

OFFICERS IAS ACADEMY

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1. E- SANTA Portal recently seen in the news is associated with which of the following?

- a) Aims to create a junction in the form of a platform for all portals and websites of the Department of School Education
- b) A platform for market intelligence for Indian exporters and entrepreneurs on global markets
- c) A web portal by Ministry of Coal for initiating the e-auction process of coal blocks
- d) An electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and buyers.

Answer: D

Explanation

What's in the news?

- Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal has inaugurated e-SANTA portal. It is an electronic marketplace providing a **platform to connect aqua farmers and buyers**.
- The term e-SANTA stands for **Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers' Trade in Aquaculture**.
- National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (NaCSA) is an **extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority** under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

About e-SANTA

- e-SANTA is an end-to-end electronic trade platform between aqua farmers and exporters. The aqua farmers have the freedom to list their produce and quote their price while the exporters have the freedom to list their requirements and also to choose the products based on their requirements such as desired size, location, harvest dates etc.
- This enables the farmers and buyers to have greater control over the trade and enables them to make informed decisions.

Significance

- e-SANTA will raise income, lifestyle, self-reliance, quality levels, traceability, and provide new options for aqua farmers. The platform will change the traditional way of carrying out business from a word of mouth basis to become more formalised & legally binding.
- e-SANTA will act as an alternative marketing tool between farmers & buyers by **eliminating middlemen**. The platform is available in **many languages** which will help the local population.

2. Consider the following statements

- 1) If the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners differ in opinion on any matter, such matters shall be decided according to the opinion of the Chief Election Commissioner.

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- 2) The Constitution has debarred the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

About Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India is an **autonomous constitutional authority** responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
- The body administers elections to the **Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President** in the country.

Powers and Responsibilities

- The Commission's functions and powers with respect to elections are divided into **three categories (Administrative, Advisory, and Quasi-judicial)**. In detail, these powers include
 - Determining the Electoral Constituencies' territorial areas throughout the country.
 - Preparing and periodically revising electoral rolls and registering all eligible voters.
 - Notifying the schedules and dates of elections and scrutinising nomination papers.
 - Granting recognition to the various political parties and allocating them election symbols.
 - The Commission also has advisory jurisdiction in the matter of post-election disqualification of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.
 - It issues the Model Code of Conduct in elections for political parties and candidates so that no one indulges in unfair practice or there is no arbitrary abuse of powers by those in power.

Composition of Election Commission

- Since its inception in 1950, the election commission had been a one-member body with only the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** as its sole member. Later, **two more election commissioners** were appointed to the body and the Election Commission became a multi-member body with 3 election commissioners.

Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners

- The **President** appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners. They have tenure of **six years**, or up to the age of **65 years**, whichever is earlier.
- They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the **Supreme Court of India**.
- According to Article 324 (5), the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed from office **only through impeachment by Parliament**.

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- However, the same constitutional provision is silent about the procedure for removal of the two Election Commissioners. It only provides that they cannot be removed from office **except on the recommendation of the CEC.**
- The Commission transacts its business by holding regular meetings and also by circulation of papers. All Election Commissioners have **equal say in the decision making of the Commission.**
- If the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners differ in opinion on any matter, such matters shall be decided according to the **opinion of the majority.** Hence **statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It should be noted that the **Constitution has not prescribed the qualifications** of the members of the Election Commission.
- Also, the **Constitution has not debarred** the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**

Why in News?

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra to take over as Chief Election Commissioner from Sunil Arora, whose tenure ended on April 12.

3. Which of the following are in Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve?

- a) Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuaries and Silent Valley National Park
- b) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve
- c) Kawal and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuaries and Nagarjunasagar-Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve
- d) Kaundinya, Gundla Brahme-swaram and Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuaries and Mukurthi National Park

Answer: B

Explanation

- The Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve was **established in 2001** and includes 3,500 km² of which 1828 km² is in Kerala and 1672 km² is in Tamil Nadu.
- It straddles the border of **Pathanamthitta, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts in Kerala** and **Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts in Tamil Nadu** at the southern end of the Western Ghats.
- Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve **became part of World Network of Biosphere Reserves** in 2016

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- It is composed of **Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries** and their adjoining areas of Achencoil, Thenmala, Konni, Punalur, Thiruvananthapuram divisions and **Agasthyavanam Special Division in Kerala**.
- It also includes the adjoining **areas of Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve** in Tamil Nadu

4. 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.

5. Consider the following statements regarding the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

- 1) Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world.
- 2) It is often called 'Mini Kaziranga' due to similar landscape and vegetation.

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

- Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in the **flood plains of River Brahmaputra** in the district of Morigaon and about 45 kms from Guwahati, the capital of Assam.
- Pobitora originally was a **grazing reserve for cattle** of erstwhile Nagaon district, came into limelight during the year 1961-62 for sighting of One Horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*). Two such grazing reserves comprising 38.83 square kilometers were **declared as reserve forests in 1971**.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** In 1987, **Pobitora was declared a wildlife sanctuary** covering an area of 16 square kilometers. In Pobitora wildlife sanctuary, there are now around 90 plus rhinos, a ten per cent increase over the last six years. Pobitora has exceeded its rhino-bearing capacity and is overpopulated. The Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary **harbors the world's highest density of one-horned rhinoceros**.
- Besides rhinoceros, the other mammals found are Leopard, Leopard cat, Fishing cat, Jungle cat, Feral Buffalo, Wild pigs, Chinese pangolins etc., Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is an **Important Bird Area** altogether 375 species of both migratory and resident birds of 46 families have been recorded so far
- Pobitora can be divided into three distinct categories: **forest, grassland and water bodies or beels**. Only about 13% of the total area is under tree cover. About 72% of Pobitora consists of wet savannah and the remaining area is covered by water bodies or beels.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The sanctuary is **often called 'Mini Kaziranga'** because of the **similar landscape** and a sizable population of the one-horned rhino.

Why in the news?

- The ambitious Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020) came to a close recently with the release of two rhinos — an adult male and a female — in Assam's Manas National Park transported from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary about 185 km east.