests in the 22 companies that comprise the S&P BSE Bharat 22 index—19 companies are in the public sector and three in the private sector.
- **Statement 4 is incorrect:** Bharat 22 is managed by ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company.

Why in the news?

After seven straight months of net inflows, gold exchange traded funds witnessed a pull-out of ₹141 crore in November primarily on the back of profit-booking by investors.

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=173505>

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/gold-etfs-clock-141-cr-outflow-in-nov/article33292543.ece>

17. The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is associated with which of the following?

- a) Regional connectivity scheme for airlines
- b) Transport and Logistics
- c) Skill oriented education
- d) Telecommunication

Answer: D

Explanation

- Established in 2002, the USOF is headed by the USOF Administrator who reports to the Secretary, **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)**
- The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003 gave statutory status to the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)
- The USOF's main aim is to **provide universal telecom services** and ensure that even the unconnected areas in the country reap the benefits of inclusive development.

Functions:

- To provide widespread and non-discriminatory access to quality ICT services at affordable prices to people in rural and remote areas.
- To provide an effective and powerful linkage to the hinterland thereby mainstreaming the population of rural and remote parts of the country.

Working:

- The funds come from **Universal Service Levy (USL)**

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- The USL is charged from all the telecom operators on their **Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)**
- These are then deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India, and prior parliamentary approval is required for dispatching.

Why in the news?

Cabinet approves Universal Service Obligation Fund Scheme for providing Mobile Coverage in Arunachal Pradesh and two Districts of Assam under the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for North Eastern Region

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1679338>

<http://usof.gov.in/usof-cms/usof-function.jsp>

18. The main objective of the PM SVANidhi Scheme is

- Aid, assist and advice farmers on how to improve their farming techniques and raise their incomes.
- Providing affordable loans to street vendors.
- Providing health insurance to COVID-19 frontline workers.
- Implementing Direct Benefit Transfer for procurement of food grains by the Food Corporation of India.

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- The Central government launched the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme on 1 June 2020 for providing affordable loans to street vendors.
- The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments within a year. The loans would be without collateral.
- The main objective of the scheme is to ensure that daily wage earners like vegetable sellers, fruit sellers, earn their livelihood. This short term assistance of Rs. 10,000 will enable small street vendors to restart their work which is badly hit due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) lock-down. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/swiggy-to-onboard-nearly-30-000-street-food-vendors-under-pm-svanidhi-scheme/story-Fub8wGCozsA4WNa2NpvTgP.html>

19. Which of the following are classified as “Minor Forest Produce” in the country?

1. Bamboo
2. Timber
3. Wild fruits

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: C

Explanation:

- Minor Forest Produce means **all non-timber forest produce** of plant origin and will include **bamboo**, canes, fodder, leaves, gums, waxes, dyes, resins and many forms of food including nuts, **wild fruits**, Honey, Lac, Tusser etc.
- MFP is a major source of livelihood for tribals living in forest areas. Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/chhattisgarh-govt-to-procure-52-forest-produce-items/story-3j1u288l7ED4pAr5bG36hI.html>

20. According to the RBI's guidelines, a 'wilful defaulter' is

- A. An individual who has committed some specified offences and has absconded from India
- B. A borrower whose principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days
- C. A borrower whose principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 270 days
- D. An individual who defaulted in meeting his repayment obligations to the lender despite having the capacity to do so

Answer: D

Explanation:

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- According to RBI guidelines, a wilful default is deemed to have occurred if the borrower has defaulted in meeting his payment / repayment obligations to the lender even when he has the capacity to honour the said obligations.
- Option A is related to **fugitive economic offenders**.
- A fugitive economic offender is an individual who has committed some specified offence(s) involving an amount of one hundred crore rupees or more and has absconded from India or refused to come back to India to avoid or face criminal prosecution in India.
- Option B is the criteria used in classification of a **non performing asset (NPA)**.
<https://www.livemint.com/videos/rbi-names-30-major-willful-defaulters-transparency-or-public-shaming-11574333410687.html>

21. Consider the following statements about NEFT and RTGS

- 1) There is no limit on minimum and maximum amount of transaction that can be done through NEFT and RTGS
- 2) NEFT is available all around the clock without any time limit.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT):

- NEFT is a **nation-wide payment system facilitating one-to-one funds transfer**.
- Under this Scheme, individuals, firms and corporates can electronically transfer funds from any bank branch to any individual, firm or corporate having an account with any other bank branch in the country participating in the Scheme.

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- NEFT is a payment system facilitating funds transfers from one bank account to another. One can access this service either by using **Internet banking or by visiting the bank branch.** (Not all bank branches are enabled with this service.)
- Once you initiate the transfer, the money reaches the beneficiary account within hours. **There is no limit on the minimum or maximum amount you can transfer, however, individual banks may put restrictions on the per transaction.**
- The bank account in which money has to be transferred will receive the money within **two hours.**
- Earlier, NEFT payment system operated for customers from 8:00AM to 7:00 PM on all working days except on 2nd and 4th Saturday as banks remain close on that day.
- Recently, NEFT has **allowed the bank customers to transfer the money all around the clock. Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)

- This is a facility used for transferring high value amounts. In real time gross settlement (RTGS), the **minimum amount that can be currently transferred is Rs 2 lakh whereas under NEFT there is no limit on the minimum or maximum amount for transfer, however, individual banks may put restrictions on the per transaction. Hence statement 1 is Incorrect.**
- The funds can be **transferred using RTGS on any working day between Monday and Saturday** either via internet banking or bank branch.

Why in the news?

The Reserve Bank has announced that the Real Time Gross Settlement System or the RTGS facility will now be available for round the clock transactions, with effect from 14th December.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/personal-finance-news/rbi-removes-neft-rtgs-payment-charges-to-push-digital-transactions/articleshow/69672695.cms?from=mdr>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/save/transfer-money-via-neft-24x7-from-today-from-jan-1-it-will-be-free-of-cost-heres-all-you-need-to-know/articleshow/72742169.cms>

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=RTGS-to-be-available-24x7-from-December-14%2c-says-RBI&id=405896>

22. Consider the following statements regarding Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

1. The GCC is India's largest regional-bloc trading partner.
2. All the countries which are the members of the GCC are also the members of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Which of the following statements 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 GCC is India's **largest regional-bloc trading partner**, which accounted for \$104 billion of trade in 2017-18, nearly a 7 per cent increase from \$97 billion the previous year. This is higher than both India-ASEAN trade (\$81 billion) and India-EU trade (\$102 billion) in 2017-18.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Although the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a full Member of the FATF, the **individual Member countries of the GCC (of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) are not.** As an FATF Member, the GCC is committed to implementing the anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist

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financing (CFT) measures agreed to by the FATF Members - in particular, the FATF Recommendations.

What is FATF?

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions.
- The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- The FATF is therefore a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.

Why in the news?

Ministry of External Affairs is about to hold panel discussions on Gulf Cooperation Council-India in run up to Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention.

Source:

<https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2018/08/india-gulf-strategic-partnerships>

<http://gcc-sg.org/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=MEA-to-hold-panel-discussions-on-Gulf-Cooperation-Council-India-in-run-up-to-Pravasi-Bharati-Divas-Convention&id=405891>

23. Which of the following is not a member of Gulf Cooperation Council(GCC)?

- United Arab Emirates
- Saudi Arabia
- Oman
- Iran

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** is a political and economic union of Arab states bordering the Gulf.

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- It was established in 1981 and its 6 members are the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.



24. Which of the following are the producers of Aerosols?

1. Automobiles
2. Smelters
3. Power plants

Select the correct answer using the codes given:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Aerosols are minute suspended in the atmosphere. When these particles are sufficiently large, we notice their presence as they scatter and absorb sunlight. Their scattering of sunlight can reduce visibility (haze) and redden sunrises and sunsets.

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- Aerosols are short-lived, unlike greenhouse gases that persist and accumulate in the atmosphere for a longer period.
- Automobiles, incinerators, smelters, and power plants are prolific producers of sulfates, nitrates, black carbon, and other particles.

Why in the news?

- Scientists have found that aerosols like black carbon and dust, which make the Indo-Gangetic Plain one of the most polluted regions of the world, have led to increased incidents of high rainfall events in the foothills of the Himalayan region.

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/aerosols-in-indo-gangetic-plain-have-led-to-increase-in-high-rainfall-in-himalayan-foothills-study-3166034.html>

25. Which of the following statements about Asian Development Bank is incorrect?

- a) It is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.
- b) India is a founding member of the ADB.
- c) ADB is an official United Nations Observer.
- d) The two largest shareholders of the ADB are US and India.

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank. It is dedicated to reducing poverty in **Asia and the Pacific** through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.
- ADB assists its members, and partners, by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.
- ADB maximizes the development impact of its **assistance by facilitating policy dialogues**, providing advisory services, and mobilizing financial resources through cofinancing operations that tap official, commercial, and export credit sources.

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- India is a founding member of the ADB and is **currently the fourth largest shareholder** and the **largest borrower of the ADB**.
- It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.
- At present, ADB comprises 68 members (including India)- of which 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- The two largest shareholders of the ADB are Japan and the US .
- ADB is an official United Nations Observer.

Why in the news?

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) upgraded its forecast for the Indian economy, projecting 8% contraction in 2020-21 as compared to 9% estimated earlier.

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/adb-narrows-indias-fy21-gdp-contraction-projection-to-8/article33302178.ece>

26. Consider the following statements regarding Khelo India Programme

1. The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level.
2. Promotion of Sports among the disabled is one of its objectives.
3. Annual financial assistance of 15 lakh per annum for the first 18 years of the age of players is given.

Which of the above statements is /are correct?

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

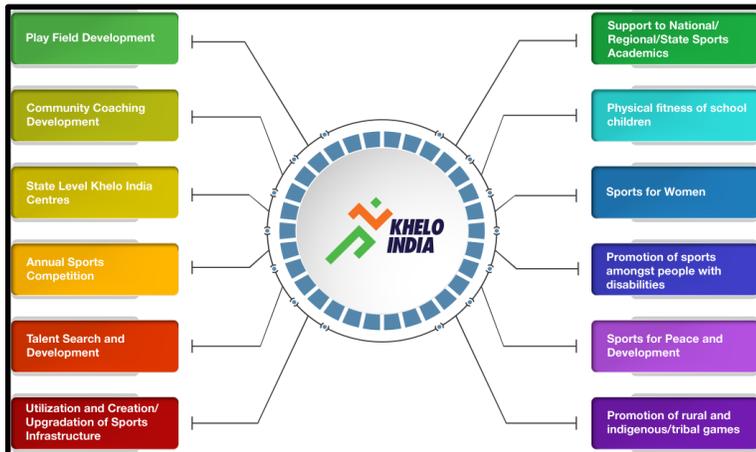
Answer: A

Explanation: Statements 1 and 2 are correct. The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country and establish India as a great sporting nation.

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Its objectives are :



Statement 3 is incorrect.

Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by the High-Powered Committee will be provided **annual financial assistance of INR 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.**

Why in the news?

Addressing the 10th Global Sports Summit, organized by FICCI, Union Sports Minister said that the government is committed to start 1000 Khelo India small centres across the country that will help retired sports persons get employment or some role in shaping the sports culture of the country

Source:

<https://kheloindia.gov.in/about>

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=190865>

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Govt-to-start-1000-Khelo-India-small-centres-to-encourage-sports-culture-in-country&id=405769>

27. World malaria report is published by

- (a) World bank
- (b) World health organisation
- (c) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

(d) Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

Answer : B

Explanation:

About Malaria

- Malaria is caused by **Plasmodium parasites**.
- The parasites are spread to people through the bites of infected **female Anopheles mosquitoes**, called "malaria vectors",
- There are five kinds of malarial parasites — Plasmodium falciparum, Plasmodium vivax (the commonest ones), Plasmodium malariae, Plasmodium ovale and Plasmodium knowlesi.
- The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has released the **World Malaria Report, 2020**.

About the report

- The report provides a **comprehensive update** on global and regional malaria data and trends including prevention, diagnosis, treatment, elimination and surveillance.
- It gives the estimated cases for malaria across the world, based on mathematical projections.

Key highlights of World Malaria Report 2020:

National analysis

- India continues to make Impressive Gains in reduction of Malaria Burden
- India is the **only high endemic country** which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 over 2018
- India has **sustained Annual Parasitic Incidence (API)** of less than one since 2012
- The Annual Parasitic Incidence (API) reduced by 27.6% in 2018 compared to 2017 and by 18.4% in 2019 as compared to 2018.
- India has also **contributed to the largest drop** in cases region-wide, from approximately 20 million to about 6 million.
- India achieved a reduction of 83.34% in malaria morbidity and 92% in malaria mortality between the year 2000 and 2019 thereby **achieving Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals** (50-75% decrease in case incidence between 2000 and 2019).

Regional analysis

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- Malaria has been made notifiable in 31 states/UTs and decline has been observed in the hitherto **high endemic states** like Odisha, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Steps taken by government to eliminate malaria

- Malaria Elimination efforts were initiated in the country in 2015 and were intensified after the launch of **National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME)** in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2017-22)** was launched by the Health Ministry in July, 2017 which laid down strategies for the next five years.
- Efforts were made by the Government of India in provision of **microscopes, rapid diagnostics Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs)**.
- They are being supplied/distributed to **high burden areas** leading to reduction in endemicity in these otherwise very high endemic states.

Steps taken at global level

- WHO has initiated the **High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) initiative** in 11 high malaria burden countries, including India to enhance response to malaria in those countries.

Why in the news?

A not very common type of malaria, Plasmodium ovale, has been identified in a jawan in Kerala.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-plasmodium-ovale-other-types-of-malaria-7101500/>

28. Consider the following statements with respect to the Convention on international trade in Endangered species of Wild fauna and flora (CITES)

1. It is legally binding on the States that have joined it, though this Convention does not take the place of national laws
2. It aims to conserve only those species which are declared 'endangered' under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list.

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

- The **international wildlife trade** is diverse, ranging from **live animals and plants to a vast array of wildlife products** derived from them, including food products, exotic leather goods, wooden musical instruments, timber and medicines
- Human activities in **several parts of the world have disturbed the natural habitats** of many species. Due to **indiscriminate killings**, several birds and animals have either become extinct or are on the verge of extinction
- Due to this, an **international convention CITES has been established** that lists several species of animals and birds in which trade is prohibited. Today, it accords varying degrees of protection to more than 37,000 species of animals and plants
- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an **international agreement between governments**.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Although CITES is **legally binding** on the Parties (in other words they have to implement the Convention), it **does not take the place of national laws**. Rather it provides a **framework to be respected by each Party**, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It aims to ensure that **international trade** in specimens of wild animals and plants **does not threaten their survival**.
- It **does not aim to conserve only those species which are declared 'endangered'** under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list
- Rather it has **listed species in three CITES Appendices**. The species are grouped in the Appendices **according to the level of threat faced by them** due to international trade

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- Roughly **5,000 species of animals and 28,000 species of plants are protected**. Bears, dolphins, cacti, corals and orchids are some examples.

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has come out with an advisory on a one-time voluntary disclosure scheme that allows owners of exotic live species that have been acquired illegally, or without documents, to declare their stock to the government between June and December 2020.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/declare-exotic-pets-avoid-prosecution-how-one-time-scheme-works-7101504/>

29. Consider the following statements about the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

1. ASI functions under the Ministry of Culture.
2. ASI declares ancient monuments which are of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which have been in existence for not less than 1000 years as Monuments of national importance.

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 Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.

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- Besides, it regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. It also regulates the Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, an "Ancient Monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for **not less than 100 years.**"

Why in the news?

Ammakulam at Keezhraivanthavadi village in Tiruvannamalai district and an elephant statue at Azhagarmalai village in Ariyalur district are declared as protected sites in Tamilnadu.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/two-tamil-nadu-monuments-declared-protected-sites/article33311004.ece>

<https://www.businessinsider.in/india/news/over-800-asi-monuments-which-have-places-of-worship-will-open-from-june-8/articleshow/76245582.cms>

30. Bonn challenge sometimes seen in the news is related to

- a) international agreement that aims to conserve migratory species
- b) global effort to restore 150 million hectares of the world's degraded and deforested lands by 2020.
- c) international treaty designed to protect human health from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury
- d) aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants

Answer: B

Explanation:

Bonn Challenge:

- The Bonn Challenge is a **global effort to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million by 2030.**

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- The 2020 target was launched at a high level event in Bonn in 2011 organised by the Government of Germany and IUCN, and was later endorsed and **extended to 2030 by the New York declaration on forests of the 2014 UN Climate Summit.**
- To date, 56 governments, private associations and companies have pledged over 168 million hectares to the Challenge.
- The Bonn Challenge is an **implementation vehicle** for national priorities such as **water and food security and rural development while simultaneously helping countries contribute to the achievement of international climate change, biodiversity and land degradation Commitments.**
- For example, multi-country programmes such as **The Restoration Initiative (TRI), supported by the Global Environment Facility and led by IUCN in partnership with UNEP and FAO,** are also catalysing implementation and providing models for collaboration.
- **Option A refers to Bonn Convention**
- **Option C refers to Minamata Convention**
- **Option D refers to Stockholm Convention**

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/forests/our-work/forest-landscape-restoration/bonn-challenge>

