

## MCQ 01.03.2021 TO 31.3.2021

1. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?

### Ethnic communities- Region associated

- 1) Ahmadians - Pakistans
- 2) Kurds - Turkey
- 3) Houthis- Yemen
- 4) Uyghurs- China

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Answer: D**

### Explanation:

#### Ahmadians

- There are an estimated **10 million Ahmadis** around the world, living in more than 200 countries.
- Of this, about **40 lakh live in Pakistan** and 1.5 lakh in India.
- Ahmadis from Pakistan have steadily moved to the West, fleeing persecution, seeking refuge in countries such as the UK, Germany and Canada.

#### Khurds

- Iranian ethnic **group native to a mountainous region of Western Asia** known as Kurdistan, which spans **southeastern Turkey**, northwestern **Iran**, northern **Iraq**, and northern **Syria**.
- About 20 million Kurds, a quarter of Turkey's population live in the underdeveloped south-east. By **subsuming Kurdish sub-national identity**, Turkish nationalism resulted in politico-economic discontent among Kurds.
- It **fuelled a Kurdish insurgency** led by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which Turkey calls a terrorist organisation.

- Although most Kurds have conformed to their respective nationalities, **aspiration for a unified homeland, Kurdistan, remains.**

### 3) Houthis

- The **Houthi** movement, named after the family it is associated with, emerged from **Yemen's** northern province Saada.



- Saudi Arabia backed Yemeni government and Houthis supported by Iran has been locked in an increasingly complex war.

### 4) Uyghurs

- Uyghurs (or Uighurs, Uygurs) are **ethnically and culturally a Turkic people** living in the **areas of Central Asia** commonly known as **East Turkistan**.
- The largest population live in **China's autonomous Xinjiang region**, in the country's north-west.
- Today, Uyghurs practice a moderate form of Islam and lead predominantly secular lives.
- There are an estimated 20 million Uyghurs living in East Turkistan and abroad, though Chinese sources put the number at 11.65 million.
- Under decades of repressive rule, the existence of the Uyghur nation is under threat as the Chinese government continues to carry out deliberate policies opposing centuries-old tradition, culture & religion.

## 2. Consider the following pairs:

Terms.	Definition
1. Recession	fall in growth rate
2. Slow down	fall in GDP

3. Deflation            fall in the rate of inflation over a period of time
4. Disinflation        persistent fall in the general price level of goods and services

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

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2, 3 and 4
- D. None of the above

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- Recession- Drop in the gross domestic product (GDP)
- Slow down- Decline in the growth rate of the GDP
- An economic recession signifies a shrinkage in the GDP for two or more consecutive quarters, while an economic slowdown is when the GDP continues to grow but in a slower rate than the previous period in question. A slowdown is a pointer towards recession and usually precedes one but does not necessarily lead to recession.
- Recession means that the country is producing and earning less than what it did before. Consumers tend to spend less as people lose confidence in the growth of the economy. Less spending means that there's decrease in demand, which, in turn leads to a dip in production. Such events also lead to lay-offs and job loss and mark a spike in unemployment.
- Slowdown, on the other hand, means that production and earnings of the economy is not growing at the same pace as before.
- Deflation- It is a persistent fall in the general price level of goods and services
- Disinflation- It is a fall in the rate of inflation over a period of time

**3. Which of the following statements with respect to Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) is correct?**

- 1) The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.
- 2) India is a founding member of NAM.

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

- a) 1 only

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

Answer: C

### Explanation

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had its origins in the **Bandung Conference** of April 1945 In Indonesia. A key role was played in this process by the then Heads of State and Government, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shri **Jawaharlal Nehru of India**, Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, who later **became the founding fathers of the movement** and its emblematic leaders.
  - **Statement 1 is correct:** Bandung formulated the concept of non-alignment based on the **Third World desire not to become involved in the East-West ideological confrontation** of the Cold War, and to focus instead on national independence struggles, the alleviation of poverty, and economic development.
  - This group of states is **not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc**. These principles were adopted at the founding non-aligned summit in Belgrade in 1961.
  - Whereas NAM started with 25 members in 1961, it has now **expanded to 115 developing member countries** which constitute nearly two-thirds of the United Nations.
  - The **10th NAM Summit in Jakarta** in 1992 adopted the Jakarta Declaration which laid out the future direction and priorities for the Movement.
  - In the past, NAM was purely a political Movement. Now economic cooperation is also given priority. A call was made to further **enhance South-South Cooperation**.
  - Common problems of the South like population, foreign debt and poverty are **identified as priority areas**
4. With reference to the New Space India Limited (NSIL), consider the following statements.
- 1) NSIL is a wholly owned Government of India company, under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS).

- 2) NSIL will gradually replace ISRO in the field of space science research and planetary exploration.
- 3) NSIL will be the nodal agency for carrying out PSLV production through Indian Industry under consortium route.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** New Space India Limited, incorporated in 2019 (under the Companies Act, 2013) is a wholly owned Government of India company, under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS).
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** NSIL is the commercial arm of ISRO with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high technology space related activities.
- It is also responsible for promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** NSIL will be the nodal agency for carrying out PSLV production through Indian Industry under consortium route. The industry consortium will be responsible for producing, assembling and integrating the launch vehicle, by making use of the existing ISRO facilities under the Government-Owned Contractor-Operated (GOCO) model.
- The major business areas of NSIL include:
  - Production of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) through industry;
  - Production and marketing of space-based services, including launch services and space-based applications like transponder leasing, remote sensing and mission support services;
  - Building of Satellites (both Communication and Earth Observation) as per user requirements.



- Transfer of technology developed by ISRO centres/ units and constituent institutions of Dept. of Space;
- Marketing spin off technologies and products/ services emanating out of ISRO activities
- Consultancy services

**5. Which among the following is known as risk-free gilt-edged instruments?**

- a) Government Securities
- b) Masala Bonds
- c) Promissory Notes
- d) Green Bonds

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

- A government security (G-Sec) is a tradable instrument issued by the central government or state governments. It acknowledges the government's debt obligations.
- In India, the central government issues both: treasury bills and bonds or dated securities, while state governments issue only bonds or dated securities, which are called the state development loans.
- Since they are issued by the government, they carry no risk of default, and hence, are called risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

**6. Which of the following is/ are the components of the Accessible India Campaign?**

- 1) Built Environment Accessibility
- 2) Transportation System Accessibility
- 3) Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Ans : D**

## **Explanation**

The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has conceptualised the “Accessible India Campaign (**Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan**)” as a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving **universal accessibility that will enable persons with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunity and live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society**. The campaign targets at enhancing the accessibility of built environment, transport system and Information & communication eco-System.

## **Components of Accessible India Campaign**

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) has the following three important components

- Built Environment Accessibility
- Transportation System Accessibility
- Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility

## **Few of its Objectives involve:**

- Conducting accessibility audit of at least 50 most important government buildings and converting them into fully accessible buildings.
- Enhancing proportion of accessible airports.
- Enhancing the proportion of accessible railway stations
- Enhancing the proportion of accessible Public Transport.
- Enhancing the pool of sign language interpreters
- Enhancing the proportion of daily captioning and sign-language interpretation of public television news programmes.

## **Why in the news?**

- Union Minister for Social justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually launched “Sugamya Bharat App”- a Crowdsourcing Mobile Application is a means for

sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India.

### About the App

- The app provides for five main features, 4 of which are directly related to **enhancing accessibility**, while the fifth is a special feature meant only for Divyangjan for **COVID related issues**.
- The accessibility related features are:
  - the registration of complaints of inaccessibility across the 3 broad pillars of the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyaan;
  - positive feedback of examples and best practices worth emulating being shared by people as jan-bhagidhari;
  - Departmental updates; and guidelines and circulars related to accessibility.
- The Sugamya Bharat App is a simple to use Mobile App with an **easy registration process**, requiring only 3 mandatory fields, namely, Name, Mobile number and Email-id.
- Registered users can raise issues related to accessibility being faced.
- The App has been provided with several **user-friendly features** like easy drop-down menus, videos in Hindi and English, along with sign language interpretation have been added demonstrating the process of registration and uploading complaints with photographs.
- The App is made **accessible for ease of use for persons with disabilities** also with features such as font size adjustment, color contrasting option, text to speech, and having an integrated screen reader in Hindi and English.
- It is available in **10 regional languages**, namely, Hindi, English, Marathi, Tamil, Odiya, Kannada, Telugu, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Malayalam.
- The App also has provision of easy photo uploads with geotagging option of the premise where accessibility intervention is required.
- The App has provision for providing notifications to the users at the time of registration, regular status updates as well as at the time of resolution and closure of the complaint.

<https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/differently-abled-welfare/schemes-programmes/accessible-india-campaign>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1701647>



**7. Which of the following is the purpose of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan?**

- a) To motivate and engage children of the age group of 6-18 years in the study of Science and Maths by Institutions of Higher Education like IIT, IISER & NIT.
- b) To improve the quality of higher education in the country through international collaboration.
- c) To improve the overall quality of state institutions by ensuring conformity to prescribed norms and adopt accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
- d) To provide rural India with professional resource support from Institutes of higher education.

**Answer: C**

Explanation:

- Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan is a holistic scheme of **development for higher education in India.**
- The centrally sponsored scheme aims at **providing strategic funding to higher educational institutions throughout the country.**
- The key objectives of RUSA are to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development of higher education at the state level.
- Creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the existing ones, developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education, professionally managed, and characterized by greater inclination towards research and provide students with education that is relevant to them as well the nation as a whole.
- **Improve the overall quality of state institutions by ensuring conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adopt accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework. Hence Option C is correct.**
- Usher transformative reforms in the state higher education system by creating a facilitative institutional structure for planning and monitoring at the state level, promoting autonomy in State Universities and improving governance in institutions

**Statement A refers to Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan**

- Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan is a unique concept developed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development that aims to inculcate a spirit of inquiry, creativity and love for Science and Mathematics in school children.

**Statement B refers to GIAN**

- GIAN Scheme launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development aims at improving the quality of higher education in the country through international collaboration.
- The objectives of GIAN include:
  - To increase the footfalls of reputed international faculty in the Indian academic institutes.
  - Provide opportunity to our faculty to learn and share knowledge and teaching skills in cutting edge areas.
  - To provide opportunity to our students to seek knowledge and experience from reputed International faculty.

**Statement D refers to Unnat Bharat Abhiyan**

- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is inspired by the vision of transformational change in rural development processes by leveraging knowledge institutions to help build the architecture of an Inclusive India.
- The objectives of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan are broadly two-fold:
  - Building institutional capacity in Institutes of higher education in research & training relevant to the needs of rural India.
  - Provide rural India with professional resource support from institutes of higher education, especially those which have acquired academic excellence in the field of Science, Engineering & Technology and Management.

**8. Consider the following with respect to National Food Security Act, 2013**

- 1) The Act legally entitled only the rural population to receive subsidized food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- 2) According to the Act, Pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals and maternity benefits of not less than Rs 6000.
- 3) It comes under the ambit of the Ministry of Agriculture and farmer's welfare

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Answer: B

### Explanation

- The National Food Security Act, 2013 was notified on 10th September, 2013 with the objective to provide for **food and nutritional security** in human life cycle approach, by ensuring **access to adequate quantity of quality food** at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Act provides for coverage of **upto 75% of the rural population** and **upto 50% of the urban population** for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus **covering about two-thirds of the population**.
- The eligible persons will be **entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains**. The existing Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households, which constitute the poorest of the poor will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Act also has a **special focus on the nutritional support to women** and children. Pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals and maternity benefits of not less than Rs 6000. **It is however restricted to two children only.**
- **Children upto 14 years** of age will be entitled to **nutritious meals** as per the prescribed nutritional standards. In case of **non-supply of entitled foodgrains** or meals, **the beneficiaries will receive food security allowance**. The Act also contains provisions for setting up of **grievance redressal mechanism** at the District and State levels
- The **eldest women of the household** of age 18 years or above will be the **head of the household** for the purpose of issuing ration cards
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** It comes under the ambit of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** ( not under the Ministry of Agriculture and farmer's welfare)

9. Which of the following have received Geographical Indication (GI) tag in India?

1. Kondapalli Toys
2. Channapatna Toys
3. Wooden Dolls of Natungram

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- All the three have a G.I Tag
- Kondapalli Toys are the toys made of wood in Kondapalli village of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh.
- Channapatna toys are a particular form of wooden toys (and dolls) that are manufactured in the town of Channapatna in the Ramanagara district of Karnataka state, India.
- Natungram is the hub of the wooden doll makers also known as Sutradhars(narrator or story teller). Carved out of a single piece of wood, these dolls from ancient folklore and mythology are characterised by their vibrant colour and ethnic style. Both men and women play important roles in the making of these dolls.

**10. With reference to the Flexible Inflation Targeting framework in India, consider the following statements.**

1. The RBI governor, with the aid and advice of his internal team and a technical advisory committee, has complete control over monetary policy decisions
2. Inflation target is to be revised once in five years by the RBI in consultation with Central Government

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: **D**

**Explanation:**

- Inflation targeting is a monetary policy strategy used by Central Banks for maintaining price level at a certain level or within a range.
- In May 2016, the RBI Act, 1934 was amended to provide a statutory basis for the implementation of the flexible inflation targeting framework.
- The amended RBI Act also provides for the inflation target to be set by the **Government of India**, in consultation with the Reserve Bank, once in every five years. **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Accordingly, the RBI targets to contain CPI inflation within 4 percent with a band of (+/-) 2 percent for the period from August 5, 2016 to March 31, 2021.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** In 2016, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was constituted by the government to add transparency to monetary policy decisions. The MPC replaced the existing system where the RBI governor, with the aid and advice of his internal team and a technical advisory committee, had complete control over monetary policy decisions.
- The MPC is entrusted with the task of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate) to contain inflation within the specified target level.
- The MPC has six members
  - o RBI Governor **(Chairperson)**, RBI Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one official nominated by the RBI Board and remaining 3 members would represent the Government.
- The MPC makes decisions based on majority vote. In case of a tie, the RBI governor will have a second or casting vote.

**11. Consider the following pairs**

<b>Volcano</b>		<b>Located in</b>
1. Mauna Loa	-	Italy
2. Anak Krakatau	-	Indonesia
3. White Island Volcano	-	New Zealand

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

a) 3 only



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

**Ans: B**

**Explanation**

- Anak Krakatoa is an island in a caldera in the **Sunda Strait** between the islands of Java and Sumatra in the Indonesian province of Lampung.

**White Volcano**

- White Volcano is an **active stratovolcano** situated 48 km from the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand, in the Bay of Plenty
- The island is **New Zealand's most active cone volcano**, and has been built up by continuous volcanic activity over the past 150,000 years

**Mauna Loa**

- Situated in the appropriately named **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, Mauna Loa is the world's largest volcano. It's outrageously active, chalking up **33 eruptions since 1843** when it had a big blow out.

**12. 'Gadgil Committee Report' and 'Kasturirangan Committee Report', sometimes seen in the news are related to**

- a) Interlinking of rivers
- b) Conservation of Western Ghats
- c) Ganga action plan
- d) Framework for Wetland conservation

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**

**Gadgil Committee**

- It defined the **boundaries of the Western Ghats for the purposes of ecological management**. It proposed that this **entire area be designated as ecologically sensitive area (ESA)**.
- Within this area, smaller regions were to be identified as ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ) I, II or III based on their existing condition and nature of threat.

### **Kasturirangan Committee**

- None of the six concerned states **agreed with the recommendations of the Gadgil Committee**, which submitted its report in August 2011
- In August 2012, then Environment Minister constituted a High-Level **Working Group on Western Ghats under Kasturirangan** to “examine” the **Gadgil Committee report** in a “holistic and multidisciplinary fashion in the light of responses received” from states, central ministries and others.
- The Kasturirangan report seeks to **bring just 37% of the Western Ghats under the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) zones** — down from the 64% suggested by the Gadgil report.

### **Recommendations of Kasturirangan Committee**

- **A ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining.** No new thermal power projects, but hydro power projects allowed with restrictions.
- A ban on **new polluting industries**. Building and construction projects up to 20,000 sq m was to be allowed but townships were to be banned.
- **Forest diversion could be allowed** with extra safeguards.

### **13. Consider the following statements about Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

- 1) It is a financial mechanism set up by the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- 2) GCF funds developing countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and enhance their ability to respond to climate change.

**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**

#### **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** It was set up by the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** in 2010. GCF has a crucial role in serving the Paris Agreement, supporting the **goal of keeping average global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the **world's largest dedicated fund** helping developing countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and **enhance their ability to respond to climate change**
- It does this by **channelling climate finance to developing countries**, which have joined other nations in committing to climate action.
- GCF's **activities are aligned with the priorities of developing countries** through the principle of country ownership and the Fund has established a direct access modality so that **national and sub-national organisations can receive funding directly** rather than only via international intermediaries
- GCF aims to **catalyse a flow of climate finance** to invest in low-emission and climate-resilient development, driving a paradigm shift in the global response to climate change  
**GCF's approach is marked by several distinct features**
- **Balanced portfolio:** GCF's investments are aimed at **achieving maximum impact in the developing world**, supporting paradigm shifts in both mitigation and adaptation. The Fund **aims for a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation investments** over time.
  - It also aims for a floor of **50 percent of the adaptation** allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** and African States.
- **Unlocking private finance:** The Fund is unique in its ability to **engage directly with both the public and private sectors** in transformational climate-sensitive investments. GCF engages directly with the private sector through its **Private Sector Facility (PSF)**.
  - It offers a **wide range of financial products** including grants, concessional loans, subordinated debt, equity, and guarantees. This enables it to match project needs and adapt to specific investment contexts, including **using its funding to overcome market barriers for private finance**.

- **Country ownership:** GCF recognizes the need to ensure that **developing country partners exercise ownership of climate change funding** and integrate it within their own national action plans.
- Developing countries appoint a **National Designated Authority (NDA)** that acts as the interface between their government and GCF and must approve all GCF project activities within the country. This country-driven approach ensures GCF's activities operate in harmony with national priorities.

**14. Consider the following statements about Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)**

1. It is an umbrella that comprises the bulk of preferential schemes granted by industrialized nations to developing countries.
2. It involves reduced Most Favored Nations (MFN) Tariffs or duty-free entry of eligible products exported by beneficiary countries to the markets of donor countries.

**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: D**

**Explanation :**

1. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is an umbrella that comprises the bulk of preferential schemes granted by industrialized nations to **developing countries**.
2. It involves reduced Most Favored Nations (MFN) Tariffs or duty-free entry of eligible products exported by beneficiary countries to the markets of donor countries.
3. The idea of granting developing countries preferential tariff rates in the markets of industrialized countries was originally presented at the first UNCTAD conference in 1964.
4. Benefits of Generalized System of Preference include Economic growth and development in the developing world by helping beneficiary countries to increase and diversify their trade with the developed nations.

5. Employment – Moving GSP imports from the docks to consumers, farmers, and manufacturers supports tens of thousands of jobs in the developed nation.

**15. The 'CHAMPIONS portal' recently seen in news in the context of which of the following?**

- a) Revival of the sports culture in India at the grass-root level
- b) Prevention of Gender based violence in India
- c) Providing immediate assistance or emergency care to a person injured in an accident
- d) Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

**Ans: D**

**Explanation**

**CHAMPIONS - Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength**

- **Union Ministry of MSME** has launched '**CHAMPIONS portal**' [www.Champions.gov.in](http://www.Champions.gov.in), a Technology driven Control Room-Cum-Management Information System.
- It is aimed at **assisting Indian MSMEs march into big league** as National and Global CHAMPIONS.
- The CHAMPIONS stands here for **Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength**.
- As the name suggests, the portal is **basically for making the smaller units big by solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding**. It is a real one-stop-shop solution of MSME Ministry.
- The ICT based system would be set up to **help the MSMEs in present difficult situation** and also to **handhold them to become national and international champions**.
- In addition to ICT tools including **telephone, internet and video conference**, the system is enabled by **Artificial Intelligence**, Data Analytics and Machine Learning.
- As part of the system, **a network of control rooms** is created in a **Hub & Spoke Model**. The Hub is situated in New Delhi. The spokes will be in the States in various offices and institutions of Ministry.



**16. The 'Anti-dumping duty' refers to**

- (a) A tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value
- (b) An import tax imposed on certain goods in order to counter export subsidies
- (c) A tax imposed only on goods produced from Special Economic Zones.
- (d) None of the above

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

**Option A is correct:** An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value. Dumping is a process where a company exports a product at a price lower than the price it normally charges on its own home market.

**Option B refers to Countervailing Duties.** Countervailing Duties (CVDs) are tariffs levied on imported goods to offset subsidies made to producers of these goods in the exporting country. CVDs are meant to level the playing field between domestic producers of a product and foreign producers of the same product who can afford to sell it at a lower price because of the subsidy they receive from their government.

**17. Consider the following pairs :**

<b>Terms sometimes</b>	<b>Their origin seen in the news</b>
------------------------	--------------------------------------

- |                                   |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Annex—I Countries              | : Cartagena Protocol |
| 2. Certified Emissions Reductions | : Nagoya Protocol    |
| 3. Clean Development Mechanism    | : Kyoto Protocol     |

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

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

**Answer : C**

**Explanation:**

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an **international legally-binding treaty** with three main goals :

- a) conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity);
- b) sustainable use of its components; and
- c) fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

Its overall objective is to **encourage actions, which will lead to a sustainable future.**

- The Convention on Biological Diversity covers biodiversity at all levels: ecosystems, species and genetic resources.
- It also covers biotechnology, including through the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In fact, it covers all possible domains that are directly or indirectly related to biodiversity and its role in development, ranging from science, politics and education to agriculture, business, culture and much more.
- The CBD's governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP). This ultimate authority of all governments (or Parties) that have ratified the treaty meets every two years to review progress, set priorities and commit to work plans.

### **Kyoto Protocol**

The Kyoto Protocol is an **international and legally binding** agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. It came into force on 16th February 2005. The major feature of the Kyoto Protocol is that it sets **binding targets for industrialized countries for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**. The greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride, hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons. The Protocol is based on the principle of **common but differentiated responsibilities**.

### **What is Common but Differentiated Responsibilities?**

It puts the obligation to reduce current emissions on developed countries on the basis that they are historically responsible for the current levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere

### **Classification of Parties and their commitments – Kyoto Protocol**

- **Annex I** -Developed countries [US, UK, Russia etc.] + Economies in transition (EIT) [Ukraine, Turkey, some eastern European countries etc.]
- **Annex II**- Developed countries (Annex II is a subset of Annex I).

- Required to provide financial and technical support to the EITs and developing countries to assist them in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Annex B** -Annex I Parties with first or second-round Kyoto greenhouse gas emissions targets.
- The first-round targets apply over the years 2008–2012 and the second-round Kyoto targets, which apply from 2013–2020.
- Compulsory binding targets to reduce GHG emissions.
- **Non-Annex I** -Parties to the UNFCCC not listed in Annex I of the Convention (mostly low-income developing countries).
- **LDCs** -Least-developed countries.No binding targets to reduce GHG emissions

### **Clean Development Mechanism**

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), defined in Article 12 of the Protocol, allows a country with an emission-reduction or emission-limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to implement an emission-reduction project in developing countries. Such projects can earn saleable certified emission reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, which can be counted towards meeting Kyoto targets. A CDM project activity might involve, for example, a rural electrification project using solar panels or the installation of more energy-efficient boilers.

The mechanism stimulates sustainable development and emission reductions, while giving industrialized countries some flexibility in how they meet their emission reduction or limitation targets.

### **Nagoya Protocol**

- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.
- Its objective is the **fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources**, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

- By helping to ensure benefit-sharing, the Nagoya Protocol creates incentives to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources, and therefore enhances the contribution of biodiversity to development and human well-being. India signed this protocol in 2010.

### **Cartagena Protocol**

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a legally binding global protocol that seeks to contribute to ensuring the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) created through modern biotechnology.

### **What does the Protocol cover?**

The Protocol covers the “transboundary movement, transit, handling and use of all living modified organisms that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking into account risks to human health”.

## **18. Consider the following statements with respect to ‘Cess’**

1. A cess can be levied on both direct and indirect taxes
2. The proceeds from cesses do not form part of a divisible pool of taxes.

**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**

- A cess is **levied on the tax payable and not on the taxable income**. In a sense, for the taxpayer, it is **equivalent to a surcharge on tax**.
- **A cess can be levied on both direct and indirect taxes**. The revenue obtained from income tax, corporation tax, and indirect taxes can be allocated for various purposes.
- The share of cesses is not part of the divisible pool of taxes that needs to be shared with states.

### **Difference between tax and cess**

- Unlike a tax, a **cess is levied to meet a specific purpose**; its proceeds cannot be spent on any kind of government expenditure.

- While the **tax proceeds are shared with the States and Union Territories** according to the guidelines by the Finance Commission, the **cess proceeds need not be shared** with them.
- **Recent examples of cess are: Clean environment cess, Krishi Kalyan cess** (for the improvement of agriculture and welfare of farmers), and education cess

### 19. 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**.

**Statement 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.

**20.** Consider the following statements about Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana

- 1) It strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MSME)
- 2) It is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM).

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:**

**Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana :**

- The “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP), a sub component of the Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) seeks to improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities available to empower her. Hence statement 2 is correct.
- MKSP recognizes the identity of “Mahila” as “Kisan” and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices (not MSME’s). Hence statement 1 is Incorrect.
- **Vision:** To reach out to the poorest of poor households and expand the portfolio of activities currently handled by the Mahila Kisan.

- The focus of MKSP is on capacitating smallholders to adopt sustainable climate resilient agro-ecology and eventually create a pool of skilled community professionals.
- Its objective is to strengthen smallholder agriculture through promotion of sustainable agriculture practices such as :
  - Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA),
  - Non Pesticide Management (NPM),
  - Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF),
  - Pashu-Sakhi model for doorstep animal care services,
  - Sustainable regeneration and harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Produce.

#### **DAY-NRLM**

- Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in June 2011 as a restructured version of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY).
- The Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services.

#### **21. Consider the following statements regarding the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

1. The International Criminal Court has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
2. It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations

**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:** The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a **permanent international court** established to investigate, **prosecute and try individuals** accused of committing the **most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a**

**whole**, namely the **crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression**

- On 17 July **1998**, the first treaty-based permanent international criminal court. The treaty **adopted during that conference is known as the Rome Statute** of the International Criminal Court.
- Among other things, **it sets out the crimes falling within the jurisdiction of the ICC**, the rules of procedure and the **mechanisms for States to cooperate** with the ICC. The countries which have accepted these rules are known as **States Parties** and are represented in the Assembly of States Parties.
- **Over 120 countries are States Parties to the Rome Statute**, representing all regions: Africa, the Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Western European and North America
- The **seat of the Court is in The Hague in the Netherlands**. The Court is funded by contributions from the States Parties and by **voluntary contributions from governments, international organisations, individuals**, corporations and other entities
- **Statement 2 is incorrect**: The **ICC, which tries individuals, is different from the International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations for the settlement of disputes between States.
- The ICC is an **independent body** whose mission is to try individuals for crimes within its jurisdiction **without the need for a special mandate from the United Nations**

**Additional Info:**

- 18 Judges
- Term: 9 Years
- Cannot be re-appointed
- Can try individuals; but should be a citizen of the State party or crim committed within the territory of a member country or even a non member accepting the ICC jurisdiction – their citizen can also be tried or through a UNSC resolution under UN Charter.
- 30 countries signed but did not ratify the Rome Statute ( USA, Russia, Israel etc.)
- Non Signatories (40). E.g. India, China etc.

**Why in the news?**

International Criminal Court (ICC) has launched investigations into the war crimes in Palestinian territories occupied by Israel.

**22. The 'Oslo Accords' recently seen in news is associated with which of the following?**

- a) Tariff concessions for least developed countries
- b) Peace process in the Middle East region
- c) Freedom of navigation in South China Sea
- d) Comprehensive rules, procedures, and guidelines for reducing Global warming

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**

**Oslo Accords**

- The Oslo Accords were a landmark moment in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East.
- **Oslo I** is an agreement signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993.
- It was meant to effectively bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to its end by means of territorial concessions and facilitating the creation of the Palestinian Authority.
- This accord is a milestone in Israeli-Palestinian relations as this is the first time they both formally recognized one another.
- **Oslo II** is officially called the **Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza (1995)**, expanded on Oslo I.
- It included provisions for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from six West Bank cities and about 450 towns.
- Additionally, the pact set a timetable for elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

**23. Which of the following Biosphere reserves in India have been included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, based on the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme?**

1. Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve
2. Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve
3. Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve
4. Simlipal Biosphere Reserve

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

### Explanation

- Biosphere Reserve (BR) is an **international designation by UNESCO** for representative parts of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large **area of terrestrial or coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination** thereof.
- BRs are designated to deal with one of the most important questions of reconciling the **conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development** and maintenance of associated cultural values

In India, there are **18 Biosphere reserves**, out of which **11 have been included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**, based on the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

- 11 internationally recognised Biosphere Reserves in India are
  - Nilgiri
  - Gulf of Mannar
  - **Sunderbans**
  - **Nanda Devi**
  - Nokrek
  - Pachmarhi
  - **Similipal**
  - Achanakmar-Amarkantak
  - Great Nicobar
  - **Agasthyamala**
  - Khangchendzonga

### Why in the news?

Recently, a massive fire broke out in the Similipal Biosphere Reserve in Odisha.



**24. Consider the following statements regarding the Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN) code**

1. It is a six-digit identification code used by Customs authorities, statistical agencies, and other government regulatory bodies to monitor and control the import and export of commodities
2. These codes are developed by the World Trade Organization (WTO)

**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 2 is incorrect:**

The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System generally referred to as "Harmonized System" or simply "HS" is a multipurpose international product nomenclature developed by the **World Customs Organization (WCO)**.

**About World Customs Organization (WCO):**

The World Customs Organization (WCO), established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to **enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations**.

Currently, the WCO represents 183 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the **WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters** and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

**Statement 1 is correct:**

- It is a **six-digit identification code** and is a multipurpose international product nomenclature. HS code are used by **Customs authorities, statistical agencies**, and other government regulatory bodies, to monitor and control the import and export of commodities

HSN classification is widely used for **taxation purposes by helping to identify the rate of tax applicable** to a specific product in a country that is under review. It can also be used in calculations that involve claiming benefits

- Over **200 countries use the system as a basis** for their customs tariffs, gathering international trade statistics, making trade policies and for monitoring goods
- The system helps in **harmonising customs and trade procedures** thus reducing costs in international trade.
- The HS is thus a **universal economic language and code for goods** and an indispensable tool for international trade.

**25. Consider the following statements with respect to India's Ease of Living Index (EoLI)**

1. It is an initiative of NITI Aayog
2. The key objective of this Index is to catalyse action to achieve broader developmental outcomes including the SDG.

**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: B**

**Explanation:**

**Ease of Living Index(EoLI)**

- EoLI is aimed at providing a holistic view of Indian cities – beginning from the services provided by local bodies, the effectiveness of the administration, the outcomes generated through these services in terms of the liveability within cities and, finally, the citizen perception of these outcomes. It is an initiative of **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs** (Not NITI Aayog). **Statement 1 is incorrect.**

The key objectives of the Ease of Living Index are four-folds

- **Generate information to guide evidence-based policy making**

- Catalyse action to achieve **broader developmental outcomes** including the SDG.  
**Statement 2 is correct.**
- **Assess and compare** the outcomes achieved from various **urban policies and schemes** and
- Obtain the **perception of citizens about their view of the services** provided by the city administration.

#### **About Ease of Living Index 2020**

- The rankings under Ease of Living Index 2020 were announced for cities with a population of more than a million, and cities with less than a million people.
- **111 cities participated** in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020. The analysis categorises them into Million+ populated cities (those with a population of more than a million) and Less than Million populated cities (those with a population of less than a million) along with all the cities under the Smart Cities Program.
- **Bengaluru** emerged as the top performer in the Million+ category, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai.
- In the Less than Million category, **Shimla** was ranked the highest in ease of living, followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.
- The EoLI 2020 strengthens its scope by consolidating the framework with the addition of a **Citizen Perception Survey** in the index, holding a weightage of 30%.
- It, therefore, examines the outcomes that lead to existing living conditions through pillars of **Quality of Life, Economic Ability, Sustainability**, spanning across 13 categories of - Education, Health, Housing and Shelter, WASH and SWM, Mobility, Safety and Security, Recreation, Level of Economic Development, Economic Opportunities, Environment, Green Spaces, and Buildings, Energy Consumption, and City Resilience, that account for 70% of the overall outcome.

#### **26. Which among the following is/are examples of negotiable instruments?**

1. Cheques
2. Promissory notes

3. Bill of exchange
4. Certificates of Deposit

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Answer: **D**

**Explanation:**

- Negotiable instruments are documents which promise payment to the assignee (the person whom it is assigned to/given to) or a specified person. These instruments are transferable signed documents which promises to pay the bearer/holder the sum of money when demanded or at any time in the future. The final holder takes the funds and can use them as per his requirements.
- Common types of negotiable instruments include Bills of exchange, Promissory notes, Cheques, and certificates of deposit (CD). **Hence, all the options are correct.**
- A promissory note refers to a written promise to its holder by an entity or an individual to pay a certain sum of money by a pre-decided date.
- Bills of exchange refers to a legally binding, written document which instructs a party to pay a predetermined sum of money to another party.
- A cheque refers to an instrument in writing which contains an unconditional order, addressed to a banker and is signed by a person who has deposited his money with the banker. This order requires the banker to pay a certain sum of money on demand only to to the bearer of cheque (person holding the cheque) or to any other person who is specifically to be paid as per instructions given.
- The Certificate of Deposit (CD) is an agreement between the depositor and the bank where a predetermined amount of money is fixed for a period and the bank pays interest on it.

**Why in the news?**

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court recently proposed the setting up of fast-track courts for a limited time to clear dishonoured cheque cases, which form over 30 per cent of the backlog in courts across the country.

**27. Consider the following statements about GeM**

1. GeM is a completely paperless, cashless and system driven e-market place.
2. The government has made it mandatory for all the departments and ministries to source goods and services from its e-market place.
3. The portal has made it mandatory for sellers to mention the 'country of origin' on products they wish to sell through the platform.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**All the statements are correct.**

- Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is a **one stop portal** to facilitate **online procurement** of common use **Goods & Services** required by various Government Departments / Organizations / PSUs. It is a completely **paperless, cashless and system driven e-market place** that enables procurement of common use goods and services with minimal human interface.
- The government has made it mandatory for all the departments and ministries to source goods and services from its e-market place.
- The move is aimed at bringing in more transparency and streamlining the government procurement, estimated at Rs 10,000 crore a year.
- The portal has made it mandatory for sellers to mention the 'country of origin' on products they wish to sell through the platform.

**Why in the news?**

- **Indian Medicines Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (IMPCL)**, the public sector manufacturing unit of the Ministry of AYUSH had a recent tie up with the Government e-Market (GeM) portal for selling its products online.



### Significance

- IMPCL is the **only CPSE under Ministry of AYUSH**, Government of India and its prices are vetted and finalised by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) for their Ayurvedic & Unani Medicines.
- With this decision of GeM, the Ayurvedic and Unani medicines of IMPCL will figure on the GeM portal to hundreds of government sector buyers, at prices finalised by the Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure.
- This will facilitate quick procurement of these medicines by Central/State Government institutions for their healthcare programmes.

### 28. Consider the following statements regarding Over the counter drugs (OTC)

- (1) OTC drugs are medicines sold directly to a consumer with a prescription from a healthcare professional.
- (2) OTC drugs are one of the reasons for antibiotic resistance among people

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 : A**

**Explanation:**

**Statement 1 is incorrect:** Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are medicines sold directly to a consumer **without** a prescription from a healthcare professional, as opposed to prescription drugs, which may be sold only to consumers possessing a valid prescription

**Statement 2 is correct:** A 2015 survey conducted by Lybrate among 20,000 people across 10 cities showed that 52% of people practised **self medication** which is the most important reason behind Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

### 29. Consider the following statements regarding the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

1. It is an international organisation consisting of 22 coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean
2. India is a founding member of this organisation

**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: D**

**Explanation**

**Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)**

- It is an **intergovernmental organization** that was created in **1982 at Port Louis, Mauritius** and institutionalized in 1984 by the **Victoria Agreement in Seychelles**. The **COI is composed** of five **African Indian Ocean nations: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles**.

Ø **Indian ocean Rim Association (IORA):** It is an international organisation consisting of 22 coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean

- Notwithstanding their different characteristics (Reunion as a French overseas region; Mauritius and Seychelles as Middle-Income Countries whereas Comoros and Madagascar are amongst the Least-Developed Countries), the **five islands share geographic proximity, historical and demographic relationships**, natural resources and common development issues

- **India has been approved as an observer state** for a five-nation grouping in the Western Indian Ocean, Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), which includes Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, Mauritius and French Reunion.

**30. Consider the following statements about the Banking Ombudsman Scheme.**

1. It is an expeditious forum to bank customers for resolution of complaints relating to certain services rendered by banks.
2. All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the Scheme.

3. One can approach the Ombudsman directly even without approaching the bank.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Banking Ombudsman Scheme is an expeditious and inexpensive forum to bank customers for resolution of complaints relating to certain services rendered by banks.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the Scheme.
- Customers can approach Ombudsman for complaints relating to deficiency in banking services like
  - Non-payment or inordinate delay in the payment or collection of cheques, drafts, bills etc.
  - Non-acceptance, without sufficient cause, of small denomination notes or coins tendered for any purpose, and for charging of commission in respect thereof;
  - Refusal to open deposit accounts without any valid reason for refusal;
  - Levying of charges without adequate prior notice to the customer;
- One's complaint will not be considered if he/she has not approached his bank for redressal of his grievance first. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- One can file a complaint before the Banking Ombudsman if the reply is not received from the bank within a period of one month after the bank concerned has received one's complaint, or the bank rejects the complaint, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the reply given by the bank.
- To strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism for customers, RBI has tightened rules concerning the banking ombudsman scheme and issued revised directions in the form of '**Internal Ombudsman Scheme, 2018**'.
- The IOS 2018 mandates Banks with more than 10 branches to have an Internal Ombudsman to review complaints that were partially or wholly rejected by the respective banks.

- It aimed to ensure that the complaints of the customers are redressed at the level of the bank itself so as to minimize the need for the customers to approach other fora for redressal.

### 31. Consider the following pairs

Wildlife Sanctuary/ National Park		Rivers flowing through them
--------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------

- |                 |   |             |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| 1. Pobitora     | : | Brahmaputra |
| 2. Jim Corbett  | : | Yamuna      |
| 3. Bhitarkanika | : | Brahmani    |

**Which of the above given pairs is/ are incorrectly matched?**

- 1, 2 and 3
- 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 only

Answer: D

#### Explanation

##### **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary**

- It is situated on the **southern bank of the Brahmaputra River** in the Morigaon district of Assam. In 1987, Pobitora was declared a wildlife sanctuary covering an area of 16 square kilometers. It harbors the **highest density of Rhino in the world** and second highest concentration of Rhino in Assam after Kaziranga National Park. Besides rhinoceros, the other mammals found are Leopard, Leopard cat, Fishing cat, Jungle cat, Feral Buffalo, Wild pigs, Chinese pangolins etc.

##### **Jim Corbett National Park**

- Jim Corbett National Park, which is a part of the larger Corbett Tiger Reserve is located in the **Nainital district of Uttarakhand**. The magical landscape of Corbett is well known and famed for its tiger richness. Established in the year 1936 as Hailey National Park, Corbett has the glory of being **India's oldest and most prestigious National Park**. It is also being honored as the place where **Project Tiger was first launched in 1973**

- For the survival of such a remarkable gamut of floral and faunal species in Jim Corbett National Park, water is a crucial factor. The **Ramganga river forms the most prominent hydrological resource**, supplemented by tributaries, most prominent of which are the **Sonanadi, Mandal and Palain rivers**. The river Kosi runs proximate to the Park and is also a significant water resource for nearby areas.

#### **Bhitarkanika National Park**

- Bhitarkanika National Park is a 145 km<sup>2</sup> large national park in northeast Kendrapara district in **Odisha** in eastern India.
- It was designated in 1998 and obtained the status of a **Ramsar site** on 19 August 2002.
- The national park and wildlife sanctuary is inundated by the rivers **Brahmani**, Baitarani, Dhamra, Pathsala.

**32. With reference to the United Nations Development Programme, Consider the following statements.**

1. It helps in eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion.
2. It focuses on Climate and disaster resilience.

**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: C**

**Explanation: Statement 1 is correct.** The United Nations Development Programme works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

**Statement 2 is correct.** It focuses on :

- Keeping people out of **POVERTY**.
- **GOVERNANCE** for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.



- Crisis prevention and increased RESILIENCE.
- ENVIRONMENT: nature-based solutions for development.
- Clean, affordable ENERGY.
- Women's empowerment and GENDER equality.

**33. Which of the following Marine national parks in India provide a world's largest nesting beach for Olive Ridley Turtles?**

- a) Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park
- b) Malvan Marine Sanctuary
- c) Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary
- d) Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park

Ans: C

#### **Explanation**

##### **Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary**

- Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is a **marine wildlife sanctuary located in Odisha**. It is the **world's largest nesting beach for Olive Ridley Turtles**.
- It **extends from Dhamra River mouth in the north to Brahmani river mouth** in the south.

##### **Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park**

- Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park is a **national park of India on the Andaman Islands**, Most of the coral reefs in the park are **fringing reefs** and the park is an important breeding ground for turtles.

##### **Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park**

- It consists of **21 small islands and coral reefs** in the Gulf of Mannar in the Indian Ocean of Tamil Nadu. The park has a **high diversity of plants and animals** in its marine and shore habitats

##### **Malvan Marine Sanctuary**

- Malvan Marine Sanctuary is the only marine sanctuary located in **Konkan region of Maharashtra**. It includes Padamged island and other submerged rocky structures.

**34. Consider the following statements regarding Model Code of Conduct.**

1. It is enforced from the date of announcement of election schedule.
2. It does not apply during by-polls.
3. It is a legally binding statute under Representation of People's Act, 1951.

**Select the correct answer using the given codes.**

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

**Answer: B**

**Explanation: Statement 1 is correct.** The code comes into force on the announcement of the poll schedule and remains operational till the process is concluded, as provided in the notification.

**Statement 2 and 3 are incorrect.**

- The model code refers to a set of norms laid down by the Election Commission of India, with the consensus of political parties. **It is not statutory.** It spells out the dos and don'ts for elections.
- Political parties, candidates and polling agents are expected to observe the norms, on matters ranging from the content of election manifestos, speeches and processions, to general conduct, so that free and fair elections take place.

**What restrictions does the code impose?**

- According to the EC, the code states that the party in power — whether at the Centre or in the States — should ensure that it does not use its official position for campaigning.
- Ministers and other government authorities cannot announce financial grants in any form. No project or scheme which may have the effect of influencing the voter in favour of the party in power can be announced, and Ministers cannot use official machinery for campaign purposes.

**35. Consider the following statements regarding the Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research (AWSAR) initiative**

1. The initiative aims to inculcate scientific temper among the Undergraduate students by encouraging them to publish research articles
2. It is a joint initiative of Ministry of Human Resource development and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

**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

**Ans: D**

**Explanation**

- Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research (AWSAR) is an initiative that aims to **disseminate Indian research stories among the masses** in an easy to understand and interesting format to a common man.
- Under this initiative, **PhD Scholars and Post-Doctoral Fellows (PDFs)** (not UG students) in Science and Technology (S&T) streams **would be encouraged to write at least one popular science article** during the tenancy of their fellowship, and to participate in a national competition.
- Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research (AWSAR) is a **new initiative conceptualized & supported by National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC) Division, Department of Science and Technology (DST)** which is actively engaged in developing various outreach programs for scientific fraternity.
- AWSAR envisages to **bridge the existing gap in communicating research** to common man by utilizing the latent potential of PhD Scholars and Post-Doctoral Fellows (PDFs). This program is being **coordinated by Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous institute of DST**

**36. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which is sometimes seen in the news is related to**

- (a) Combating air pollution
- (b) Reduction of global hunger and malnutrition
- (c) Advancing women's rights
- (d) Fighting trans-national cyber crimes

**Answer: C**

- The **United Nations** has organized **four world conferences** on women. These took place in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and **Beijing in 1995**.
- The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality.
- The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by **more than 180 countries**, was an agenda for women's empowerment and is now considered the key **global policy document on gender equality**.
- It set strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of **gender equality in 12 critical areas** of concern:
  - Women and poverty
  - Education and training of women
  - Women and health
  - Violence against women
  - Women and armed conflict
  - Women and the economy
  - Women in power and decision-making
  - Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
  - Human rights of women
  - Women and the media
  - Women and the environment
  - The girl-child

**37. Which of the following are not the effects of carbon fertilization?**

1. Increased rate of photosynthesis in plants
2. Increased growth rate of vegetative biomass

**Select the correct answer from options given below**

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

**Answer D**

**Explanation:**

**Both the statements are correct.**

**What is Carbon Fertilization?**

The carbon dioxide fertilization or carbon fertilisation is the phenomena that the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere **increases the rate of photosynthesis in plants.**

- The green leaves of the plant use energy from sunlight through photosynthesis to chemically combine carbon dioxide drawn in from the air with water and nutrients tapped from the ground to produce sugars, which are the main source of food, fiber and fuel for life on Earth.
- **Increase of anthropogenic emission:** The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere helps in the growth of plants because the rate of photosynthesis increases will resulted the rise of anthropogenic emissions. Plants grow faster leads to the sequestration of more Carbon dioxide and the growth also increases the crop yields. In other words, larger amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that has resulted from rising anthropogenic emissions will help in the growth of plants, which use carbon dioxide during photosynthesis.
- **Increases the efficiency of water utility in the plants:** During high concentration of carbon dioxide, plants maintain narrow openings of leaf surface which protect them in water loss.
- Plants distribute a greater proportion of photosynthate to roots under high concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. This resulted greater root production, which increases the development of mycorrhiza and fixation of nitrogen in root nodules. It helps the plants to grow even less nutritional soil.
- The **reproductive biomass growth as well as vegetative biomass growth is usually increased by elevated carbon dioxide.**

**38. Consider the following statements with respect to stem cells**

1. Embryonic stem cells are pluripotent and can turn into more than one type of cell.



2. Cancer stem cells are the small number of cells within a tumor that drive the tumor's growth.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

**Answer: C**

### **What Are Stem Cells?**

- Stem cells are special human cells that have the ability to develop into many different cell types, from muscle cells to brain cells.
- In some cases, they also have the ability to repair damaged tissues.
- Researchers believe that stem cell-based therapies may one day be used to treat devastating ailments like paralysis and Alzheimer's disease.

### **Types of stem cells**

- Stem cells are divided into two main forms: **embryonic** stem cells and **adult** stem cells.
- The embryonic stem cells used in research today come from unused embryos resulting from an in vitro fertilization procedure and that are donated to science.
- These embryonic stem cells are pluripotent, meaning that they can turn into more than one type of cell. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- There are two types of adult stem cells. One type comes from fully developed tissues, like the brain, skin, and bone marrow.
- There are only small numbers of stem cells in these tissues, and they are more likely to generate only certain types of cells. For example, a stem cell derived from the liver will only generate more liver cells.
- The second type is induced pluripotent stem cells.
- These are adult stem cells that have been manipulated in a laboratory to take on the pluripotent characteristics of embryonic stem cells.

### **Stem cells in medicine**

- **The only stem cells currently used** to treat disease are **hematopoietic** stem cells—the blood cell-forming adult stem cells found in bone marrow.

- These cells are used in procedures like bone marrow transplants that help cancer patients produce new blood cells after their own hematopoietic stem cells have been killed by radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

### **What are Cancer stem cells?**

- They are a type of adult or progenitor cell found in most types of cancer.
- These cells generally represent just 1% to 3% of all cells in a tumor, but they are the only cells with the ability to regenerate malignant cells and fuel the growth of the cancer. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- Researchers believe current cancer treatments sometimes fail because they don't destroy the cancer stem cells.

### **39. With reference to Performance Budgeting, consider the following statements.**

1. It involves fresh evaluation of expenditure in the Government budget, assuming it as a new Item
2. In India, the Performance Budget is also known as 'Outcome Budget'.

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: **B**

### **Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect: Zero Base Budget** involves fresh evaluation of expenditure in the Government budget, assuming it as a new item. The review has been made to provide justification or otherwise for the project as a whole in the light of the socio-economic objectives which have been already set up for this project and as well as in view of the priorities of the society.
- When the outcome of any activity is taken as the base of any budget, such budget is known as 'Performance Budget'.
- In the Performance Budget, it is the compulsion of the government to tell 'what is done', 'how much done' for the betterment of the people.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** In India, the Performance Budget is also known as 'Outcome Budget'.

**40. Consider the following statements**

- 1) The cryosphere is the frozen water part of the Earth.
- 2) Snow and ice reflect more sunlight than open water or bare ground.

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: D

The cryosphere is **the frozen water part of the Earth system. Hence statement 1 correct.**

There are places on Earth that are so cold that water is frozen solid. These areas of snow or ice, which are subject to temperatures below 32°F for at least part of the year, compose the cryosphere. The term "cryosphere" comes from the Greek word, "krios," which means cold. Ice and snow on land are one part of the cryosphere and the other part of the cryosphere is ice that is found in water.

Snow and ice reflect more sunlight than open water or bare ground. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**

The presence or absence of snow and ice affects heating and cooling over the Earth's surface, influencing the entire planet's energy balance.

Changes in snow and ice cover affect air temperatures, sea levels, ocean currents, and storm patterns all over the world.

**41. Consider the following statements regarding the World Heritage site**

1. It is a recognition given by UNESCO for the location having an "Outstanding Universal Value"
2. Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) in Sikkim was inscribed as India's first "Mixed World Heritage ((cultural as well as natural) Site"

**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: D

### Explanation

- It is a location having an **“Outstanding Universal Value”**. According to the **World Heritage Convention’s Operational Guidelines**, an Outstanding Universal Value signifies “cultural and/or natural significance which is so **exceptional as to transcend national boundaries** and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.”

### Categorisation

- The Sites fall into **three categories: cultural heritage, natural heritage, and mixed heritage (cultural as well as natural)**.
- The **UNESCO World Heritage Committee** meets at least once every year, generally in June/July, to deliberate the addition, removal, or modification of items on the list of World Heritage Sites.
- According to the Guidelines, the State Parties prepare a **Tentative List, or the “inventory of those properties situated on its territory which each State Party considers suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List.”** A nomination document is then prepared in this regard based on which the application is considered by the Committee.
- **Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) in Sikkim** was inscribed as India's first “Mixed World Heritage ((cultural as well as natural) Site”
- In India, the **Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO (INCCU), and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** are the bodies which play a key role in this regard.
- After **receiving nominations from the State Parties**, the Committee then puts them through a rigorous examination before any new location can qualify as a World Heritage Site.

**Why in the news?**

- At present, India has **42 sites** listed under Tentative List which is a prerequisite condition for inscription as a World Heritage Site.
- **'Dholavira: A Harappan City'** has been submitted for nomination of a World Heritage Site in 2019-2020.
- Nominations of **'Santiniketan, India'** and **'Sacred Ensemble of Hoysalas'** have been submitted to UNESCO for the year 2021-22 cycle.

**42. With reference to the sugarcane cultivation in India, consider the following statements :**

1. Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is an arrangement for the price to be paid to sugarcane farmers by the Sugar Mills, on the advice of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State Governments.
2. The government has imposed Minimum Indicative Export Quota (MIEQ) for sugar mills to tackle deficit sugarcane production in the country.

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:**

- Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) is an arrangement for the price to be paid to sugarcane farmers by the Sugar Mills and is announced each year by the Centre, on the advice of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State Governments.
- The sugar production in the country during current sugar season 2020-21 is estimated to be at 310 lakh MT as against the estimated domestic consumption of 260 lakh MT.
- To mitigate the situation of surplus stock, the Government has taken several steps including allocated mill wise Minimum Indicative Export Quota (MIEQ), fixed Remunerative Price of ethanol derived from molasses as well as from sugarcane juice, etc.

**What is Minimum Indicative Export Quotas?**



- Under MIEQ, mills are required to export a fixed quantity of sugar within a specified period, failing which the mills shall be deemed to be violating the directives of the government.

**43. With reference to Konark sun temple, consider the following statements**

1. The temple was built by the rulers of the Eastern Ganga dynasty
2. It is a classic illustration of the Kalinga architecture
3. The Sun Temple of Konark has been declared a world heritage site by UNESCO

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

- The Sun Temple at Konark, located on the eastern shores is one of the **outstanding examples of temple architecture** in India.
- The Konark Sun temple is **dedicated to the Hindu sun god Surya**, and it is the most famous of the few sun temples built in India. It is located about 35 km northeast of the city of Puri on the coastline in the state of Odisha
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It is directly and materially **linked to Brahmanism and tantric belief systems**. The Sun Temple is the **culmination of Kalinga temple architecture**, with all its defining elements in complete and perfect form.
- **Statement 1 is correct** It was built by **King Narasimhadeva I** (1238-1264 CE) of the **Eastern Ganga dynasty** (8th century CE - 15th century CE).
- The Konark is the **third link of Odisha's Golden Triangle**. The first link is Jagannath Puri and the second link is Bhubaneswar (Capital city of Odisha)
- The Konark temple is constructed as a **gigantic chariot with 24 wheels** about three meters high and pulled by 7 horses, housing the Sun God within.
- The entrance is guarded by two huge lions, each **killing a war elephant** and beneath the elephant is a man. The lions **represent pride**, **elephants represent wealth** and both of them consumes man

- This temple was also **known as 'Black Pagoda'** due to its **dark color and used as a navigational landmark** by ancient sailors to Odisha
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The Sun Temple of Konark has been declared a **world heritage site** by **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** in 1984.

### **Eastern Ganga Dynasty & Odisha Temple Architecture**

- The Eastern Gangas established their kingdom in the **Kalinga region** in eastern India (present-day Odisha state) at “the beginning of the eighth century CE”
- The greatest king of this dynasty was **Anantavarman Chodaganga (1077 - 1147 CE)**, who ruled for about 70 years. The great temple of the **god Jagannatha at Puri**, begun by him, 'stands as a brilliant monument to the artistic vigour and prosperity of Orissa during his reign'
- His successors continued the tradition, with the most **notable being Narasimhadeva I** who not only completed the construction of the Jagannatha temple but also the temple at Konarak

### **Why in the news?**

Several steps have been taken by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conserve Sun temple at Konark.

### **44. Consider the following statements regarding the KIRAN Scheme**

1. It is an exclusive scheme for women with the mandate to bring gender parity in Science & Technology through gender mainstreaming.
2. KIRAN Scheme is mandated to support women at University level only and does not cater to schools.

**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: Both the statements are correct:**

- The **Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)** Scheme is one of the several pioneering initiatives started by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** for promoting women in science.
- It is primarily aimed to bring gender parity in the Science & Technology sector by inducting more women talent in the research & development domain through various programmes.
- And also the programme is aimed at providing opportunities to women scientists who had a break in their career primarily due to family responsibilities
- Through KIRAN, DST is aimed at providing opportunities in research, entrepreneurship, science communication, technology development/demonstration and self-employment
- In addition, **Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in women universities (CURIE)** is another component of KIRAN that has a focus to develop state-of-the-art infrastructure to help large number of women to enhance their S&T skills and knowledge in order to make a fulfilling career in this domain besides promoting research culture in such institutions
- KIRAN Scheme is **mandated to support women at University level only** and does not cater to schools

**45. Consider the following statements about gestational diabetes**

- 1) Gestational diabetes is high blood sugar that develops during pregnancy and usually disappears after giving birth.
- 2) It occurs in the mother's body which cannot produce enough insulin to meet the extra needs in pregnancy.

**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:**

**What is gestational diabetes?**

- Gestational diabetes is high blood sugar that develops **during pregnancy** and usually disappears after giving birth.
- It can occur at any stage of pregnancy, but is more common in the second half.
- It occurs if the mother's body which cannot produce enough insulin – a hormone that helps control blood sugar levels – to meet the extra needs in pregnancy.
- Gestational diabetes can cause problems for the mother and the baby during and after birth.
- But the risk of these problems happening can be reduced if it's detected and well managed.

**How can gestational diabetes affect pregnancy?**

- Baby growing **larger** than usual – this may lead to difficulties during the delivery and increases the likelihood of needing induced labour or caesarean section.
- **Premature** birth – giving birth before the 37th week of pregnancy.
- The baby developing low blood sugar or yellowing of the skin and eyes (**jaundice**) after he or she is born, which may require treatment in hospital
- Still born babies.

**46. Recently the second edition of Joint Exercise 'Dustlik-II was conducted between India and which one of the following countries ?**

- a) UAE
- b) Uzbekistan
- c) Saudi Arabia
- d) Kazakhstan

Ans : B

**Explanation**

- DUSTLIK II" is a joint military exercise between **India – Uzbekistan**.
- This is the **Second Edition** of annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies.
- The first edition of the exercise was held in Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.
- 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and Indian Army are participating in the exercise.
- Both contingents will be **sharing their expertise and skills in the field of counter terrorist operations** in mountainous/rural/urban scenarios under UN mandate.

### Significance

- This joint exercise will definitely provide impetus to the ever growing **military and diplomatic ties** between the two nations and also reflects the strong resolve of both nations to counter terrorism.

### Why in the news?

- DUSTLIK-II **Commenced recently** in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, **Ranikhet (Uttarakhand)**.

### India and UAE

- **Desert Eagle II** is the second in the series of **bilateral exercises** between Indian Air Force (IAF) and United Arab Emirates Air Force (UAE AF)

### India and Kazakhstan

- **KAZIND** is the annual military exercise between **India and Kazakhstan**. The aim of exercise is joint training of troops in **Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations** in both Jungle and Mountainous terrain

**47. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana, which one of the following statements is not correct?**

- A. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Labour & Employment
- B. Under the scheme, the Government is paying full employers' contribution of 12% towards Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Pension Scheme for new employees who have been registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)
- C. The scheme can be availed by new employees registered with EPFO irrespective of their earnings
- D. The scheme incentivises the employers to recruit unemployed persons and also to formalize informal employees

Answer: C

### Explanation:

- **Statement A is correct:** The Ministry of Labour & Employment is implementing "Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana" (PMRPY) since 2016-17 with the objective of promoting employment generation.



- **Statement B is correct:** Under the scheme, the Government is paying full employers' contribution of 12% (towards Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Pension Scheme both), for a period of 3 years in respect of new employees who have been registered with the EPFO on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.
- **Statement C is incorrect:** The scheme will be applicable to those having earnings of Rs 15,000/- per month.
- **Statement D is correct:** This will incentivise the employers to recruit unemployed persons and also to formalize informal employees.

**48. The PM-WANI recently seen in news is related to which of the following?**

- a) Unmanned aerial vehicle
- b) Fighter aircraft
- c) Public Wi-Fi
- d) COVID Vaccination

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- **Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface** aims at setting up Public Wi-Fi Networks by Public Data Office Aggregators (PDOAs).
- The objective is to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices (PDOs) spread across the length and breadth of the country.
- The project will accelerate proliferation of Broadband Internet services through the Public Wi-Fi network in the country.
- There shall be no license fee for providing Broadband Internet through these public Wi-Fi networks.

**Benefits:**

- The proliferation of public Wi-Fi will not only create employment but also enhance disposable incomes in the hands of small and medium entrepreneurs and boost the GDP of the country.
- Availability and use of Broadband will enhance incomes, employment, quality of life, ease of doing business etc.

**49. The mandate of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment is empowerment of the socially, educationally and economically marginalised sections of the society that includes which of the following?**

- 1) Scheduled Castes
- 2) Victims of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
- 3) Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)
- 4) Transgender persons
- 5) Senior Citizens

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- The vision of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is to build an **inclusive society** wherein members of the **target groups can lead productive, safe and dignified lives with adequate support for their growth and development.**
- It aims to support and empower its target groups through programmes of educational, economic and social development and rehabilitation wherever necessary.
- The mandate of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment is empowerment of the socially, educationally and economically marginalised sections of the society including
  - (i) Scheduled Castes
  - (ii) other Backward Class
  - (iii) Senior Citizens
  - (iv) Victims of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
  - (v) Transgender Persons (vi) Beggars
  - (vii) Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)
  - (viii) Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) and

(xi) Economically Weaker Section (EWS).

**50. With reference to, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR), consider the following.**

- 1) Under the scheme, guidance, technology and infrastructure will be provided to youth and entrepreneurs for start-ups in different areas of agriculture.
- 2) The objective of this scheme is to make farming as a remunerative economic activity through strengthening the farmer's effort, risk mitigation and promoting agri-business entrepreneurship.

**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: C**

**Explanation:**

**About RKVY-RAFTAAR:**

- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana – Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sectors Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR)** is a unique scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW).
- The objective of this scheme is to make farming as a remunerative economic activity through strengthening the farmer's effort, risk mitigation and promoting agri-business entrepreneurship. **Hence Statement 2 is Correct.**
- RKVY-RAFTAAR will continue to be implemented as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** in the ratio of 60: 40 (Government of India and State Share respectively) except in case of North Eastern and hilly states where the sharing pattern is 90:10. For UTs the grant is 100% as Central share..
- Under the scheme, guidance, technology and infrastructure will be provided to youth and entrepreneurs for start-ups in different areas of agriculture. **Hence Statement 1 is Correct.**

**51. Consider the following statements about Kala-azar**

- 1) It is a bacterial disease caused by *Leishmania donovani* which affects the internal organs of the body.
- 2) Kala azar is largely endemic to the southern states in India.

**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: D**

**Explanation**

- Kala-azar, also called Visceral leishmaniasis, is the most severe form of leishmaniasis and, without proper diagnosis and treatment, is associated with high fatality.
- It is a **parasitic disease** of the viscera (the internal organs, particularly the liver, spleen, bone marrow and lymph nodes) due to infection by the parasite called ***Leishmania donovani* (Leishmaniasis)**. (not a bacterial disease) Hence statement 1 is incorrect.

**What causes Kala azar?**

- Kala azar is caused by bites from **female phlebotomine sandflies** – the vector of the leishmania parasite.

**Symptoms of kala azar**

- Initially, leishmania parasites cause skin sores or ulcers at the site of sand fly bites. If the disease progresses, it attacks the immune system.
- Kala azar presents after two to eight months, with more generalized symptoms including prolonged fever and weakness.

**Kala-azar Elimination Programme in India**

- Kala azar is largely **endemic to four states** in India – Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh. (not endemic to southern states) Hence statement 2 is incorrect.
- Due to the increasing problem of Kala-azar, Government of India is running a centrally sponsored Kala-azar control programme in the endemic states.

**Why in the news?**

- Seven new cases of Kala-azar or Visceral Leishmaniasis have been reported in the last one week in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district.
- This casts serious doubt on the state government's efforts to eradicate the disease in the state by 2022.

**52. Consider the following statements about National Social Assistance Programme**

- 1) National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a welfare programme administered by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- 2) This programme is being implemented in rural areas as well as urban areas.
- 3) For getting benefits under NSAP the applicant must belong to a Below Poverty Line (BPL) family according to the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

**About NSAP**

- Launched in 1995, the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a welfare programme being administered by the **Ministry of Rural Development**. Hence **statement 1 is correct**.
- This programme is being implemented in **rural areas as well as urban areas**. Hence **statement 2 is correct**.
- NSAP represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of **Article 41 of the Constitution of India** which directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want within the limit of its economic capacity and development.
- Presently NSAP comprises of five schemes, namely –
  - Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS),
  - Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS),



- Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS),
- National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and
- Annapurna.

### **Eligibility and scale of assistance**

- For getting benefits under NSAP the applicant must belong to a **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** family according to the criteria prescribed by the Govt. of India. Hence **statement 3 is correct**.
- The other eligibility criteria and the scale of central assistance under the sub - schemes of NSAP are as follows. Besides the central assistance, states / UT contribute an equal amount as their share:
- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):** A monthly pension of **Rs.200/-** to old age BPL persons in age group 60-79 years and **Rs.500/-** to old age BPL persons of age of 80 years and more.
- **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS):** A monthly pension of **Rs.300/-** to BPL widows aged 40-79 years and **Rs.500/-** upon attaining the age of 80 years.
- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS):** A monthly pension of **Rs.300/-** is given to disabled BPL persons aged 18-79 years and **Rs.500/-** upon attaining the age of 80 years.
- **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):** A one-time assistance of **Rs.20,000/-** to the surviving members of a BPL family upon the death of the primary breadwinner.
- **Annapurna Scheme: 10 KG food grains (wheat or rice)** is given to those BPL elderly who remain uncovered under IGNOAPS.

### **Why in News?**

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development in its report submitted to the Lok Sabha said that the Centre must increase the “meagre” pensions provided for poor senior citizens, widows and disabled people under the National Social Assistance Programme.

### **53. Which of the following statements about Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019 is incorrect?**

- a) The Act empowers the central government to designate an individual a “terrorist” if they are found committing, preparing for, promoting, or involved in an act of terror.

- b) The Act requires all investigating officers to take prior permission of the Director General of Police of a state for conducting raids, and seizing properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities.
- c) The act allows NIA officers of Inspector rank to carry out investigations.
- d) None of the above

**Answer: B**

### **Explanation**

#### **UAPA Act, 2019**

- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019 was passed by the Parliament in August 2019. It amended the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- The Act **empowers the central government to designate an individual a “terrorist”** if they are found committing, preparing for, promoting, or involved in an act of terror.
- The 1967 UAPA law required an investigating officer to take **prior permission** of the Director General of Police of a state for conducting raids, and seizing properties that are suspected to be linked to terrorist activities.
- The amendment act **removes this requirement** if the investigation is conducted by an officer of the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**. Hence **Option B is incorrect**. The investigating officer only requires sanction from the Director General of NIA.
- The 1967 law specifies that only officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police of the NIA shall have the power to investigate offences under the UAPA law. The new act allows NIA **officers of Inspector rank to carry out investigations**.

#### **Why in News?**

- According to the data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), there has been over **72% increase in the number of persons arrested under the anti-terror law UAPA (Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act)** in 2019 compared to 2015,
- As many as 1948 persons were arrested under the UAPA in 1226 cases registered across the country in 2019. Such cases registered in 2015-2018 stood at 897, 922, 901 and 1182 and the number of those arrested was 1128, 999, 1554 and 1421 respectively.
- Under the UAPA, **getting bail is rare** and the **investigating agency has up to 180 days to file a charge sheet**.

- Earlier, a reply by the government in the Lok Sabha shows that **only 2.2 % of cases registered under the UAPA between 2016-2019 ended in convictions** by court.

#### **About NIA**

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is a **statutory body** constituted under the **National Investigation Agency Act, 2008**.
- It is a central agency to investigate and prosecute offences:
  - affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India, security of State, friendly relations with foreign States.
  - against atomic and nuclear facilities.
  - smuggling in High-Quality Counterfeit Indian Currency.
- It implements international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations, its agencies and other international organisations.
- It acts as the Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency.

#### **54. Which of the following is/are the characteristics of an invasive species?**

- 1) A species must adapt to the new area easily
- 2) It must reproduce quickly
- 3) It must harm the economy, or the native plants and animals of the region

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

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

**Answer: D**

#### **Explanation**

An invasive species can be any kind of living organism—an amphibian, plant, insect, fish, fungus, or bacteria—that is not native to an ecosystem and causes harm.

- Not all non-native species are invasive. For example, most of the food crops grown in India, including onion, potato and tomatoes are not native to the region.
- To be invasive,
  1. a species must adapt to the new area easily

2. it must reproduce quickly
3. it must harm the economy, or the native plants and animals of the region

**Hence all the statements are correct.**

- Some of the most serious invasive species in India are *Alternanthera philoxeroides*, *Cassia uniflora*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Lantana camara*, *Parthenium hysterophorus* and *Prosopis juliflora*, etc.

### **Wattle Trees**



- **Acacia mearnsii**, commonly known as black wattle, late black wattle or green wattle, is a species of flowering plant in the family Fabaceae and is **endemic to south-eastern Australia**.
- In some parts of the world, *A. mearnsii* is considered to be an invasive species. Its invasiveness is due to its production of large numbers of seeds each year and to its large crown that shades other species.

### **Shola forests**

The Shola forests of South India derive their name from the Tamil word *solai*, which means a 'tropical rainforest'.

- The Shola vegetation are tropical montane forests found in the Western Ghats.
- They are separated by rolling grasslands in high altitudes.
- It majorly consists of stunted forest growths of **diverse grass species**.



- These forests are found sheltered in valleys with sufficient moisture and proper drainage, at an altitude of more than 1,500 metres. The upper reaches are covered with grasslands, known as Shola grasslands. Shola grasslands consist of dwarf trees growing 25-30 feet.
- Nilgiris upper region is classified as southern grassland mountain grassland.
- The comparison of the results of the 1849 and 1992 studies shows that cultivation of tea, wattle and eucalyptus has reduced the Shola forest-grassland ecosystem to a great extent. Between 1973-2014 Shola grasslands area had seen a 66.7% decline.

#### **Why in the news?**

- Nilgiris is facing invasive species like Wattle trees, Lantana camara, Cytisus scoparius (Scotch broom), Senna spectabilis, etc.
- According to a High Court order, an expert committee for invasive species management in Nilgiris is focusing on areas to know how feasible it will be to re-establish Shola forests and grasslands by removing the wattle trees.
- They are facing multiple problems like:
  - 1) Wherever the invasive species of wattle trees are being removed. Other invasive/exotic species of grass, such as Vulpia myuros have come up, which is **not palatable** for local wildlife.
  - 2) A patch where invasive wattle has been removed needs to be maintained every year for a period of at least five to six years because it remerges quickly and this will require persistence and substantial funding.
  - 3) The forest department is worried how to get rid of the exotic trees that have been removed.
- With the above challenges in hand the committee is finding that removing invasive flora will have a very limited impact on restoring native forests and grasslands in the Nilgiris.

#### **55. Which of the following countries unveiled a plan for a joint lunar space station?**

- a) Japan and USA
- b) China and Russia
- c) France and Russia
- d) India and USA

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**



- **Russia and China** unveiled plans for a joint lunar space station.

#### **About the joint initiative**

- The Russian space agency **Roscomos** said in a statement that it had signed an agreement with China's National Space Administration (**CNSA**) to develop a complex of **experimental research facilities** created on the surface and/or in the orbit of the Moon.
- **2021** celebrates the **60th anniversary** of Russia's first-ever manned space flight — it sent **Yuri Gagarin** into **space** in April 1961, followed by the first woman, Valentina Tereshkova, two years later.

#### **China's recent space initiatives**

- In 2020, it launched its **Tianwen-1 probe to Mars** that is currently orbiting Mars.
- And in December 2020, it successfully brought rock and soil samples from the Moon back to Earth, the first mission of this type in over 40 years.

#### **Other players**

- The U.S. space agency NASA has now set its sights on Mars, with its **Perseverance rovers** conducting their first test drive on the planet. NASA eventually intends to conduct a possible human mission to the planet, even if planning is still at a very preliminary stage.
- Under the **Artemis programme** NASA plans to **land the first woman** and the next man on **the moon by 2024**.
- Elon Musk's **SpaceX** has become a key player in the modern space race and has announced plans to fly several members of the public to the Moon in 2023.

#### **India's upcoming missions**

- **Chandrayaan-3 2022-** Mission repeat of Chandrayaan-2 with **lander, rover** and a propulsion module to attempt **soft landing** of lunar surface.
- **Gaganyaan-2022**-is an Indian **crewed orbital spacecraft** intended to be the basis of the **Indian Human Spaceflight Programme**. The spacecraft is being designed to carry three people, and a planned upgraded version will be equipped with rendezvous and docking capability.

### **56. Consider the following statements**

- 1) Autotomy is the ability of certain animals to release part of the body that has been grasped by an external agent.

2) Autotomy is observed in sea slugs and lizards.

**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**

**About Sea Slugs**

- The sea slugs are called “butterflies of the ocean” and they are beautiful, deadly, and strange.
- They are also called nudibranchs and can be found in marine environments all over the world.
- Like orchids, nudibranchs vary widely in color and arrangement.
- Some nudibranch species have evolved the plant-like ability to **photosynthesize**, or live off sunlight.

**Why in the news?**

- According to a paper published in the Journal Current Biology, it was found that some species of **sea slugs can detach their whole body** from their head to further regenerate the whole body.
- This behaviour of casting off body parts is observed in some animals like **lizards** and other species is called autotomy. But the sea slugs represent extreme autotomy where even regeneration of heart and other important organs is possible. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- ***Autotomy, also called Self-amputation, the ability of certain animals to release part of the body that has been grasped by an external agent. Hence statement 1 is correct.***
- Scientists believe that this is possible by the sea slugs as they eat certain types of algae, they can photosynthesize their food from sunlight and oxygen, just like a plant, for about 10 days. Their head which is detached can provide essential nutrients for regeneration.

**What further research can yield?**

- Understanding the underlying molecular mechanisms involved in this type of regeneration could help us to understand how human cells and tissues can be used to repair damage.

**57. Consider the following statements about RadioCarbon dating**

- 1) Radiocarbon dating is a method that provides objective age estimates for carbon-based materials that originated from living organisms.
- 2) An age could be estimated by measuring the amount of carbon-6 present in the sample and comparing this against an internationally used reference standard.

**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**

**Radiocarbon Dating**

- **Radiocarbon dating** is a method that provides objective **age estimates** for **carbon-based materials** that originated from living organisms. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- An age could be estimated by **measuring the amount of carbon-14** (not C6) present in the sample and comparing this against an internationally used reference standard. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**
- **Carbon-14 is a weakly radioactive isotope of Carbon**; also known as radiocarbon, it is an isotopic chronometer. **C-14 dating is applicable to organic materials(not applicable to metals).**
- All living things absorb carbon from the atmosphere and their food, including the radioactive form carbon-14, which decays over time.
- Since plants and animals stop absorbing carbon-14 when they die, the amount that remains when they are dated tells us how long ago they lived.
- When it comes to bones, scientists extract the part made up of collagen because it is organic.

**Why in News?**

- Neanderthal fossils from a cave in Belgium which is believed to belong to the last survivors of the species ever discovered in Europe are thousands of years older than what was assumed, according to a new study that appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

### Who are the Neanderthals

- **Neanderthal**, (*Homo neanderthalensis*, *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*), member of a group of archaic humans who emerged at least 200,000 years ago during the **Pleistocene Epoch** (about 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago) and were replaced or assimilated by early modern human populations (*Homo sapiens*).

### What the discovery says

- Previous radiocarbon dating of the remains from the Spy Cave yielded ages as recent as approximately 24,000 years ago, but the new testing pushes the clock back to between **44,200 to 40,600 years ago**.

### Why an accurate timeline is important

- Having a firm idea of when our closest human relatives disappeared is considered a key first step toward **understanding** more about the **nature and capabilities of the Neanderthals**, as well as **why they eventually went extinct** while our own ancestors prospered.
- Without a reliable framework of chronology we can't really be confident in **understanding** the **relationships** between **Neanderthals and Homo sapiens**.

### 58. Consider the following statements with respect to the National Clean Air Programme

1. It aims to reduce particulate matter ( $PM_{2.5}$  and  $PM_{10}$ ) pollution by 20-30% in all the cities by 2024, with 2017 as the base year for comparison.
2. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is executing this nation-wide programme

**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: B**

### Explanation

#### About NCAP

- NCAP is a pollution control initiative that was launched by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** in January 2019. This is the first ever effort in the country to frame a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound reduction target.

- It aims to reduce particulate matter (**PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>**) pollution by **20-30%** in **122 cities by 2024**, with 2017 as the base year for comparison. (not in all the cities) Hence **statement 1 is incorrect**.
- The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** executes this nation-wide programme. Hence **statement 2 is correct**.

### **Implementation**

- Under NCAP, **122 non-attainment cities** have been identified across the country based on the **Air Quality data from 2014-2018**.
- Apart from experts from the industry and academia, the programme is a collaboration between the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, NITI Aayog, and Central Pollution Control Board.
- **City specific action plans** have been prepared which include measures for strengthening the monitoring network, reducing vehicular/industrial emissions, increasing public awareness etc.
- Implementation of the city specific action plans are regularly monitored by Committees at Central and State level namely Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and Implementation Committee.
- Air quality of cities is monitored by **State Pollution Control Boards** which publishes their results from time to time.

### **Why in the news?**

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change submitted details about the National Clean Air Programme in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

### **59. Which of the following statements about the Stand-Up India Scheme is incorrect?**

- a) The Stand-Up India Scheme aims to facilitate bank loans between 10 lakh and 100 lakh to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch.
- b) Loans under the scheme are available for only green field projects.



- c) This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector.
- d) In case of non-individual enterprises, at least 75 per cent of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or woman entrepreneur.

**Answer: D**

### **Explanation**

#### **About the Scheme**

- The Stand-Up India Scheme aims to facilitate bank loans between **10 lakh and 100 lakh** to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise.
- This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector.
- In case of non-individual enterprises, at least **51 percent** of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or woman entrepreneur. Hence **Option D is incorrect.**

#### **Eligibility**

- SC/ST and/or woman entrepreneurs, above 18 years of age.
- Loans under the scheme are available for only green field projects. Green field signifies, in this context, the first time venture of the beneficiary in the manufacturing or services or trading sector.
- In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneur.
- Borrowers should not be in default to any bank/financial institution.

#### **Why in News?**

- Government has said that more than 81 percent accounts under the Stand Up India Scheme belong to women entrepreneurs.

### **60. Consider the following statements with respect to Electoral Bonds**

1. Electoral bonds are interest-free bearer bonds that are used to donate money anonymously to political parties.

2. Only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 and have secured no less than three per cent votes in the last Lok Sabha or State elections are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

**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**

**Electoral Bond**

- An electoral bond is designed to be a **bearer instrument** like a **Promissory Note** — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand and **free of interest**. Hence **statement 1 is correct**.
- It can be purchased by **any citizen** of India or a **body incorporated in India**.
- The bonds will be issued in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore and will be available at specified branches of State Bank of India.
- They can be bought by the donor with a KYC-compliant account.
- Donors can donate the bonds to their party of choice which can then be cashed in via the party's verified account within 15 days.
- The donor will remain **anonymous**.
- The electoral bonds will **not bear the name of the donor**.
- The donor and the party details will be available with the bank, but the political party might not be aware of who the donor is.
- Political parties are allotted a verified account by the Election Commission and all the electoral bond transactions are done through this account only.
- **Only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 and have secured no less than one per cent votes in the last Lok Sabha or State elections are eligible to receive electoral bonds. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**

- The bonds will be available for purchase for a period of **10 days** each in the beginning of **every quarter**, i.e. in January, April, July and October as specified by the Central Government.
- An additional period of 30 days shall be specified by the Central Government in the year of Lok Sabha elections.
- Before 2017, the electoral bonds scheme was for donation of over Rs 20,000.
- In 2017, the government capped the donation limit at Rs 2,000.
- A donor will get tax deduction and the recipient, or the political party, will get tax exemption, provided returns are filed by the political party
- The information furnished by the buyer shall be treated confidential by the authorised bank and shall not be disclosed to any authority for any purposes, except when demanded **by a competent court or upon registration of criminal case by any law enforcement agency.**

**61. Consider the following statements about the Jal Jeevan Mission launched in 2019.**

- 1) The chief objective of the Mission is to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2022.
- 2) The Jal Jeevan Mission is based on a community approach to water and will include extensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) as a key component of the mission.

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: B**

**Explanation**

**About Jal Jeevan Mission**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Launched in 2019, the chief objective of the Mission is to provide **Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2024** and thereby **ensuring potable water supply in adequate quantity i.e. @ 55 lpcd (Litres per capita per day)** of prescribed quality on a long-term and regular basis. Hence the statement **1 is incorrect.**

- The programme also implements **source sustainability measures** as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation and rainwater harvesting.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission is based on a **community approach** to water and will include **extensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC)** as a key component of the mission. **Statement 2 is correct.**
- JJM looks to create a **jan andolan for water**, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- **Note:** In the Union Budget 2021-22, the Union government announced the roll out of **Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban** which aims to create universal coverage of water supply in all 4,378 statutory towns as well as sewage management in 500 AMRUT cities.

#### **Why in News?**

- Jal Shakti Minister has said that three crore 80 lakh rural families have been provided tap water connection since the launch of the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- He said the coverage reached to 37 per cent from 17 percent within the span of one and a half years.

#### **62. Consider the following statements about SERB- Project Information System & Management (SERB – PRISM)**

- 1) It is a portal that can help retrieve real-time information about research support provided by the Science and Engineering Board (SERB).
- 2) It was developed by the National Informatics Centre.

**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:**

**About SERB-PRISM**

- The portal called '**SERB – PROject Information System & Management (SERB – PRISM)**' was developed by **Science and Engineering Board (SERB)** and was launched recently, through an e-platform. **Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**
- It can help **retrieve real-time information about research support** provided by the Science and Engineering Board (SERB). **Hence statement 1 is correct.**

#### **Key highlights**

- This portal is designed to provide information regarding **projects sanctioned by SERB from 2011 onwards**, including funding details, status, research summary, and project output information such as publications and patents.
- Search facilities enable retrieval of information about projects by Name of PI, institution, state, keywords, as well as year-wise listing and equipment that has been sanctioned by SERB in these projects.
- This portal may be **linked with important sectors** such as water, energy, and climate as well as with Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR).

#### **Significance**

- SERB-PRISM provides a platform which makes project details, research outcomes, facilities created, and their achievements originating from SERB funding accessible.
- It also allows researchers to look at research trends, learn about cutting-edge science, locate critical equipment in their vicinity and help **seek collaborations across disciplines.**
- It helps in the **democratisation of Research & Development funding trends.**

#### **About SERB**

- SERB is a **Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Ministry of Science and Technology, established through an Act of Parliament in 2009. (SERB ACT, 2008)
- **Supporting basic research in emerging areas of Science & Engineering** are the primary and distinctive mandate of the Board.
- It is the **premier agency** for planning, promoting, and funding of **internationally competitive research** in emerging areas.

**63. Consider the following statements with reference to the Places of Worship Act, 1991**



1. It says no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section.
2. The provisions of the act will also apply to monuments and sites covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

**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:**

- In its recent Ayodhya judgment, the Supreme Court commended the enactment of Places of Worship Act, 1991 as one that preserved the constitutional value of secularism by not permitting the status of a place of worship to be changed.
- Objective of the Act are to freeze the status of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of such a place of worship as on that day, to pre-empt new claims by any group about the past status of any place of worship and attempts to reclaim the structures or the land on which they stood.
- The Act declares that the religious character of a place of worship shall continue to be the same as it was on August 15, 1947.
- It says no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section. Hence statement 1 is correct.
- These provisions will not apply to monuments and sites covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.
- Section 5 of this act says that the Act does not apply to the place of worship commonly referred to as Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya.
- Penal provision in the Act: The Act provides for imprisonment up to three years and a fine for anyone contravening the prohibition

**Why in News?**

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to respond to a plea challenging the Places of

Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

**64. Consider the following statements about Inner Line Permit (ILP) system.**

- 1) It is a special permit that regulates visit of Indians to states where the ILP regime is prevalent.
- 2) It is based on the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act (BEFR), 1873.
- 3) It can be issued by both the central government and state government concerned.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Answer: A

**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** An Inner Line Permit is a document/**special permit that allows an Indian citizen to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.** The system is in force in states such as — **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and parts of Uttarakhand.** No Indian citizen can visit any of these states unless he or she belongs to that state, nor can he or she overstay beyond the period specified in the ILP
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Inner Line Permit (ILP) regulates visit of Indians to States where ILP regime is **prevalent under Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.**
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** An ILP is **issued by the state government concerned** (not by the central government). It can be **obtained after applying either online or physically.** It states the **dates of travel and also specifies the particular areas** in the state which the ILP holder can travel to.

**Background**

- Under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873, the **British framed regulations restricting the entry and regulating the stay of outsiders** in designated areas. This was to protect the **Crown's own commercial interests** by preventing "British subjects" (Indians) from trading within these regions.

- In 1950, the **Indian government replaced “British subjects” with “Citizen of India”**. This was **to address concerns about protecting the interests of the indigenous people** from outsiders belonging to other Indian states.

#### **Why in News?**

- The Uttarakhand government, in a recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, had sought withdrawal of “inner-line permit” (ILP) system in Niti Valley of Chamoli district and Nelang Valley of Uttarkashi district for better border management and expansion of tourism and other economic activities in villages located there.

#### **65. “Green deal” sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of**

- A. European Union
- B. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- C. Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- D. Group of Seven

Answer: **A**

#### **Explanation:**

- The **European Union (EU)** introduced its ambitious **Green Deal** in the CoP25 (held in Madrid in 2019) which consists of additional measures it would take on climate change.
- EU’s member countries are together the **third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases** in the world after China and the United States.
- The European Green Deal outlines that the EU will become **carbon neutral** (*achieved when a country’s emissions are balanced by absorptions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere*) **by 2050** and increase its **2030 emission reduction target** to at least 50 per cent compared to 1990 levels and work towards 55 per cent.

<https://theprint.in/opinion/how-india-can-kickstart-a-green-energy-revolution/621551/>

#### **66. Consider the following statements regarding the e - NAM (National Agriculture Market)**

1. It is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

2. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing e-NAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

**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**

- National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a **pan-India electronic trading portal** which **networks the existing APMC mandis** to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities
- It is an **online trading platform for agriculture produce** aiming to help farmers, traders, and buyers with online trading and getting a better price by smooth marketing
- It was launched by the Centre in 2015 and the government had to extend it in a phased manner across the 585 mandis of the country by December 31, 2019
- **Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)** is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**

**Advantages**

- For the farmers, **NAM promises more options for sale**. It would increase his access to markets through **warehouse-based sales** and thus obviate the need to transport his produce to the mandi
- For the local trader in the mandi / market, NAM offers the **opportunity to access a larger national market** for secondary trading

**67. Which of the following mineral is referred as 'Buried Sunshine'?**

- a) Silver
- b) Diamond
- c) Coal
- d) Petroleum

**Answer : C**

### Explanation

- Coal is the most abundantly found fossil fuel. It is used as a domestic fuel, in industries such as iron and steel, steam engines and to generate electricity.
- Electricity from coal is called thermal power. The coal which we are using today was formed millions of years ago when giant ferns and swamps got buried under the layers of earth. Coal is therefore referred to as Buried Sunshine.
- The leading coal producers of the world are China, USA, Germany, Russia, South Africa and France.
- The coal producing areas of India are Raniganj, Jharia, Dhanbad and Bokaro in Jharkhand

68. Consider the following pairs.

Conventions	Related to
1. Stockholm Convention	Hazardous chemicals and Pesticides
2. Bonn Convention	Migratory Species
3. Vienna Convention	Consular Relations

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

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

**Solution: A**

**Explanation:**

**Statement 1 is Incorrect**

**Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants** is an international environmental treaty, signed in 2001 and effective from May 2004, that aims to **eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**.

**Statement 2 is Correct**

**Bonn Convention** or Convention on the Conservation of migratory species of Wild animals aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range.



### **Statement 3 is Correct**

The **Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963** is an international treaty that defines a framework for consular relations between independent states.

A consul performs two functions: protecting in the host country the interests of their countrymen, and furthering the relations between the two states.

### **69. Which of the following does not belong to the classical dances of India?**

- a) Kathakali
- b) Kuchipudi
- c) Odissi
- d) None of the above

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

#### **Eight Classical Dances of India**

- Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu)
- Kathak (North India)
- Kathakali (Kerala)
- Mohiniyattam (Kerala)
- Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Odissi (Odisha)
- Sattriya (Assam)
- Manipuri (Manipur)

### **70. Regarding "Carbon Credit", which of the following statements is correct?**

- a) They are traded at a price fixed from time to time by United Nations Environment Programme
- b) It is an appreciation or credit given to a country for efforts in reducing Green House Gases (GHG) emissions.
- c) It is the total emission of GHGs over a period of time by any country
- d) It is a tradable unit to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide or equivalent amount of the mass of another greenhouse gas.

### Answer D

Explanation:

A carbon credit is a generic term for any tradable certificate or permit representing the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide or the mass of another greenhouse gas with a carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide.

Carbon credits and carbon markets are a component of national and international attempts to mitigate the growth in concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

### 71. Consider the following statements about the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)

- 1) The Act legally entitled up to 60% of the rural population and 40% of the urban population to receive subsidized foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- 2) It is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments.

**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: B**

**Explanation:**

**About NFSA**

- The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides for **food and nutritional security** in the human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices for people to live a life with dignity and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- The Act is in line with **Goal Two of the Sustainable Development Goals** (which seeks sustainable solutions to end hunger in all its forms by 2030 and to achieve food security) set by the United Nations General Assembly.
- Schemes such as the **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM)**, the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**, and the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** are included under the Act.

### Key Features

- The Act legally entitled up to **75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population** to receive subsidized foodgrains under the **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.
- The eligible persons will be **entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains**. The existing **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households**, which constitute the poorest of the poor, will continue to receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.
- About two-thirds of the population, therefore, is covered under the Act to receive highly subsidized foodgrains.
- The Act also has a special focus on the nutritional support to women and children. **Pregnant women and lactating mothers** will be entitled to meals and **maternity benefits of not less than Rs 6000**. It is however restricted to two children only.
- **Children upto 14 years of age** will be entitled to nutritious meals as per the prescribed nutritional standards. In case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals, the beneficiaries will receive **food security allowance**.
- The Act also contains provisions for setting up of **grievance redressal mechanism** at the District and State levels
- The **eldest women of the household** of age 18 years or above will be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing ration cards.
- The implementation of the scheme comes under the ambit of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.

### Implementation

- It is operated under the **joint responsibility of the Central and the State/Union Territory (UT) Governments**. Hence statement 2 is correct.
- The Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of food grains up to the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India.
- States/UTs hold the operational responsibilities for allocation and distribution of food grains.
- The NFSA currently covers **81 crore people** which was determined on the basis of the **2011 census**, and has not been revised since the law was passed in 2013.

### Why in News?

- The Government has announced that once the new census data is available, the Centre may consider revising the number of people who get subsidised food grains under the National Food Security Act.
- The government has also launched the '**Mera Ration**' mobile app to help ration card holders identify their nearest ration shop, check details of their own entitlements, and track their recent transactions.

### NITI Aayog proposal

- Government think tank **NITI Aayog** has recently circulated a discussion paper proposing a **reduction in the NFSA coverage**, to 60% of the rural population and 40% of the urban population, in a bid to curb the food subsidy budget.
- Right to Food activists and economists such as Jean Dreze, who was instrumental in formulating the NFSA, have argued that with an increased population, the NFSA's coverage should be expanded, not pruned.

### 72. Which of the following commodities are exempted from GST?

- 1) Crude oil
- 2) Natural gas
- 3) Petrol
- 4) Diesel
- 5) Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF)

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

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

**Answer: D**

### Explanation

- When the GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, amalgamating over a dozen central and state levies, **five commodities - crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel**

**(ATF)** - were kept out of its purview given the revenue dependence of the central and state governments on this sector.

- This meant that the central government continued to levy **excise duty** on them while state governments charged **Value-added tax (VAT)**. These taxes have been raised periodically.
- While the taxes haven't come down, a spike in global oil prices on demand recovery has pushed petrol and diesel to an all-time high, leading to demand for them coming under the GST.

#### **What's in the news?**

- Amid record-high fuel prices, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said there is no proposal as of now to bring crude oil, petrol, diesel, jet fuel (ATF) and natural gas under the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

#### **73. Consider the following statements about NOTA option in the Indian electoral system**

- 1) If a voter chooses to press NOTA it indicates that the voter has not chosen to vote for any of the parties.
- 2) A NOTA vote requires prior permission of the presiding officer.

**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:**

**About NOTA**

- 'None of The Above' (NOTA) option in the Indian electoral system was introduced in India following the **2013 Supreme Court directive** in the *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India* judgment.
- The Supreme Court held that "If the right to vote is a statutory right, then the right to reject a candidate is a fundamental right of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution."



- The NOTA option was **first used in the Assembly elections held in four states -- Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the Union Territory, Delhi in 2013.**
- NOTA is the option which enables the voter to officially register a vote of rejection for all candidates who are contesting. If a voter chooses to press NOTA it indicates that the voter has not chosen to vote for any of the parties. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**

#### **How is a NOTA vote cast?**

- The EVMs have the NOTA option at the end of the candidates' list.
- Earlier, in order to cast a negative ballot by filing **Form 49-O**, a voter had to inform the presiding officer at the polling booth. But this compromised the secrecy of the ballot.
- A NOTA vote doesn't require the involvement of the presiding officer. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**

#### **Does it Make a Difference?**

- The NOTA option on EVMs has **no electoral value**. Even if the maximum number of votes cast is for NOTA, the candidate getting the most of the remaining votes would be declared winner.
- In other words, the existence of NOTA has been seen just as a “**symbolic instrument to express resentment**” against all the contesting candidates or the political system in general.
- However, attempts have been made recently, albeit at the local level, to expand the scope of NOTA.

#### **What are they?**

- In November 2018, the **Maharashtra State Election Commission** announced that if NOTA garners the most number of votes in a panchayat or municipality election, then none of the candidates in the fray would be declared elected, and instead a re-election would take place.
- In the same year, the **Haryana State Election Commissioner** inserted provisions in the law to bar the candidates—those who got less votes than NOTA—from contesting the follow-up elections.
- However, for Assembly and general elections – which are governed by the Election Commission of India – the scope of NOTA remains limited.

- Now, for the NOTA option to be given some "electoral value" in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, amendments will need to be made to **Rule 64 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.**

#### **Is NOTA available in Rajya Sabha polls?**

- In 2018, the **Election Commission withdrew the NOTA option** from ballot papers of the **Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Council polls** following a Supreme Court directive.
- The apex court held that the NOTA option is meant only for universal adult suffrage and direct elections and not polls held by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote as done in the Rajya Sabha.

#### **Why in News?**

- The Supreme Court has sought response from the Centre and the Election Commission on a plea seeking to direct the poll body to nullify an election result and conduct a fresh poll if the maximum votes are for NOTA in a particular constituency.

#### **Earlier Recommendations**

- The **'Right to Reject'** was first proposed by the **Law Commission** in 1999. It also suggested that the **candidates be declared elected only if they have obtained 50%+1 of the valid votes cast.**
- Similarly, the **Election Commission** endorsed 'Right to Reject', first in 2001, and then in 2004 in its Proposed Electoral Reforms.
- The **'Background Paper on Electoral Reforms'**, prepared by the **Ministry of Law in 2010**, had proposed that if a certain percentage of the vote was negative, then the election result should be nullified and a new election held.

**74. With reference to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), consider the following statements**

1. It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN)
2. It has jurisdiction to try individuals accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity

**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 International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the **principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN)**. It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946.

- The seat of the Court is at the **Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands)**. Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America).

- The Court's role is to **settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions** on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

- The Court is **composed of 15 judges**, who are **elected for terms of office of nine years** by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. Its official languages are English and French.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The International Court of Justice acts as a **world court**. The Court's jurisdiction is twofold: it decides, in accordance with international law, disputes of a legal nature that are submitted to it by States (jurisdiction in contentious cases); and it **gives advisory opinions on legal questions at the request of the organs of the United Nations**, specialized agencies or one related organization authorized to make such a request (advisory jurisdiction)

Ø The International Court of Justice has **no jurisdiction to try individuals accused of war crimes or crimes** against humanity.

### **The International Criminal Court (ICC)**

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) **investigates and tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community:** genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

- The Court is **participating in a global fight to end impunity**, and through international criminal justice, the Court aims to hold those responsible accountable for their crimes and to help prevent these crimes from happening again.

**Why in the news?**

- Kenya has declined to take part in proceedings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over its maritime border dispute with neighbouring Somalia.

**75. Consider the following statements about Organic farming**

- 1) Organic farming is a sustainable agriculture system that excludes the use of synthetic inputs in farming and relies on on-farm inputs such as crop residues, farmyard manure, enriched composts, vermi-compost, oil cakes, bio-fertilizers etc for nutrient management of crops.
- 2) The demand of organic farming has increased in the domestic market during the last few years.

**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**

- Organic farming is a **sustainable agriculture system that excludes the use of synthetic inputs** in farming and relies on on-farm inputs such as crop residues, farmyard manure, enriched composts, vermi-compost, oil cakes, bio-fertilizers etc for nutrient management of crops. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**
- Similarly, pests and diseases are managed by eco-friendly farming practices of crop rotation, trap crops, bio-pesticides like neem-based formulations, bio control agents, mechanical traps, stale seed bed etc. adoption of organic farming practices produces safe food, reduces cost of production, improves soil health and health in mitigating the climate change and global warming by reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers.
- The Government of India has been promoting Organic farming in the country through dedicated schemes namely **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** and **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER)** since 2015-16 to cater to the needs of domestic and export markets respectively.
- Both the schemes stress on end to end support to organic farmers i.e. from production to certification and marketing.

- Post harvest management support including processing, packing, marketing is made integral part of these schemes to encourage organic farmers including in the State of Rajasthan and Assam.
- **The demand for organic farming has increased in the domestic market during the last few years. Hence statement 2 is correct**
- According to the joint study of ASSOCHAM –EY, the domestic organic market is growing @ 17% and the projected demand of organic food market is likely to cross 87.1 crore by 2021 from the Rs. 53.3 crore in 2016. The demand in international market has also increased in last 3 years.

**76. Maastricht Treaty and Lisbon Treaty are related to which of the following International organisations?**

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- G 7
- ASEAN
- European Union

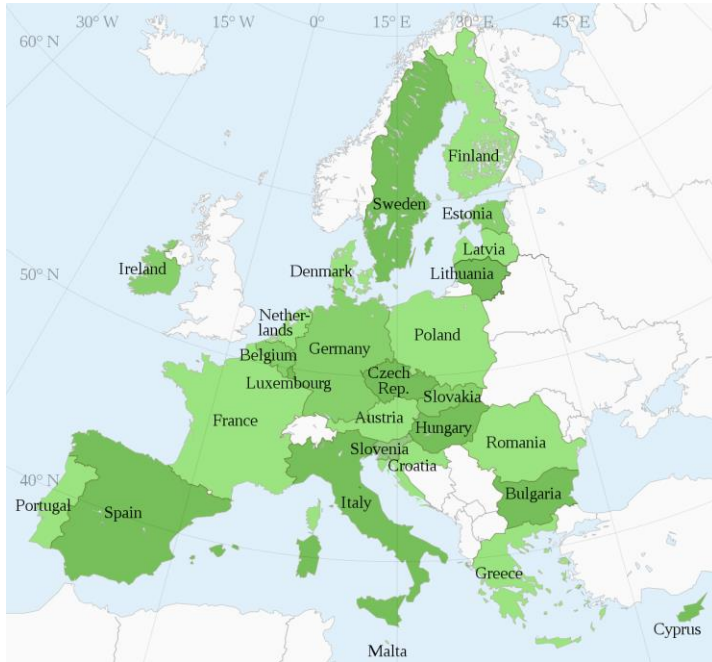
**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- The European Union (EU) is a unique **economic and political union** between 27 European countries.
- The **United Kingdom**, which had been a founding member of the EU, left the organization in 2020.
- The EU was created by the **Maastricht Treaty**, which entered into force on November 1, 1993. The treaty was designed to enhance European political and economic integration by creating a single currency (the euro), a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights and by advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs.
- Additionally, the **Treaty of Lisbon**, enacted in 2009, gave the EU more broad powers that included being authorized to sign international treaties, increase border patrol, and other security and enforcement provisions.
- EU's headquarters is currently located in Brussels, Belgium.



- Currently, the euro is the official currency of 19 out of 27 EU member countries which together constitute the **Eurozone**, officially called the **euro area**.



**77. With reference to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), consider the following statements.**

- CSR is a corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare.
- India has legally mandated CSR.
- Any company that has a net worth of at least Rs 500 crore, a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or a net profit of Rs 5 crore is obliged to spend 5% of its average profits over the last three years on CSR.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

**Statement 1 is correct:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a management concept through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (“**Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach**”).

- **Statement 2 is correct:** India is the first country in the world to make CSR **mandatory**, following an amendment to The Company Act, 2013 in 2014.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Any company that has a net worth of at least Rs 500 crore, a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or a net profit of Rs 5 crore is obliged to spend **2% of its average profits** over the last three years on CSR.
- Businesses can invest their profits in areas such as education, poverty, gender equality, and hunger as part of their CSR compliance, as regulated by the law.

**78. Consider the following statements about the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.**

1. The law allows a woman to undergo an abortion only under certain conditions such serious abnormality of the fetus, mental or physical harm to the woman, etc.
2. It capped the upper gestation limit for abortion at 20 weeks.

**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:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 allows a woman to undergo an abortion only under certain conditions. A woman can seek abortion if the doctor confirms that the fetus in the womb has serious abnormality or if the continuation of pregnancy could cause mental or physical harm to the woman.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The law allows a woman to undergo abortion **only till 20 weeks, beyond which abortion is prohibited.**

#### **Issues with the current law**

- Legal and medical experts feel that a revision of the legal limit for abortion is long overdue.
- Foetal abnormalities show up only by 18 weeks, so just a two-week window after that is too small for the would-be parents to take the difficult call on whether to keep their baby and for the medical practitioner to exhaust all possible options before advising the patient to take the extreme step.
- Since lack of legal approval does not prevent abortions from being carried out beyond 20 weeks, women are put under risk since the abortions then are often conducted in unhygienic conditions by untrained, unqualified persons. It is estimated that about 8% of maternal deaths happen due to unsafe abortions.
- Recently, the Parliament has approved the MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which allows abortion up to 24 weeks of gestational age for vulnerable categories of women and there is no limit of gestational age in case of pregnancies with substantial foetal abnormalities, diagnosed by a medical board.

**79. With reference to the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), consider the following statements.**

1. It was launched by India in 2020 to control COVID outbreak.
2. It is an international partnership to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development.

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: **B**

#### **Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** India launched the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) on the sidelines of the UN Climate Action Summit in September, 2019.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** This international partnership of national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, private sector, and knowledge institutions will promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development.
- Developed through consultations with more than 35 countries, CDRI envisions enabling measurable reduction in infrastructure losses from disasters, including extreme climate events.

**80. Consider the following statements with respect to Code on Wages Act, 2019**

- 1) The state governments will fix a floor wage, taking into account the living standards of workers
- 2) The Code will apply to all employees to enforce minimum wage among both formal and informal sector workers.

**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: B

**Explanation**

The Code on Wages, 2019 seeks to regulate **wage and bonus payments in all employments** where any industry, trade, business, or manufacture is carried out. The Code **replaces the following four laws:** (i) the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, (ii) the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, (iii) the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, and (iv) the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976

- **Statement 2 is correct: Coverage:** The Code will **apply to all employees** to enforce **minimum wage among both formal and informal sector** workers and make provision for no gender discrimination in either recruitment or payment of wages. The central government will make wage-related decisions for **employment such as railways, mines, and oil fields**, among others. State governments will make decisions for all other employment.

- **Wages include salary, allowance**, or any other component expressed in monetary terms. This **does not include bonus payable to employees** or any travelling allowance, among others.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect: Floor wage-** According to the Code, the **central government** (not state government) **will fix a floor wage**, taking into account living standards of workers. Further, it may set **different floor wages for different geographical areas**. Before fixing the floor wage, the central government may obtain the advice of the Central Advisory Board and may consult with state governments
- The **minimum wages** decided by the central or state governments **must be higher than the floor wage**. In case the existing minimum wages fixed by the central or state governments are higher than the floor wage, they cannot reduce the minimum wages.
- **Fixing the minimum wage:** The Code **prohibits employers from paying wages less than the minimum wages**. Minimum wages will be notified by the central or state governments. The minimum wages will be **revised and reviewed** by the central or state governments at **an interval of not more than five years**.
- **Overtime:** The central or state government may **fix the number of hours that constitute a normal working day**. In case employees work in excess of a normal working day, they will be entitled to overtime wage, which must be at least **twice the normal rate of wages**.
- **Determination of bonus:** All employees whose wages do not exceed a specific monthly amount, notified by the central or state government, will be entitled to an annual bonus
- **Gender discrimination:** The Code **prohibits gender discrimination** in matters related to wages and recruitment of employees for the **same work or work of similar nature**. Work of similar nature is defined as work for which the skill, effort, experience, and responsibility required are the same.
- **Advisory boards:** The central and state governments will constitute advisory boards. **One-third of the total members** on both the central and state Boards will be women. The Boards will advise the respective governments on various issues including: (i) **fixation of minimum wages** and (ii) increasing employment opportunities for women.
- **Offences:** The Code specifies **penalties for offences committed by an employer** such as (i) paying less than the due wages or (ii) for **contravening any provision of the Code**.



**81. Consider the following statements with respect to Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013,**

- 1) It covers both the organised and unorganised sectors.
- 2) All workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign companies having a place of work in India comes under the definition of workplace.
- 3) The Act does not cover a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house.

**Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?**

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

**About Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, of 2013.**

- In 2013, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was passed **broadening the Vishaka guidelines.**
- The Act mandates that **every organisation with 10 or more employees set up an internal complaints committee of ICC** at each office or branch.
- It lays down procedures and defines various aspects of sexual harassment, including aggrieved victim — a woman “of any age whether employed or not”, who “alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment”, which means the rights of all women working or visiting any workplace, in any capacity, are protected under the Act.

**What were the Vishaka guidelines?**

These were laid down by the Supreme Court in a judgment in 1997. This was a case filed by women's rights groups, one of which was Vishaka. They had filed a public interest litigation over the alleged gang-rape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan. In 1992, she had prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, leading to the alleged gang-rape in an act of revenge.

### **What do these guidelines say?**

Legally binding, these defined sexual harassment and imposed three key obligations on institutions — **prohibition, prevention, redressal**. The Supreme Court directed that they establish a Complaints Committee, which would look into matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment includes “any one or more” of the following “unwelcome acts or behaviour” committed directly or by implication:

- Physical contact and advances
- A demand or request for sexual favours
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

### **Definition of Workplace**

- A workplace is defined as “any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey.”

### **Statement 1 and 2 are correct:**

- As per this definition, a workplace covers both the organised and unorganised sectors.
- It also includes all workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign company having a place of work in India.

### **Women covered under the Act:**

- The Act recognizes the right of every woman to a safe and secure workplace environment irrespective of her age or employment/work status. Hence, the right of all women working or visiting any workplace whether in the capacity of regular, temporary, adhoc, or daily wages basis is protected under the Act.
- It includes all women whether engaged directly or through an agent including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer. They may be working for remuneration, on a voluntary basis or otherwise.

- Their terms of employment can be express or implied.
- Further, she could be a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or called by any other such name.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:**

- The Act also covers a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house

**82. Consider the following statements with respect to organic farming**

1. It is a system which avoids or largely excludes the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and proposes the usage of organic manure and natural 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.

Answer: B

**Explanation**

- It 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:** As per the definition of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) study team on organic farming “**organic farming is a system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetic inputs (such as fertilizers, pesticides, hormones, feed additives etc)** and to the maximum extent feasible rely upon crop rotations, **crop residues, animal manures**, off-farm organic waste, mineral grade rock additives and biological system of nutrient mobilization and plant protection”.

- FAO suggested that “Organic agriculture is a **unique production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health**, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity, and this is accomplished by using on-farm agronomic, biological and mechanical methods in exclusion of all synthetic off-farm inputs”.

#### **Need of organic farming**

- The scientists have realized that the ‘Green Revolution’ with high input use has reached a plateau and is now sustained with **diminishing return of falling dividends**. Thus, a natural balance needs to be maintained at all cost for the existence of life and property.

#### **The key characteristics of organic farming include**

- **Statement 3 Is correct** : Protecting the **long term fertility of soils** by maintaining organic matter levels, **encouraging soil biological activity**, and careful mechanical intervention
- **Statement 2 Is incorrect: No genetic modification is done** to increase the yield of the crop.
- **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 etc
- 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

### **83. Consider the following pairs with respect to agricultural revolutions in India**

<b>Revolution</b>	<b>Related with</b>
1. Golden Revolution	- Jute production
2. Blue Revolution	- Fish production
3. Round Revolution	- Egg production
4. Yellow Revolution	- Oil seeds Production

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

- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 2 and 4 only
- 1, 2 and 4 only

d) 2 and 3 only

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**

- The agricultural revolution refers to the **significant change in the agriculture that occurs when there are discoveries, inventions** or new technologies implemented. These changes have positive implications on production and **increase the production rate**. The concept of **‘Rainbow revolution’** was instituted to increase agricultural production through an **integral development programme** of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, sugarcane, fishery, poultry and animal husbandry.

**Agricultural revolutions in India**

Green Revolution                      Food grain Production

**Golden Revolution**                      **Fruit Production**

Grey Revolution                      Fertilizer Production

**Blue Revolution**                      **Fish Production**

Golden Fiber Revolution                      Jute Production

Black Revolution                      Petroleum Production

Pink Revolution                      Prawn Production

**Round Revolution**                      **Potato Production**

Red Revolution                      Meat/Tomato Production

Silver Revolution                      Egg/Poultry Production

White Revolution                      Milk Production

**Yellow Revolution**                      **Oil seeds Production**

**84. 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



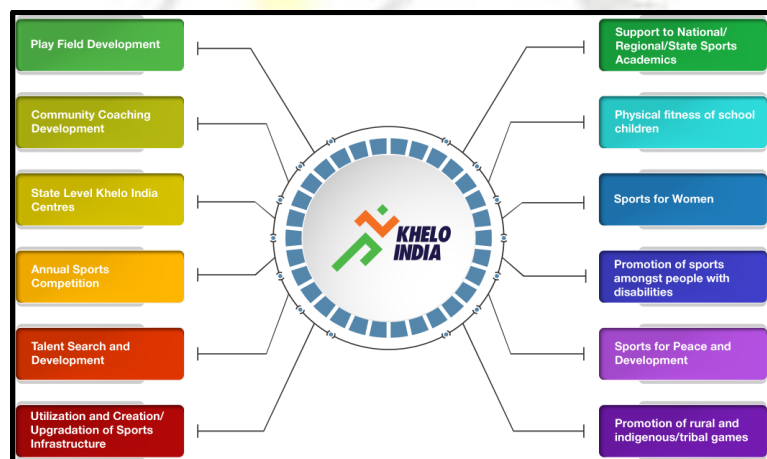
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) Only 1
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**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.

**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.**

**85. Consider the following statements about Kisan MaanDhan Yojana**

- 1) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) is an old age pension scheme for all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in the country.
- 2) It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for the entry age group of 18 to 60 years.

**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: A**

**Explanation:**

- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY)** is an old age pension scheme for all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in the country (owning less than 2 hectares of land) Hence statement 1 is correct.
- PM-Kisan MaanDhan Yojana Scheme aims to cover around 3 to 5 crore **Small and Marginal Farmers**.
- It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme, with entry age of **18 to 40 years**. (Not 18 to 60 years) **Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Under this Scheme, a minimum **fixed pension of Rs.3,000/-** is provided to the eligible small and marginal farmers on attaining the age of 60 years.
- The **LIC** shall be the pension fund manager and shall be responsible for pension pay out.

**86. Which of the following are the factors in the determination of Minimum Support Price (MSP)?**

1. Cost of production (CoP)
2. Price trend in the domestic and international markets
3. Inter-crop price parity

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- a) 1 Only
- b) 1 and 2 Only
- c) 2 and 3 Only
- d) All the above.

**Answer – D**

**Explanation:**

1. Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a **form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.**

2. The minimum support prices are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops **on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).**

3. Cost of production (CoP) is one of the important factors in the determination of MSP of mandated crops.

4. Commission for 'Agricultural Costs and Prices' (CACP), considers other important factors such as demand and supply, price trend in the domestic and international markets, inter-crop price parity.

**87. Consider the following statements about National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**

- 1) It has been constituted as an attached office of the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- 2) Currently, the NPPA fixes the price of scheduled drugs only.
- 3) The manufacturer of a non-scheduled drug (drugs not under direct price control) is not required to take price approvals from NPPA for such drugs.

**Which of the statements given above is/are INCORRECT?**

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

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**

**National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)**

- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), was established in 1997 **as an independent body of experts** as per the decision taken by the Cabinet committee in September 1994 while reviewing Drug Policy as regulator for pricing of drugs.
- It has been constituted as **an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- The Authority has been entrusted with the task of

- Fixation/revision of prices of pharmaceutical products (bulk drugs and formulations),
- Enforcement of provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order
- Monitoring of the prices of controlled and decontrolled drugs in the country.

#### **What is the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) ?**

- The Drugs Prices Control Order, 1995 is an order issued by the Government of India under Sec. 3 of **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** to regulate the prices of drugs.
- The Order provides the **list of price controlled drugs, procedures for fixation of prices of drugs, method of implementation of prices fixed by Government, penalties for contravention of provisions etc.**
- Later, the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) 2013 was notified.
- The DPCO 2013 contains 680 scheduled drug formulations spread across 27 therapeutic groups. However, the prices of other drugs can be regulated, if warranted in public interest.
- The manufacturer of a **non-scheduled drugs** (drugs not under direct price control) is **not required to take price approvals** from NPPA for such drugs. Hence **statement 3 is correct.**
- However, NPPA is required to monitor the prices of such drugs and take corrective measures where warranted and their includes the **power to fix and regulate such prices.** Thus, NPPA **can fix the price for Non-scheduled drugs also. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**

#### **88. Consider the following statements with reference to Tuberculosis:**

- 1) Nikshay Poshan Yojana provides financial assistance to all TB notified patients in order to provide nutritional support and aid in the treatment of TB.
- 2) India aims to eliminate TB by 2022 in order to achieve Sustainable development goals.

**Which of the following statements given above is/are INCORRECT ?**

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

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

The Nikshay Poshan Yojana provides **500 INR monthly to all TB notified TB patients** in order to provide nutritional support and aid in the treatment of TB. Hence **statement 1 is correct**.

India has set a target for complete **elimination of Tuberculosis (TB) by 2025**, five years ahead of the global target of 2030. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**.

**89. Which of the following are objectives of PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme?**

- 1) Increase in access to finance by micro food processing units.
- 2) Encourage Waste to Wealth activities.
- 3) Enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has launched the PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) scheme as a part of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'.

**Objectives of the scheme :**

- Increase in access to finance by micro food processing units.
- Increase in revenues of target enterprises.
- Enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards.
- Strengthening capacities of support systems.
- Transition from the unorganized sector to the formal sector.
- Special focus on women entrepreneurs and Aspirational districts.
- Encourage Waste to Wealth activities.
- Focus on minor forest produce in Tribal Districts.



**Salient features of the scheme:**

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- Expenditure to be shared by the Government of India and States at 60:40.
- 2,00,000 micro-enterprises are to be assisted with credit linked subsidies.
- Scheme will be implemented over a 5 year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- Cluster based approach.
- Focus will be on perishables.

**Benefits of the scheme:**

- Nearly eight lakh micro- enterprises will benefit through access to information, better exposure and formalization.
- Credit linked subsidy support and hand-holding will be extended to 2,00,000 micro enterprises for expansion and upgradation.
- It will enable them to formalize, grow and become competitive.
- The project is likely to generate nine lakh skilled and semi-skilled jobs.
- Scheme envisages increased access to credit by existing micro food processing entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in the Aspirational Districts.
- Better integration with organized markets.
- Increased access to common services like sorting, grading, processing, packaging, storage etc.

**90. Which of the following statements regarding Leprosy is/are correct?**

1. Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae.
2. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set the goal of zero children with leprosy and deformities by 2020.
3. It is common in tropical or subtropical countries and is also known as Hansen's Disease.

**Select the correct answer using the given codes**

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

**Answer:D**

**Explanation:**

All the three statements are correct.

- Leprosy is one of the oldest diseases in recorded history. Also, known as Hansen's disease (HD), it is a chronic, progressive bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*.
- It primarily affects the nerves of the extremities, the skin, the lining of the nose, the upper respiratory tract and the eyes. The disease produces skin ulcers, nerve damage, and muscle weakness. If it isn't treated, it can cause severe disfigurement and significant disability.
- It is known to occur at all ages ranging from early infancy to very old age. It is common in many countries, especially those with a tropical or subtropical climate.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set the goal of zero children with leprosy and deformities by 2020.

**91. Consider the following statements about Nirbhaya Fund**

1. Nirbhaya Fund is a dedicated fund set up by the government of India which can be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women.
2. It is a non-lapsable corpus fund, being administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

**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**

- Nirbhaya Fund is a dedicated fund set up by the government of India in 2013 which can be utilized for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of women. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**

- It is a **non-lapsable corpus fund** administered by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF)** of the Government of India. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**.
- It provides for an Empowered Committee (EC) of officers chaired by the Secretary, **Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD)** to **appraise and recommend proposals** to be funded under this framework.
- It also provides for the concerned Ministry/ Department to seek approval of the designated competent financial authority, as well as of the DEA for funding of such proposals under the Nirbhaya Framework.
- As per this framework, the **MoF through DEA is the nodal Ministry** for any accretion into and withdrawal from the corpus, and the **MWCD is responsible to review and monitor** the progress of sanctioned projects/ schemes in conjunction with the concerned Central Ministries/ Departments.
- Budget allocations against approved projects are made in the budget of the respective Ministries/ Departments through **Demands or Supplementary Demands for Grants**.
- The **salient features of Nirbhaya Fund** like project contours, procedure for submitting proposals, procedure for processing proposals, funding pattern etc. is indicated in the framework.
- **Funding to Non-Governmental Organisations is not envisaged under the framework.**

**92. Which of the following statements regarding '9 dash' line is correct?**

- (a) International Boundary line between North and South Korea.
- (b) Line of control between South Korea and Japan in Korea strait.
- (c) Demarcation line made by China for their claims of south china sea including Paracel and Spratly islands.
- (d) Boundary line between Russia, China and Mongolia.

Ans: (c)

**Explanation:**

"Nine-dash line" is the heart of the South China Sea dispute. It is a line drawn by China to demarcate its maritime rights in the South China sea. Normally it should have been demarcated based on the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea.

China extrapolated the line to occupy various groups of islands like Paracel and Spratly. These islands are said to be rich in oil and natural gas reserves. It runs as far as 2,000km from the Chinese mainland to within a few hundred kilometres of the Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam. According to China, any land or features contained within the 9 dash line belongs to it. China points out that historically they held ownership of these places. But other countries like Vietnam and the Philippines do not agree to it.



**93. Consider the following statements**

- (1) India has a specific law regarding refugees and provisions to deal with cross border migration.
- (2) India has not been a signatory of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol.

**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: B**

**Explanation:**

**Statement 1 is incorrect:** India doesn't have a specific law regarding refugees.

**Statement 2 is correct:** 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 UNHCR statute.

**The 1951 Refugee Convention** is the key legal document that forms the basis of our work. Ratified by 145 State parties. An essential purpose of the 1951 Convention is to define the legal status of the refugees in the territory of the contracting Party. It contains comprehensive provisions on the obligations and rights of refugees in areas as diverse as gainful employment, labour legislation, social security, public relief and education

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its **1967 Protocol** together are the most comprehensive instruments which have been adopted to date on a universal level to safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees and to regulate their status in countries of asylum. As such they are fundamental to the international regime of refugee protection. They help in ensuring that refugees are granted basic humanitarian treatment

**94. Consider the following statements**

1. India is the second largest fish producing nation in the world.
2. Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) aims to address critical infrastructure gaps in the fisheries sector.

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: C**

**Explanation:**

**Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) :**

- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) aims to address critical infrastructure gaps in fisheries sector. Hence statement 2 is correct.



- The scheme under the Department of Fisheries will establish a robust fisheries management framework.
- This will **address critical gaps in strengthening the value chain, including infrastructure, modernization, traceability, production, productivity, post-harvest management, and quality control.**

#### **Fisheries Sector:**

- The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying, and Fisheries is the main authoritative body for development of the fisheries industry in India.
- Presently **India is the second largest fish producing and second largest aquaculture nation in the world after China. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- As per Economic Survey, "Fisheries is a fast-growing sector in India, which provides nutrition and food security to a large population of the country besides providing income and employment to more than 14.5 million people."
- The Government has **merged all the schemes of fisheries Sector into an umbrella scheme of 'Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries'** focusing on increasing fish production and productivity from aquaculture and fisheries resources, both inland and marine."

**95. Which of the following was/were included in UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage list?**

1. Kumbh Mela
2. Yoga
3. Mudi yettu
4. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

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

**Ans: D**

**Explanation**

## UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- This coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate **diversity of cultural heritage** and raise awareness about its importance
- The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect

**It has two parts viz. Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of urgent safeguarding**

**From India the Intangible Cultural Heritages added into this list include**

- Tradition of Vedic chanting
- Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana
- **Kutiyattam**, Sanskrit theatre
- Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas
- **Mudiyettu**, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
- Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan
- **Chhau dance**
- **Buddhist chanting of Ladakh**: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.
- Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur
- Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab
- **Yoga**
- Nawrouz
- **Kumbh Mela**

## 96. Consider the following pairs

1. Sabka Vishwas -Legacy Dispute Resolution
2. PM Shram Yogi Maan-dhan -Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons
3. PM Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana -Pension scheme for Unorganised Workers

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

a.1 only

b.2 and 3 only

c.2 only

d.1,2 and 3

**Answers: A**

**Explanation:**

**1) Sabka Vishwas Scheme:**

- It is a Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme.
- The scheme targets those taxpayers who want to close their pending disputes related to Service Tax and Excise Tax (now subsumed under Goods and Services Tax).

The two main components of the Scheme are **dispute resolution and amnesty**.

- The dispute resolution component is aimed at **liquidating the legacy cases of Central Excise and Service Tax** that are subsumed in GST and are pending in litigation at various forums.
- The amnesty component of the Scheme offers an opportunity to the taxpayers **to pay the outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under the law**. The most attractive aspect of the Scheme is that it provides substantial relief in the tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine, penalty, In all these cases, there would be no other liability of interest, fine or penalty. There is also a complete amnesty from prosecution.

**2) PM Shram Yogi Maan-dhan**

The scheme is meant for **old age protection and social security of Unorganised Workers (UW)** who are mostly engaged as rickshaw pullers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, brick kiln workers, cobblers, rag pickers, domestic workers, washer men, home-based workers, own account workers, agricultural workers, construction workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers, audio - visual workers or in similar other occupations.

**Eligibility Criteria**

- Should be an unorganised worker (UW)
- Entry age between 18 and 40 years
- Monthly Income ₹15000 or below

### **Should not be**

- engaged in Organized Sector (membership of EPF/NPS/ESIC)
- an income tax payer

### **Features:**

It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme, under which the subscriber would receive a minimum assured pension of ₹3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years and if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension as family pension. Family pension is applicable only to spouse.

### **3) Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana**

- The **National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons Yojana** is a pension scheme for shopkeeper's/ retail traders and self-employed persons .
- It is a **voluntary and contribution based central sector scheme**.
- The traders in the age group of 18-40 years with an annual turnover, **not exceeding Rs.1.5 crore** and who are not a member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS/PM-SYM or an income tax payer, can join the scheme.
- Under the scheme, 50% monthly contribution is payable by the beneficiary and equal matching contribution is paid by the Central Government.
- Subscribers, after attaining the age of 60 years, are eligible for a monthly **minimum assured pension of Rs.3,000/-**

### **97. With reference to the Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme, consider the following statements:**

1. It will reimburse taxes and duties paid by exporters which are not getting exempted or refunded under any other existing mechanism.
2. It replaces the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) in a phased manner.

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:**

- Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) was introduced under **Foreign Trade Policy of India (FTP 2015-20)**, as a part of Exports from India Scheme.
- The scheme provides **incentive in the form of duty credit scrip** to exporters to compensate for their losses on payment of duties. The scrips can be transferred or used for payment of a number of duties including the basic customs duty.

### **What is the issue?**

- In 2019, a WTO dispute resolution panel ruled that MEIS was **not in compliance with the global trade norms**.
- Additionally, many exporters had persistently complained that the MEIS scheme doesn't offset all the taxes.

### **RoDTEP scheme**

- To address these issues, the government introduced the **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme** with a view to give a boost to the country's outbound shipments.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The government announced that whatever taxes, or duties or local levies imposed by the Centre, State or local governments that are not getting refunded through any other scheme, will be done through RoDTEP in a way that is **compliant with the WTO norms**.
- It is proposed to **digitally refund to exporters**, duties and taxes levied at the Centre, State and local levels.
- **Statement 2 is correct :** The RoDTEP scheme **replaces the Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS)** in a phased manner.

### **98. Consider the following statements with respect to Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**

1. Periodic Labour Force Survey is carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. It is an quinquennial report released to measure both employment and unemployment in the country.

### **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: D

### Explanation

One of the major statistical hurdles in our country is the **estimation of reliable employment and unemployment data**. The NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) was historically conducting Employment and Unemployment Surveys as part of its National Sample Surveys.

- They were **quinquennial (once in every five years)** Employment and Unemployment surveys. These surveys were the prime source for statistics about employment and unemployment situation in the country.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** But from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, the **NSSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** (not by the Ministry of Labour and Employment) has adopted a new employment and unemployment survey called **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** First report of the PLFS was published in June 2019 for the period of 2017-18. The PLFS has now become the major employment and unemployment data of the NSSO; **replacing the previous five-year surveys**. Since the PLFS aims to provide more employment data for **more frequent intervals (annual and quarterly)**, the PLFS is superior to the earlier five-year employment estimates.
- Methodologically, the PLFS is different from the earlier quinquennial surveys in terms of survey methodology, data collection mechanism and sampling design.

### 99. Consider the following statements regarding the Indus Water Treaty (1960)

1. It is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan brokered by the World Bank
2. According to the treaty, all the water of western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) shall be available for unrestricted use in India.
3. The treaty allocates 80% of water from the Indus river system to Pakistan.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 and 2 only

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

Ans : C

#### Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is a **water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan** signed on September 19, 1960. The treaty was signed by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan. It was **brokered by the World Bank** (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development).
- The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) deals with **river Indus and its five tributaries**, which are classified into 2 categories
- **Eastern rivers:** Sutlej, Beas and Ravi
- **Western rivers:** Jhelum, Chenab and Indus
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** According to treaty, **all the water of eastern rivers shall be available for unrestricted use in India**. India should let unrestricted flow of water from **western rivers to Pakistan**.
- It doesn't mean that India can't use western river water. The treaty says that **India can use the water in western rivers in "non-consumptive" needs**. Here non consumptive means we can use it for irrigation, storage and even for electricity production
- The **treaty allocates 80% of water from the six-river Indus water system to Pakistan**. India can use only 20 percent of the total water carried by Indus river system.

#### 100. Gandhi Peace Prize is related to which of the following?

- a. An Award conferred to recognize the special contribution of the children in the fields of social service
- b. Global award for leaders striving towards sustainable development
- c. Scheme of National Awards to senior citizens
- d. Award for bringing about a Social, Economic and Political transformation through Non-violence.

Answer: D

#### Explanation

- **Gandhi Peace Prize:** Award for **Social, Economic and Political transformation** through Non-violence was instituted in the year 1995. This annual award is given to individuals, associations, institutions or organizations who have worked selflessly for peace, non-violence and amelioration of human sufferings particularly of the less-privileged section of society contributing towards social justice and harmony.
- Option A is related to the **Bal Shakti Puraskar** which is conferred to **recognize the special contribution of the children** in the fields of social service, innovation, bravery, sports, art and culture and scholastic. The award carries a medal, a certificate, a citation and a cash prize worth Rs 1lakh.
- Option B is related to the **Global Goalkeeper awards:** The award facilitate change makers around the world for their **contributions toward meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**,
- Option C is related to Vayoshreshtha Samman. **Vayoshreshtha Samman** is a **Scheme of awards instituted by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment** and gradually upgraded to the status of National Awards, for institutions involved in **rendering distinguished service for the cause of elderly persons** especially indigent senior citizens and to eminent citizens in recognition of their service/achievements.

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

- Honey
- Fodder
- Wild fruits
- Timber
- Bamboo

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

- A. 1, 2 and 3 only
- B. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- D. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**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.

**112. Consider the following statements about UNESCO Global Geoparks.**

1. They are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
2. At present, there are 18 Global Geoparks in India.

**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:** UNESCO Global Geoparks are **single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance** are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
- The purpose of a UNESCO Global Geoparks is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's natural, cultural and intangible heritages.
- The **status does not imply restrictions on any economic activity** inside a Geopark where that activity complies with indigenous, local, regional and/or national legislation.

**Bottom-up approach**

- UNESCO Global Geoparks are established through a bottom-up process involving all relevant local and regional stakeholders and authorities in the area (e.g. land owners, community groups, tourism providers, indigenous people, and local organizations).

## **Difference between UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites**

- UNESCO Global Geoparks, together with the other two UNESCO site designations Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, give a complete picture of celebrating our heritage while at the same time conserving the world's cultural, biological and geological diversity, and promoting sustainable economic development.
- While **Biosphere Reserves** focus on the harmonised management of biological and cultural diversity and **World Heritage Sites** promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value, **UNESCO Global Geoparks** give international recognition for sites that promote the importance and significance of protecting the Earth's geodiversity through actively engaging with the local communities.

### **What is the Global Geoparks Network?**

- The Global Geoparks Network (GGN), of which **membership is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks**, is a legally constituted **not-for-profit organisation**.
- The GGN was founded in **2004** and is a dynamic network where members are committed to work together and exchange ideas of best practise and join in common projects to raise the quality standards of all products and practises of a UNESCO Global Geopark.

### **India's Case**

- At present, there are **161 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 44 countries**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Despite its extremely diverse geological terrain and markings of some of the world's most fabulous geological events, **India does not have a single geopark recognised by UNESCO**.

## **113. Consider the following statements regarding Bandhipur Tiger Reserve**

1. It is situated in the Chamarajanagar District of Karnataka.
2. This National Park forms a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
3. It is surrounded by the river Moyar in the north, River Kabini in the south and the River Nugu runs through the park.

### **Which of the following statements is/are correct ?**

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



(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans : B**

**Explanation**

- It is situated in the Chamarajanagar District of Karnataka.
- The Tiger Reserve is situated in two contiguous districts (Mysore and Chamarajanagar) of Karnataka. It is located at the tri-junction area of the States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- The National Park forms part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- It is surrounded by the river Kabini in the north, River Moyar in the south and the River Nugu runs through the park.
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve is surrounded by
  1. Nagarhole Tiger Reserve (Karnataka) in the North West (Kabini Reservoir separates the two)
  2. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in the South and
  3. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) in the South West.

114. **With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, consider the following statements.**

1. It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skill Qualification Framework.
3. Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The scheme was launched in 2015.
- The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood.
- Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It aims to align the competencies of the unregulated workforce of the country to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).

**115. With reference to 'Eco-sensitive zones (ESZ)', consider the following statements.**

1. As a general principle, land falling within 100 kms of the boundaries of the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are categorised as Eco-sensitive Zones.
2. They are declared under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

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: **B**

**Explanation:**

- ESAs are defined as those areas that are ecologically and economically important, but vulnerable even to mild disturbances, and hence demand careful management.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** As a general principle, **land falling within 10 kms** of the boundaries of the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are categorised as Eco-Fragile Zones or Eco-sensitive Zones.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** They are declared under the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**.

- The purpose of declaring Eco-sensitive Zones around National parks and Sanctuaries is to create some kind of "**Shock Absorber**" for the Protected Areas. They would also act as a **transition zone** from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.
- The activities in the eco-sensitive zones would be of a **regulatory nature rather than prohibitive nature**, unless and otherwise so required.

**116. Consider the following statements about the State Development Loans (SDLs).**

1. SDLs are market borrowings of state governments, issued by the RBI on their behalf.
2. Foreign Portfolio Investment is allowed in SDLs.

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:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** State Development Loans (SDLs) are market borrowings by state governments. RBI issues these securities on their behalf, through auctions.
- Purpose of issuing State Development Loans is to meet the budgetary needs of state governments.
- Each state is allowed to issue securities up to a certain limit each year.
- SDLs are eligible securities for Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) and Liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) purposes, and are bought by banks, insurance companies, mutual funds, provident funds and other institutional investors.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The limits for FPI investment in Government securities (G-secs) and State Development Loans (SDLs) are 6% and 2%, respectively, of outstanding stocks of securities.

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/states-market-borrowings-go-up-28-y-o-y/article34144471.ece>

117. With reference to the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), consider the following statements.

1. It is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at assisting first generation entrepreneurs for setting up micro enterprises in the non-farm sector.
2. At the national level, the Scheme is being implemented by NABARD.
3. The scheme is applicable to all viable projects in rural as well as urban areas, under the Micro enterprises sector.

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: B

**Explanation:**

- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a central sector scheme administered by the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** since 2008-09.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It is a major **credit-linked subsidy programme** aimed at **assisting first generation entrepreneurs for setting up micro enterprises** in the **non-farm sector** by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** At the national level, the Scheme is being implemented by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**, a statutory organization under the administrative control of the Ministry of MSME, as the single nodal agency.
- At the State level, the Scheme will be implemented through State KVIC Directorates, State Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industries Centres (DICs) and banks.
- Under the scheme, loans are being provided by all Public Sector Banks, selected Private Sector Banks and Co-operative Banks with **margin money subsidy** (refers to the amount that the government contributes to beneficiaries availing PMEGP loan) being given by the Ministry of MSME through KVIC.

Categories of beneficiaries under PMEGP	Beneficiary's own contribution (of project cost)	Rate of Subsidy	
		Urban	Rural
General Category	10%	15%	25%
Special Category (including SC/ST/OBC /Minorities/ Women, Ex-Servicemen, Physically handicapped, NER, Hill, and Border areas etc)	5%	25%	35%

### Scope

- **Statement 3 is correct:** The scheme is applicable to all viable projects in **rural as well as urban areas**, under the Micro enterprises sector.
- The maximum cost of the project admissible under the manufacturing sector is **Rs.25 lakhs** and the business/services sector is **Rs.10 lakhs**.
- **Only one person from a family** is eligible for obtaining financial assistance under the scheme.
- Assistance under the Scheme is available **only for new projects**.

### Eligible Entrepreneurs / Borrowers

- Any individual, above 18 years of age
- The beneficiaries should have passed at least VIII standard, for setting up of project costing above Rs.10 lacs in the Manufacturing Sector and above Rs. 5 lacs in the business /Service Sector,
- Self Help Groups
- Institutions registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860
- Production Co-operative Societies
- Charitable Trusts

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-skil-pmegp-number-of-micro-enterprises-set-up-in-fy20-declines-employment-dips-from-5-87-lakh-in-fy19/2219405/lite/>

### 118. Consider the following assets:

1. Certificates of Deposits



2. Demand deposits with Banks
3. Currency

The correct sequence of these assets in the decreasing order of liquidity is

- A. 1-2-3
- B. 2-3-1
- C. 3-1-2
- D. 3-2-1

Answer: **D**

**Explanation:**

- Liquid Assets are the assets of the business which can be converted into cash within a short span of time.
- Currency is considered the most liquid asset among all the assets in the economy.
- A demand deposit is an account with a bank or other financial institution that allows the depositor to withdraw his or her funds from the account without warning or with less than seven days' notice. Thus, it also offers high liquidity for the depositors.
- Certificate of deposits (CDs) are money market instruments which can have a duration that ranges from a few months to several years.

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/stock-markets/mutual-funds-exposure-to-bank-certificates-of-deposits-declines-67/article34111341.ece>

**119. Which of the following sectors are eligible for Priority Sector Lending (PSL)?**

1. Education
2. Renewable Energy
3. Export Credit
4. Startup sector

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Answer: **D**

## **Explanation:**

### **What is Priority Sector Lending?**

- Priority Sector means those sectors which the Government of India and Reserve Bank of India consider as important for the development of the basic needs of the country and are to be given priority over other sectors. The banks are mandated to encourage the growth of such sectors with adequate and timely credit.
- Priority Sector includes the following categories:
  - Agriculture
  - Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
  - **Export Credit**
  - **Education**
  - Housing
  - Social Infrastructure
  - **Renewable Energy**
  - Others
- **Targets Under the Priority Sector Lending**
  - **Domestic scheduled commercial banks** (excluding Regional Rural Banks and Small Finance Banks) and **Foreign banks with 20 branches and above:** 40 per cent of Adjusted Net Bank Credit or Credit Equivalent Amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure, whichever is higher.
  - **Regional Rural Banks & Small finance banks:** 75 per cent of Adjusted Net Bank Credit or Credit Equivalent Amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure, whichever is higher.
  - **Foreign banks with less than 20 branches:** 40 per cent of Adjusted Net Bank Credit or Credit Equivalent Amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposure, whichever is higher, to be achieved in a phased manner by 2020.
  - **Sub-targets** are specified for certain sectors like 18% to agriculture with 8% to small and marginal farmers, 7.5% to micro units and 10% to Advances to Weaker Sections.
- Last year, the RBI released revised priority sector lending guidelines to augment funding to segments including start-ups and agriculture.

- The revised PSL guidelines will enable better credit penetration to credit deficient areas, increase the lending to small and marginal farmers and weaker sections, boost credit to renewable energy, and health infrastructure.

#### **Changes made**

- According to the revised guidelines,
  - **Bank finance of up to ₹50 crore to start-ups,**
  - **loans to farmers both for installation of solar power plants for solarisation of grid-connected agriculture pumps,** and for **setting up compressed biogas (CBG) plants** have been included as fresh categories eligible for finance under the priority sector.
- The revised PSL guidelines have been framed to **address regional disparities** in the flow of priority sector credit. Higher weightage has been assigned to incremental priority sector credit in '**identified districts**' where priority sector credit flow is comparatively low.
- The targets prescribed for '**small and marginal farmers**' and '**weaker sections**' are being increased in a phased manner and higher credit limit has been specified for **farmer producer organisations (FPOs)/farmers producers companies (FPCs)** undertaking farming with assured marketing of their produce at a pre-determined price.
- While the **loan limits for renewable energy have been doubled** now, the **credit limit for health infrastructure**, including those under 'Ayushman Bharat', has also been **doubled** to improve the country's health infrastructure.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/18000-cr-credit-plan-for-dakshina-kannada/article34155547.ece/amp/>

120. **With reference to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021, consider the following statements.**

1. The Bill provides that the term 'government' referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi will imply Lieutenant Governor.
2. The Bill also prohibits the Legislative Assembly of Delhi from making any rule to enable itself or its Committees to consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

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:

#### How is Delhi governed?

- Delhi's current status as a Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly is an outcome of the **69th Amendment Act** through which **Articles 239AA and 239BB** were introduced in the Constitution.
- The **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act** was passed simultaneously to supplement the constitutional provisions relating to the Assembly and the Council of Ministers in the national capital.
- For all practical purposes, the GNCTD Act outlines the powers of the Assembly, the discretionary powers enjoyed by the L-G, and the duties of the Chief Minister with respect to the need to furnish information to the L-G.
- The L-G does have the power to **refer any matter, over which there is a disagreement with the elected government, to the President** under Article 239AA(4).

#### Supreme Court judgement

- In its **2018 verdict**, the five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court had held that the **Lieutenant Governor's (L-G) concurrence is not required on issues other than police, public order and land**.
- It had added that **decisions of the Council of Ministers will, however, have to be communicated to the L-G**.
- The court held that requiring prior concurrence of the Lieutenant Governor would absolutely negate the ideals of representative governance and democracy conceived for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi by **Article 239AA** of the Constitution. It also ruled that the **L-G was bound by the aid and advice of the council of ministers**.

#### Why in News?

- The Parliament has passed the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021** with Rajya Sabha giving its nod.

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Bill which seeks to amend the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 has already been cleared in the Lok Sabha. The Bill provides that the term 'government' referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi will imply Lieutenant Governor, LG.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Bill also prohibits the Legislative Assembly of Delhi from making any rule to enable itself or its Committees to consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy in his reply to the discussion said, the bill does not intend to take away the powers of the elected government of Delhi but only seeks to clear the ambiguities regarding the powers of the LG at par with other Union Territories in the country.

[http://newsonair.com/News?title=Parliament-passes-National-Capital-Territory-of-Delhi-\(Amendment\)-Bill%2c-2021&id=412762](http://newsonair.com/News?title=Parliament-passes-National-Capital-Territory-of-Delhi-(Amendment)-Bill%2c-2021&id=412762)

121. **With reference to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, consider the following statements.**

1. The Act mandates that each person would have to be recognised as 'transgender' on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by a District Magistrate.
2. The Act makes it mandatory to constitute the National Council for Transgender persons (NCT) which will advise the central government as well as monitor the impact of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons.
3. The Act provides one percent reservation for Transgender persons in posts of all Government establishments.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Answer: A

**Explanation**

**Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**



- **Definition:** The act defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes transmen and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- **Certificate of identity:** The Act allows **self perception of gender identity**. But it mandates that each person would have to be recognised as 'transgender' on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by a **District Magistrate. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Welfare measures by the government:** The Act states that the relevant government will take measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society. It must also take steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.
- **Prohibition against discrimination:** The Act prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to education, employment, healthcare, access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, right to movement, right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property, opportunity to hold public or private office and access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.
- **Right of residence:** Every transgender person shall have a right to reside and be included in his household.
- **Employment:** No government or private entity can discriminate against a transgender person in employment matters, including recruitment, and promotion.
- **Offences and penalties:** The Act recognizes the following offences against transgender persons: (i) forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes), (ii) denial of use of public places, (iii) removal from household, and village, (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse. Penalties for these offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine.
- The Act makes it mandatory to constitute the **National Council for Transgender persons (NCT)** which will advise the central government as well as monitor the impact of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons. It will also redress the grievances of transgender persons. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

## Major Judgements

- **National Legal Services Authority of India (NALSA) Vs. Union of India Case** under which the Supreme Court for the very first time recognised transgendered persons as a “**third gender**” and directed the government to safeguard their rights and extend certain reservations for admission into education institutions and public appointments to third gender persons.
- In the **Navtej Singh Johar Vs. Union of India Case**, Supreme Court decriminalised some part of **Section-377 of Indian Penal Code** that barred even consensual homosexual sex between adults, thereby strengthening transgender rights.
- In this case, the Supreme Court introduced the concept of the **Doctrine of progressive realisation of rights** which mandates that the laws of a country should be in consonance with its modern ethos, it should be “sensible” and “easy to apply”.
- Using this legal doctrine, then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra held that once a right is recognised and given to the public, it cannot be taken back by the state at a later date. Once a step is taken forward, there is no going back.

## Criticisms of the current Act

- **Against the Spirit of Self Perceived Identity:** The act does not have a clear definition regarding how the District Magistrate will actually examine the person or their documents to certify them as a transgender and it is also considered as a violation of privacy.
- It **does not mention any punishments for rape or sexual assault** of transgender persons as according to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code stands, rape is something that only a man can do to a woman.
- **No Reservation:** In the **NALSA judgement**, the state and central govts were asked to extend backward class reservation to transgenders in education and public employment. But the act fails to address that issue. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- **Lighter Sentences:** There are lighter punishments for several criminal offences, such as “sexual abuse” and “physical abuse” if they are committed against transgender people in comparison to females.
- **A transgender commission at the national level is not enough.** There is need for a welfare board for transgender, and a helpline number for those in distress at regional and local levels

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707311>

**122. Mission Karmayogi was launched with the main objective of**

- A. Ministry of Women and Child Development initiative to motivate children to keep their homes, schools, and surroundings clean.
- B. To eradicate illiteracy in the country by imparting functional literacy to non-literates.
- C. Conservation of heritage, urban planning and in increasing the economic growth of the heritage cities.
- D. Nationwide programme to lay the foundation for capacity building of civil servants.

Answer: **D**

**Explanation:**

- Mission Karmayogi is a nationwide programme to lay the **foundation for capacity building of civil servants**. It will help the officers to learn about the best practices across the world.
- Officially called the "**National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**", the mission plans to **transform human resource management in the country**.
- Mission Karmayogi aims to prepare the Indian civil servant for the future by making him more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled.
- The fundamental focus of the reform is the creation of a '**citizen centric civil service**' capable of creating and delivering services conducive to economic growth and public welfare.
- It shifts the focus from "Rule based training to **Role based training**". Greater thrust has been laid on behavioural change.

**Unfolding of Mission Karmayogi**

- Mission Karmayogi programme will be delivered by setting up a digital platform called **iGOTKarmayogi**.
- The platform will act as a launchpad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, which will enable a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels.

- **NPCSCB** will be **governed by the Prime Minister's Human Resource Council**, which will also include state Chief Ministers, Union Cabinet ministers and experts. This council will approve and review civil service capacity building programmes.
- Besides this, there will be a **Cabinet Secretary Coordination Unit** comprising select secretaries and cadre controlling authorities.
- Also, there will be a **Capacity Building Commission**, which will include experts in related fields and global professionals. This commission will prepare and monitor annual capacity building plans and audit human resources available in the government.
- There will be a wholly-owned **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which will govern the iGOT-Karmayogi platform.**
- The SPV will be a "not-for-profit" company which will create and operationalise the content, market place and manage key business services of iGOT-Karmayogi platform.
- To cover around 46 lakh central employees, a sum of Rs 510.86 crore will be spent over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The expenditure is partly funded by multilateral assistance to the tune of \$50 million.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=170746>

### 123. POSHAN Abhiyaan, a flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, targets to reduce

1. Stunting
2. Under-nutrition
3. Low birth weight
4. Anemia

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

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

Answer: **D**

**Explanation:**

- POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) is a flagship programme of the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, which ensures convergence with various programmes i.e., Anganwadi Services, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG), Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), National Health Mission (NHM), Swachh-Bharat Mission, Public Distribution System (PDS) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- The mission targets to reduce **stunting, under-nutrition, anemia** (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce **low birth weight** by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- The mission also strives to achieve a reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (**Mission 25 by 2022**).

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707476>

**124. Consider the following statements.**

1. Dark matter does not interact with the electromagnetic force.
2. Dark matter accounts for roughly 68 percent of the universe's total mass and 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**

- Dark Matter refers to the hypothetical matter that scientists have not been able to locate in the universe - either through telescopes or using any other technological method.
- Dark matter works like an **attractive force** — a kind of cosmic cement that holds our universe together. This is because dark matter does interact with gravity, but it doesn't reflect, absorb or emit light.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Unlike normal matter, **dark matter does not interact with the electromagnetic force**. As a result, it **does not absorb, reflect or emit light**, making it extremely hard to spot.



- In fact, researchers have been able to infer the existence of dark matter only from the gravitational effect it seems to have on visible matter.
- In the 1930s, astronomer **Fritz Zwicky** speculated the presence of “dark matter” for the first time.

### **Dark energy**

- Dark energy is a **repulsive force** — a sort of anti-gravity — hypothesised to be responsible for the accelerated expansion of the Universe.
- Like Dark Matter, Dark Energy is **not directly observed**, but rather inferred from observations of gravitational interactions between astronomical objects.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Dark energy is the far more dominant force of the two, accounting for roughly **68 percent** of the universe’s total mass and energy. **Dark matter makes up 27 percent.** And the rest — a measly 5 percent — is all the regular matter we see and interact with every day.
- Current hypotheses propose dark energy might emerge from the bubbling of empty space, a small effect that is also widespread, making it powerful enough to drag apart clusters of galaxies without ripping them apart from within.

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/dark-matter-mystery-deepens-demise-reported-detection>

### **125. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).**

1. The vision of the scheme is to ensure access to some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms in the country.
2. The scheme has six components with specific objectives.
3. PMKSY adopts a decentralized State level planning and projectized execution structure.

Which among the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: **C**

### **Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The vision of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) is to ensure **access to some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms** in the country, to produce '**per drop more crop**', thus bringing much desired rural prosperity.
- Launched in 2015 by the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, PMKSY has **been conceived amalgamating ongoing schemes** viz. Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) and the On Farm Water Management (OFWM).

### **Broad objectives of PMKSY**

- Achieve **convergence of investments in irrigation** at the field level (preparation of district level and, if required, sub district level water use plans).
- **Enhance the physical access of water** on the farm and expand cultivable area under assured irrigation (Har Khet ko pani),
- Integration of water source, distribution and its efficient use, to make best use of water through appropriate technologies and practices.
- **Improve on-farm water use efficiency** to reduce wastage and increase availability both in duration and extent.
- Enhance the adoption of **precision-irrigation and other water saving technologies (More crop per drop)**.
- Enhance recharge of aquifers and introduce sustainable water conservation practices.

### **Four components of PMKSY: (Hence, statement 2 is incorrect)**

- **Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP),**
  - To focus on faster completion of ongoing Major and Medium Irrigation including National Projects.
- **Har Khet Ko Pani ('all fields will get water'),**
  - Activities including Creation of new water sources through Minor Irrigation and Creation and rejuvenation of traditional water storage systems like Jal Mandir (Gujarat); Khatri, Kuhl (H.P.); Zabo (Nagaland); Eri, Ooranis (T.N.); Dongs (Assam); Katas, Bandhas (Odisha and M.P.) etc. at feasible locations.
- **Per Drop More Crop**

- Promoting efficient water conveyance and precision water application devices like drips, sprinklers, pivots, rain-guns in the farm.
- **Watershed Development**
- Effective rainfall management like field bunding, contour bunding/trenching, staggered trenching, land levelling, mulching etc. and Creating Water harvesting structures such as check dams, nala bund, farm ponds, tanks etc.

### **Implementation**

- **Statement 3 is correct:** PMKSY adopts a '**decentralized State level planning and projectized execution**' structure that allows States to draw up their own irrigation development plans based on **District Irrigation Plan (DIP)** and **State Irrigation Plan (SIP)**.
- PMKSY acts as a convergence platform for all water sector activities including drinking water & sanitation, MGNREGA, application of science & technology etc. through comprehensive plans.

<https://www.epw.in/engage/article/union-budget-2021-22-capital-expenditure-economy>

**126. With reference to the Central Information Commission, which one of the following statements is not correct?**

- A. The Central Information Commission shall consist of the Chief Information Commissioner and such number of Central Information Commissioners not exceeding 10 as may be deemed necessary.
- B. As per the Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019, the salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the Chief Information Commissioner is equivalent to that of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- C. The Chief Information Commissioner is appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee.
- D. The Chief Information Commissioner shall not be a Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State, or hold any other office of profit or connected with any political party or carrying on any business or pursuing any profession.

Answer: **B**

**Explanation:**

**About RTI Act, 2005**

- Under the RTI Act, 2005, **Public Authorities** are required to make disclosures on various aspects of their structure and functioning.
- This includes: (i) disclosure on their organisation, functions, and structure, (ii) powers and duties of its officers and employees, and (iii) financial information.
- The intent of such *suo moto* disclosures is that the public should need minimum recourse through the Act to obtain such information. If such information is not made available, citizens have the right to request for it from the Authorities.
- This may include information in the **form of documents, files, or electronic records** under the control of the Public Authority. The intent behind the enactment of the Act is to **promote transparency and accountability** in the working of Public Authorities.

#### **How is the right to information enforced under the Act?**

- The Act has established a **three tier structure** for enforcing the right to information guaranteed under the Act.
- The first request for information goes to the **Central/State Assistant Public Information Officer** and **Central/State Public Information Officer**, designated by the Public Authorities. These Officers are required to provide information to an RTI applicant **within 30 days** of the request.
- Appeals from their decisions go to an **Appellate Authority**.
- Appeals against the order of the Appellate Authority go to the **State Information Commission or the Central Information Commission**. These Information Commissions consist of a **Chief Information Commissioner, and up to 10 Information Commissioners**.

#### **Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019**

- The Act amended Sections 13 and 16 of the RTI Act, 2005.
- Section 13 of the original Act sets the term of the central Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners at **five years** (or until the **age of 65**, whichever is earlier). The amendment changed that the appointment will be for such term as may be **prescribed by the Central Government**.
- **Statement B is incorrect:** According to the amendment act, the salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners **shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government**.

Previously it was equivalent to that of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners respectively.

- The government said that the amendment was required because the election commission is a Constitutional body while the information commission, formed under the Right to Information Act, is a **statutory one**.

#### **How is the Central Information Commission constituted?**

- Under the RTI Act 2005, the **Central Government** shall constitute a body to be known as the Central Information Commission.
- **Statement A is correct:** The Central Information Commission shall consist of the **Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)** and such number of **Central Information Commissioners (ICs)** not exceeding **10** as may be deemed necessary.

#### **Process of appointment of CIC/IC**

- **Statement C is correct:** The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners shall be appointed by the **President** on the recommendation of a committee consisting of:-
  - the Prime Minister, who shall be the Chairperson of the committee;
  - the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha; and
  - a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Note:** Where the Leader of Opposition in the House of the People has not been recognized as such, the **Leader of the single largest group in opposition of the Government** in the House of the People shall be deemed to be the Leader of Opposition.

#### **Eligibility criteria**

- Section 12(5) of the RTI Act 2005 provides that the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners shall be persons of eminence in public life with wide knowledge and experience in law, science and technology, social service, management, journalism, mass media or administration and governance.
- **Statement D is correct:** Chief Information Commissioner or an Information Commissioner shall not be a **Member of Parliament or Member of the Legislature of any State or Union Territory** as the case may be, or **hold any other office of profit or connected with any political party or carrying on any business or pursuing any profession**.



<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/almost-40-of-rti-rejections-last-year-did-not-invoke-valid-reason-analysis/article34171928.ece>

**127. With reference to the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, consider the following statements.**

1. The Act seeks to make illegal migrants belonging to certain religious groups from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship.
2. The Act will not apply to areas included in the fifth and Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.
3. The Act also amends the provisions on registration of Overseas Citizens of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

**Explanation:**

**Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019**

**How is citizenship acquired in India?**

- In India, citizenship is regulated by the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
- The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through **five methods** – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.

**Can illegal migrants acquire citizenship?**

- An illegal migrant is prohibited from acquiring Indian citizenship.
- An illegal migrant is a foreigner who: (i) enters the country without valid travel documents, like a passport and visa, or (ii) enters with valid documents, but stays beyond the permitted time period.
- Illegal migrants may be imprisoned or deported under the **Foreigners Act, 1946** and the **Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920**.

### How does the 2019 Act seek to change the criteria for determining citizenship?

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Act makes it clear that immigrants belonging to **Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi communities** from the Muslim-majority nations (**Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan**) will not be treated as illegal.
- They will also be eligible to get naturalised citizenship.
- One of the requirements for citizenship by **naturalization** under the 1955 Act is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, and for 11 of the previous 14 years.
- The amendment act **relaxes this 11-year requirement to five years** for persons belonging to these six religions from these three countries.
- They will also no longer be deported or jailed under the Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920.
- The cut-off date for citizenship is **December 31, 2014** which means the applicant should have entered India on or before that date.

### Rationale of the Law

- The Statement of Objects and Reasons in the amendment Act (SoR) states that India has had historic migration of people with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and these countries have a state religion, which has resulted in **religious persecution** of minority groups.

### Are the provisions of the Act applicable across the country?

- The Act clarifies that the amendments will not apply to certain areas. These are:
  - The tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, as included in the **Sixth Schedule to the Constitution**. These tribal areas include Karbi Anglong (in Assam), Garo Hills (in Meghalaya), Chakma District (in Mizoram), and Tripura Tribal Areas District.
  - **States regulated by the "Inner Line" permit** under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873.
  - Areas included in Fifth Schedule to the Constitution are not exempted from the Act. Hence **Statement 2 is incorrect.**

### How does the Act change the regulations for Overseas Citizens of India?

- **Statement 3 is correct:** The Act also amends the provisions on registration of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).
- OCI cardholders are foreigners who are persons of Indian origin.

- At present, the government may cancel a person's OCI registration on various grounds specified in the 1955 Act.
- The 2019 amendment **adds another ground for cancelling OCI registration** — violation of any law notified by the central government.

<https://www.thehindu.com/elections/assam-assembly/assam-assembly-elections-will-anti-caa-stir-prove-storm-in-a-teacup/article34172083.ece>

**128. Consider the following statements about the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).**

1. It is a constitutional organisation.
2. The recommendations of NHRC are binding in nature.

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: **D**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is a **statutory organisation** established in 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.
- The Act also created Human Rights Commissions at the levels of the various States.
- NHRC was established in conformity with the **Paris Principles**, adopted at the first international workshop on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights held in Paris in 1991, and endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1993.

**Functions of NHRC**

- The NHRC enquires into complaints of violation of human rights or negligence in the prevention of such violation by a public servant, studies treaties and international instruments on human rights and makes recommendations for their effective implementation to the Government.
- It is responsible for spreading human rights awareness amongst the masses.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** As per the Protection of Human Rights Act, the NHRC **can only recommend the government but the recommendations are non-binding.**
- While inquiring into complaints under the Act, the Commission shall have all the powers of a **civil court.**
- NHRC cannot inquire in any case, if the complaint is made after **one year** of the incident.

#### **Composition of NHRC**

- According to the **Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019**, the NHRC consists of
  - A Chairperson, who has been a Chief Justice of India or a **Judge of the Supreme Court**
  - One member who is, or has been, a Judge of the Supreme Court of India
  - One member who is, or has been, the Chief Justice of a High Court
  - Three Members, out of which at least one shall be a woman to be appointed from amongst persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights
  - In addition, the Chairpersons of National Commissions viz., National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights; and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities serve as **ex officio members.**
- The term of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission is **three years** and shall be **eligible for re-appointment.**

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=NHRC-issues-notice-to-Rajasthan-government-over-rising-incidents-of-crime-against-women-in-state&id=412911>

#### **129. Consider the following statements about Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs).**

1. These schools are being set up by the Ministry of Education.
2. The objective of EMRSs is to provide quality middle and high level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas.

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: **B**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** has been setting up Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) since 1998-99 for imparting quality education to tribal children in their own environment.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The objective of EMRSs is to provide quality middle and high level education to **Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas**.
- Each school has a capacity of 480 students, catering to students from Class VI to XII. Hitherto, grants were given for construction of schools and recurring expenses to the State Governments under Grants under **Article 275 (1)** of the Constitution.
- In order to give further impetus to EMRS, it has been decided that by the year 2022, **every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons**, will have an EMRS.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Ministry-of-Tribal-Affairs-to-fill-up-around-3-thousand-4-hundred-teaching-staff-vacancies&id=412815>

**130. Consider the following statements about Blockchain technology.**

1. It employs a highly centralised architecture for the purpose of ensuring integrity and verifiability of data stored on the ledger.
2. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Cardano, etc. is one of the applications of blockchain technology.

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

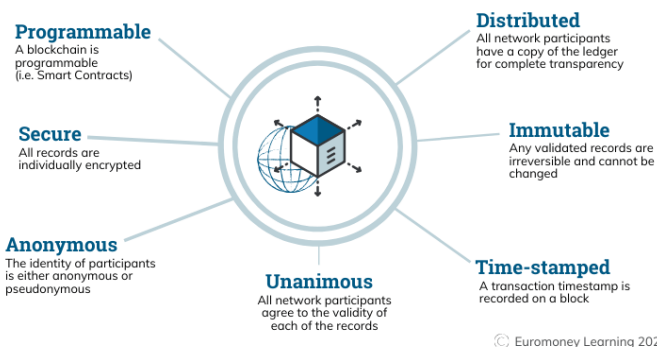
Answer: **B**

**Explanation:**



- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** A blockchain is a **distributed ledger of information** which is replicated across various nodes on a “peer-to-peer” network for the purpose of **ensuring integrity and verifiability of data stored on the ledger**.
- Blockchain, sometimes referred to as **Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)**, makes the history of any digital asset unalterable and transparent through the use of **decentralization and cryptographic hashing**.
- A simple analogy for understanding blockchain technology is a **Google Doc**. When we create a document and share it with a group of people, the document is distributed instead of copied or transferred.
- This creates a decentralized distribution chain that gives everyone access to the document at the same time. But blockchain is more complicated than a Google Doc
- Blockchain is an especially promising and revolutionary technology because it helps **reduce risk, stamps out fraud and brings transparency** in a scalable way for myriad uses.

### The Properties of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)



### Applications

- Blockchain ledgers have traditionally been used as supporting structures for **cryptocurrencies**, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum; however, their use in non-cryptocurrency applications too has seen a steady rise such as:
  - Secure sharing of medical data
  - Music royalties tracking
  - Cross-border payments
  - Real-time IoT operating systems
  - Personal identity security

- Anti-money laundering tracking system
- Supply chain and logistics monitoring
- Voting mechanism
- Advertising insights
- Original content creation
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Cryptocurrency
- Real estate processing platform

<https://www.livemint.com/companies/news/blockchain-forensics-startup-chainalysis-raises-100-mln-at-2-bln-valuation-11616772583337.html>

131. With reference to the geographical indication (GI) tag, consider the following statements.

1. It is conferred on both natural and manufactured goods.
2. The registration of GI is valid for 3 years after which it needs to be renewed.
3. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 is administered by the Competition Commission of India.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Answer: A

**Explanation:**

- 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. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It is used for **agricultural, natural and manufactured goods**. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The registration of GI is valid for **10 years** after which it needs to be renewed.

- In India, GI is given under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** 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.
- India enacted its GI legislation to comply with India's obligations under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights **(TRIPS) agreement**.
- 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 is a **collective intellectual property right** and is thus owned by all the producers within the defined GI territory unlike intellectual properties like patent and trademark which are owned by an individual or a business entity.

#### **Benefits of registration of geographical indications**

- It confers legal protection to Geographical Indications in India
- Prevents unauthorised use of a Registered Geographical Indication by others
- It provides legal protection to Indian Geographical Indications which in turn boost exports.
- It promotes economic prosperity of producers of goods produced in a geographical territory.

**<https://lifestyle.livemint.com/food/discover/bebinca-a-goan-sweet-might-get-a-gi-tag-111616670733198.html>**

132. **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 takes the form of the Preferential Trade Area, Free Trade Area, Customs Union, Common Market and Economic Union.
  - A **preferential trade area (PTA)** is a trading bloc that gives preferential access to certain products from the participating countries. This is done by reducing tariffs but not by abolishing them completely. A PTA can be established through a trade pact. It is the first stage of economic integration.
  - 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. e.g. 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 and (zero tariffs among members) with a **common external tariff**. e.g. BENELUX (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg).
  - 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. e.g. 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 harmonized monetary policies, taxation and government spending. (e.g. European Economic Union)
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/03/28/independence-risks-economic-havoc-scots/>

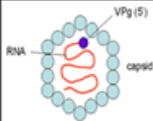
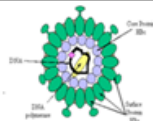
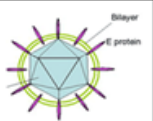
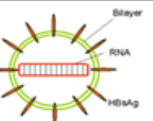

133. **With reference to Hepatitis, which one of the following statements is not correct?**

- A. Hepatitis is usually caused by a viral infection.
- B. Hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of parenteral contact with infected body fluids.
- C. There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis A.
- D. In India, Hepatitis B vaccine is provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).

Answer: C

### Explanation:

- **Statement A is correct:** Hepatitis refers to an inflammatory condition of the liver. Usually caused by a **viral infection**, but there exists **other possible causes** of hepatitis which are autoimmune responses, medications, drugs, toxins, and alcohol.
- There are **5 main hepatitis viruses**, referred to as types **A, B, C, D, and E**.
  - In particular, **types B and C lead to chronic disease** in hundreds of millions of people and, together, are the most common cause of liver cirrhosis and cancer.
  - **Statement B is correct:** Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by **ingestion of contaminated food or water**. Hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of **parenteral contact with infected body fluids**. Common modes of transmission for these viruses include receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment and for hepatitis B transmission from mother to baby at birth, from family member to child, and also by sexual contact.
- Acute infection may occur with limited or no symptoms, or may include symptoms such as jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

					
<b>Name of Virus</b>	Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)	Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)	Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)	Hepatitis D Virus (HDV)	Hepatitis E Virus (HEV)
<b>Classification</b>	Picornavirus	Hepadnavirus	Flavivirus	Deltavirus	Hepevirus
<b>Viral genome</b>	ssRNA	dsDNA	ssRNA	-ssRNA (-ve)	ssRNA
<b>Transmission</b>	Enteric	Parental	Parental	Parental	Enteric
<b>Incubation period</b>	15-45 days	45-160 days	15-150 days	30-60 days	15-60 days
<b>Chronic Hepatitis</b>	No.	Yes. 10% chance	Yes. >50% chance	Yes. <5% of coinfectious >80% of superinfectious	No.
<b>Cure?</b>	No cure. Treatments usually tackle the symptoms.	No cure. Treatments usually tackle the symptoms.	No cure. Treatments usually tackle the symptoms.	No cure. Treatment: Alpha interferon for 12 months.	No cure. Treatments usually tackle the symptoms.



## Vaccines

- **Statement C is incorrect:** There are vaccines to prevent **Hepatitis A** and **Hepatitis B**; however, there is **no vaccine for hepatitis C**.
- **Statement D is correct:** In India **Hepatitis B vaccine** is provided under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP). Hepatitis B vaccine also provides protection from **Hepatitis D virus (HDV) infection**.
- A vaccine to prevent **Hepatitis E virus infection** has been developed and is licensed in China, but is not yet available elsewhere.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/city-scientists-develop-kit-to-diagnose-hep-c-covid/articleshow/81657724.cms>

**144. With reference to Microalgae, consider the following statements.**

1. Microalgae are unicellular species which exist individually, or in chains or groups.
2. They are found only in freshwaters.
3. Microalgae produce approximately half of the atmospheric oxygen.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

### Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Microalgae are **unicellular species** which exist individually, or in chains or groups.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** They are typically found in **freshwater and marine systems**.
- Depending on the species, their sizes can range from a few micrometers ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) to a few hundreds of micrometers. Unlike higher plants, microalgae **do not have roots, stems and leaves**.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Microalgae, capable of performing photosynthesis, are important for life on earth; they **produce approximately half of the atmospheric oxygen** and simultaneously use the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), to grow photoautotrophically.

- They can remove inorganic and organic pollutants, heavy metals, pesticides and pathogens from the wastewater,
- They can also be used to **generate biofuel**.

**<https://www.cnbctv18.com/startup/startup-digest-herere-top-stories-of-the-week-3-8738261.htm>**

**155. The artificial waterway Suez Canal connects**

- A. Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf
- B. Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
- C. Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea
- D. Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf

Answer: **C**

**Explanation:**

- Global trade has been impacted after a container ship got stuck in the Suez Canal recently, the 193-km waterway that is pivotal in connecting Europe and Asia.
- Located in **Egypt**, the artificial sea-level waterway was built between 1859 and 1869 **linking the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**.
- As the shortest route between the Atlantic Ocean and lands around the Indian and western Pacific Oceans, the canal is one of the busiest waterways in the world, negating the need to navigate around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and thus cutting distances by up to 7,000 kms.



### Suez Canal's Long History

- The canal has existed in one form or the other since construction started under the reign of Senausret III, Pharaoh of Egypt (1887-1849 BC).
- In 1799, Napoleon's efforts to build a proper canal were brought to an end due to an inaccuracy in the measurements. In the mid-1800s, French diplomats convinced the Egyptian viceroy Said Pasha to support the canal's construction.
- In 1858, the Universal Suez Ship Canal Company was tasked to construct and operate the canal for 99 years, after which rights would be handed to the Egyptian government.
- The French and British held most of the shares in the canal company. The British used their position to sustain their maritime and colonial interests by maintaining a defensive force along the Suez Canal Zone as part of a 1936 treaty.
- In 1954, facing pressure from Egyptian nationalists, the two countries signed a seven-year treaty that led to the withdrawal of British troops.

### Egypt takes over Suez Canal

- In 1956, Egyptian President Abdel Nasser **nationalised the Suez Canal** to pay for the construction of a dam on the Nile.

- This led to **the Suez Crisis with the UK, France and Israel mounting an attack on Egypt.** The conflict ended in 1957 after the United Nations got involved and was followed by the first instance of the UN Peacekeeping Forces being deployed anywhere in the world.
- Even as the occupying forces withdrew their troops, the UN forces were stationed at Sinai to maintain peace between Egypt and Israel.

### **Suez Canal crisis**

- In 1967, Nasser ordered the peacekeeping forces out of Sinai leading to a new conflict between the two countries. Israelis occupied Sinai and in response, Egypt closed the canal to all shipping.
- The closure lasted until 1975, when the two countries signed a disengagement accord. The canal was the focal point of the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, with the Arab coalition led by Egypt and Syria.

### **An Economic Lifeline**

- The canal continues to be the lifeline for all trade between the West and East as 10 percent of the global trade passes through it every year. The average 50 ships that pass through it daily carry about \$9.5 billion worth of goods, every day.
- The freight and cargo include everything from crude oil to perishables.

### **136. The Earth Hour is organized by**

- A. Global Footprint Network
- B. United Nations Environment Programme
- C. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- D. World Wide Fund for Nature

Answer: **D**

### **Explanation**

- Earth Hour is organized by the **World Wide Fund for Nature.**
- It is a global grassroots movement uniting people to take action on environmental issues and protect the planet.
- Earth Hour initiative began in 2007 and encourages people to switch off the lights from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm as per their local time. The idea is to refrain from the use of non-essential lighting to save energy in a symbolic call for environmental protection.

- It is observed annually on the last Saturday of March.

### **World Wide Fund for Nature**

- The World Wide Fund for Nature is an **international non-governmental organization** founded in 1961.
- The organization works towards reducing the degradation of Earth's natural environment and building a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

### **137. Consider the following statements regarding the Asian Elephant**

1. They inhabit dry to wet forest and grassland habitats
2. It has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List

**Which of the above given statements is/are incorrect?**

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

Ans: D

### **Explanation**

- The Asian elephant is the **largest land mammal on the Asian continent**. They **inhabit dry to wet forest and grassland habitats** in 13 range countries spanning South and Southeast Asia. While they have **preferred forage plants**, Asian elephants have adapted to surviving on resources that vary based on the area.
- Asian elephants are **extremely sociable**, forming groups of six to seven related females that are led by the oldest female, the matriarch.
- Like African elephants, these groups occasionally join others to form larger herds, although these associations are relatively short-lived. **In Asia, elephant herd sizes are significantly smaller than those of savannah elephants in Africa.**
- India declared **Indian Elephant as "National Heritage Animal"**. This provides highest degree of legal protection to the animal under Schedule I of Wildlife protection act, 1972
- The Asian elephant has been listed as **Endangered on the IUCN Red List**
- In Asia, **humans have had close associations with elephants** over many centuries, and elephants have become important cultural icons



- More than two-thirds of an elephant's day may be spent feeding on grasses, but it also eats large amounts of tree bark, roots, leaves, and small stems. Cultivated crops such as bananas, rice, and sugarcane are favorite foods.

**138. World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), sometimes seen in news is a**

- a) An inter-governmental agency sponsored by IUCN
- b) International Non-Governmental Organization
- c) A Specialized agency under the United Nations
- d) None of the above

Ans: B

**Explanation**

- It is **international non-governmental organization** working in the field of the **wilderness preservation and reduction of human impact on the environment**.
- It was **formerly named World Wildlife Fund**.
- It is **world's largest conservation organization** with over five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries, supporting around 1,300 conservation and environmental projects.
- It was founded in 1961 and is **headquartered in Gland, Switzerland**.
- WWF aims to **stop degradation of planet's natural environment** and build future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
- Currently, its work is **organized around these six areas**: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests and oceans
- It **publishes Living Planet Report every two years** since 1998 and it is based on Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.

**139. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping**

1. It is mandatory for all the UN member states to send Peacekeeping forces to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace
2. Among the UN member states, India is one of the largest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions



3. India was the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Ans: B**

**Explanation**

- UN Peacekeeping **helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.**
- It **deploys troops and police from around the world, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers** to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly.
- Peacekeeping has unique strengths, **including legitimacy, burden sharing** and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates
- United Nations Peacekeeping is a **joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support.**
- Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council. The **financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility** of UN Member States
- UN peacekeepers (often referred to as **Blue Berets or Blue Helmets** because of their light blue berets or helmets) **can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.**
- Peacekeeping forces are contributed by **member states on a voluntary basis** (Not mandatory)
- UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles

Ø Consent of the parties.

Ø Impartiality

Ø Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate

**UN Peacekeeping and India**

- Currently, there are more than **6,700 troops and police from India** who have been deployed to UN peacekeeping missions which makes it one of the **largest** troop-contributing countries
- More than 200,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions established around the world since 1948.
- India has a long tradition of sending **women on UN peacekeeping missions**.
- In 2007, **India** became the **first country** to deploy an **all-women contingent** to a **UN peacekeeping mission**

**140. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Extradition'**

1. Extradition is the process by which, one country upon the request of another, effects the return of a person for trial in the requesting country where they have been accused of doing something illegal
2. An Extradition request for an accused can be initiated in the case of under-investigation, under-trial and convicted criminals
3. India does not have any legislation at national level to deal specifically with the extradition

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

Ans: C

**Explanation**

- As defined by **Hon'ble Supreme Court of India**, 'Extradition is the delivery on the part of one State to another of those **whom it is desired to deal with for crimes** of which they have been accused or convicted and are **justifiable in the Courts** of the other State'
- Ø Extradition is the process by which, **one country upon the request of another, effects the return of a person for trial** in the requesting country where they have been accused of doing something illegal
- An Extradition request for an accused **can be initiated in the case of under-investigation, under-trial and convicted criminals**. In cases under investigation,

abundant precautions have to be exercised by the law enforcement agency to ensure that it is in possession of prima facie evidence to sustain the allegation before the Courts of Law in the Foreign State

- The **Extradition Act 1962** provides India's legislative basis for extradition (So India has legislation to deal specifically with extradition). It consolidated the **law relating to the extradition of criminal fugitive from India to foreign states**. The Indian Extradition Act, 1962 was substantially modified in 1993 by Act 66 of 1993.

- The Consular, Passport & Visa (CPV) Division, **Ministry of External Affairs**, Government of India is the **Central/Nodal Authority that administers the Extradition Act** and it processes incoming and outgoing Extradition Requests.

**141. 1. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G)**

1. It aims to provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families who are homeless by the end of March 2022.
2. Identification of beneficiaries will be done as per the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 after due verification by Gram Sabha.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**About PMAY-G**

- The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched in 2016 and aims to provide a **pucca house with basic amenities** to all rural families who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
- It was initiated with the objective of achieving **"Housing for All" by 2022**.

- Identification of beneficiaries will be done as per the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 after due verification by Gram Sabha.

### **Financial Assistance**

- Under PMAY-G, each beneficiary is given **100% grant of Rs.1.20 lakh** (in plain areas) and **Rs. 1.30 lakh** (in Hilly States/North Eastern States/Difficult areas/UT of J&K and Ladakh/Left Wing Extremism(LWE) districts).
- The beneficiaries of PMAY-G, in addition to the unit assistance, are also provided support of unskilled labour wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and assistance of Rs. 12,000 for construction of toilets through Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), MGNREGS or any other dedicated source of funding.
- The scheme has provisions for convergence with other schemes of Government of India and State/UTs for providing LPG connection under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Scheme, electricity connection, access to safe drinking water under Jal Jeevan Mission , etc.

### **Why in News?**

- According to the Ministry of Rural Development, less than 6% of houses sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin in 2020-21 have reached completion so far this year, with COVID-19 stalling progress.
- However, some States such as Odisha and Jharkhand used the scheme to provide employment opportunities for migrant workers who returned to their villages during the crisis.
- With a little over a year to go to achieve its goal of “Housing for All”, the PMAY-G has only completed 55% of its construction target, although money has been sanctioned for almost 85% of beneficiaries.
- Of the 2.28 crore houses to be built for the rural poor under the Yojana, less than 1.27 crore had been completed by January 28, 2021. Another 61 lakh are under construction.

**142. Consider the following statements about the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) UDAN scheme.**

1. It aims at providing connectivity to un-served and under-served airports of the country through revival of existing air-strips and airports.
2. The scheme offers viability gap funding to companies in addition to waiver of certain statutory charges and taxes on jet fuel.
3. The Airports Authority of India is designated as the Implementing Agency under this Scheme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** In 2017, the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) “UDAN” (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) which aims at **providing connectivity to un-served and under-served airports** of the country through revival of existing air-strips and airports to make **flying affordable** to the common man who want to travel to and fro the Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities of the country.
- UDAN has a unique market-based model. Airline routes are allocated to operators selected through a **competitive bidding mechanism**.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** UDAN scheme offers **viability gap funding** to companies in addition to waiver of certain statutory charges and taxes on jet fuel in order to offer affordable connectivity.
- Airlines have to set aside **50% of the total aircraft capacity** for cheaper fares to be offered at the rate of **Rs 2,500 per hour of flight**, in return for which airlines are given a subsidy by the Centre and the State government concerned.
- The airport that will be renovated under this scheme will be chosen after referring to the respective State government. Together with the State government the Central government will revive the dysfunctional and unserved airports of the country.



- **Statement 3 is correct:** The **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** is designated as the Implementing Agency under this Scheme.
- The scheme is now in its **fourth phase** with focus on bringing connectivity to priority areas like North East India, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, hilly states in other parts of the country, and islands.

#### **Why in News?**

- Recently, the government operationalised 22 new routes under the UDAN scheme. This is part of endeavour to connect the unconnected regions. Out of these new routes, six routes have been operationalised in North-East India.
- Till date, 347 routes have been operationalised under the UDAN scheme.

#### **143. Which of the following is/are an objective of the New Development Bank (NDB) ?**

- 1) Fostering development of member countries.
- 2) Promoting competitiveness and facilitating job creation.
- 3) Building a knowledge sharing platform among developing countries.

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below**

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

Answer:D

#### **Explanation**

- **The New Development Bank (NDB)** is a multilateral development bank **established by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)** with the objective of **financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS** and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions **toward global growth and development.**
- During the **sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014)**, the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB). The Bank shall have an **initial authorized capital of US\$ 100 billion.** The initial subscribed capital shall be US\$ 50 billion, **equally shared among founding members.**

- The Bank will also **provide technical assistance for projects** to be supported by the NDB and engage in information, cultural and **personnel exchanges** with the purpose of contributing to the achievement of environmental and social sustainability.
- As a young and dynamic multilateral development bank, the New Development Bank is well-placed to **trigger a new kind of development** – one that is based on holistic and sustainable growth for our planet
- **Statement 1, 2 and 3 are correct: The main objectives of NDB operations are**
  - **Fostering development of member countries**
  - Supporting economic growth
  - **Promoting competitiveness and facilitating job creation**
  - **Building a knowledge sharing platform among developing countries**
- To fulfill its purpose, the **Bank will support public or private projects through loans, guarantees**, equity participation and other financial instruments.
- The activities of the New Development Bank as an international institution for promoting sustainable development are **consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations** in the socio-economic field. In 2018, the **New Development Bank received observer status in the UN General Assembly**, establishing a firm basis for active and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations.

## **BRICS**

- BRICS is the group composed by the **five major emerging countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa** - which together represent about **42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade**.
- The acronym BRIC was coined by **Goldman Sachs in 2001** to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States, the five largest economies of the world in the 21st century. In 2006, BRIC countries started their dialogue, which since 2009 takes place at annual meetings of heads of state and government. In **2011, with South Africa joining the group**, the BRICS reached its final composition, incorporating a country from the African continent.

**144.** Consider the following pairs

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Female Anopheles mosquitoes     | - Encephalitis fever |
| 2. Female Aedes aegypti mosquitoes | - Malaria            |
| 3. Culex albopictus                | - Dengue             |

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

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of these

Answer: D

**Explanation**

**Statement 1 is incorrect:** Only certain species of mosquitoes of the *Anopheles* genus—and females of those species—can transmit malaria.

**Statement 2 is incorrect:** *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the main vector that transmits the viruses that cause dengue. The viruses are passed on to humans through the bites of an infective female *Aedes* mosquito, which mainly acquires the virus while feeding on the blood of an infected person

**Statement 3 is correct:** The genus *Culex* is a carrier of viral encephalitis and, in tropical and subtropical climates

**145.** What is the correct sequence of occurrence of the following cities in South-East Asia as one proceeds from south to north?

- 1. Manila
- 2. Hanoi
- 3. Jakarta
- 4. Phnom Penh

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 4-2-1-3
- b) 3-2-4-1
- c) 3-4-1-2
- d) 4-3-2-1

Answer: C



