

## May MCQ Compilation

### 1. Consider the following countries:

1. Turkmenistan
2. Uzbekistan
3. Kazakhstan
4. Kyrgyzstan
5. Tajikistan

**Caspian Sea is bordered by which of the above countries?**

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only  
(b) 1, 3 and 5 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) All of the above

**Ans: (c)**

**Explanation:**



**2. Graded Response Action Plan sometimes seen in news is related to**

- a) Pollution abatement of the river Ganga, to improve the water quality
- b) A vast reforestation exercise along the Aravalli hill range
- c) A Supreme Court mandated direction for controlling pollution in Delhi NCR region.
- d) An Action plan by the Environment Ministry to restore lost biodiversity in himalayas.

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- It is an emergency plan prepared by the **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to **contain worsening air quality of Delhi-NCR**.
- It was prepared after the order of the Supreme Court in December 2016.
- It comprises a series of measures that come into force incrementally as pollution increases.
- The nature, scope and rigor of measures to be taken is linked to levels of pollution viz. Severe + or Emergency, severe, Very poor, Moderate to poor and Moderate.
- It is implemented by the **Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)**, which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The actions are to be implemented in the entire National Capital Region (NCR).
- It comprises measures such as prohibition on entry of trucks into Delhi; ban on construction activities, introduction of odd and even scheme for private vehicles, shutting of schools, closure of brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crushers; shutting down of Badarpur power plant, ban on diesel generator sets, garbage burning in landfills and plying of visibly polluting vehicles etc.



### 3. The Kaladan Multimodal project aims to connect

- A. Kunming to Kyaukpyu port
- B. Enayam to Colombo port
- C. Kolkata to Sittwe port
- D. Kabul to Chabahar port

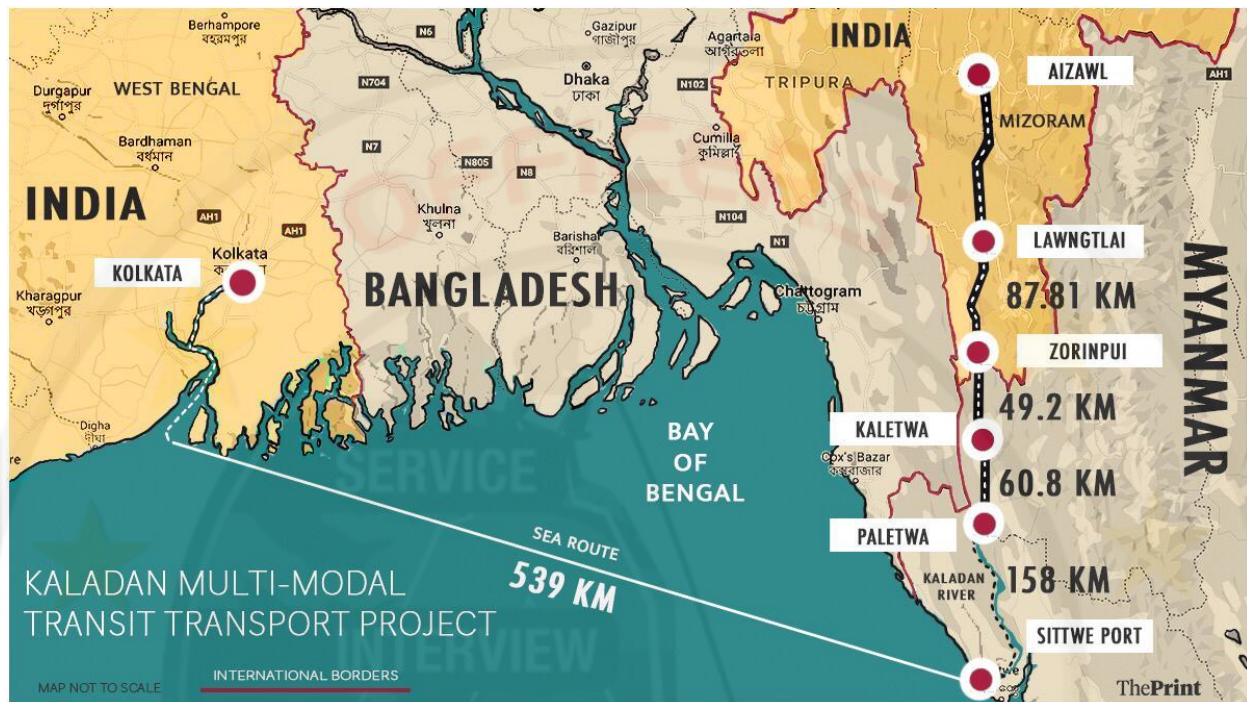
**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- The Kaladan Multimodal project envisages connecting **Kolkata to Sittwe port** in Myanmar, and then Mizoram by river and road. India and Myanmar had signed a framework agreement in 2008 for the implementation of this project.
- The Kaladan project starts from West Bengal and charts an over 500-km course through the Bay of Bengal to Myanmar's Sittwe Port, where it channels the Kaladan river — which flows from Myanmar to Mizoram — to connect with the northeast.
- As the name implies, it's multimodal and employs a range of infrastructure from roads and bridges to floating barrages.



- Recently, the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project was in the final stages despite delays due to various challenges.



4. Article 87 of Indian constitution provides for the President to address a joint sitting in which of the following occasions?

- At the commencement of the first session of a new legislature after each general election to the House of the People
- At the commencement of the first session of Parliament each year
- At the commencement of the winter session of Parliament each year
- Both A and B

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**History of President's address**

- In India, the practice of the President addressing Parliament can be traced back to the **Government of India Act of 1919**.

- The above law gave the **Governor-General** the right of addressing the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State.
- After the Constitution came into force, **President Rajendra Prasad** addressed members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha for the first time on **January 31, 1950**.

#### **Constitutional Provisions**

- **Article 87** of Indian constitution provides **two special occasions** on which the President addresses a joint sitting.
  - The first is to address the opening session of a new legislature **after a general election**.
  - The second is to address the **first sitting of Parliament each year**. A session of a new or continuing legislature cannot begin without fulfilling this requirement.
- The address of the President follows a general structure in which it highlights the government's accomplishments from the previous year and sets the broad governance agenda for the coming year.
- Following the President's address, **a motion** ("Motion of Thanks") is moved in the two Houses **thanking the President** for his address.
- This is an occasion for MPs in the two Houses to have a broad debate on governance in the country. The Prime Minister replies to the motion of thanks in both Houses, and responds to the issues raised by MPs.
- The motion is then put to vote and MPs can express their disagreement by moving amendments to the motion.

#### **5. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body functioning under the**

- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
- Ministry of textiles
- None of the Above

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a **statutory body** established by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.

- It functions under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.
- KVIC plans, promotes, organizes and implements programs for the development of Khadi and other village industries in rural areas nationwide.
- KVIC also focuses on creation of employment in the Khadi industry.

### **Objectives**

- The broad objectives that the KVIC has set before it are:
  - The social objective of providing employment
  - The economic objective of producing saleable articles
  - The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit

### **Functions of KVIC**

- Building up of a reserve of raw materials and implementation for supply to producers.
- Formation of common service facilities for processing of raw materials that include semi-finished goods.
- Promoting the sale and marketing of Khadi and Village Industries products, as well as handicrafts.
- Promoting research in the village industries sector related production techniques and equipment.
- Providing financial assistance to individuals and institutions for the development and operation of Khadi and Village industries.

### **Why in News?**

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has rolled out a massive employment drive benefiting 2250 artisan families in Malda district of West Bengal.
- West Bengal is known for producing some of the finest cotton and silk fabric. The state is widely acclaimed for its **Muga, Mulberry and Tussar Silk** production. It is also popular for its world famous **Muslin cotton**.

### **6. Consider the following statements about the Purchasing Managers' Index.**

1. It is an indicator of economic health for both manufacturing and service sectors.
2. It is published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).
3. PMI >50 implies an expansion of business and economic activity, PMI <50 means contraction.



**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: C

**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Purchasing Managers' Index is an economic indicator which indicates the business activity & economic health of both the **manufacturing and service sectors**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** PMI of India is published by Japanese firm Nikkei.
- The PMI is an investor sentiment tracking index and is dynamic in nature.
- They are derived from monthly surveys of about 400 private companies.
- Variables used for calculating the PMI are: Output, New Orders, Employment, Input Costs, Output Prices, Backlogs of Work, Export Orders, Quantity of Purchases, Suppliers' Delivery Times, Stocks of Purchases and Stocks of Finished Goods.

**How to read PMI?**

- **Statement 3 is correct:** While PMI >50 implies an expansion of business and economic activity, PMI <50 means contraction.

**7. With reference to the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), consider the following statements.**

1. MPs shall recommend works costing at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by S.T. population.
2. Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
3. It is the responsibility of the MPs to sanction, execute and complete the works within the stipulated time.

**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**

- The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is meant to enable **Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature** with emphasis on **creation of durable community assets based on locally felt needs** to be taken up in their constituencies in the area of national priorities namely drinking water, education, public health, sanitation, roads etc.
- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has been responsible for the policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism for implementation of the Scheme.

**Features**

- The MPLADS is **fully funded** by the Government of India. The **annual** MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is **Rs. 5 crore**.
- Funds under the MPLADS are **non-lapsable**.
- **Statement 2 is correct: Lok Sabha Members** can recommend works within their Constituencies and **Elected Members of Rajya Sabha** can recommend works within the State of Election (with select exceptions). **Nominated Members** of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- All works to meet locally felt infrastructure and development needs, with an emphasis on creation of durable assets in the constituency are permissible under MPLADS as prescribed in the scheme guidelines.
- The MPLADS funds can be merged with other schemes such as MGNREGA and Khelo India.

**Allocation for SC & ST**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The guidelines recommend MPs to suggest works costing at least 15 per cent of their MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Caste population** and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Tribe population**.



- In case there is insufficient tribal population in the area of Lok Sabha Member, they may recommend this amount for the creation of community assets in tribal areas outside of their constituency but within their State of election.

### **Implementation**

- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Under MPLADS, the role of the MPs is limited only upto recommendation of works. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the **District Authority** to sanction, execute and complete the works recommended by Members of Parliament within the stipulated time.
- The District Authority shall identify the Implementing Agency capable of executing the eligible work qualitatively, timely and satisfactorily. It shall be responsible for timely and effective implementation of such works.
- Information on MPLADS (the number and cost of works sanctioned, implementing agencies, projects completed, etc) should be made available to citizens under the **Right to Information Act**.
- **At least 10% of the projects** under implementation in the district are to be **inspected** every year by the district authority.

### **8. Consider the following statements regarding CoalBed Methane**

1. It is an unconventional form of natural gas found in coal deposits.
2. It is called 'sweet gas' as it contains only a negligible amount of hydrogen sulphide.

**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:**

**Both the statements are correct.**

- Coalbed methane (CBM) is an **unconventional form of natural gas** found in coal deposits or coal seams and now considered an alternative source for augmenting India's energy resource.

- CBM is formed during the process of **coalification** – the transformation of plant material into coal.
- It is considered a valuable energy resource with reserves and production having grown nearly every year since 1989.
- Coalbed methane is distinct from typical sandstone or other conventional gas reservoirs, as the methane is stored within the coal by a process called adsorption.
- The methane is present as lining the inside of pores within the coal.
- The open fractures in the coal can also contain free gas or can be saturated with water.
- Further, unlike natural gas from conventional reservoirs, coalbed methane contains very little heavier hydrocarbons such as propane or butane, and no natural-gas condensate.
- It is called ‘sweet gas’ as it contains a negligible amount of hydrogen sulphide(sometimes zero also)The gas often contains up to a few percent of carbon dioxide.

#### **India 's CBM potential:**

- India has the **fifth-largest coal reserves** in the world, and CBM has been looked at as a clean alternative fuel with significant prospects.
- India’s CBM resources are estimated at around 92 trillion cubic feet (TCF), or 2,600 billion cubic metres (BCM).
- The country’s coal and CBM reserves are found in 12 states of India, with the Gondwana sediments of eastern India holding the bulk.
- The Damodar Koel valley and Son valley are prospective areas for CBM development.

#### **9. Consider the following pairs with respect to the process of decomposition/degradation**

##### **List I**

1. Composting  
matter by

2. Pyrolysis

3. Bioremediation

##### **List II**

Process of decomposition of organic and inorganic microorganism under controlled condition

Thermal degradation of biomass by application of heat in presence of oxygen

Process of degradation of environmental contaminants with the use of microorganisms

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

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

**Answer: D**

### **Explanation**

#### **Composting**

- Composting is the **natural process of decomposition of organic matter** (it does not decompose inorganic matter) by microorganisms under controlled conditions.
- Raw **organic materials** such as **crop residues, animal wastes, food garbage**, some municipal wastes and suitable industrial wastes, enhance their suitability for application to the soil as a fertilizing resource, after having undergone composting
- Compost is a **rich source of organic matter**. Soil organic matter plays an important role in **sustaining soil fertility**, and hence in **sustainable agricultural production**.

#### **Bioremediation**

Bioremediation is the **use of living micro organisms to degrade the environmental contaminants** into less toxic forms.

It uses **naturally occurring bacteria** and fungi or plants to degrade or detoxify substances hazardous to human health and/or the environment.

Bioremediation can be **effective only** where environmental **conditions permit microbial growth and activity**. The application often involves the manipulation of environmental parameters to allow microbial growth and degradation to proceed at a faster rate

#### **Pyrolysis**

- Pyrolysis is the **thermal degradation of biomass by heat** in the **absence of oxygen** (not in the presence of oxygen) and results in the **production of** charcoal (solid), bio-oil (liquid), and fuel gases
- Pyrolysis is most commonly used in the **treatment of organic materials**. In general, pyrolysis of organic substances **produces volatile products** and leaves a solid residue enriched in carbon, **char**
- Pyrolysis is considered as the **first step in the processes of gasification** or combustion



10. Consider the following pairs regarding the mountain passes and the states in which they are located

**LIST I**

1. Shipki La

-

2. Nathu La

-

3. Zoji La

-

**LIST II**

Sikkim

Himachal Pradesh

Jammu and Kashmir

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

a) 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 1 and 2 only

d) 3 only

**Ans: D**

**Explanation**

**Zoji La (Pass):** It is in the **Zaskar range of Jammu & Kashmir**. The road route from Srinagar to Leh goes through this pass. It has been created by the Indus River.

**Shipki La (Pass):** It is in **Himachal Pradesh**. The road from Shimla to Tibet goes through this pass. The Satluj River flows through this pass.

**Nathu La** is a mountain pass in the **Himalayas connecting Sikkim with Chumbi Valley** of the Tibetan Plateau in China. It is one of the three open trading border posts between China and India; the others being Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh and Lipulekh at the trisection point of Uttarakhand–India, Nepal and China.

Nathu La pass was re-opened in 2006 to shorten the travel distance to important Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the region and give a boost to Indo-China trade. It is also one of the five officially agreed Border Personnel Meeting points between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army of China for regular consultations and interactions between the two armies to improve relations

**11. Which of the following countries is/ are members of G7?**

1. Japan
2. Russia
3. U.S
4. Canada

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

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

**Answer: A**

**Explanation :**

The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an **informal forum** bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations. The annual G7 summits have over the years developed into a platform for determining the course of multilateral discourse and shaping political responses to global challenges. It complements the role of the G20, which is widely regarded as the framework for ongoing global economic coordination.

The following countries are the members:

- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- the United Kingdom
- the United States.

Note:

**It used to be known as the G8 (Group of Eight) until 2014 when Russia was excluded because of its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.**



**12. Consider the following statements.**

1. G7 countries are the seven major advanced economies and represent over 46% of the gross domestic product globally.
2. The European Union is a Sovereign Member State in the G7 grouping.
3. The decisions taken at the G7 are not legally binding,

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation :**

**Statement 1 is correct:**

The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations. The G7 countries represent over 46% of the gross domestic product globally based on nominal values. These countries represent over 32% of the GDP based on purchasing power parity. The countries in this group have more than 62% of the global net wealth – or a total of \$280 trillion.



**Statement 2 is incorrect:**

The European Union is a unique supranational organisation – not a sovereign Member State – hence the name G7 “Group of Seven”. The EU is therefore a ‘non-enumerated’ member and does not assume the rotating G7 presidency.

In 1977, representatives of the then European Community began participating in the London summit. The role has expanded over time, with the EU gradually included in all political discussions

**Statement 3 is correct:**

The following countries are the members:

- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- the United Kingdom
- the United States.

G7 is capable of setting the global agenda because decisions taken by these major economic powers have a real impact. Thus the **decisions taken at the G7 are not legally binding**, but exert strong political influence.

**13. Which of the following is/are the members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?**

1. Nigeria
2. Saudi Arabia
3. Russia
4. China

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a group consisting of **13 of the world's major oil-exporting nations**.
- Countries that belong to OPEC include **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela** (the five founders), plus the **United Arab Emirates, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon**.
- **Note:** Ecuador and Qatar terminated their membership of OPEC recently.
- OPEC was founded in 1960 to coordinate the petroleum policies of its members and to provide member states with technical and economic aid.
- OPEC is used to work as a cartel and fix prices in a favourable band. It could bring down prices by increasing oil production and raise prices by cutting production.

**OPEC Plus**

- The 2014 oil crisis, which was accentuated by oversupply of crude, brought down prices below \$30 a barrel. Since then, OPEC has been working with **non-OPEC countries** like Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Sudan and South Sudan to fix the global prices and supply.
- Known as the **"OPEC Plus" arrangement**, this alliance kept production lower and pumped up the prices.

## Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)



### Why in News?

- OPEC's share of India's oil imports fell to the lowest in at least two decades in the year to the end of March as overall purchases by India fell to a six-year low.
- Total crude imports by India, which is the **world's third-biggest oil importer**, fell to 3.97 million barrels per day (bpd) in FY21, down 11.8% from a year earlier.
- India bought **more U.S. and Canadian oil** at the expense of that from Africa and West Asia, reducing purchases from members of OPEC to about 2.86 million bpd and **reducing the group's share of imports to 72%** from about 80% previously. That is the lowest share since at least FY02, before which crude import data is not available.
- U.S. and Canadian oil accounted for about 7% and 1.3% respectively of India's imports compared to 4.5% and 0.60% a year earlier.
- The U.S. emerged as the fifth-biggest supplier, up two places from FY20.

### 14. Consider the following pairs of string puppetry and the state associated with it.

- 1) Gopalila Kundhei – Orissa
- 2) Bommalattam – Tamil Nadu
- 3) Kalasutri Bahulya – Maharashtra
- 4) Putola Nach – Assam



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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

### **Puppetry in India**

- **Oldest written reference to puppetry** has been found at **Tamil classic Silappadikaaram** written around 1st and 2nd Century BC.
- The excavation sites at **Harappa and Mohenjodaro** have yielded puppets with sockets attached to them which suggest the presence of puppetry as an art form.

### **Types of Puppetry in India**

**1. Glove Puppets-** The puppets are worn on the hand of the puppeteers like gloves.

01. Pavakkoothu – Kerala

**2. String Puppets-** Strings are attached to small holes in the hands, head and back of the body which are then controlled by the puppeteer.

- Gopalila Kundhei – Orissa
- Bommalattam – Tamil Nadu
- Kalasutri Bahulya – Maharashtra
- Putola Nach – Assam
- Kathputli – Rajasthan
- Gombeyatta – Karnataka

**3. Shadow Puppets-** Puppets are placed on a white screen with light falling from behind to create a shadow effect on the screen.

- Thol Bommalattam – Tamil Nadu
- Togalu Gombeyata – Karnataka
- Chamadyache Bahulya – Maharashtra
- Tholpavakoothu – Kerala
- Ravanachhaya – Orissa
- Tholu Bommalata – Andhra Pradesh

#### 4. Rod Puppets

- Kathi Kandhe – Orissa
- Putul Nach – West Bengal
- Yampuri – Bihar

#### What's in the news?

- The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an **Assam**-based trust the opportunity to focus on a near-forgotten form of **string puppetry**, the **Putola Nach**.
- The art form was used to take the messages related to COVID-19 to the public through social media videos.
- The videos were produced in collaboration with UNICEF. The names of the videos were **COVID Shatru** (enemy), **COVID Bibharat** (confusion).

#### About the art

- Usually, **Putola Nach** is used to perform scenes from the epics such as **Ramayana** or **Mahabharatha**. It is a traditional string puppet theatre from **Assam**.
- Dolls are 1.5 metres tall and are made of hollow wood or bamboo. The heads are made of terracotta.
- Musical Instruments are used in performing the art.

#### 15. Consider the following statements about Kisan Credit card

- 1) It enables farmers to purchase agricultural inputs and also draw cash to satisfy their agricultural needs.
- 2) Apart from landholding small and marginal farmers, oral lessee and tenant farmers are also eligible to avail this card.
- 3) Farmers who are involved in activities related to animal husbandry and fisheries cannot avail this card.

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

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

**Answer: C**

### Explanation

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in **1998** with the aim of providing **adequate and timely credit support** from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers for their cultivation and other needs as indicated below:
  - a. To meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops;
  - b. Post-harvest expenses;
  - c. Produce marketing loan;
  - d. Consumption requirements of farmer household;
  - e. Working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture;
  - f. Investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities.
- **Note:** The aggregate of components 'a' to 'e' above will form the **short term credit limit portion** and the aggregate of components under 'f' will form the **long term credit limit portion**.
- Under the KCC Scheme, a flexible limit of Rs.10,000 to Rs.50,000 has been provided to marginal farmers (as Flexi KCC) based on the land holding and crops grown.
- The beneficiaries under the scheme will be issued with a **Smart card/ Debit card**.
- It enables farmers to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. and draw cash to satisfy their agricultural and consumption needs.
- The Scheme is implemented by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives**.

### Eligibility

- Farmers - individual/joint borrowers who are owner cultivators;
- Tenant farmers, oral lessees & sharecroppers;
- Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) of farmers including tenant farmers, sharecroppers etc.
- In 2019, KCC was extended to **farmers who are involved in activities related to animal husbandry and fisheries**.

### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is conducting a special drive to cover farmers under the Kisan Credit Card scheme.



**16. Consider the following statements regarding Rafale aircraft**

1. It is a twin-jet fighter aircraft able to operate only from aircraft carrier.
2. It can carry out all combat aviation missions.

**Select the correct answer**

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

**Answer : B**

**Explanation**

- **Rafale** is a twin-jet fighter aircraft able to operate from **both an aircraft carrier and a shore base**.
- It is a **fully versatile aircraft** which can carry out **all combat aviation missions** to achieve air superiority and air defence, close air support, in-depth strikes, reconnaissance, anti-ship strikes and nuclear deterrence.

**Why in the news?**

The IAF has received 20 of the 36 jets contracted from France with the sixth batch of three Rafale fighter jets arrived recently.

**17. With reference to the famous Indra Sawhney & Others v. Union of India case (1992), consider the following statements.**

1. The court held the government's move to give 27% reservation to Other Backward Classes as unconstitutional.
2. The judgement introduced a 50% ceiling limit on reservation in jobs and education.
3. The court held that a backward class of citizens cannot be identified only and exclusively with reference to economic criteria.

**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: C

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** In the **1992 Indra Sawhney judgment**, the supreme court upheld the government's move to give 27% reservation to Other Backward Classes (based on the **Mandal Commission report**).
- The apex court also **introduced the concept of creamy layer** and held that the creamy layer (highly advanced socially as well as economically and educationally) must be excluded from backward classes for the purpose of reservation. The court asked the Central government to fix the norms for income, property and status for identifying the creamy layer.
- **Statements 2 & 3 are correct:** The court also introduced a **50% ceiling limit** on reservation in jobs and education and held that a backward class of citizens **cannot be identified only and exclusively with reference to economic criteria**.
- The court further held that creamy layer principle is **only confined to Other Backward Classes** and has no relevance in the case of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.
- The Supreme Court also held that reservations in appointments — under **Article 16(4)** of the Constitution — **do not apply to promotions**.

**18. With reference to the new classification of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India, consider the following statements.**

1. MSMEs will be categorised based only on the investment in machinery or equipment.
2. There will be no distinction between Manufacturing and Service MSMEs

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:**

- MSMEs contribute 29.7% of GDP and 49.66% of Indian Exports.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The government has changed the basic definition of MSME and also **end the difference between the manufacturing and services sector.**
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Till now, MSMEs are categorised based only on the investment in machinery or equipment. The new classification has **raised the investment limit** and included **annual turnover** as an additional criteria.
- Accordingly, units having investment less than Rs 1 crore and turnover less than Rs 5 crore will be called Micro units.
- Investment between Rs 1 and Rs 10 crore and turnover of Rs 5 crore to Rs 50 crore will be categorised as Small Enterprises.
- Units having investment between Rs 10 crore but up to Rs 50 crore and turnover between Rs 50 crore and Rs 250 crore will now be known as Medium Enterprises.

#### **Rationale for the move**

- It has been a long-standing demand from industry to hike the investment limits, as with inflation, units often cross the threshold that will bring them benefits. To prevent this, they either run their operations at a reduced level or incorporate multiple units so that turnover is distributed in a way that they remain within the threshold that will give them the benefits.
- With the revised definitions of MSMEs, they will not have to worry about growing their size and can still avail benefits.

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

1. The Act legally entitled the population to receive subsidized food grains under the Universal Public Distribution System.
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. The implementation of the scheme 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:** The implementation of the scheme comes under the ambit of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** (not under the Ministry of Agriculture and farmer's welfare).

## 20. Consider the following statements about Mega food parks

- 1) The primary objective of the Scheme is to provide modern infrastructure facilities for the food processing along the value chain from farm to market.
- 2) Functioning of Mega Food Parks is closely monitored by the 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: A

### Explanation

- The Mega Food Parks scheme aims to provide a **mechanism to bring together farmers, processors and retailers** and link agricultural production to the market so as to ensure **maximization of value addition, minimization of wastages** and improving farmers' income
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The primary objective of the Scheme is to **provide modern infrastructure facilities for the food processing** along the value chain from farm to market with a **cluster based approach** based on a hub and spokes model
- It includes creation of infrastructure for **primary processing and storage near the farm** in the form of **Primary Processing Centres (PPCs)** and **Collection Centres (CCs)** and common facilities and enabling infrastructure like roads, electricity, water, ETP facilities etc. at **Central Processing Centre (CPC)**
  - These PPCs and CCs act as **aggregation and storage points** to feed raw material to the food processing units located in the CPC
- Food Processing being capital intensive activity, **common facilities are created at CPC** to be used by the processing units on hire basis. This helps in **reducing the cost of individual units** significantly and makes them more viable
- The scheme envisages a **one-time capital grant of 50% of the project cost** (excluding land cost) subject to a maximum of Rs 50 crore in **general areas** and **75% of the project cost** (excluding land cost) subject to a ceiling of Rs. 50 crore in **difficult and hilly areas** i.e. North

East Region including Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) and notified areas of the states

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Functioning of Mega Food Parks is closely monitored by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** (not Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare) through a well-established mechanism that includes **detailed scrutiny of the periodical progress reports** of the project by the Programme Management Agency (PMA). The Mega Food Park project is **implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** which is a **Body Corporate** registered under the Companies Act

#### **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)**

- SPV is an entity which is formed for a **single, well-defined and narrow purpose**
- Also called a special purpose entity (SPE), it is a **subsidiary created by a parent company** to **isolate financial risk**. Its legal status as a separate company makes its obligations secure even if the parent company goes bankrupt

#### **21. Which of the following industries are mandated to get Environmental Impact Assessment?**

1. Pulp, paper and newsprint
2. Synthetic Rubber
3. River Valley Projects
4. Cement
5. Nuclear Power projects

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

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

**Answer: D**

#### **Explanation:**

Environmental Impact Assessment is a tool designed to identify and predict the impact of a project on the bio-geophysical environment and on man's health and well-being, to interpret and communicate information about the impact, to analyze site and process alternatives and



provide solutions to sift out, or abate/mitigate the negative consequences on man and the environment. EIA was made mandatory in 1994 under the Environmental Protection Act of 1986 with the following four objectives:

- Predict environmental impact of projects;
- Find ways and means to reduce adverse impacts;
- Shape the projects to suit local environment; and
- Present the predictions and options to the decision-makers.

Few industries that are mandated to get EIA include:

- Pulp, paper and newsprint
- Synthetic Rubber
- River Valley Projects
- Cement
- Nuclear Power projects
- Mining of minerals including Opencast/Underground mining
- Leather/skin/hide processing industry
- Air ports
- Highways, railways, transport terminals, mass rapid transport systems etc..

**Benefits of EIA:**

- EIA links environment with development for environmentally safe and sustainable development.
- EIA provides a cost effective method to eliminate or minimize the adverse impact of developmental projects.
- EIA enables the decision makers to analyse the effect of developmental activities on the environment well before the developmental project is implemented.
- EIA encourages the adaptation of mitigation strategies in the developmental plan.

**22. With reference to pollutants, match correctly the pollutant and related feature:**

1) Carbon Monoxide (CO)	A) Carcinogenic
2) Hydrocarbon	B) causes stiffness of flower buds which eventually fall off from plants
3) Nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	C) causes acute respiratory disease in children
4) Sulphur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	D) block the delivery of oxygen to the organs and tissues

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-D
- (b) 1-C, 2-A, 3-B, 4-D
- (c) 1-D, 2-A, 3-C, 4-B
- (d) 1-A, 2-D, 3-C, 4-B

Answer: C

**Explanation:**

- 1) **Carbon monoxide (CO)** is one of the most serious air pollutants. It is a colourless and odourless gas, highly poisonous to living beings because of its ability **to block the delivery of oxygen to the organs and tissues**. It is produced as a result of incomplete combustion of carbon. Carbon monoxide is mainly released into the air by automobile exhaust.
- 2) **Hydrocarbons** are composed of hydrogen and carbon only and are formed by the incomplete combustion of fuel used in automobiles. **Hydrocarbons are carcinogenic, i.e.,** they cause cancer. They harm plants by causing ageing, breakdown of tissues and shedding of leaves, flowers and twigs.
- 3) Oxides of sulphur are produced when sulphur containing fossil fuel is burnt. The most common species, **sulphur dioxide** is a gas that is poisonous to both animals and plants. It has been reported that even a low concentration of sulphur dioxide causes respiratory diseases, e.g., asthma, bronchitis, emphysema in human beings. Sulphur dioxide causes irritation to the eyes, resulting in tears and redness. **High concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> leads to**

**stiffness of flower buds which eventually fall off from plants.** Uncatalysed oxidation of sulphur dioxide is slow.

- 4) Dinitrogen and dioxygen are the main constituents of air. These gases do not react with each other at a normal temperature. At high altitudes when lightning strikes, they combine to form oxides of nitrogen. NO<sub>2</sub> is oxidised to nitrate ion, NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> which is washed into the soil, where it serves as a fertilizer.

In an automobile engine, (at high temperature) when fossil fuel is burnt, dinitrogen and dioxygen combine to yield significant quantities of nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). The irritant red haze in the traffic and congested places is due to oxides of nitrogen. Higher concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> damage the leaves of plants and retard the rate of photosynthesis. **Nitrogen dioxide is a lung irritant that can lead to an acute respiratory disease in children.** It is toxic to living tissues also. Nitrogen dioxide is also harmful to various textile fibres and metals.

**23. Consider the following**

1. Carbon monoxide
2. Methane
3. Ozone
4. Sulphur dioxide

**Which of the above are released into the atmosphere due to the burning of crop/biomass residue?**

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

**Ans: D**

**Explanation**

- Biomass burning is the **combustion of organic matter**. Burning can be from natural or manmade fires. Examples are the **burning of crop stubble, forest residues and vegetation burnt for land clearing**



- Burning of agricultural biomass residue, or **Crop Residue Burning (CRB)** has been identified as a major health hazard. Burning of crop residues not only **degrade the atmospheric quality** but also **affect the climate and ultimate the human health**.
- Crop residue and biomass burning (forest fires) are considered as a **major source of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), Ozone**, volatile organic compounds (VOC), nitrogen oxides, **Sulphur dioxide** and halogen compounds
- It is also a significant source of **aerosol in the atmosphere**, having potential impact on global air quality and that of a climate
- It was observed that **levels of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> increases during the burning months** (October–November) incorporated with the effect of meteorological parameters especially wind direction, precipitation and atmospheric temperature.

**24. With reference to olive ridley turtles, consider the following statements.**

1. They are listed as endangered in the IUCN Red list.
2. They arrive at the beaches in western coast of India annually for mass nesting.

**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:**

- The olive ridley turtle is considered the most abundant sea turtle in the world.
- Olive ridleys are found **only in warmer waters**, including the southern Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** They are listed as **vulnerable** in the IUCN Red list.

**Mass nesting**

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The Olive Ridley Turtles come to the beaches of the **Odisha coast** annually between November and December and stay on until April and May for nesting.

- While states like Maharashtra, Goa, and the offshore Andaman islands witness sporadic nesting of olive ridley turtles, **Odisha is the only state in India that sees mass nesting of olive ridley turtles.**

- **Rushikulya** and **Gahirmatha** are the two principal mass nesting sites in Odisha.

#### **Threats**

- The Olive Ridley's face serious threats across their migratory route, habitat and nesting beaches, due to human activities such as turtle unfriendly fishing practices, development and exploitation of nesting beaches for ports, and tourist centers.
- Though international trade in these turtles and their products is banned, they are still extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather.
- All the five species of sea turtles occurring in India, including the Olive Ridley turtles, are legally protected under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and **Appendix I** of the CITES Convention which prohibits trade in turtle products.
- As the nesting period stretches over six months, the Indian Coast Guard undertakes the Olive Ridley Turtle protection program under the code name '**Operation Olivia**' every year.

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

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

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

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

**Causes of Forest Fire**

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

- **Natural causes-** Many forest fires start from natural causes such as lightning which set trees on fire. However, rain extinguishes such fires without causing much damage. **High atmospheric temperatures and dryness (low humidity) offer favorable circumstances for a fire to start.**
- **Man made causes-** Fire is caused when a source of fire like naked flame, cigarette or bidi, electric spark or any source of ignition comes into contact with inflammable material.

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

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

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

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



- fires started accidentally by careless visitors to forests who discard cigarette butts.

**26. Consider the following statements**

- 1) Hypoxia is a condition in which the body or a region of the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply at the tissue level.
- 2) High oxygen saturation in the blood without any visible manifestation of distress is called happy hypoxia.

**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**

**Why in News?**

- Medical practitioners have reported a condition called silent or happy hypoxia in the ongoing Covid pandemic

**What is Hypoxia?**

- **Hypoxia** is a **condition** in which the body or a region of the body is **deprived of adequate oxygen supply** at the tissue level.
- Hypoxia may be classified as either generalized, affecting the whole body, or local, affecting a region of the body.
- The normal oxygen saturation in the bloodstream of a healthy person is above 95%, but COVID-19 patients display dangerous declines of as less as 40%. When **levels fall below 90%, patients** could begin **experiencing lethargy, confusion or mental disruptions** because of insufficient quantities of oxygen reaching the brain. Levels below 80% can result in damage to vital organs.

### What is happy hypoxia?

- **Low oxygen saturation** in the blood **without any visible manifestation of distress** is called **happy hypoxia**.
- While **hypoxia** is a **warning signal** for imminent failure of vital body organs like the kidneys, brain, heart and is usually accompanied by prominent breathlessness, **happy hypoxia does not prompt** any such **obvious external signs**
- A medical device called a **pulse oximeter** can be used in the early detection of silent hypoxia.

### Related information

#### Oxygen concentrator

- An **oxygen concentrator** takes in **air** and **separates** the **oxygen** and delivers it into a person via a nasal cannula.
- Air is 79% nitrogen and 21% oxygen and a concentrator that works by plugging into a source of electricity delivers air that is upto 95% oxygen.
- In **respiratory infections** that causes oxygen saturation levels to dip below 90%, having an **external device supply pure oxygen eases the burden** on the **lungs**.
- **However** in cases of **severe respiratory distress**, it may be **necessary** to provide oxygen that is almost **99% pure** and an oxygen concentrator is not up to that job.
- A concentrator consists of a compressor and sieve bed filter. The former squeezes atmospheric air and also adjusts the pressure at which is delivered.
- A sieve bed in the concentrator is made of a material called **Zeolite**. It separates the nitrogen.

### 27. Consider the following statements about Asiatic lions

- 1) At present Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.
- 2) Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- 3) The IUCN had listed the asiatic lions as Vulnerable species.

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**About:**

- Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions. They have shorter manes (hair around their face) than African counterparts.
- Asiatic lions were once distributed upto the state of West Bengal in east and Rewa in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.
- At present **Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat**, is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.

**Protection for Asiatic Lions**

**Protection Status:**

- IUCN Red List: **Endangered**
- CITES: **Appendix I**
- Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: **Schedule I**

**Conservation Efforts**

- The “**Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**” has been launched by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- It is the Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the cost sharing of 60:40 by the Centre and the State Govt.
- As a result of these conservation efforts, the population of Asiatic lions, which used to be around 50 by the late 1890s, increased to 674 in 2020.

**Why in the news?**

- Eight Asiatic lions at Hyderabad’s Nehru Zoological Park have tested positive for the deadly Coronavirus.

**28. With reference to the Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban), consider the following statements.**

1. It aims to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all statutory towns.
2. The project will focus on creating green spaces and sponge cities to reduce floods and enhance amenity value through an Urban Aquifer Management plan.



3. Under JJM(U), 20% of water demand will be met by reused water with development of institutional mechanisms.

**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:** Union Finance Minister, in the latest budget, announced that Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) will be launched to provide **universal coverage of water supply to all households** through **functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns** in accordance with **SDG Goal-6** ("clean water and sanitation for all").
- Sewerage/septage management in **500 AMRUT cities** with the objective of making them water secure are the major focus areas under JJM(U).

**Key Highlights**

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The project will focus on **rejuvenation of water bodies** to augment sustainable fresh water supply and creating **green spaces and sponge cities** to reduce floods and **enhance amenity value** through an Urban Aquifer Management plan.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** JJM(U) will promote **circular economy of water** through development of a city water balance plan for each city focusing on recycle/reuse of treated sewage, rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation. **20% of water demand** to be met by reused water with development of institutional mechanisms.
- **Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign** is proposed to spread awareness among masses about conservation of water.
- In order to promote **Public private partnership**, it has been mandated for cities having million plus population to take up PPP projects worth minimum of 10 percent of their total project fund allocation.
- Funding Pattern :
  - For Union Territories, there will be 100% central funding.
  - For North Eastern and Hill States, central funding for projects will be 90%.

- Central funding will be 50% for cities with less than 1 lakh population, one third for cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population and 25% for cities with million plus population.
- Mission will be monitored through a **technology-based platform** on which beneficiary response will be monitored along with progress and output-outcome.

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

- Kerala has announced that it will provide about 30 lakh new tap water connections in the current financial year under Jal Jeevan Mission.
- The Jal Shakti Ministry has urged the State to give top priority to coverage of households in SC/ ST majority areas and Aspirational districts.

#### **29. Consider the following statements about the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.**

1. Long term credit is not provided under the scheme.
2. The beneficiaries under the scheme will be issued with a Smart card/ Debit card.
3. Commercial Banks are outside the ambit of implementation of KCC scheme.

#### **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: **B**

#### **Explanation:**

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in **1998** with the aim of providing **adequate and timely credit support** from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers for their cultivation and other needs as indicated below:
  - a. To meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops;
  - b. Post-harvest expenses;
  - c. Produce marketing loan;
  - d. Consumption requirements of farmer household;
  - e. Working capital for maintenance of farm assets and activities allied to agriculture;
  - f. Investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities.

- **Note:** The aggregate of components 'a' to 'e' above will form the **short term credit limit portion** and the aggregate of components under 'f' will form the **long term credit limit portion. Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- Under the KCC Scheme, a flexible limit of Rs.10,000 to Rs.50,000 has been provided to marginal farmers (as Flexi KCC) based on the land holding and crops grown.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The beneficiaries under the scheme will be issued with a **Smart card/ Debit card.**
- It enables farmers to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. and draw cash to satisfy their agricultural and consumption needs.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The Scheme is implemented by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives.**

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

1. CSR is a corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare.
2. India has legally mandated CSR.
3. 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?

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

Answer: A

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.

#### **Latest amendments**

- Recently, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs amended the rules of CSR.
- As per the new rules, non-compliance to the CSR rules and obligations will **no longer be treated as a criminal offence**. These will now be treated as civil wrongs.
- A company may engage **International Organisations** for designing, monitoring and evaluation of the CSR projects and for capacity building of their own personnel for CSR.
- Any **surplus income** being generated through a company's CSR activities can not form part of the company's profit. The surplus shall be reinvested into the same project or shall be transferred to the Unspent CSR Account.
- Any CSR expenditure that exceeds the required amount can be carried **forward to the next three years**.

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

- The Government has clarified that spending of CSR funds for creating health infrastructure for COVID care are eligible CSR activities under Companies Act.

### **31. Consider the following statements**

- 1) According to the Representation of People Act, 1951, it is mandatory for every candidate contesting a Parliamentary or Assembly election to deposit a certain security amount.
- 2) If the candidate gets fewer than one-sixth of the total number of valid votes cast in the constituency, his security deposit will be lost.

**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's in the news?**

- Election results for West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry assemblies were declared recently. Many of the candidates contested lost their security deposits.

**What is losing deposit in elections?**

- According to the **Representation of People Act, 1951**, it is mandatory for every candidate contesting a Parliamentary or Assembly election to deposit a certain security amount.
- To contest a Parliamentary election, the amount is **Rs 25,000** and in case of an Assembly election, it is **Rs 10,000**.
- This amount is deposited with the Election Commission and is called a security deposit in the election. The deposit amount is mandated to ensure **only serious candidates file nomination to contest elections**.
- The Election Commission of India takes many steps to conduct free and fair parliamentary and assembly elections in the country. So the deposit of a security amount is one of them.
- Now, **if the candidate gets fewer than one-sixth of the total number of valid votes cast** in the constituency, his **security deposit will be lost**. This means that the candidate who had deposited Rs 25,000 or Rs 10,000 or any other amount would not be refunded by the Election Commission of India.
- In the first Lok Sabha elections in 1951-52, almost 40 per cent of the total candidates lost their deposits. Nearly 86 per cent of the candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections in 2019 lost deposits, according to a report released by the Election Commission of India.

**32. Consider the following statements about methane**

- 1) Methane's lifetime in the atmosphere is much shorter than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)
- 2) Carbon dioxide is more efficient at trapping radiation than Methane.

**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**

- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is the simplest hydrocarbon, consisting of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms.
- It is produced by **both natural process and human activities**. Major natural sources of methane include **emissions from wetlands and oceans, and from the digestive processes of termites**.
- Methane is emitted during the **production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil**. Methane emissions also result from **livestock and other agricultural practices, land use and by the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills**.
- Globally, 50-65 percent of total CH<sub>4</sub> emissions come from human activities.
- Although the concentration of methane in Earth's atmosphere is small (around 1.8 parts per million), it is an important greenhouse gas because it is such a **potent heat absorber**.
- Methane's lifetime in the atmosphere is **much shorter** than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), but CH<sub>4</sub> is **more efficient at trapping radiation** than CO<sub>2</sub> (almost 25 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>).
- Methane contributes to the formation of **ground-level ozone**, a dangerous air pollutant.

**Why in the news?**

- Recently *GLOBAL METHANE ASSESSMENT* has been published by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and the United Nations Environment Programme.

**Some of the key points of the report are:**

- More than half of global methane emissions stem from human activities in three sectors: **fossil fuels** (35 percent of human-caused emissions), **waste** (20 percent) and **agriculture** (40 per cent).

- It has asked the countries to reduce human-caused methane emissions by 45% by 2030. This is a cost-effective step required to achieve the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1.5° C target.
- It has recommended different targets and areas for different countries. For India it has recommended to reduce methane emissions in the **waste sector**. The waste sector could cut its methane emissions by improving the disposal of sewage.
- Focused strategies specifically targeting methane need to be implemented to achieve sufficient methane mitigation.

### 33. Consider the following statements

- 1) Dumping is the practice of selling a product in a foreign market at an unfairly low price in order to gain a competitive advantage over other suppliers.
- 2) The government of the affected country cannot take any legal action against the dumping country even though there is evidence of genuine material injury to industries in the domestic market.

**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: B**

**Explanation**

**What is dumping?**

- Dumping is the practice of selling a product in a foreign market at an **unfairly low price** (a price that is lower than the cost in the home market, or which is lower than the cost of production) in order **to gain a competitive advantage over other suppliers**.
- Dumping is done to gain access to the foreign market and eliminate competition. It creates a **monopoly** in the market.
- Dumping enables consumers in the importing country to obtain access to goods at an **affordable price**. However, it can also destroy the local market of the importing country, which can result in layoffs and the closure of businesses.

### Anti-dumping duty

- An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a **domestic government imposes on foreign imports** when it believes that the goods are being “dumped” – through the low pricing – in the domestic market.
- Anti-dumping duty is imposed **to protect local businesses and markets** from unfair competition by foreign imports.

### Ill effects of such duties

- While the intention of anti-dumping duties is to save domestic jobs, these tariffs can also lead to **higher prices for domestic consumers**.
- In the long-term, anti-dumping duties can **reduce the international competition of domestic companies** producing similar goods.

### Dumping and WTO

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** plays a critical role in the regulation of anti-dumping measures.
- The **WTO Anti-Dumping Agreement** allows the government of the affected country to take legal action against the dumping country as long as there is **evidence of genuine material injury to industries in the domestic market**.
- The government must show that dumping took place, the extent of the dumping in terms of costs, and the injury or threat to cause injury to the domestic market.
- In other cases, the WTO intervenes to prevent anti-dumping measures.

### What's in the News?

- The government has extended anti-dumping duty on certain types of seamless tubes, and pipes till October 31 this year with a view to guarding domestic manufacturers from cheap Chinese imports.
- The duty was first imposed in May 2016 for five years.
- The commerce ministry's investigation arm **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** had recommended for extension of the duty, after concluding a probe.
- While DGTR recommends the duty to be levied, the **Ministry of Finance** imposes it.
- Countries initiate anti-dumping probes to determine if the domestic industry has been hurt by a surge in below-cost imports. As a counter-measure, they impose duties under the multilateral WTO regime.



- India has initiated maximum anti-dumping cases against dumped imports from **China**.

**34. The National Social Assistance Programme is a welfare programme being administered by**

- A. Ministry of Rural Development
- B. Ministry of Women and Child Development
- C. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- D. Ministry of Labour & Employment

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

- The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was launched on 15th August, 1995. NSAP represents a significant step towards the fulfillment of the Directive Principles in Article 41 and 42 of the Constitution recognizing the concurrent responsibility of the Central and the State Governments in the matter.
- The programme is being administered by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.

**Objective of NSAP**

- It is a social security and welfare programme to provide support to aged persons, widows, disabled persons and bereaved families on death of primary breadwinner, belonging to below poverty line households.
- Under the National Social Assistance Programme Government is committed towards extending direct transfers to over 30 million old age, widow and differently abled beneficiaries belonging to below poverty line families.

**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. The other eligibility criteria and the scale of central assistance under the sub - schemes of NSAP are as follows.
- **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 Ministry of Rural Development conducted a nationwide review of the National Social Assistance Programme recently.

### **35. Consider the following statements about Quad grouping.**

1. It is a grouping of four democracies – India, Australia, US and Japan – first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.
2. The QUAD partners share a commitment towards a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region based on shared values and principles and respect for international law.

### **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 grouping of four democracies – **India, Australia, US and Japan** – known as the **quadrilateral security dialogue or quad**, was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. Quad was revived in 2017.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The QUAD partners share a **commitment towards a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region** based on shared values and principles and respect for international law.
- There is a focus on practical cooperation in the areas of connectivity and infrastructure development, and counter-terrorism, cyber security, maritime security, humanitarian and disaster relief, with the objective of promoting peace, security, stability and prosperity in an increasingly inter-connected Indo-Pacific region.
- With growing concerns in all four quad countries about **Chinese foreign policy and regional influence**, the group has found renewed relevance.

**36. Which of the following is/are advantages of 5G technology?**

- 1) Faster speed
- 2) Ultra Low latency
- 3) Increased connectivity

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

The fifth generation of mobile communication networks is 5g technology.

5G is projected to bring three main benefits:

**Faster speed:** Data transfer speeds are projected to be about 10 times higher with 5G than is possible with 4G. That means significantly faster transmission of images and videos. With 4G/LTE, downloading a high-definition movie might take about 10 minutes. With 5G, it should take less than a second.

**Shorter delays:** Though it's not always noticeable, there is often a brief lag in time from when data is sent to when it's received. 5G should reduce this so-called latency, making it possible, for example, to watch high-speed virtual reality video with no delays or glitches.

**Increased connectivity:** Cell towers equipped with 5G technology would have greatly increased capacity over 4G/LTE. That means more people — and more devices — should be able to communicate at the same time.

**Hence all three are advantages of 5G technology.**

**37. What is/are the difference between a payment bank and a small finance bank?**

1. Small Finance Banks primarily undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections, whereas Payment Banks cannot perform lending activities.
2. Payment Banks cannot provide debit card facilities like Small Finance Banks.

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

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

**Payment Banks:**

- Payment banks are the new age banks with limited facility. These banks mostly operate through the small vendors and shopkeepers. It exist in between the mobile wallet and regular banks.
- A payment bank provides following services to its customers.
- Accept demand deposits (currently restricted upto Rs.1 lakh)
- Remittance services
- Mobile payments
- Fund transfers
- **Debit card** and associated services (Payment banks are not allowed to provide credit card facilities)



- Net Banking services
- Sell third-party financial products like insurance and mutual funds
- **They can't offer loans**
- The Reserve Bank expects payment banks to target India's migrant labourers, low-income households and small businesses, offering savings accounts and remittance services with a low transaction cost.

**Small Finance Banks:**

- The small finance bank primarily undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections including small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.
- There are no restrictions in the area of operations of small finance banks.
- The small finance banks are subject to all prudential norms and regulations of RBI as applicable to existing commercial banks including requirement of maintenance of Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).
- The small finance banks will be required to extend 75 per cent of its Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) to the sectors eligible for classification as priority sector lending (PSL) by the Reserve Bank.
- At least 50 per cent of its loan portfolio should constitute loans and advances of upto Rs. 25 lakh.
- **They are eligible to provide credit card and debit card facilities and associational services.**

**38. Consider the following statements regarding Financial Action Task Force (FATF).**

1. FATF is an inter-governmental body.
2. FATF was established by the G-20 Summit that was held in Paris in 1989.

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

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

**Answer: A**

### Explanation:

- FATF is an **inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7**
- It is a **“policy-making body”** which works to **generate the necessary political will** to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas
- The **FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris**

### Roles and functions

- Initially it was established to examine and develop measures to **combat money laundering**.
- In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to **combat terrorist financing**, in addition to money laundering.
- In April 2012, it added efforts to **counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**

### Composition

- The FATF currently **comprises 37 member jurisdictions** and 2 regional organisations, representing most major financial centers in all parts of the globe. It also has observers and associate members

### Blacklist and Grey list

- **Black List:** Countries known as **Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs)** are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF **revises the blacklist regularly**, adding or deleting entries
- **Grey List:** Countries that are **considered safe haven for supporting terror funding** and money laundering are put in the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist

39. He was a Moderate nationalist leader who joined the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1899. Between 1899 and 1902, he was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council followed by a stint at the Imperial Legislative Council from 1902 till his death. He became the president of INC at its Banaras session in 1905. According to him, the greatest need of the hour in India during those times was industrial education.

The above description refers to?

- a) Madan Mohan Malaviya
- b) Pherozeshah Mehta
- c) Dadabhai Naoroji
- d) Gopal Krishna Gokhale

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

• Following the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, there arose a brand of **liberal political leaders** in India who sought a greater role for Indians in running the country's affairs while pledging allegiance to British rule. In the **Bombay Presidency**, the prominent leaders who adopted constitutional methods as a means of achieving political reform included **Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Justice MG Ranade**

• It was in this very line of thought that Bombay gave the nation another notable leader at the turn of the century – the **liberal giant Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)**.

• A protege of Ranade and influenced by the British philosopher-parliamentarian Edmund Burke, Gokhale worked towards **realising constitutional ideals in India** for three decades and abjured the use of reactionary or revolutionary ways.

• In 1905, Gokhale **founded the 'Servants of India Society'** with the object of training men to devote themselves to the service of India as **national missionaries** and to promote by all constitutional means the national interests of the Indian people.

• While appreciating the benefits of British rule in general, he never **failed to criticize unjust policies and high-handed actions** of the Government.

• In his opinion, the economic results of British rule in India were absolutely disastrous, resulting in frightful poverty. According to him, **the greatest need of the hour in India was industrial education**

**Professor-turned-political leader**

• Gokhale hailed from the Ratnagiri district in present-day Maharashtra and studied at the Elphinstone College in Mumbai before joining as a professor at the **Fergusson College** in Pune, where he taught political economy and history.

• Gokhale first arrived on the national scene after cross-examining British colonial expenditure at the **Welby Commission** of 1897 in England.



- Gokhale's work earned him praise in India as he **laid bare British military financing policies** that heavily burdened Indian taxpayers much to the chagrin of then Viceroy Lord Curzon — regarded among the most vituperative of racists to occupy that post
- **In 1899, Gokhale joined the Indian National Congress**, emerging as one of the main leaders of its 'moderate' wing, and gave up teaching three years later to work as a lawmaker for the remainder of his life

### **Positions in colonial legislatures**

- Gokhale is best remembered for his extensive work in colonial legislatures. Between 1899 and 1902, he was a **member of the Bombay Legislative Council** followed by a stint at the Imperial Legislative Council from 1902 till his death.
- At Bombay, Gokhale **opposed the British government's onerous land revenue policies**, advocated free and compulsory primary education, and asked for the creation of equal opportunities to fight against untouchability
- At the Imperial legislature, Gokhale played a **key role in framing the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909** and advocated for the expansion of legislative councils at both the Centre and the provinces.
- A critic of British imperial bureaucracy, Gokhale **favoured decentralisation** and the promotion of panchayat and taluka bodies
- He also **spoke for the Indian diaspora living in other parts of the British Empire** and opposed tooth and nail the indentured labour system, raising their problems in the Imperial legislature as well as at Congress sessions

### **Work in the Congress**

- Gokhale became Congress president at its **Banaras session in 1905**. This was also the time when bitter differences had arisen between his group of 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists' led by Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak among others.
- Matters came to a head when the **two factions split at the Surat session of 1907**.
- Historians note that despite ideological differences, Gokhale maintained cordial relations with his opponents. In **1907, he fervently campaigned for the release of Lala Lajpat Rai**, who was imprisoned that year by the British at Mandalay in present-day Myanmar.



- **After Mahatma Gandhi's return to India**, he joined Gokhale's group before going on to lead the independence movement. **Gandhi regarded Gokhale as his political mentor**, and wrote a book in Gujarati dedicated to the leader titled 'Dharmatma Gokhale'.

**Why in the news?**

Recently, the Prime Minister **paid tribute to Gopal Krishna Gokhale on his 155th birth anniversary** on 9th May 2021

**40. Consider the following statements about the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).**

1. It was constituted as a part of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India to oversee the auditing profession in the country.
2. NFRA functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

**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:**

- National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) was constituted in 2018 under the Companies Act, 2013.
- NFRA is an **independent regulator** overseeing the auditing profession in the country.
- It has taken over all the powers of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) regarding regulation of auditors. **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** NFRA functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

**Functions and powers of NFRA**

- Recommend **accounting and auditing policies and standards** to be adopted by companies;
- Monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards. NFRA has also been given powers to **investigate professional misconduct** committed by members of the ICAI for prescribed class of body corporate or persons.

- NFRA is empowered to oversee the quality of audit service and undertake investigation of companies whose securities are listed on any stock exchange in India or abroad.
- Also, it can probe unlisted public companies having paid-up capital of no less than Rs 500 crore or annual turnover of no less than Rs 1,000 crore.

**41. Which of the following statements with respect to Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 is incorrect?**

- It covers both the organised and unorganised sectors.
- All workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign companies having a place of work in India come under the definition of workplace.
- The Act also covers a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house.
- Every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 5 or more employees.

**Answer: D**

**Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act**

**Key Provisions of the Act**

- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 addresses the issue of workplace sexual harassment faced by women in **private institutions and government organisations.**
- The act superseded **Vishakha Guidelines** laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997.
- The Act defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.

**Definition of Workplace**

- Under the Act, 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.”
- 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.
- As per the Act, workplace includes:-

- Government organizations, including Government company, corporations and cooperative societies;-
- Private sector organisations, venture, society, trust, NGO or service providers etc. providing services which are commercial, vocational, educational, sports, professional, entertainment, industrial, health related or financial activities, including production, supply, sale, distribution or service;-
- Hospitals/Nursing Homes;-
- Sports Institutes/Facilities;-
- Places visited by the employee (including while on travel) including transportation provided by employer;
- A dwelling place or house.

### ICC & LCC

- Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee** at each office or branch with **10 or more employees**.
- Every district will have a **Local Complaints Committee (LCC)** so as to enable women in the unorganised sector or small establishments to work in an environment free of sexual harassment.
- The LCC will receive complaints:
  - From women working in an organisation having less than 10 workers;
  - When the complaint is against the employer himself;
  - From domestic workers.
- At least **50 percent** of the nominated members in any Internal or Local Committee must be women.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of **civil courts** for gathering evidence.
- The Complaints Committees are required to provide for **conciliation** before initiating an inquiry, if requested by the complainant.

### Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed a handbook and a training module for effective implementation/ awareness of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.

**42. With reference to the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), consider the following statements.**

1. MPs are entitled to recommend works to the tune of Rs 2 crore annually
2. MPs shall recommend works costing at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by S.T. population
3. Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country

**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: B**

**Explanation**

- The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is a programme first launched 1993, aimed towards providing funds for developmental works recommended by individual MPs.
- The objective of the scheme is to enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets based on the locally felt needs to be taken up in their Constituencies.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Under the MPLADS scheme, each MP has the choice of suggesting to the District Collector works to the tune of **Rs 5 crore per annum** to be taken up in his or her constituency.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their Constituencies and Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State of Election (with select exceptions). Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- Under MPLADS, the role of the MPs is limited only upto recommendation of works. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the District Authority to sanction, execute and complete the works recommended by Members of Parliament within the stipulated time.



- **Statement 2 is correct:** The guidelines recommend MPs to suggest works costing at least 15 per cent of their MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by ST population.
- In case there is insufficient tribal population in the area of Lok Sabha Member, they may recommend this amount for the creation of community assets in tribal areas outside of their constituency but within their State of election.

#### **What kind of projects are executed?**

- The guidelines lay down a number of development works, including construction of railway halt stations, providing financial assistance to recognised educational bodies, cooperative societies, bar associations, installing CCTV cameras, and rainwater harvesting systems,
- The MPLADS funds can be merged with other schemes such as MGNREGA and Khelo India.
- MPLADS was held constitutionally valid by the Supreme Court in its May 6, 2010 judgment.

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

- Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has donated one crore 50 lakh rupees from MPLAD fund for purchase of medical equipment in Haridwar. He said, every effort is being made to ensure that there is no shortage of medical equipment for the country.

#### **43. Consider the following statements about mucormycosis**

- 1) Mucormycosis is a serious bacterial infection caused by mucormycetes.
- 2) Amphotericin B is the drug that can help treat mucormycosis.

#### **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**

- Mucormycosis (previously called zygomycosis) is a serious but **rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes.**
- These molds live throughout the environment.

- Mucormycosis mainly affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness.
- It most commonly affects the sinuses or the lungs after inhaling fungal spores from the air
- It can also occur on the skin after a cut, burn, or other type of skin injury.

### **Symptoms**

- Headache, fever, pain under the eyes, nasal or sinus congestion, and partial loss of vision are among Mucormycosis symptoms, also known as the black fungus.

### **Mucormycosis and COVID 19**

- Doctors believe mucormycosis, which has an overall mortality rate of 50%, may be being triggered by the use of steroids, a life-saving treatment for severe and critically ill Covid-19 patients.
- Steroids reduce inflammation in the lungs for Covid-19 and appear to help stop some of the damage that can happen when the body's immune system goes into overdrive to fight off coronavirus. But they also reduce immunity and push up blood sugar levels in both diabetics and non-diabetic Covid-19 patients.
- It's thought that this drop in immunity could be triggering these cases of mucormycosis.

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

Government is taking steps to ramp up availability of Amphotericin B, an antifungal drug to fight Mucormycosis.

#### **44.Hiroshima Declaration which is sometimes seen in news is associated with:**

- a)G7
- b)European Union
- c)G20
- d)G4

**Answer:A**

### **Explanation:**

- The Hiroshima declaration aims to revitalise the momentum for the effort towards making a world without nuclear weapons.

- It reaffirms the commitment of G-7 countries' to seek a safer world for all and create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons to promote international stability.

#### **About G7**

- The Group of Seven (G7) is a group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- These countries, with the seven largest advanced economies in the world, represent 58% of the global net wealth (\$317 trillion).
- The G7 countries also represent more than 46% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) based on nominal values, and more than 32% of the global GDP based on purchasing power parity.
- The European Union is also represented at the G7 summit.

**45. With reference to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), consider the following statements.**

1. It is the National Meteorological Service of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology, seismology and allied subjects.
2. MAUSAM mobile app is an initiative of the IMD to provide seamless and user-friendly access to different weather products.

**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 India Meteorological Department (IMD) was established in **1875**. It is the National Meteorological Service of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology, seismology and allied subjects.
- It is an agency of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- IMD is headquartered in **Delhi** and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica. Regional offices are at Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur and Pune.

- IMD is also **one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centers** of the World Meteorological Organization.

### **Main Functions of IMD**

- To **take meteorological observations and to provide current and forecast meteorological information** for optimum operation of weather-sensitive activities like agriculture, irrigation, shipping, aviation, offshore oil explorations, etc.
- To **warn against severe weather phenomena** like tropical cyclones, norwesters, dust storms, heavy rains and snow, cold and heat waves, etc., which cause destruction of life and property.
- To **provide meteorological statistics** required for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.
- To **conduct and promote research** in meteorology and allied disciplines.
- To **detect and locate earthquakes and to evaluate seismicity** in different parts of the country for development projects.

### **Why in News?**

- Indian Meteorological Department recently celebrated its 146th Foundation Day.

### **Various mobile apps launched by IMD**

#### **Damini for lightning forecast**

- Damini Lightning Alert app, developed by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)**, is for giving warning to the user about the lightning on the basis of user location.

#### **MAUSAM for weather forecast**

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The MAUSAM mobile App, designed and developed jointly by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), IITM and IMD, has the following 5 services:
  - **Current Weather:** Current temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction for 200 cities updated 8 times a day. Information on Sunrise/ sunset and moonrise/ moonset are also given.
  - **Nowcast:** Three hourly warnings of localized weather phenomena and their intensity issued for about 800 stations, and districts of India by State Meteorological Centres of IMD. In case of severe weather, its impact also is included in the warning.



- **City Forecast:** Past 24 hours and 7 day forecast of weather conditions around 450 cities in India.
- **Warnings:** Alerts issued twice a day for all districts for the next five days in colour code (Red, Orange and Yellow) to warn citizens of approaching dangerous weather. The colour code Red is the most severe category urging authorities to take action, Orange code prompts authorities and public to be alert and Yellow code prompts authorities and public to keep them updated.
- **Radar products:** Latest Station wise radar products updated every 10 minutes.

#### **Meghdoot for agrometeorological advisories**

- The Meghdoot app is a joint initiative of the IMD and IITM and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- It provides forecasts relating to temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind speed and direction, which play critical roles in agricultural operations and advisories to the farmers on how to take care of their crops and livestock. The information would be updated twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays.

#### **46. The NASA's OSIRIS-REx is significant because**

- A. It is the first space mission to study Jupiter's Trojan asteroids
- B. It is the first mission dedicated to looking deep beneath the Martian surface
- C. It is a scientific mission to unlock the mysteries of the Sun's corona and solar wind
- D. It is NASA's first mission to visit a near-Earth asteroid, survey the surface, and collect a sample to deliver to Earth

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

**Why in News:**

- **NASA's spacecraft, OSIRIS-REx** which scientists believe has collected samples from **asteroid Bennu**, began its two-year journey back to Earth.

**About the spacecraft**

- OSIRIS-REx is **NASA's first mission** to visit a near-Earth asteroid, survey its surface and collect a sample from it. **Japan** is the **only other country** to have accomplished such a feat.

- Scientists will use the **asteroid samples** to **study** the **formation of the solar system** and of habitable planets such as Earth.
- NASA will also distribute a part of the samples to laboratories worldwide and will reserve about 75 per cent of the samples for future generations who can study it with technologies not yet created.

#### **What is asteroid Bennu?**

- **Bennu** is believed to have been born in the **Main Asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter** and because of gravitational tugs from other celestial objects and the slight push asteroids get when they release absorbed sunlight, the asteroid is coming closer to Earth.
- **Asteroids** are **rocky objects** that **orbit** the **Sun**, much smaller than planets. They are **also called minor planets**. According to NASA, 994,383 is the count for known asteroids, the remnants from the formation of the solar system over 4.6 billion years ago.
- Option A is related to **NASA's Lucy mission**.
- Option B is related to **NASA's InSight mission**.
- Option C is related to **Parker Solar Probe**.

**47. What is the correct sequence of occurrence of the following protected areas as one proceeds from North to South?**

1. Mukurthi
2. Bhitarkanika
3. Hemis
4. Ntangki

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

- a) 4-2-1-3
- b) 3-2-4-1
- c) 3-4-2-1
- d) 4-3-2-1

**Ans: C**

**Explanation:**

National Park	State
Hemis	Leh
Ntangki	Nagaland
Mukurthi	Tamil Nadu
Bhitarkanika	Odisha

**48. Consider the following statements about Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

- 1) Low-income economies with a Low Human Development Index (HDI) which are regarded as developing countries are mostly the members of OECD
- 2) India is a member of OECD.

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is **an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives.**
- It is a **34 member countries group** with a goal to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.

- **Aim:** Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, it works on establishing international norms and finding **evidence-based solutions** to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges.
- OECD members are democratic countries that support free-market economies.
- **Most of the OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries** (not low income countries with low HDI and not developing countries). **Hence statement 1 is Incorrect.**
- **India is not a member of OECD. Hence statement 2 is Incorrect.**
- OECD is an **official United Nations (UN), observer member**

#### **Functions of OECD**

- The OECD publishes **economic reports, statistical databases**, analyses, and forecasts on the outlook for economic growth worldwide
- The group analyzes and reports on the impact of **social policy issues** such as **gender discrimination** on economic growth, and makes policy recommendations designed to foster growth with sensitivity to environmental issues. The organization also seeks to eliminate bribery and other financial crime worldwide
- The OECD maintains a so-called "**black list**" of nations that are considered uncooperative tax havens.
- It led a two-year effort with the Group of 20 (G20) nations to encourage tax reform worldwide and eliminate tax avoidance by profitable corporations.

#### **Reports and Indices by OECD**

- International Migration Outlook
- OECD Better Life Index

#### **49. Consider the following statements about Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme**

- 1) It seeks to encourage people to buy gold bonds instead of actual gold.
- 2) The investment in the Bonds will be eligible for Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) compliance by banks.



- 3) It will reduce the demand for physical gold to some extent and thus helps in reducing the annual demand for import of gold.

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- **Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs)** are a kind of Government bonds that are issued **(by the RBI on behalf of the Government)** on payment of rupees but denominated in grams of gold. The value of these bonds is tied to the value of gold. On redemption, the investor gets interest income and the prevailing price of gold.
- These bonds are thus different from usual Government securities (G-secs) as the redemption value at the time of maturity is not a fixed sum, but linked to the price of an underlying commodity called gold. **It seeks to encourage people to buy gold bonds instead of actual gold.**

**Advantages and disadvantages**

**To the investor**

The advantages to the investor in investing in SGB instead of gold are the following:

- **Interest earnings** on an otherwise dead asset.
- Ease of storage and handling gold, while preserving its advantage of earnings in terms of appreciation of its prices in future.
- **An alternate instrument for investment.**

The only possible disadvantage to the investor is that, while in the event of appreciation of the price of gold, the investor gains, however, in the unlikely event of a **fall in gold prices, the loss too will be borne by the investor.**

**To the Economy**

The advantages to the Government and the economy are the following:

- **Reduction in the cost of Government's borrowings**- the current borrowing cost from the domestic market is around 7-8 per cent. Thus, an interest payment below this level is an yearly saving for the Government on account of its borrowing cost. This difference can be used by the Government to cover the appreciation of gold prices payable to the investors at the time of redemption.
- A decrease in the price of the gold will be a gain for the Government.
- It will **reduce the demand for physical gold** to some extent and thus helps in reducing the annual demand for import of gold.

The possible disadvantage to the Government will be in the unlikely event of a **substantial increase in gold prices**. For this, the scheme proposes the creation of a Gold Reserve Fund which will absorb the price fluctuations and the fund will be continuously monitored for sustainability. Further, the issuance of the SGBs will be in tranches to enable the Government to maintain its issuance within its yearly borrowing limits.

#### **Features**

- The Bonds are denominated in units of **one gram of gold** and multiples thereof. The Bonds will be repayable on the **expiration of eight years** from the date of issue.
- Premature redemption of the Bond is allowed from **fifth year** of the date of issue on the interest payment dates.
- The investment in the Bonds will be eligible for **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)** compliance by banks.
- These bonds can also be used as **collateral** for loans.

**50. Which one of the following countries is/ are members of the ASEAN grouping?**

- 1) Thailand
- 2) Laos
- 3) India
- 4) China

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**



- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, is a regional & intergovernmental organisation of 10 countries of southeast Asia.
- ASEAN was established in 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the **ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)**.
- Its members are **Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam.**
- The organisation aims to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership. They work towards the progress of the southeast Asia region.

**51.Consider the following statements about Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, (FCRA), 2010**

- 1) The objective of the Act is to prevent use of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activity detrimental to the national interest.
- 2) Organisations can receive the foreign funds in a bank account designated as the 'FCRA account' only in branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi, as notified by the 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: B**

**Explanation:**

**About Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, (FCRA), 2010**

- The FCRA 2010 regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution by individuals, associations and companies. Foreign contribution is the donation or transfer of any currency, security or article (of beyond a specified value) by a foreign source.
- The objective is to prevent use of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activity detrimental to the national interest.
- **All societies, companies, associations and NGOs** have to register themselves under the FCRA and fulfil definite criteria to be eligible for foreign funds.
- The registration is initially **valid for five years** and it can be renewed subsequently if they comply with all norms.
- Registered associations can receive foreign contributions for **social, educational, religious, economic and cultural purposes**.
- Filing of annual returns, on the lines of Income Tax, is compulsory.
- At present, there are 22,591 FCRA-registered NGOs in the country.

**Who cannot receive foreign donations?**

- **Members of the legislature and political parties, government officials, judges and media persons** are prohibited from receiving any foreign contribution.



- However, in 2017 the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), amended the FCRA law paving the way for **political parties to receive funds** from the Indian subsidiary of a foreign company or a foreign company in which an Indian holds 50% or more shares.

### **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020**

- Last year, the Parliament passed the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020 which amends the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010.

### **Highlights of the 2020 Act**

#### **Prohibition to accept foreign contribution**

- The amendment adds **public servants** (as defined under the Indian Penal Code) to the list of persons who are prohibited to accept any foreign contribution.
- Public servant includes any person who is in service or pay of the government, or remunerated by the government for the performance of any public duty.

#### **Transfer of foreign contribution**

- The amendment act prohibits the transfer of grants received under FCRA to any other person or organisation.

#### **Aadhaar for registration**

- Any person seeking prior permission, registration or renewal of registration must provide the **Aadhaar number of all its office bearers, directors or key functionaries, as an identification document.**
- In case of a foreigner, they must provide a copy of the passport or the Overseas Citizen of India card for identification.

#### **FCRA account**

- Organisations can receive the foreign funds in a bank account designated as the 'FCRA account' **only in branches of the State Bank of India, New Delhi**, as notified by the central government.

#### **Reduction in use of foreign contribution for administrative purposes**

- Under the 2010 Act, a person who receives foreign contribution must use it only for the purpose for which the contribution is received. Further, they must not use more than 50% of the contribution for meeting administrative expenses.
- The amendment act **reduces this limit to 20%.**

#### **Suspension of registration**

- Under the 2010 Act, the government may suspend the registration of a person for a period not exceeding 180 days.
- The latest amendment adds that such **suspension may be extended up to an additional 180 days.**

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

- According to a submission made by a non-governmental organisation in the Delhi High Court, only 16% registered NGOs have active bank accounts with the State Bank of India's main branch in Delhi, a **compulsory requirement to receive foreign funds from April 1.**
- An Assam-based NGO has also moved the Gauhati High Court against another amended provision of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2020 that makes Aadhaar mandatory for opening and operating the account in Delhi.
- The Gauhati High Court has sent a notice to the SBI asking it to explain why Aadhaar was necessary to open a bank account, when in 2018, the Supreme Court in the **K.S. Puttaswamy (Aadhaar) case** had ruled that **mandatorily linking Aadhaar to a bank account “does not satisfy the test of proportionality”.**
- According to the amended provisions of the FCRA enacted in September 2020, the NGOs registered under the Act were asked to open a designated bank account at the SBI, Delhi and compulsorily register the Aadhaar details of the chief functionaries, trustees and office-bearers.
- The amendment stated that all the existing FCRA accounts of the NGOs will be linked to the SBI account in Delhi, and while they may not be able to receive fresh foreign funds from April 1 in the existing accounts, they could utilise the money that already exists in the old account.

#### **52. Consider the following statements about eSanjeevani**

- 1) The portal was designed & developed by Niti Aayog.
- 2) It aims to implement Doctor-to-Doctor teleconsultation in all the 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres in conjunction with identified Medical College hospitals in a 'Hub and Spoke' model.

**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: A**

**Explanation**

**About 'eSanjeevani'**

- Launched in 2009 by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** 'eSanjeevani' is a **web-based comprehensive telemedicine solution**. It aims to provide healthcare services to patients in their homes.
- Besides enhancing the quality of medical services, addressing issues about uneven distribution and shortage of infrastructural as well as human resources, eSanjeevani also aims to make healthcare services equitable by **bridging the digital divide** that exists between the urban vs. rural, rich vs. poor etc.
- eSanjeevani can also be used to provide **medical education** to interns, people across Various Common Service Centers (CSCs), etc.
- The portal was designed & developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, a premier R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

**Services provided**

- eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz.
  - Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and
  - Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.

**eSanjeevani**

- It is being implemented under the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWC)**. It aims to implement Doctor-to-Doctor teleconsultation in all the 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres in conjunction with identified Medical College hospitals in a 'Hub and Spoke' model.
- States have identified and set up dedicated 'Hubs' in Medical Colleges and District hospitals to provide teleconsultation services to 'Spokes', i.e SHCs, PHCs and HWCs.

### **eSanjeevani OPD**

- Owing to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Ministry launched the second tele-consultation service enabling patient-to-doctor telemedicine through 'eSanjeevaniOPD'.
- This service is available as an Android mobile application as well. This has made it convenient for the people to avail of the health services without having to travel.
- This e-health service is offered free of cost and has proved a boon in containing the spread of COVID while simultaneously enabling provisions for non-COVID essential healthcare.

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

- eSanjeevani, the flagship National Telemedicine Service of MoHFW has served more than 50 lakh (more than half a crore) patients in the last one year.

### **53. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):**

1. Even if one of the family members paid Income Tax in the last assessment year, that farmer family is not eligible for benefits under PM-KISAN.
2. All professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects are excluded from the scheme.
3. For availing benefits under the scheme, Aadhaar is mandatory.

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

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

**Answer:** (b)

**Statement 2 is incorrect:** Not all professionals are excluded from the scheme. Only those who have registered with respective Professional bodies and carry out profession by undertaking practices are excluded.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**

- PM-KISAN is a **Central Sector scheme** with **100% funding from the Government of India**.



- Under the Scheme an **income support of Rs.6000/-** per year is provided to all farmer families across the country in **three equal installments of Rs.2000/- each every four months.**
- Definition of family for the Scheme is husband, wife and minor children.
- The entire responsibility of identification of beneficiary farmer families rests with the State / UT Governments.
- The fund is **directly transferred to the bank accounts** of the beneficiaries.
- For enrollment, the farmer is required to approach the local patwari / revenue officer / Nodal Officer (PM-Kisan) nominated by the State Government.
- The Common Service Centres (CSCs) have also been authorized to do registration of the farmers for the Scheme upon payment of fees.
- Farmers can also do their self-registration through the Farmers Corner in the portal.
- For availing benefits under the scheme, Aadhaar is mandatory. Hence, **Statement 3 is correct.**
- **Special provisions have been made for the North-Eastern States** where land ownership rights are community based, **Forest Dwellers and Jharkhand**, which does not have updated land records and restrictions on transfer of land.

#### **Exclusion Categories**

The following categories of beneficiaries of higher economic status shall not be eligible for benefit under the scheme.

(a) All Institutional Land holders.

(b) Farmer families in **which one or more of its members belong to** following categories

i) Former and present holders of constitutional posts

ii) Former and present Ministers/ State Ministers and former/present Members of Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha/ State Legislative Assemblies/ State Legislative Councils, former and present Mayors of Municipal Corporations, former and present Chairpersons of District Panchayats.

iii) All serving or retired officers and employees of Central/ State Government Ministries /Offices/Departments and its field units Central or State PSEs and Attached offices /Autonomous Institutions under Government as well as regular employees of the Local Bodies

(Excluding Multi Tasking Staff /Class IV/Group D employees)

vi) All superannuated/retired pensioners whose monthly pension is Rs.10,000/-or more

(Excluding Multi Tasking Staff / Class IV/Group D employees) of above category

v) **All Persons who paid Income Tax in the last assessment year. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**

vi) Professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects **registered with Professional bodies and carrying out profession by undertaking practices.**

**54. Galathea National Park and the Campbell Bay National Park are located in this biosphere reserve. It has been declared as one of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves by UNESCO.**

**Identify the biosphere reserve.**

- a) Great Nicobar Biosphere reserve
- b) Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve
- c) Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve
- d) Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

**Answer: A**

**Explanation**

- Great Nicobar is the **southernmost island of the Nicobar Islands** Archipelago. The Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve harbours a wide spectrum of ecosystems comprising **tropical wet evergreen forests, mountain ranges** reaching a height of 642 m above sea level, and coastal plains.
- It incorporates two National parks of India, the larger **Campbell Bay National Park** on the northern part of the island, and **Galathea National Park** in the southern interior
- The region is noted for its rich biodiversity. It houses 650 species of angiosperms, ferns, gymnosperms, bryophytes and lichens among others. The tract is **rich in plant diversity** and fosters a number of **rare and endemic species**
- The region also harbours a large number of **endemic and endangered species** of fauna. Of these, the well-known **Crab-eating Macaque, Nicobar Tree Shrew, Dugong**, Nicobar

Megapode, Serpent Eagle, saltwater crocodile, marine turtles and Reticulated Python are endemic and/or endangered.

- In year 2013 it was **included in the list of Man and Biosphere program of UNESCO** to promote sustainable development based on local community effort and sound science
- The **Mongoloid Shompen Tribe**, about 200 in number live in the forests of the biosphere reserve particularly along the rivers and streams. They are **hunters and food gatherers**, dependent on forest and marine resources for sustenance.
- Another Mongoloid Tribe, **Nicobarese** about 300 in number used to live in settlements along the west coast. After the tsunami in 2004, which devastated their settlement on the western coast, they were **relocated to Afra Bay in the North Coast** and Campbell Bay. They survive on fish caught from the sea.

#### **Man and Biosphere program (MAB)**

- Launched in 1971, **UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)** is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a **scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments**.
- MAB combines the **natural and social sciences**, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting **innovative approaches to economic development** that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable.
- Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts **701 sites in 124 countries** all over the world, including **21 transboundary sites**.

#### **Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve**

- The Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve is located in the biogeographical region of the Deccan Peninsula and the Biotic Province in Satpura Range of Madhya Pradesh state in central India

#### **Khangchendzonga National Park**

- **Khangchendzonga National Park** also **Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve** is a National Park and a Biosphere reserve located in Sikkim, India. It was inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list in July 2016, becoming the first "Mixed Heritage" site of India

#### **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**

- The **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** is an International Biosphere Reserve in the Western Ghats and Nilgiri Hills ranges of South India. It includes the Aralam, Mudumalai, Mukurthi,



Nagarhole, Bandipur and Silent Valley national parks, as well as the Wayanad and Sathyamangalam wildlife sanctuaries.

**55. Which of the following is/are the major focus areas of UNDP India's country programme for 2018-2022 ?**

- 1) Inclusive growth
- 2) Environment and energy
- 3) Strengthening systems and institutions
- 4) Science and Astronomy

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

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

**Answer: B**

**Explanation**

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

- **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** works in almost 170 countries and territories, helping to **achieve the eradication of poverty**, and the **reduction of inequalities** and exclusion, while protecting the planet.
- It helps countries to **develop strong policies**, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and **build resilience** so they can sustain their progress.
- In order to achieve its mandate, **UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions** from **UN Member States, multilateral organizations**, private sector and other sources.

**UNDP and India**

- UNDP has worked in India since 1951 in almost all areas of human development, from systems and institutional strengthening to **inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods**, as well as sustainable energy, environment and resilience.



- In 1952, the Government of India and UNDP entered into a **basic agreement to govern UNDP's assistance to the Special Agreement** on the Technical Assistance between UN organizations and the Government of India.
- UNDP has supported India for the last five decades, both at the **federal and provincial levels**, in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** through mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
- With over 30 projects on the ground in almost every state, today UNDP India works to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by **transforming traditional models to do development differently**.

#### **UNDP India's country programme for 2018-2022**

- The Country Programme (2018-2022) is formulated in close consultation with the Government and guided by both the **current and new UNDP strategic plans**
- **The Department of Economic Affairs**, Government of India is the **designated nodal department** which approves and signs the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) with UNDP.
- The programme is nationally executed and **implemented by a range of partners** including government ministries, state governments, district authorities, **civil society organizations, NGOs and other UN agencies**.
- UNDP India's country programme for 2018-2022 has three major focus areas:
  - Inclusive growth
  - Environment and energy
  - Strengthening systems and institutions
  - **Science and Astronomy is not among** the major focus areas of this programme
- These are supported by a **framework of renewed partnerships and blended finance solutions**, a pool of financial and technical resources for greater impact and scale and South-South expertise.

#### **56. Consider the following statements regarding the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**

1. Under the scheme, Jan aushadhi medical stores have been set up to provide generic drugs

2. It was launched by the Ministry of Health and family welfare to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses

**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: A**

**Explanation**

- It is a campaign **launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers** to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses
- Jan Aushadhi medical stores have been set up to **provide generic drugs**, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.
- It was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in November 2008 under the name **Jan Aushadi Campaign. Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)** is the implementation agency for PMBJP
- The Main objective of the scheme includes making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, **through exclusive outlets "Jan Aushadhi Medical Store"**, so as to **reduce out of pocket expenses** in healthcare.

**57. Auxiliary Nurse-Midwife (ANM) and accredited social health activist (ASHA) focus on which of the following component of healthcare.**

- A. Primary health care
- B. Secondary health care
- C. Tertiary health care
- D. Mental health care

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

- Auxiliary Nurse-Midwife and accredited social health activist form crucial links in the **Primary health care of the country.**
- Auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) is a village-level female health worker in India who is known as the first contact person between the community and the health services. ANMs are regarded as the grass-roots workers in the health organisation pyramid. Their services are considered important to provide safe and effective care to village communities.
- Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is a trained female community health activist. Selected from the community itself and accountable to it, the ASHA will be trained to work as an interface between the community and the public health system.

**58. The territories “West Bank and Gaza strip” are sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of**

- A. China and Philippines
- B. Saudi Arabia and Yemen
- C. Iraq and Iran
- D. Israel and Palestine

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**Israel-Palestine conflict**

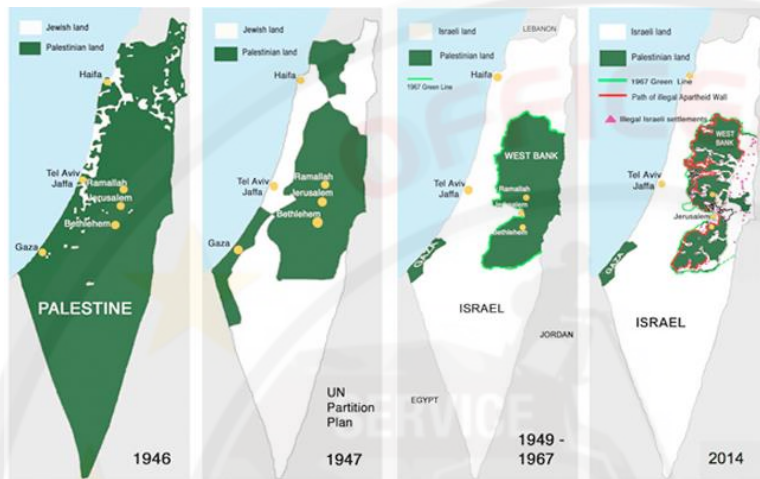
- Jerusalem lies in the heart of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The tussle is over who gets to control the ancient city that is sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians.
- After the end of the **First Arab-Israel War in 1948**, Jerusalem was partitioned into West and East, under Israeli and Palestinian control respectively.
- But in 1967, during the **Six-Day Arab-Israel War**, Israel occupied East Jerusalem from Jordanian forces, and Israel’s Parliament declared the territory had been annexed to Israel.
- This marginalised the Palestinians, who wanted East Jerusalem to be their capital under the **“two-state solution”**.

**What is it?**

- Its basis is two separate states, Israel and Palestine, living peacefully side by side on the land between the western bank of the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea.



- This territory would be divided broadly along the **pre-1967 armistice line or “green line”**
- **Jerusalem**, which both sides want as their capital, would be shared.
- Past negotiations have failed to make progress and there are currently no fresh talks in prospect.



### Oslo Accords & India's position

- Despite Israel's hold over the Jerusalem, in 2016, the UN reaffirmed that Jerusalem's Palestinian territories were under “hostile occupation”.
- Undeterred by the refusal of the international community to endorse the annexation, Israel further expanded settlements in the territories of East Jerusalem.
- Under the **Oslo Accords** of the 1990s, both Israel and the Palestinians agreed that the status of settlements would be decided by negotiations. But the negotiations process has been stalled for several years now.
- India has **traditionally backed a two-state solution** to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict.

### What is the West Bank?

- It is a chunk of land located - as the name suggests - on the west bank of the River Jordan and bounded by Israel to the north, west and south. To its east lies **Jordan**.
- Since the Six-Day War in 1967, also known as the Third Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank has been **occupied by Israel**. Both Israelis and Palestinians assert their rights to the territory of the West Bank and its disputed status and the conflict has not been resolved as yet.
- Between 2.1 million and 3 million Palestinian Arabs live in the West Bank under both limited self-rule and Israeli military rule.



- The West Bank is also home to some 430,000 Israeli Jews who live in 132 settlements built under Israel's occupation.
- The vast majority of the international community considers the settlements **illegal under international law**, though Israel disputes this interpretation.

**59. Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India:**

1. PVTGs reside in 18 States and one Union Territory.
2. A stagnant or declining population is one of the criteria for determining PVTG status.
3. There are 95 PVTGs officially notified in the country so far.
4. Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs.

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

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

**Answer C**

**Explanation**

- Tribal communities are often identified by some specific signs such as primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness to contact with the community at large and backwardness.
- Along with these, some tribal groups have some specific features such as dependency on hunting, gathering for food, having pre-agriculture level of technology, zero or negative growth of population and extremely low level of literacy. These groups are called Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- A total of **75 PVTGs (not 95 PVTGs)** out of 705 Scheduled Tribes are **spread over 18 states and one Union Territory (UT)**, in the country.
- The criteria for identifying Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups are: -
  - Pre-agricultural level of technology
  - Low level of literacy,
  - Economic backwardness,

- A declining or stagnant population.
- Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs where Irular belongs to Tamilnadu and Konda Reddi belongs to Andhrapradesh.

**60. Consider the following statements about Basavanna.**

1. Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanaas.
2. He was the main force behind the Sharana movement witnessed in Karnataka.

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

**Sol:**

- Basavanna was an Indian 12th-century **statesman, philosopher, poet, Lingayat saint in the Shiva-focussed Bhakti movement, and Hindu Shaivite social reformer** during the reign of the Kalyani Chalukya/Kalachuri dynasty.
- Basavanna was active during the rule of both dynasties but reached his peak of influence during the rule of King Bijjala II in Karnataka.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Basavanna **spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanaas.**
- Basavanna **rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals** but introduced Ishtalinga necklace, with an image of the Shiva Linga, to every person regardless of his or her birth, to be a constant reminder of one's bhakti (devotion) to Shiva.
- As the chief minister of his kingdom, he introduced new public institutions such as the **Anubhava Mantapa** ("hall of spiritual experience"), which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, in open.
- Basava **championed devotional worship** that rejected temple worship and rituals led by Brahmins, and replaced it with personalized direct worship of Shiva through practices such as individually worn icons and symbols like a small linga.

- Basaveshwara is the first Kannadiga in whose honour a commemorative coin has been minted in recognition of his social reforms.
- Basavanna literary works include the **Vachana Sahitya in Kannada Language**.
- He is also known as **Bhaktibhandari** (the treasurer of devotion), Basavanna or Basaveswara.

#### **Sharana Movement (Vachana Movement)**

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Sharana movement Basaveshwara presided over attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement.
- The **egalitarianism** of Basavanna's Sharana movement was too radical for its times.
- Sharanas **challenged the caste order**: they organised a wedding where the bridegroom was from a lower caste, and the bride a Brahmin.
- The Sharana movement produced 33 women vachana poets, most of them from the lower strata of the society.

**61. Which of the following statements about the United Nations Security Council is incorrect?**

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established in 1946 as one of the six principal organs of the UN.
- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Council has 10 permanent members including India and 5 non-permanent members.
- Permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolutions, including those on the admission of new member states.

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**About UNSC**

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established in **1946** as **one of the six principal organs of the UN**. It is generally viewed as the apex of the UN system.
- It is responsible for the **maintenance of international peace and security**.

- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions.

- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue **binding resolutions** to member states.

### Membership

- UNSC consists of 15 Members.
- The council has **five permanent members** (P-5) United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France.
- These permanent members can **veto** any substantive Security Council resolutions, including those on the admission of new member states.
- The Security Council also has **10 non-permanent members**, elected on a **regional basis** as follows:
  - five for African and Asian States;
  - one for Eastern European States;
  - two for the Latin American and Caribbean States; and
  - two for Western European and other States.
- Each year the 193-member UN General Assembly (UNGA) elects five non-permanent members for a **two-year term**.
- The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

### Vote and Majority Required

- Each member of the Security Council shall have **one vote**.
- Decisions of the Security Council on **procedural matters** shall be made by an **affirmative vote of nine members**.
- Decisions of the Security Council on **all other matters** shall be made by an **affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members**.
- However, any member, whether permanent or nonpermanent, must abstain from voting in any decision concerning the peaceful settlement of a dispute to which it is a party.

### Why in the News?

- A UN Security Council meeting is set to take place as hostilities between Israel and Palestine enters the seventh day.
- International community has called for an end to the escalating conflict.



**62. Consider the following statements about the GST council.**

1. The Prime Minister acts as the chairman.
2. Decisions of the council are made by voting with a 3/4<sup>th</sup> majority.
3. State governments and the centre have an equal share of voting.

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

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

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

- Goods & Services Tax Council is a **constitutional body** under Article 279A of the amended Constitution, for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.
- The Council was introduced by the **Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016**.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The GST Council is chaired by the **Union Finance Minister** and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

**Mandate of GST Council**

- The Goods and Services Tax Council shall make recommendations to the Union and the States on—
  - the **taxes, cesses and surcharges** levied by the Union, the States and the local bodies which may be subsumed in the goods and services tax;
  - the goods and services that may be **subjected to, or exempted** from the goods and services tax;
  - the **threshold limit of turnover** below which goods and services may be exempted from goods and services tax;
  - the **rates including floor rates with bands** of goods and services tax;

- the date on which the goods and services tax be levied on **petroleum crude, high speed diesel, motor spirit (commonly known as petrol), natural gas and aviation turbine fuel.**
- **Quorum: One-half** of the total number of Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall constitute the quorum at its meetings.
- **Statement 2 is correct: Voting share:** Every decision of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be taken at a meeting, by a majority of **not less than three-fourths** of the weighted votes of the members present and voting, in accordance with the following principles, namely: —
  - the vote of the **Central Government** shall have a weightage of **one-third** of the total votes cast, and
  - the votes of all the **State Governments** taken together shall have a weightage of **two-thirds** of the total votes cast, in that meeting. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- No act or proceedings of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be invalid merely by reason of—
  - any vacancy in, or any defect in, the constitution of the Council; or
  - any defect in the appointment of a person as a Member of the Council; or
  - any procedural irregularity of the Council not affecting the merits of the case.
- **Dispute adjudication:** The Goods and Services Tax Council shall establish a mechanism to adjudicate any dispute
  - between the Government of India and one or more States; or
  - between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other side; or
  - between two or more States, arising out of the recommendations of the Council or implementation thereof.

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

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the GST Council will meet for the first time in more than seven-and-a-half months, on May 28.
- The Council, which is expected to meet every quarter, had last met in early October. While States had been urging a meeting of the Council over the past couple of months, the Centre

had said it would be better to wait for the Assembly elections, including in large States like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, to conclude.

**63. COVID Suraksha sometimes seen in the news is related to**

- a) Facilitating organic farmers to sell their organic produce to COVID victims.
- b) Incentivising people who provide immediate solution to tackle COVID crisis
- c) accelerate the development and production of Indigenous COVID Vaccines.
- d) None of the above

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0 Mission COVID Suraksha was announced by the Government of India, to **accelerate the development and production of Indigenous COVID Vaccines.**
- This is being implemented by the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India at Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), New Delhi.

**Why in the news?**

- To augment the capacity of Indigenous production of Covaxin under the Mission, the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India in April, 2021 provided **financial support as Grant** to vaccine manufacturing facilities **for enhanced production capacities.**
- As a part of this augmentation plan, capacities of manufacturers are being **upgraded with required infrastructure and technology.**

**About DBT:**

- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under the **Ministry of Science & Technology**, **promotes the use and application of biotechnology** in the areas of agriculture, healthcare, animal sciences, environment and industry.
- It is focused on attaining new heights in biotechnology research, shaping biotechnology into a premier precision tool of the future for creation of wealth and ensuring social justice – specially for the welfare of the poor.

**About BIRAC:**

- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is a **not-for-profit Public Sector Enterprise**, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India.

- It is an **Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise** to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

**64. Mukurthi national park is located in the state of**

- a) Tamilnadu
- b) Kerala
- c) Karnataka
- d) Assam

**Answer:A**

**Explanation**

- Mukurthi national park is located in the Nilgiris district of the **state of Tamil Nadu**.
- The park is characterized by montane grasslands and shrublands interspersed with **sholas in a high altitude area** of high rainfall, near-freezing temperatures and high winds.
- Mukurthi is perhaps the only area of the Nilgiris that has **not been badly affected by conversion to exotic monoculture plantations**. It is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- The Park is sandwiched **between** the Mudumalai National Park and the Silent Valley National park.
- There are several streams, many of which drain in to the **Bhavani River (a tributary of Cauvery)**.
- Major attraction of the park is **Nilgiri tahr** (endemic sheep, IUCN- Endangered).

**Why in the news?**

- Mukurthi National Park has become vulnerable to illegal encroachments, especially **Naduvattam area** which has a very high diversity of endemic species.
- Naduvattam area is known for its endemic balsams which are unique to this area.
- The district authorities are investigating the matters trying to resolve the issue.

**65. Consider the following pairs of Cyclones which are addressed by different names in different locations.**

- 1) Hurricanes – In the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific.
- 2) Typhoons – In Southeast Asia



3) Cyclone – In the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific around Australia.

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

**Why in News:**

- The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast 2021's first cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea.

**What are cyclones?**

- A cyclone is a system of winds rotating around a low pressure center. The swirling air rises and cools, creating clouds and precipitation.
- In the Northern Hemisphere, they bend to the right. This makes the cyclone rotate counterclockwise.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, currents bend to the left. This makes cyclones rotate clockwise.
- Cyclones are shaped clockwise/anti-clockwise by the Coriolis effect. The rotation of the earth about its axis affects the direction of the wind and this force is called the Coriolis force. The Coriolis effect is caused by our planet's rotation.

**How are they formed**

- Tropical cyclones are formed over warm ocean water near the equator.
- Warm moist air near the surface of the ocean rises upwards. This creates a low-pressure area near the surface.
- This results in the movement of cooler air from surrounding areas into the low-pressure area. Now even this cool air becomes warm and moist and rises up.
- The above cycle keeps continuing. The warm moist air which rises up, cools the water in the air, resulting in the formation of clouds. This whole system of clouds and winds spins and grows. This entire cycle continues resulting in a cyclone.
- When the winds reach a speed of 101 kmph, it is called a tropical storm, when the winds reach a speed of 119 kmph it is called a tropical cyclone or hurricane.

- There are various types of cyclones depending on the type of prevailing low-pressure system.
  - Tropical cyclone
  - Extratropical cyclone (Temperate cyclones are also known as Extra-tropical cyclones where the term “Extra-tropical” signifies that this type of cyclone generally occurs outside the tropics with a latitude range between 30° and 60°.)
  - Tornadoes (A tornado is a violently rotating column of air that is in contact with both the surface of the Earth and a cumulonimbus cloud or, in rare cases, the base of a cumulus cloud)
- Cyclones are addressed by different names in different locations.

- **Hurricanes – In the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific.**
- **Typhoons – In Southeast Asia**
- **Cyclone – In the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific around Australia.**

Related Information

#### **Anticyclones**

- An anticyclone is the opposite of a cyclone, which has an outward-spiralling air circulation around a high pressure centre.
- An anticyclone's winds rotate clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere around a center of high pressure.
- In anticyclones, air comes in from above and sinks to the ground.

**66. The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, which comprises the Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, is located in the state of?**

- A. Uttarakhand
- B. Odisha
- C. Chhattisgarh
- D. Uttar Pradesh

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**Location**

- The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a protected area in **Uttar Pradesh**. It shares the north-eastern **boundary with Nepal**, which is defined to a large extent by the **Mohana River**.

- It comprises the **Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary**. The three Protected Areas, being the last viable home of the **Royal Bengal Tiger** in the state, have been jointly constituted into Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger.

#### **Vegetation**

- **Moist Deciduous** type, containing some of the finest examples of Sal forests in India, as well the most extensive tracts of **moist grasslands** that remain in this region.

#### **Rivers flowing through**

- The **Sharda River** flows by the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, the **Geruwa River** flows through the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary and the **Suheli and Mohana** streams flow in the Dudhwa National Park, all of which are tributaries of the mighty **Ghagra River**.

#### **Wildlife**

- Tiger, Rhinoceros, Elephant, Swamp deer, Sambar, Cheetal, Hog deer, Kakar, Wild pig, Blue bull, Rhesus monkey, Langur, Sloth bear, Porcupine, Otter, Monitor lizard, Turtles, Python, Mugger, Gharial, etc.
- Of the nearly 1300 birds found in the Indian subcontinent, over 450 species can be seen in the Reserve. These include Hornbill, Red Jungle Fowl, Peafowl, Bengal Florican, Fishing eagle, Serpent eagle, Osprey, Woodpeckers, Shama, Indian Pitta, Paradise flycatcher, Orioles, Emerald dove etc.

#### **67. Which of the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), consider the following statements.**

1. It is being implemented with the objective of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among pregnant women especially with weak socio-economic status.
2. Under the JSY, eligible pregnant women are entitled for cash assistance irrespective of the age of mother and number of children for giving birth in a government or accredited private health facility.
3. BPL (Below Poverty Line) pregnant women, who prefer to deliver at home, are entitled to a cash assistance of Rs 500 per delivery.

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

- A. 1 only

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a **safe motherhood intervention** under the **National Health Mission** launched by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in 2005.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It is being implemented with the objective of **reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery** among pregnant women especially with weak socio-economic status i.e. women from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and BPL households..
- **JSY integrates cash assistance with delivery and post-delivery care.**
- The scheme is under implementation in **all states and Union Territories (UTs)**, with a special focus on Low Performing States (LPS).
- **Cash assistance:** Under the JSY, eligible pregnant women are entitled for cash assistance **irrespective of the age of mother and number of children** for giving birth in a government or accredited private health facility. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Statement 3 is correct:** **BPL pregnant women, who prefer to deliver at home**, are entitled to a cash assistance of **Rs 500 per delivery** regardless of age of women and the number of children. The rationale is that the beneficiary would be able to use the cash assistance for her care during delivery or to meet incidental expenses of delivery.

Category	Rural area (Rs.)	Urban area (Rs.)	Eligibility
<b>Financial Assistance for Institutional Delivery</b>			
Low Performing States(LPS)	1400	1000	Available to all women regardless of age and number of children for delivery in government /private accredited health facilities.
High Performing States(HPS)	700	600	Available only to BPL/SC/ST women regardless of age and number of children for delivery in government /private accredited health facilities.
<b>Financial Assistance for Home Delivery</b>			
Low Performing States(LPS)	500	500	Available only to BPL women who prefer to deliver at home regardless of age and number of children.
HighPerforming States(HPS)	500	500	



- **Focus:** The scheme focuses on the poor pregnant woman with **special dispensation for States having low institutional delivery rates** namely the States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Rajasthan, Orissa and Jammu and Kashmir. While these States have been named as Low Performing States (LPS), the remaining States have been named as High performing States (HPS).
- The Yojana enables the States/UTs to hire the services of a **private specialist** to conduct **Caesarean Section** or for the management of Obstetric complications, in the Public Health facilities, where Government specialists are not in place.
- States are encouraged to **accredit private health facilities** for increasing the choice of delivery care institutions.

**68. Which one of the following is not a Strategic Petroleum Reserve site in India?**

- A. Visakhapatnam
- B. Mangaluru
- C. Kandla
- D. Padur

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) are **huge stockpiles of crude oil** stored in the **underground rock caverns** (considered safest for storage of Hydrocarbons) to tackle emergency situations and allow a country to tide over short-term supply disruptions.
- They represent **a defence against any event of downfall in future oil production**, including physical or economic actions which disrupt any part of the production process from exploration and development through refining.

**Status in India**

- In India, Strategic Petroleum Reserves are maintained by **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited**, a Special Purpose Vehicle - wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- Strategic crude oil storages are situated at **Mangalore (Karnataka), Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Padur (Karnataka)** as per Phase I of India's SPR programme. They

have fuel storage of a total 5.33 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes). As per the consumption pattern of 2019-20, the total capacity is estimated to provide for about **9.5 days of crude oil requirement**.

- In addition, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in the country have storage facilities for crude oil and petroleum products for **64.5 days**, thus the current total national capacity for storage of crude oil and petroleum products currently is **74 days**.



- The government of India has given 'in principle' approval to set up two more such caverns at **Chandikhol (Odisha) and Padur** as per phase II through Public-Private Partnership. This will give an **additional 6.5 MMT** of the oil reserves. As per the consumption pattern of 2019-20, 6.5 MMT SPR capacity is estimated to provide for about **additional 12 days of India's crude oil requirement**.
- The **global practice** is to maintain strategic reserves of **at least 90 days of oil imports**.

## 69. Consider the following statements about World Trade Organization (WTO).

1. The primary purpose of the WTO is to foster global monetary cooperation.

2. The topmost decision-making body of the WTO is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every year.

**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:**

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations.
- The WTO officially commenced on **1 January 1995** under the **Marrakesh Agreement**, replacing the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, which commenced in 1948.
- It is the largest international economic organization in the world.
- The WTO deals with **regulation of trade in goods, services and intellectual property** between participating countries by providing a framework for negotiating trade agreements and a dispute resolution process aimed at enforcing participants' adherence to WTO agreements, which are signed by representatives of member governments ratified by their parliaments.

**Objectives**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The primary purpose of the WTO is to **open trade for the benefit of all**. It functions to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.
- Fostering global monetary cooperation is a major objective of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- The WTO is essentially an **alternative dispute or mediation entity** that upholds the international rules of trade among nations. The organization provides a platform that allows member governments to negotiate and resolve trade issues with other members.
- The WTO **prohibits discrimination between trading partners**, but provides exceptions for environmental protection, national security, and other important goals.
- At present, the WTO has over 160 members representing 98 per cent of world trade.



- **India** has been a WTO member since 1 January 1995 and a member of GATT since 8 July 1948.

## **WTO Structure**

### **Ministerial Conference**

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The topmost decision-making body of the WTO is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets **every two years**.
- It brings together all members of the WTO, all of which are countries or customs unions.
- The Ministerial Conference can take decisions on all matters under any of the multilateral trade agreements.

### **General Council**

- The General Council comprises the representatives of all member countries and acts as the representative of the Ministerial Conference when it comes to daily operations. Its job is to carry out the implementation and monitoring function of the WTO.

### **Dispute Settlement Body**

- The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) is a **part of the General Council** and is responsible for settling trade disputes between member states.
- According to the procedure established by the WTO, the first step to resolve a trade dispute is engaging in the **consultation process**.
- If two trading partners having a dispute could not resolve at that level, one of them can ask for a settlement of **DSB** for hearing. The General Council of the WTO convenes as the DSB.
- The DSB's ruling can be challenged at the **appellate body**, the highest court for global trade disputes.

### **Appellate Body**

- The Appellate Body is a standing committee of **seven members** that presides over appeals against judgments passed in trade-related disputes brought by WTO members.
- Members of the Appellate Body have **four-year terms**. In the selection process, WTO members follow the **consensus principle**, which means that the nomination of the Appellate Body members can only proceed smoothly with the agreement of all the members of WTO.
- The Appellate Body **must have at least three sitting members** to hear an appeal.

**70. Which of the following is the main objective of the SARFAESI Act enacted in 2002?**



- A. To lay down processes to help Indian lenders recover their dues quickly
- B. To establish the Real Estate Regulatory Authority for regulation and promotion of the real estate sector
- C. To prohibit anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position by enterprises
- D. None of the above

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

- The **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act** was passed in 2002 to lay down processes to help Indian lenders recover their dues quickly.
- Under the SARFAESI Act, banks and other financial institutions, in the capacity of secured creditors are allowed to auction residential or commercial properties of borrowers to recover loans, without approaching the courts.
- Before this Act took effect, financial institutions had to take recourse to civil suits in the courts to recover their dues, which is a lengthy and time-consuming process.
- As per the SARFAESI Act, if a borrower defaults on a loan financed by a bank against collateral, then the **bank gets sweeping powers to recover its dues from the borrower**. After giving a notice period of 60 days, the lender can take possession of the pledged assets of the borrower, take over the management of such assets, appoint any person to manage them or ask debtors of the borrower to pay their dues too, with respect to the asset.
- This recovery procedure saves banks and financial institutions a lot of time which otherwise would be long drawn out due to the intervention of courts.

**Why in News?**

- To improve credit discipline while continuing to protect the interest of small borrowers, the latest Budget proposed to reduce the minimum loan size eligible for debt recovery under the **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh** for NBFCs with minimum asset size of Rs. 100 crore.

**71. Consider the following statements**

- 1) Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.
- 2) It is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and intercountry adoptions.
- 3) India is yet to ratify the Hague convention on Intercountry Adoption, 1993.

**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:**

**Statement 1 is correct:** Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of the **Ministry of Women & Child Development**, Government of India.

**Statement 2 is correct:** It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate **in-country and inter-country adoptions**.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in **accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, 1993**, ratified by the Government of India in 2003. CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

**About Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, 1993**

The Hague Convention 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention) protects **children and their families against the risks of illegal, irregular, premature or ill-prepared adoptions abroad**.

This Convention, which operates through a system of national Central Authorities, reinforces the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 21) and seeks to ensure that intercountry adoptions are made in the best interests of the child and with respect for his or her fundamental rights. It also seeks to prevent the abduction, the sale of, or traffic in children.

It is an effort to protect those involved from the corruption, abuses, and exploitation which sometimes accompanies international adoption.

### Why in the news?

As India battles a raging second wave, cases of children losing their parents to Covid-19 are also mounting. The apprehension of child trafficking in the garb of adoption has increased.

### 72. Which of the following is/are the components of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)?

1. Setting up of 1.5 lakh Health & Wellness Centres by 2022
2. Setting up of new AIIMS like institutes in underserved regions of the country
3. Upgradation of existing Govt Medical Colleges (GMCs)

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) envisages **creation of tertiary healthcare capacity** in medical education, research and clinical care, in the underserved areas of the country.
- It aims at correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/reliable tertiary healthcare services and also **augmenting facilities for quality medical education** in the country.
- PMSSY has two components:
  - Setting up of new AIIMS like institutes in underserved regions of the country and
  - Upgradation of existing Govt Medical Colleges (GMCs)
- Setting up of 1.5 lakh Health & Wellness Centres by 2022 is an important component of **Ayushman Bharat programme**.

### Why in the news?

- New AIIMS started under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana are providing advanced COVID Care in States.

**73. Which of the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan is incorrect?**

- a) It is a Central Sector pension scheme to ensure old age protection for Unorganised Workers.
- b) It is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)
- c) People with the age group of 18-60 years are eligible for the scheme.
- d) None of the above

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**About Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan**

- It is a Central Sector pension scheme to ensure old age protection for Unorganised Workers. It was launched in 2019.
- It is administered by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Common Service Centres (CSCs).
- LIC will be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension pay out.

**Eligibility**

- The Unorganised workers whose monthly income is Rs 15,000/ per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years are eligible for the scheme.
- They should not be covered under New Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme or Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- He/she should not be an income tax payer.

**Salient Feature of PM-SYM**

- **Matching contribution by the Central Government:** PM-SYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on a 50:50 basis where prescribed age-specific contribution shall be made by the beneficiary and the matching contribution by the Central Government.
- **Minimum Assured Pension:** Each subscriber under the PM-SYM, shall receive a minimum assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years.



- **Family Pension:** During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension received by the beneficiary as family pension. Family pension is applicable only to the spouse.

**Why in News?**

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment conducted a nationwide review of the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan programme.

**74. Consider the following statements about the “core inflation”.**

1. It measures the price movements of eight core industries (Electricity, steel, refinery products, crude oil, coal, cement, natural gas and fertilizers) which comprise 40.27 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
2. The flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework of the RBI targets to contain CPI core inflation within 4 percent with a band of (+/-) 2 percent.

**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:**

- Core inflation is a measure of inflation obtained by excluding commodities of high price volatility such as food items, energy products etc.
- If temporary price shocks are taken into account, they may affect the estimated overall inflation numbers in such a way that they are different from actual inflation. To eliminate this possibility, core inflation is calculated to gauge the actual inflation apart from temporary shocks and volatility.
- Under the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework, RBI aims to contain **headline CPI (Combined)** within 4 percent with a band of (+/-) 2 percent.

**75. Consider the following statements**

- 1) The power to create new districts or alter or abolish existing districts rests with the State governments.
- 2) This can be done only by passing a law in the State Assembly.

**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: B**

**Explanation**

**What's in the news?**

- Recently, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh declared Malerkotla the 23rd district of the State.

**How are new districts carved?**

- The power to create new districts or alter or abolish existing districts rests with the State governments. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**
- This can either be done through an executive order or by passing a law in the State Assembly. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Many States prefer the executive route by simply issuing a notification in the official gazette.

**How does it help?**

- States argue that smaller districts lead to better administration and governance. For example, in 2016, the Assam government issued a notification to upgrade the Majuli subdivision to Majuli district for “administrative expediency”.

**Does the Central government have a role to play here?**

- The Centre has no role to play in the alteration of districts or creation of new ones. States are free to decide. The Home Ministry comes into the picture when a State wants to change the name of a district or a railway station.
- The State government's request is sent to other departments and agencies such as the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Posts, Geographical Survey of India Sciences and the Railway Ministry seeking clearance.

- A no-objection certificate may be issued after examining their replies.

**What has been the trend?**

- According to the 2011 Census, there were 593 districts in the country. The Census results showed that between 2001-2011, as many as 46 districts were created by States.
- Though the 2021 Census is yet to happen, Know India, a website run by the Government of India, says currently there are 718 districts in the country. The surge in number is also due to bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into A.P and Telangana in 2014. Telangana at present has 33 districts and A.P has 13 districts.

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

1. These schools are being set up by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
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: C**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.**
- As per the budget 2018-19, **every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons**, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.

**Why in the news?**

Recently, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to support the digital transformation of schools such as Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and Ashram Schools, among others under the Ministry.

**77. With reference to the Crime & Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), Consider the following statements.**

1. CCTNS aims at creating an integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing at the Police Station level.
2. It is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan of Government of India.

**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**

**Explanation: Both the statements are correct.**

- CCTNS aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effective policing at all levels and especially at the Police Station level through adoption of principles of e-Governance, and creation of a nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking system around "investigation of crime and detection of criminals" in real time, which is a critical requirement in the context of the present day internal security scenario.
- The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network Systems (CCTNS) was conceptualized by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** in detailed consultation with all stakeholders and is being implemented as a "Mission Mode Project (MMP)" since 2009 under National e-Governance Plan.

**What is National e-Governance Plan ?**

- The National e-Governance Plan is an initiative of the Government of India to make all government services available to the citizens of India via electronic media.



- NeGP was formulated by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances.

**Objectives:**

- Provide Citizen Centric Police Services via a web portal
- Pan India search on National database of Crime & Criminal records
- Crime and Criminal reports at State and Center
- Computerization of Police Processes

**78. 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. It can be purchased by any citizen of India or a body incorporated in India.
3. 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.

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

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

**Answer : B**

**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**.
- 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 has secured no less than one per cent votes in the last Lok Sabha or State elections are eligible to receive electoral bonds.**
- 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.**

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

- According to a Right to Information reply by the State Bank of India, it has sold electoral bonds worth ₹695.34 crore from April 1 to April 10, when the elections to the Assemblies of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, West Bengal, Assam and Kerala were in full swing.
- The amount sold was the highest-ever for any Assembly elections since the scheme started in 2018.

**79. With reference to “convalescent - plasma therapy”, consider the following statements**

1. Plasma Therapy involves transfusion of antibodies from someone who has recovered from COVID-19 into a critical patient.
2. It is a way of artificially inducing passive immunity.

**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: C**

**What is Plasma Therapy for COVID-19?**

- Plasma Therapy involves transfusion of antibodies from someone who has recovered from COVID-19 into a critical patient.
- The therapy is based on the principle that the blood of a recovered patient is rich in antibodies needed to combat COVID-19.
- Antibodies are Y-shaped proteins produced by a human body and used by the immune system to identify and neutralise foreign objects such as bacteria and viruses. These antibodies are expected to help critical patients recover.
- It is a way of artificially inducing passive immunity.

**How does plasma therapy work?**

- Blood plasma, a yellowish liquid is a component of blood and consists of protein, minerals and antibodies.
- If someone has recovered from COVID-19 there are chances that the person's body has developed antibodies that helped him/her to fight the virus.
- The same antibodies, if infused into a critical patient may provide passive immunity and help in the recovery process.

**Why in the News?**

- The Central Government has dropped plasma therapy from Covid treatment protocol.

- The decision came on the basis of recommendations of experts from AIIMS, ICMR-COVID-19 National Task Force, and Joint Monitoring Group of the Union Health Ministry citing its ineffectiveness and inappropriate use in several cases.
- The plasma therapy has not been found effective in reducing the progression to severe disease nor has a decrease in the fatality rate been observed. The development comes just days after a group of medical practitioners wrote Principal Scientific Advisor K Vijay Raghavan cautioning against the 'irrational and non-scientific use' of convalescent plasma for COVID-19.

**80. The main objective of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadan Yojana (PMGSY) is**

- Scheme to promote village development under which each Member of Parliament will take the responsibility of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in three villages.
- Integrated development of selected villages having more than 50% Scheduled Caste (SC) population through implementation of existing schemes in a convergent manner.
- To provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages.
- To ensure universal household electrification by providing last mile connectivity.

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

**About the scheme**

- The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), was launched in 2000 as 100 % **centrally sponsored scheme** to provide connectivity to unconnected habitations of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-East, hill, tribal and desert areas as per Census, 2001).
- The **Ministry of Rural Development** along with state governments is responsible for the implementation of PMGSY.
- In 2015, under the recommendation of the 14th finance commission, the funding pattern was changed.
- **Current funding pattern:** In ratio of 60:40 between Centre and State for all States except for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States (Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir) for which it is 90:10.

**Related information:**



- **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas:** Government launched Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas in the year 2016 as a separate vertical **under PMGSY** to provide all-weather road connectivity with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures in 44 districts (35 are worst LWE affected districts and 09 are adjoining districts), which are critical from security and communication point of view.
- **Meri Sadak mobile app:** It was launched to enable citizens to register complaints regarding the quality and pace of construction of PMGSY roads.

**81. Which of the following is/are the criteria to declare a tribal group as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)?**

- 1) A pre-agriculture level of technology
- 2) A stagnant or declining population
- 3) Extremely low literacy
- 4) A subsistence level of economy

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

**PVTGs**

- In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population. Tribal people live in about 15% of the geographical area of the country.
- Among them some groups are declared as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) based on the following criteria.
  - **A pre-agriculture level of technology;**
  - **A stagnant or declining population;**
  - **Extremely low literacy; and**
  - **A subsistence level of economy.**

## Livelihood

- In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, which are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- **75 tribal groups** have been categorized by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** as PVTGs.
- PVTGs reside in **18 States and UT of A&N Islands**.
- Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in **Odisha (13)**, followed by Andhra Pradesh (12).
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements the **Scheme of “Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)”** exclusively for them.
- PVTGs depend on various livelihoods such as food gathering, Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), hunting, livestock rearing, shifting cultivation and artisan works. Most of their livelihoods depend on the forest.

## Statewise PVTGs

<u>State / UT</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>PVTGs Name</u>
<i>Andhra Pradesh and Telangana</i>	1.Bodo Gadaba 2.Bondo Poroja 3.Chenchu 4.Dongria Khond 5.Gutob Gadaba 6.Khond Poroja 7.Kolam 8.Kondareddis 9.Konda Savaras 10.Kutia Khond 11.Parengi Poroja 12.Thoti

<i>Bihar and Jharkhand</i>	13.Asurs 14.Birhor 15.Birjia 16.Hill Kharia 17.Konvas 18.Mal Paharia 19.Parhaiyas 20.Sauda Paharia 21.Savar
<i>Jharkhand</i>	Same as above
<i>Gujarat</i>	22.Kathodi 23.Kohvalia 24.Padhar 25.Siddi 26.Kolgha
<i>Karnataka</i>	27. Jenu Kuruba 28. Koraga
<i>Kerala</i>	29.Cholanaikayan (a section of Kattunaickans) 30.Kadar 31.Kattunayakan 32.Kurumbas 33.Koraga
<i>Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh</i>	34.Abujh Macias 35.Baigas 36.Bharias 37.Hill Korbass 38.Kamars 39.Saharias 40.Birhor
<i>Chhattisgarh</i>	Same as above

<i>Maharashtra</i>	41.Katkaria (Kathodia) 42.Kolam      43.Maria Gond
<i>Manipur</i>	44. Marram Nagas
<i>Odisha</i>	45.Birhor      46.Bondo 47.Didayi      48.Dongria- Khond      49.Juangs 50.Kharias      51.Kutia Kondh 52.Lanjia Sauras 53.Lodhas 54.Mankidias 55.Paudi Bhuyans      56.Soura 57.Chuktia Bhunjia
<i>Rajasthan</i>	58.Seharias
<i>Tamil Nadu</i>	59.Kattu      Nayakans 60.Kotas 61.Kurumbas 62.Irulas      63.Paniyans 64.Todas
<i>Tripura</i>	65.Reangs
<i>Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand</i>	66.Buxas 67.Rajis
<i>West Bengal</i>	68.Birhor      69.Lodhas 70.Totos
<i>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands</i>	71.Great Andamanese 72.Jarawas      73.Onges



	74.Sentinelese 75.Shorn Pens
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### Why in the News?

- The COVID-19 situation appears to have worsened in certain areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Odisha.
- As many as 23 persons belonging to the **Dongria-Khond community**, a PVTG in the Niyamgiri Hill range of Rayagada district in Odisha, have tested positive for COVID-19. The district administration said the infection level was high in the community as the tribals were shying away from getting tested.
- Similarly, in Malkangiri district, Bondo Hill, home to the **Bondo community**, another PVTG, has been declared as a containment zone after 12 from the tribe tested positive for COVID-19.
- The infections detected among the PVTGs in the second wave of COVID-19 has rung alarm bells in the administration.

### 82. Which of the following statements about APEDA is/are correct?

- 1) It is a statutory body created under Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act 1985.
- 2) The authority was replaced by the Processed Food Export Promotion Council (PFEPCC) recently.

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: A**

**Explanation**

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act 1985. The Authority replaced the Processed Food Export Promotion Council (PFEPCC). APEDA, under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industries** promotes export of agricultural and processed food products from India.

**APEDA is mandated with the responsibility of export promotion and development of the following scheduled products**

- Fruits, Vegetables and their Products
- Meat and Meat Products
- Poultry and Poultry Products
- Dairy Products
- Confectionery, Biscuits and Bakery Products
- Honey, Jaggery and Sugar Products
- Cocoa and its products, chocolates of all kinds
- Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic Beverages
- Cereal and Cereal Products
- Groundnuts, Peanuts and Walnuts
- Pickles, Papads and Chutneys
- Guar Gum
- Floriculture and Floriculture Products
- Herbal and Medicinal Plants

**Other Functions:**

- Fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports;
- Carrying out inspection of meat and meat products in slaughterhouses, processing plants, storage premises, conveyances or other places where such products are kept or handled for the purpose of ensuring the quality of such products;
- Improving of packaging of the Scheduled products;
- Improving of **marketing of the Scheduled products outside India;**
- Collection of statistics from the owners of factories or establishments engaged in the production, processing, packaging, marketing or export of the scheduled products or from

such other persons as may be prescribed on any matter relating to the scheduled products and publication of the statistics so collected or of any portions thereof or extracts therefrom;

**Why in the news?**

In a bid to increase mangoes exports to South Korea, APEDA in collaboration with Indian embassy, Seoul and Indian Chamber of Commerce in Korea (ICCK), organised a Virtual Buyer Seller Meet (VBSM).

**83. With reference to the E-Way Bill system in GST, consider the following statements.**

1. It is a mechanism to track the movement of goods by motorized and non motorized conveyance.
2. The objective is to check tax evasion.
3. An e-way bill is mandatory when the supply involves taxable goods and the value of a consignment exceeds Rs. 50,000.

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- Electronic Way Bill (E-Way Bill) is basically a **compliance mechanism** wherein by way of a digital interface the person causing the movement of goods uploads the relevant information prior to the commencement of movement of goods and generates e-way bill on the GST portal.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** E-way bill is a mechanism to **ensure that goods being transported comply with the GST Law** and is an **effective tool to track the movement of goods and check tax evasion.**
- **Statement 3 is correct:** An e-way bill is required for inter-State movement of goods worth **over ₹50,000**. For intra-State movement, the limits vary from State to State.
- Since **imports and exports** have been considered as inter-state supplies under the GST act, the e-way bill is required to be issued for these transactions as well.

- **Exceptions** to e-way bill requirement

- goods being transported by a non-motorised conveyance; **Hence, statement 1 is incorrect.**
- goods being transported from the port, airport, air cargo complex and land customs station to an inland container depot or a container freight station for clearance by Customs;
- Contraceptives, judicial and non-judicial stamp paper, newspapers, khadi, raw silk, Indian flag, human hair, kajal, earthen pots, cheques, municipal waste, puja samagri, LPG, kerosene, etc. are also outside the ambit of the e-way bill.

**Why in the news?**

The Union Government has integrated the E-Way Bill (EWB) system with FasTag and RFID.

**84. The Strait of Hormuz connects which of the following?**

- a) Persian gulf and Gulf of Oman
- b) Andaman sea and South China Sea
- c) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
- d) Black Sea and Marmara sea

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**

The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow, strategically important strait between the Gulf of Oman in the southeast and the Persian Gulf.



Option B refers to Malacca Strait.





Option C refers to Bab-Al- Mandan strait.

**Map of Yemen and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait**



Option D refers to Bosphorus strait.



85. Consider the following statements regarding Pobitora wildlife sanctuary

1. It is spread across the southern bank of Ganges.
2. The sanctuary is home to the threatened species of Indian one horned rhinoceros.
3. It is dominated by tropical deciduous forest vegetation.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

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

Ans: (c)

Explanation:

**Statement 1 is incorrect:** Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is located on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra in Morigaon district in Assam, India

**Statement 2 is correct:** In Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, recorded 10% increase in rhino population over the last six years. Pobitora has exceeded its rhino-bearing capacity and is overpopulated. The animals have begun moving outside the sanctuary in search of food, and chances of serious man-animal conflict are quite rife. Besides, the straying animals carry the risk of contracting diseases that afflict domestic animals.

Under the **Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020)** which is a joint programme of the Department of Environment & Forests, Govt of Assam, WWF India, the International Rhino Foundation and the US fish & wildlife service, six rhinos were **trans located** from Pobitora and re-introduced into the **Manas National Park**.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** The sanctuary is dominated by **grassland** type of vegetation, which supports population of wide variety of species like wild boar, feral water buffalo, Barking deer etc.

**86. Which of the following pairs is/are incorrectly matched?**

- 1) Bogibeel bridge- Assam
- 2) Sisseri river bridge- Arunachal Pradesh
- 3) Dhola-Sadiya Bridge- Sikkim

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

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

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

**Bogibeel bridge**

- The Bogibeel Bridge is India's rail-cum-road bridge at 4.94 km.
- The bridge will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facilitating quicker movement of vehicles and easy access for the people of Dhemaji to major hospitals, education institutes and the Dibrugarh airport.
- The bridge provides direct connectivity from Dibrugarh to Itanagar. Also, it's railway track will reduce the travel distance by 705 km. The bridge will significantly reduce the journey from Dibrugarh in Assam to the Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar.
- It will benefit tourists, trade goods and those seeking medical treatment. The bridge will facilitate quicker movement of troops and equipment to areas near the India-China border.

**Sisseri River bridge**



- Sisseri River bridge is at Lower Dibang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The 200-metre long bridge between Jonai-Pasighat-Ranaghat-Roing road will provide **connectivity between Dibang Valley and Siang** to meet the long-pending demand of the people of Arunachal Pradesh as it would cut down the travel time from Pasighat to Roing by about five hours.
- The Sisseri River bridge provides connectivity to Tinsukia via Dhola-Sadia bridge. It was constructed by Project Brahmaputra of **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**.
- This bridge is also strategically important from military view point and will be a part of Trans Arunachal Highway.

### **Dhola-Sadia Bridge**

- The bridge is built across the Lohit river, which is a tributary of the Brahmaputra. It will connect Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh. The total length of the project, including the approach roads on each side, is 28.50 km.
- The bridge is located 540 km from Assam's capital Dispur and 300 km from Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar. It connects Sadia town in Assam's Tinsukia district with Dhola village, also in Assam.
- The bridge will reduce the travel time between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh from six hours to just one hour as the distance will shrink by 165 km.
- The bridge will make it much easier for Army convoys to reach outposts near the China border. It is also expected to boost tourism as there is no civilian airport in Arunachal Pradesh and this will make the road transport smoother.

### **87. Consider the following statements with respect to Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.**

- 1) It mandates that each person would have to be recognised as 'transgender' on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by the district magistrate.
- 2) Prime Minister is the chairperson of National Council for Transgender Persons.

**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:**

**Definition of a transgender person:**

A transgender person is one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra. Intersex variations is defined to mean a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of male or female body.

**Statement 1 is correct.** It mandates that each person would have to be recognised as 'transgender' on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by the district magistrate.

**Statement 2 is incorrect. National Council for Transgender persons (NCT):**

The NCT will consist of: (i) **Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson)**; (ii) Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice- Chairperson); (iii) Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice; (iv) one representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human Resources Development. Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog, and the National Human Rights Commission. State governments will also be represented. The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organisations.

## Pros and cons

SALIENT FEATURES	COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE
• Definitions do not differentiate between transgenders, transsexuals, intersex persons and genderqueer	• Community differentiates between transgender, transsexual and intersex persons and dismisses the 'one-solution fits all' idea
• Prohibition against discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, public facilities etc. Also prevents forced labour	• Lack of enforceability dilutes provision. Lived experiences riddled with discrimination
• Certificate of identity can be obtained at the DM's office and a revised certificate is to be obtained if sex is changed	• Shuns provision as impinging on their right to self-determination. Fear it'll lead to bureaucratic discrimination
• Government welfare measures and provisions of healthcare, including HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries	• Step forward but medical community lacks knowledge of transgender bodies
• Transgender persons may only change their first name	• Prefer to take Guru's name since many have severed ties with their birth family
• Setting up of a National Council for Transgender persons (NCT), including various Ministers and five transgender persons	• Desire greater representation in decision making that affects them directly

- The Act will make all the stakeholders responsive and accountable for upholding the principles underlying the Bill. It will bring greater accountability on the part of the Central Government and State Governments/Union Territories Administrations for issues concerning Transgender persons.
- The Act will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society. It will lead to greater inclusiveness and will make the transgender persons productive members of the society.

### 88. Consider the following statements.

1. India's major portion of biodiversity is being safeguarded as Protected Areas under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. India has formally designated around 20% of the country's geographical area as Protected 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: D**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** India's major portion of biodiversity is being safeguarded as Protected Areas (PAs). India has systematically designated its PAs in **four legal categories** viz. **National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves** under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** As per this Act, India has set up 903 formally designated PAs with the total coverage 1,65,012.65 sq. km (**5.02% of the country's geographical area**). Among 903 PAs, there are 101 National Parks, 553 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 86 Conservation Reserves and 163 Community Reserves (as on 1st January, 2020).

**89. Consider the following statements about POSHAN Abhiyaan.**

1. The mission targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight each by 5% per annum.
2. The mission also strives to achieve a reduction in Stunting from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

**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:**

- 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).



- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** 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.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The mission also strives to achieve a reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (**Mission 25 by 2022**).

**90. With reference to the Phase II & Phase III of the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project, consider the following statements.**

1. The aim of the project is to improve the safety and operational performance of all dams across the country.
2. The World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank provide financial assistance to the project.

**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 2 is correct:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project Phase II & Phase III under the **Ministry of Jalshakti** with the **financial assistance of the World Bank (WB), and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**.

**About the Project**

- The aim of the project is to **improve the safety and operational performance of selected dams** across the whole country, along with institutional strengthening with a system wide management approach.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Scheme envisages comprehensive rehabilitation of **736 existing dams (not all dams) located across 19 states of the country**.
- The project, worth ₹10,211 crore, will be implemented from **April 2021-March 2031**.
- DRIP Phase II & Phase III envisages the following **objectives:-**



- To **improve the safety and performance of selected existing dams** and associated appurtenances in a sustainable manner.
- To **strengthen the dam safety institutional setup** in participating states as well as at central level, and
- To explore the alternative incidental means at few of selected dams to **generate the incidental revenue** for sustainable operation and maintenance of dams
- To achieve the above objectives, DRIP Phase II & Phase III has following **components**
  - Rehabilitation and improvement of dams and associated appurtenances,
  - Dam safety institutional strengthening in participating States and Central agencies,
  - Exploration of alternative incidental means at few of selected dams to generate the incidental revenue for sustainable operation and maintenance of dams, and
  - Project management.

**91. Consider the following statements about Nutrient Based Subsidy scheme (NBS)**

- 1) Under the scheme, a fixed amount of subsidy decided on an annual basis, is provided on each grade of subsidized Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers depending upon its nutrient content.
- 2) The scheme is being implemented by the Department of Fertilizers, 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: A**

**Explanation**

- In a country like India, where around **65 per cent of the population depends on agriculture** for their livelihood, the **Government has a major role in ensuring the**

availability of agri-inputs including **fertilisers at affordable prices**. At the same time, **balanced fertilisation** is necessary to enhance farm productivity

- Government is making available Urea and **21 grades of P&K fertilizers** to farmers at **subsidized prices** through fertilizer manufacturers/importers. The **subsidy on P&K fertilizers is being governed by NBS Scheme**
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) programme for fertilizer was initiated in the year 2010. Under the scheme, a **fixed amount of subsidy decided on an annual basis** is provided on each grade of subsidized Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers based on its nutrient content

#### **Aims of the Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme**

- The scheme aims at ensuring that sufficient quantity of P&K is at the farmer's disposal at statutory controlled prices, so that the agricultural growth can be sustained and **balanced nutrient application to the soil can be ensured**
- It aims at improving the agricultural productivity, promoting the **growth of the indigenous fertilizers industry** and also reducing the burden of Subsidy
- Under the NBS Policy, the Government announces a **fixed rate of subsidy** by taking into account all **relevant factors including international prices, exchange rate**, inventory level and **prevailing Maximum Retail Prices** of P&K fertilizers
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The scheme is being implemented by the **Department of Fertilizers** under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers** (not under the Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare)

**92. With reference to the BRICS grouping, consider the following statements:**

1. BRICS cooperation is aimed at complementing and strengthening existing bilateral and multilateral relations among member countries.
2. The grouping has put in place a Contingent Reserve Arrangement to support member countries during balance of payments pressures.

**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:**

- BRICS brings together five major emerging economies- **China, Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa**. It comprises 43% of the world population, having 30% of the world GDP and a 17% share in world trade.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of **BRIC** (Brazil, Russia, India and China) Foreign Ministers on the margins of the UNGA in New York in September 2006.
- South Africa was added to the grouping in 2011 creating "BRICS".
- **Statement 1 is correct:** BRICS cooperation is aimed at complementing and strengthening existing bilateral and multilateral relations among member countries.
- The **Chairship of the forum is rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- Cooperation among members is predicated on three levels or "tracks" of interaction, namely:
  - **Track I:** Formal diplomatic engagement between the national governments
  - **Track II:** Engagement through government-affiliated institutions, e.g. state-owned enterprises and business councils
  - **Track III:** Civil society and "people-to-people" engagement.

**Significant developments of BRICS**

**New Development Bank**

- The NDB created by the BRICS countries formally came into existence at the Ufa Summit (Russia) in **2015**.
- It was established 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.
- In 2018, the NDB received **observer status** in the UN General Assembly.
- **Voting power** of each member is equal to the number of its subscribed shares in capital stock.
- All members of the United Nations could be members of the bank, however the share of the BRICS nations can never be less than **55% of voting power**.

### Contingency Reserve

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) is a framework for the provision of support through liquidity and precautionary instruments in response to actual or potential short-term balance of payments pressures.

### Why in the news?

Recently, India virtually hosted the 7th meeting of the BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG) under the Science, Technology, and Innovation track of the BRICS 2021.

### 93. Which among the following is/are well known ecological movements in India?

1. Chipko movement
2. Navdanya movement
3. Silent valley movement

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Ans: D

### Explanation

- The **Chipko movement** or Chipko Andolan was a **forest conservation movement**. It began in **1970s in Uttarakhand** and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world.
  - It created a **precedent for starting nonviolent protest in India** and its success meant that the world immediately took notice of this non-violent movement, which was to inspire in time many similar eco-groups by helping to **slow down the rapid deforestation**
- **Navdanya** is a **movement for Earth Democracy** based on the philosophy of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' (The Earth as one Family). It protects the **India's biodiversity based food heritage**



- The objective is to **spread ecological awareness** and to learn how to **live in harmony with nature**
- Navdanya pioneered the **movement of seed saving**, which began in response to the crisis of agricultural biodiversity. Having realized that conservation of agricultural biodiversity is impossible without **the participation of the communities** who have evolved and protected the plants and animals that form the basis of sustainable agriculture.
- **Silent Valley movement** was aimed at the protection of Silent Valley, **an evergreen tropical forest in the Palakkad district of Kerala, India**. It was started in **1973 by an NGO** led by school teachers and the Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) to **save the Silent Valley from being flooded by a hydroelectric project**. The valley was declared as Silent Valley National Park in 1985.

**Why in the news?**

Sunderlal Bahuguna, the Gandhian who was the driving force behind the Chipko movement died recently due to Covid-19.

**94. Consider the following statements regarding the Kyasanur Forest Disease**

1. It is a highly contagious parasitic infection which causes high fatality in primates
2. Currently, no vaccine is available for this disease

**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**

- KFD is **caused by the Kyasanur Forest Disease Virus (KFDV)**. The virus was identified in 1957 when it was **isolated from a sick monkey** from the Kyasanur Forest

Ø The KFD is **caused by virus, not by a parasite**

- **Hard ticks are the reservoir** of the KFD virus and once infected, remain so for life.

- **Rodents, shrews, and monkeys are common hosts** for KFDV after being bitten by an infected tick. KFDV can cause **epizootics with high fatality in primates**.

### **Transmission**

- Transmission to **humans may occur after a tick bite or contact with an infected animal**, most importantly a sick or recently dead monkey
- The disease as of now is **stated to be transmitted through monkeys**. Large animals such as goats, cows, and sheep may become infected with KFD but **play a limited role in the transmission of the disease**.
- These animals **provide the blood meals for ticks**, but **transmission of KFDV to humans** from these larger animals is **extremely rare**. Furthermore, there is **no evidence of disease transmission via the unpasteurised milk** of any of these animals.

### **Vulnerable Group**

- People with **recreational or occupational exposure to rural or outdoor settings** (e.g., hunters, herders, forest workers, farmers) are potentially at risk for infection by contact with infected ticks
- **Seasonality is another important risk factor** as more cases are reported during the dry season

### **Prevention**

- There is **no specific treatment for KFD**, but early hospitalisation and **supportive therapy is important**
- A **vaccine does exist for KFD** and is **used in endemic areas** of India. Additional preventative measures include **insect repellents and wearing protective clothing** in areas where ticks are endemic.

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

A new point-of-care test has been found to be highly sensitive in the rapid diagnosis of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).

**95. In which of the following countries does the 0-degree latitude pass through?**

1. Uganda
2. Kenya
3. Somalia

4. Republic of Congo
5. Gabon
6. The democratic republic of Congo

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

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 2, 4 and 5 only
- c) 1, 2, 4 and 6 only
- d) All of the above

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**



**96. Consider the following statements with respect to the National Clean Air Programme**

1. It aims to achieve a national-level target of 80-90% reduction of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> concentration between 2017 and 2024
2. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is executing this nation-wide programme

**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: A**

**Explanation**



### National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- Launched in January 2019, it is the **first ever effort in the country to frame a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound reduction target.**
- **The plan includes 102 non-attainment cities**, across 23 states and Union territories, which were identified **by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** on the basis of their ambient air quality data between 2011 and 2015
- Non-attainment cities are those which have been **consistently showing poorer air quality than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards**. These include Delhi, Varanasi, Bhopal, Kolkata, Noida, Muzaffarpur, and Mumbai

#### Key features

- **Target:** Achieve a national-level target of **20-30% reduction** (80-90 %) of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> concentration by between 2017 and 2024.
- **Implementation:** **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** will execute this **nation-wide programme** in consonance with the section 162 (b) of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act.
- As part of the programme, **the Centre also plans to scale up the air quality monitoring network across India**. At least 4,000 monitors are needed across the country, instead of the existing 101 real-time air quality (AQ) monitors, according to an analysis.
- The plan proposes a **three-tier system**, including **real-time physical data collection, data archiving, and an action trigger system** in all 102 cities, besides extensive plantation plans, research on clean-technologies, landscaping of major arterial roads, and stringent industrial standards.
- It also proposes **state-level plans of e-mobility** in the two-wheeler sector, rapid augmentation of charging infrastructure, **stringent implementation of BS-VI norms**, boosting public transportation system, and adoption of third-party audits for polluting industries.

### 97. Which of the following statements is incorrect?

- a) A voluntary license is an arrangement whereby a patent holder may allow others to manufacture, import, and/or distribute its patented drug.



- b) Compulsory licenses are authorizations given to a third-party to make, use or sell a particular product or use a particular process which has been patented, without the need of the permission of the patent owner.
- c) Compulsory licensing is recognised at both national as well as international levels, with express mention in both (Indian) Patent Act, 1970 and TRIPS Agreement.
- d) India has never used the provision of compulsory licensing so far.

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**What is voluntary licensing?**

- A voluntary license is an arrangement whereby a **patent holder may allow others** to manufacture, import, and/or distribute its patented drug.

**What is compulsory licensing?**

- **Compulsory licenses are authorizations given to a third-party** to make, use or sell a particular product or use a particular process which has been patented, **without the need of the permission of the patent owner.**
- This concept is recognised at both national as well as international levels, with express mention in both **(Indian) Patent Act, 1970** and **TRIPS Agreement**. There are certain pre-requisite conditions which need to be fulfilled if a compulsory license is to be granted in favour of someone.
- Section 92 of the Indian Patent Act enables grant of compulsory licensing in circumstances of national emergency or extreme urgency.

**Did India ever use compulsory licencing?**

- India has used compulsory licensing only **once in 2012 for Sorafenib**, an anticancer drug.  
**(Hence option D is incorrect)**

**Is this the same as tearing up the patent?**

- The patent owner still has **rights over the patent**, including a right to be paid compensation for copies of the products made under the compulsory licence.

**Does there have to be an emergency?**

- The TRIPS Agreement does not specifically list the reasons that might be used to justify compulsory licensing. However, the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health confirms

that **countries are free to determine the grounds for granting compulsory licences**, and to determine what constitutes a national emergency.

#### **Prerequisites for issuing Compulsory license under TRIPS agreement**

- Normally the person or company applying for a licence has to have tried, within a reasonable period of time, to **negotiate a voluntary licence** with the patent holder on reasonable commercial terms. Only if that fails can a compulsory licence be issued, and - even when a compulsory licence has been issued, the patent owner has to receive adequate remuneration taking into account the economic value of the authorization.
- Compulsory licensing must meet certain additional requirements: the **scope and duration of the licence** must be limited to the purpose for which it was granted, it cannot be given exclusively to licensees (e.g. the patent-holder can continue to produce), and it should be subject to legal review.
- Only when there is a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency the first step of negotiating a voluntary licence can be bypassed in order to save time.

#### **Who can use the option to grant a compulsory licence?**

- The option is available to **all members** for the purpose of local manufacturing or import.

#### **Amended TRIPS agreement**

- TRIPS Agreement has been amended to provide for an additional type of compulsory licensing. This change follows a decision at the 2001 Doha Ministerial Conference when Ministers recognized that countries unable to manufacture pharmaceuticals should be able to obtain cheaper copies produced under compulsory licences elsewhere if necessary.
- The idea is that if such a country needs to turn to the option of compulsory licensing to produce needed affordable pharmaceuticals, producers overseas can step up and supply that need, even if a compulsory licence is needed in that country.
- It's therefore a **compulsory licence specially for production in one country**, for export, to **meet the public health needs of one or more other countries**.

#### **Which products are covered by this mechanism?**

- According to the Amended TRIPS Agreement, the mechanism **covers pharmaceutical products**, including medicines, vaccines and diagnostics, needed to fight an epidemic.

**98. The Ministry of Power has decided to set up a National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants. Which of the following is/are objectives of the same?**

- 1) To increase the level of co-firing from present 5% to higher levels.
- 2) To take up R&D activity in boiler design.
- 3) To consider regulatory issues in biomass co-firing.
- 4) To facilitate overcoming the constraints in the supply chain of biomass pellets and agro-residue.

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

- The Ministry of Power has decided to set up a National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants.
- This would further support the energy transition in the country and our targets to move towards cleaner energy sources.
- The "National Mission on use of biomass in thermal power plants" will have the **following objectives;**
  - (a) To **increase the level of co-firing** from present 5% to higher levels to have a larger share of carbon neutral power generation from the thermal power plants.
  - (b) To **take up R&D activity in boiler design** to handle the higher amount of silica, alkalis in the biomass pellets.
  - (c) To **facilitate overcoming the constraints in supply chain of bio mass pellets** and agro- residue and its transport upto to the power plants.
  - (d) To consider **regulatory issues in biomass co-firing.**
- The modalities of operation and structure of the Nation Mission are under finalization.
- It is being envisaged that the Mission would have a Steering Committee headed by Secretary (Power) comprising of all stakeholders including representatives from Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) etc.



- The Executive Committee would be headed by Member (Thermal), CEA.
- NTPC will play a larger role in providing logistic and infrastructure support in the proposed National Mission.
- The Mission would have full time officers from CEA, NTPC, DVC and NLC or other participating organizations.
- The duration of the proposed National Mission would be a minimum of 5 years.
- The following Sub-Groups are also proposed to be formed under the Mission:
  - (i) **Sub-Group 1** : to be responsible to carry out research on properties/ characteristics of biomass.
  - (ii) **Sub-Group 2** : to carry out technical specification and safety aspects including research in boiler design etc. to handle the pilot project for higher amount of co-firing of biomass with coal in pulverized coal (PC) fired boilers.
  - (iii). **Sub-Group 3**: for resolving the issues of supply chain during the mission period and sensitization programme.
  - (iv). **Sub-Group 4** : to select designated labs and certification bodies for testing of Agro-based biomass pellets and Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) pellets
  - (v). **Sub-Group 5**: be formed on regulatory framework and economics of biomass co-firing in coal based Thermal power plants.
- The proposed National Mission on biomass will also contribute to the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.

**99. Under the Universal Immunisation Programme in India, vaccines are provided against which of the following diseases?**

1. Measles
2. Rubella
3. Hepatitis C
4. Diphtheria

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

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 4 only



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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation:**

- The Immunization Programme in India was introduced in **1978** as the '**Expanded Programme of Immunization**' (EPI) by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- In 1985, the programme was modified as '**Universal Immunization Programme**' (UIP) to be implemented in a phased manner to cover all districts in the country.
- Under UIP, immunization is providing free of cost against 12 vaccine preventable diseases:
  - Nationally against 9 diseases - **Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and Meningitis & Pneumonia caused by Hemophilus Influenza type B**
  - Sub-nationally against 3 diseases - **Rotavirus, Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis**; of which Rotavirus vaccine and Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine are in process of expansion while JE vaccine is provided only in endemic districts.
- **There is currently no vaccine for hepatitis C.**
- A child is said to be fully immunized if the child receives all due vaccines as per national immunization schedule within the 1st year age of child.
- Every year the Universal Immunization Programme caters to the vaccination needs of 2.65 crore children and 2.9 crore pregnant women against these 12 Vaccine Preventable Diseases. Despite these efforts by all the States and UTs, some children and pregnant women get missed out from this network.

**Mission Indradhanush:**

- To strengthen and re-energize the programme and achieve full immunization coverage for all children and pregnant women at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched "**Mission Indradhanush**" in 2014.
- Under this drive focus is given on **pockets of low immunization coverage** and hard to reach areas where the proportion of unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children is highest.

**100. Consider the following statements with respect to The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

1. It is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field.
2. India is a founding member of IAEA
3. It reports to both UN General Assembly (UNGA) and UN Security Council (UNSC)

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

- a) 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) None of the above

**Answer : D**

**All are correct statements**

**Explanation**

- It is widely known as the **world's "Atoms for Peace and Development" organization** within the United Nations family.
- It is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. It **works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology.**
- Though established as an autonomous organisation, **independently of the United Nations** through its own international treaty, the IAEA Statute, the **IAEA reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.**
- Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.
- Members: The IAEA has 171 member states. Most UN members are member States of the IAEA.
- **India is the founding member of IAEA**

**101. Consider the following statements about Kuno Palpur wildlife sanctuary**

- 1) It is located in the state of Madhya Pradesh
- 2) Kuno river which is a tributary of the Chambal river flows through the national park.

**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:**

**Statement 1 is correct:**

- Kuno National Park is a **protected area in Madhya Pradesh** that received the status of national park in 2018.
- The protected area was established in 1981 as a wildlife sanctuary in the Sheopur and Morena districts.
- It was also known as Kuno-Palpur and Palpur-Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It is part of the Kathiawar-Gir dry deciduous forests ecoregion.

**Statement 2 is correct:**

- The Kuno River is one of the main tributaries of the Chambal River. It flows through the Kuno National Park from south to north, draining the other rivulets and Tributaries into the Chambal River in Morena at MP-Rajasthan border. It is 180 km long and originates from the Shivpuri Plateau.

**Why in the news?**

- Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park is all set to receive 8-10 cheetahs from Namibia through donation from Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) of South Africa.
- Finding Kuno National Park suitable for cheetahs, EWT specialists have asked to fence the national park ensuring cheetahs' safety.
- The cheetahs will be introduced in November 2021.

**102. Consider the following pairs of grasslands and the region in which they are distributed.**

- 1) Sholas- Western Ghats
- 2) Banni- Himachal Pradesh
- 3) Phumdis- Gujarat

**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:C**

**Explanation:**

- Grasslands are highly dynamic ecosystems that include vegetation that is mainly dominated by grass or grass-like plants.
- These can be in the form of natural and semi-natural pastures, woodlands, scrub and steppe formations(Intermediate areas between forests and deserts made up of small grasses).
- The UNESCO defines grassland as“land covered with herbaceous plants with less than 10 percent tree and shrub cover” and "wooded grassland as 10-40 percent tree and shrub cover".

**Are there grasslands in India?**

- Grasslands occupy nearly 24 percent of the geographical area in India.
- According to Environmental Information System (ENVIS)the major types of grasslands in India are
  - the alpine moist meadows of the Greater Himalayas;
  - alpine arid pastures or steppe formations of the trans Himalayas;
  - hillside grasslands in the mid-elevation ranges of the Himalayas;
  - 'Chauris' of the Himalayan foothills;
  - 'Terai' grasslands on the Gangetic and the Brahmaputra floodplains;
  - **'Phumdis' or floating grasslands of Manipur;**
  - **'Banni' and 'Vidis' of Gujarat;**
  - savannas of western and peninsular India;
  - plateau and valley grasslands in the Satpuras and Maikal hills;
  - dry grasslands of the Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu plains and
  - **'Shola' grasslands of the Western Ghats.**

**Why in the news?**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered all encroachments to be removed from Gujarat's Banni grasslands within six months.



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

1. It is a statutory body established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.
2. The Tribunal has jurisdiction over all civil cases involving a substantial question relating to the environment.
3. The decisions of the Tribunal are binding and their orders are enforceable as the powers vested are the same as in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a **statutory body** established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.
- It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to **handle environmental disputes** involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be **guided by principles of natural justice**.
- The Tribunal is vested with the **powers of a civil court** under the Code of Civil Procedure for discharging its functions but it can make its own rules.
- It provides speedy environmental justice and helps reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.

**What is the Tribunal's composition?**

- The Tribunal has a presence in **five zones**- North, Central, East, South and West. The Principal Bench is situated in the North Zone, headquartered in **Delhi**.
- The Central zone bench is situated in Bhopal, East zone in Kolkata, South zone in Chennai and West zone in Pune.

- The Tribunal is headed by the **Chairperson** who sits in the Principal Bench and has **at least ten but not more than twenty judicial members** and **at least ten but not more than twenty expert members**.

#### **Tribunal's Jurisdiction**

- The NGT deals with civil cases under the seven laws related to the environment, these include
  - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
  - The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977
  - The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
  - The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
  - The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
  - The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 and
  - The Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- Two important acts - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** have been kept out of NGT's jurisdiction.
- The Tribunal has jurisdiction **over all civil cases involving a substantial question relating to the environment. Statement 2 is correct.** Additionally, any person aggrieved by an order/direction of any of the Appellate Authorities under the legislations mentioned above can also challenge them before the National Green Tribunal.

#### **Are decisions of the Court binding?**

- **Yes**, decisions of the Tribunal are binding. The Tribunal's orders are enforceable as the powers vested are the same as in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

#### **Statement 3 is correct**

#### **Are decisions of the Tribunal final?**

- The Tribunal has powers to review its own decisions. If this fails, the decision can be challenged before the **Supreme Court within ninety days**.

**104. Consider the following statements about World Health Organisation**

- 1) The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) established in 1948 to further international cooperation for improved public health conditions.
- 2) It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- 3) India is yet to become a member of WHO.

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation**

- The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) established in 1948 to further international cooperation for improved public health conditions.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Working with 194 Member States (including India), its stated goal is to ensure "**the highest attainable level of health for all people**".

**105. Consider the following statements regarding the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979**

1. It is applicable to every establishment that employs hundred or more migrant workmen from other States
2. The principal employer is prohibited from employing inter-State workmen without a certificate of registration from the relevant authority

**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: B**

**Explanation**

- A key piece of legislation governing inter-state migrants in India is the **Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979**.
- The Act was enacted to **prevent the exploitation of inter-state migrant workmen** by contractors, and to ensure fair and decent conditions of employment.
- The law requires all establishments hiring **inter-state migrants to be registered**, and contractors who recruit such workmen be licensed.
- **Contractors are obligated to provide details of all workmen to the relevant authority.** Contractors are also required to **ensure regular payment, non-discrimination, provisioning of suitable accommodation**, free medical facilities and protective clothing for the workmen.

**Key provisions**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** It is applicable to **every establishment that employs five or more migrant** workmen from other States; or if it had employed five or more such workmen on any day in the preceding 12 months.
- It is also applicable to contractors who **employ a similar number of inter-State workmen.**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The principal employer is prohibited from employing inter-State workmen **without a certificate of registration from the relevant authority.**
- The law also lays down that **every contractor** who recruits workmen from one State for deployment in another State **should obtain a licence** to do so

**106. Consider the following Pairs**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Epiphytic         | - plants which derive nutrients from fungi |
| 2. Terrestrial       | - plants growing on land and climbers      |
| 3. Mycoheterotrophic | - plants growing on another plants         |

**Which of the above pairs are matched correctly?**

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



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

**Answer:C**

**Explanation:**

Orchids can be broadly categorised into three life forms:

- **Epiphytic** - plants **growing on another plants** including those growing on rock boulders and often termed lithophyte. The epiphytic orchids are abundant up to 1800 m above the sea level and their occurrence decreases with the increase in altitude.
- **Terrestrial** - plants **growing on land and climbers**. Terrestrial orchids are found in large numbers in temperate and alpine region
- **Mycoheterotrophic** - plants which **derive nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi** that are attached to the roots of a vascular plant. These are found in temperate regions, or are found growing with parasites in tropical regions.

About 757 species or 60% of all orchids found in India are epiphytic, 447 are terrestrial and 43 are mycoheterotrophic.

**Why in the news?**

- A new species *Didymocarpus vickifunkiae*, of African Violets have been recorded in Mizoram by IISER, Bhopal (a research institute under Ministry of Education).
- It is an **epiphyte** and is considered **an endangered species**. It produces light pink flowers during the monsoons.
- This discovery has upheld the north-east region's sensitive and highly diversified biodiversity and unique biogeographic placement as a part of two biodiversity hotspots — the Indo-Burma and the Eastern Himalayas.

**About Didymocarpus genus**

- Commonly known as **African violets**, native to **Tanzania and Kenya** have been popular in the horticultural world, often used indoors in European countries.
- They are widely distributed in Asia from Western Himalayas to Sumatra,
- But one of the unique features is that most of these species are **narrow endemics (found in very less area)** and **require specialised habitats** to survive, thus acting as an **indicator of pristine habitats**.

- There are 106 currently known species of this genus, of which 26 are in the northeast of India,

**107. Consider the following statements about Atal Pension Yojana (APY).**

1. It is a pension scheme for citizens of India focussed on the organised sector workers.
2. APY is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

**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: A**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Atal Pension Yojana (APY) addresses the **old age income security** of the working poor. It is **focused on the unorganized sector workers**.
- It encourages the workers in the **unorganised sector to voluntarily save for their retirement**. The Government had launched the scheme with effect from **1st June, 2015**.

**Eligibility**

- Any citizen of India can join the APY scheme. The age of the subscriber should be between **18-40 years**. The contribution levels would vary and would be low if a subscriber joins early and increases if she joins late.
- The benefits of the scheme will arise to the subscribers on attaining the **age of 60 years**.

**Features of APY**

- Fixed pension for the subscribers ranging between **Rs.1000 to Rs. 5000**, if s/he joins and contributes **between the age of 18 years and 40 years**.
- The same pension is payable to Spouse after death of Subscriber.
- Return of indicative pension wealth to nominees after death of spouse.
- Under the scheme, individuals who have registered before March 31, 2016, will get a co-contribution from the government, which will be 50 percent of the subscriber contribution

up to a maximum of Rs. 1,000. The co-contribution will be for 5 years from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

- APY is administered by the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**. **Statement 2 is correct.**

#### **About PFRDA**

- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is the statutory authority established by an enactment of the Parliament, to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the National Pension System (NPS) and pension schemes to which this Act applies.

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

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has recently announced that Assets Under Management (AUM) under the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY), crossed the milestone of Rs. 6 trillion.

**108. Consider the following statements about the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).**

1. OIC aims at promoting Islamic solidarity and co-operation among its Member and Observer States in the political, economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, scientific and related spheres.
2. India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC.

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

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: C**

#### **Explanation:**

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the **second largest inter-governmental organization** after the United Nations with a membership of **57 states**.
- The majority of its member states are Muslim-majority countries, while others have significant Muslim populations, including several African and South American countries.
- **India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC. Statement 2 is correct.**
- The organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world to ensure and safeguard their interest on economic socio and political areas.

- Under its charter, the OIC aims at promoting **Islamic solidarity and co-operation** among its Member and Observer States in the political, economic, social, cultural, humanitarian, scientific and related spheres. **Statement 1 is correct.**
- The OIC has **observer status at the United Nations**, on a reciprocal basis, and it co-operates with the United Nations in all areas of concern, including support to the Governments of Member States in their efforts to promote the economic and social development of their countries and peoples.
- Its Headquarters is in **Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.**

**Why in the news?**

- Member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are calling on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to set up a permanent commission to report on human rights violations in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank .

**109. With reference to the UN Human Rights Council, consider the following statements.**

1. It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system made up of all members of the UN.
2. It is responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe.

**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 Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Council's mandate is to promote "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" and "address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon."
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year.



- The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

### Membership

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Council is made of **47 Member States**, which are elected by the majority of members of the General Assembly of the United Nations through **direct and secret ballot**.
- The Council's Membership is based on **equitable geographical distribution**.
- Members of the Council serve for a period of **three years** and are **not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms**.

### 110. Match the following Buddhist texts

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Vinaya Pitaka     | - Disciplinary rules for the Buddhist monks and nuns.  |
| 2. Sutta Pitaka      | - Teachings attributed to the Buddha.                  |
| 3. Abhidhamma Pitaka | - Summaries or enumerated lists of Buddha's teachings. |

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

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

**Answer : D**

### Explanation

#### Vinaya Pitaka

The Vinaya Piṭaka is made up of rules of discipline laid down for regulating the conduct of the Buddha's disciples who have been admitted as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis.

#### Sutta Pitaka

The Sutta Pitaka contains more than 10,000 suttas (discourses) attributed to the Buddha or his close companions.

## Abhidhamma Pitaka

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka is a detailed scholastic analysis and summary of the Buddha's teachings in the Suttas. Here the suttas are reworked into a schematized system of general principles that might be called 'Buddhist Psychology'.

111. It is a Stratovolcano or composite type of volcano and one of the most active volcanoes in the world. It is located in the western branch of the Rift Valley, near Lake Kivu at the eastern border of DR Congo with Rwanda in the Virunga National Park. The above description refers to which of the following?

- a) Mount etna
- b) Mouna Loa
- c) Nyiragongo Gina
- d) Mauna kea

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

**About the volcano**



- **Nyiragongo Goma** is a Stratovolcano or composite type of volcano and one of the most active volcanoes in the world.
- It is located in the western branch of the Rift Valley, near Lake Kivu at the eastern border of **DRCongo** with Rwanda in the Virunga National Park.
- The summit stands at 3,470 metres (11,385 feet) and is said to contain the largest quasi permanent lava lake in the world, the level of which rises and fall from time to time.
- Nyiragongo is infamous for its **extremely fluid lava** that runs as water when the lava lake drains. It is considered extremely dangerous because lava flows can reach up to 100 kilometres (60 miles) an hour.
- It last erupted in 2002 which destroyed Goma city and displaced around 2,00,000 people.

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

- Mount Nyiragongo erupted on may 23, 2021. It has killed over 15 people and over 500 homes are destroyed.

#### **112. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?**

- A non performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of more than 90 days.
- Assets which have remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months are substandard assets.
- An asset would be classified as doubtful if it has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months.
- With respect to agriculture, a loan granted for short duration crops will be treated as NPA, if the instalment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for one crop season.

**Answer: D**

#### **Explanation**

#### **What is NPA?**

- A non performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of more than **90 days**.
- Banks classify NPAs further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets.

- **Substandard assets:** Assets which have remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months.
- **Doubtful assets:** An asset would be classified as doubtful if it has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months.
- **Loss assets:** Loss asset is considered uncollectible and of such little value that its continuance as a bankable asset is not warranted, although there may be some salvage or recovery value.
- With respect to agriculture, a loan granted for short duration crops will be treated as NPA, if the instalment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for **two crop seasons**.
- A loan granted for long duration crops will be treated as NPA, if the instalment of principal or interest thereon remains overdue for **one crop season**.

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

- According to a recent report of Care Ratings, a Credit Rating Agency, the quantum of gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) is expected to decline by the end of March, despite being a challenging year, compared with FY20.
- Stating that **public sector banks (PSBs) accounted for more than 80% of SCBs' GNPA** till FY19, the report said more than the past years, the PSBs had registered a substantial contraction in GNPAs.
- The PSB GNPA ratio continues to remain significantly higher than the private banks.

#### **113. Consider the following statements about currency swap arrangements**

- 1) Currency swap operations usually carry no exchange rate risk, as transaction terms are set in advance.
- 2) India has never extended currency swap operations with any country so far.

**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**



### What are currency swap arrangements?

- In the swap arrangement, generally a country provides dollars to a foreign central bank, which, at the same time, provides the equivalent funds in its currency to the former, based on the market exchange rate at the time of the transaction.
- The parties agree to swap back these quantities of their two currencies at a specified date in the future, which could be the next day or even two years later, using the same exchange rate as in the first transaction.

### Why in the News?

- Bangladesh has cleared a \$200 million currency swap facility for Sri Lanka, to help boost its economy.
- With Sri Lanka's main foreign exchange-earning sectors – tourism, export of garments and tea – badly hit due to the pandemic, the country has been struggling to maintain its reserves in the face of a daunting debt repayment schedule. In April 2021, Sri Lanka's foreign reserves stood at \$ 4.5 billion, about the same amount that the country is due to settle this year in external loan repayments.
- So far this year, Colombo has obtained financial assistance from **China**, through a \$ 1.5 billion currency swap arrangement, and a \$500 million loan, in addition to the \$500 million extended last year. Sri Lanka also inked a \$500 million loan-agreement with the **EXIM Bank of Korea** a fortnight ago.
- **India**, which extended a \$400 million currency swap facility from the Reserve Bank of India – it was settled in February 2021 after an extension – is yet to respond to Sri Lanka's year-old request for an additional \$1.1 billion currency swap facility.

### Similar arrangements

- The RBI offers similar swap lines to central banks in the **SAARC region** within a total corpus of \$2 billion.
- This facility originally came into operation in 2012 to provide a backstop line of funding for short-term foreign exchange liquidity requirements or balance of payment crises until longer term arrangements were made.
- Under the facility, RBI offers swaps of varying sizes in US Dollars, Euro or Indian Rupee to each SAARC member country depending on their two months import requirement.

- India also has a \$75 billion bilateral currency swap line with **Japan**, which has the second highest dollar reserves after China. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**.

#### **Advantages of such arrangements**

- These swap operations **usually carry no exchange rate risk**, as transaction terms are set in advance. The absence of an exchange rate risk is one of the major benefits of such a facility. Hence **statement 1 is correct**.
- This facility provides the country, which is getting the dollars, with the **flexibility to use these reserves at any time** in order to maintain an appropriate level of balance of payments or short-term liquidity.

#### **114. Consider the following statements**

- 1) A lunar eclipse occurs when the moon passes directly behind the earth into its shadow.
- 2) When a full moon occurs at its perigee, it is called a supermoon.

**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**

**Why in News:**

- The first total lunar eclipse in more than two years coincided with a supermoon.

**What is a Lunar Eclipse?**

- A **lunar eclipse** occurs when the **moon passes directly behind the earth** into its **shadow**.
- **The earth, sun and the moon** are either **closely or perfectly aligned**, with the earth in the middle. The **earth's shadow** blocks sunlight from reflecting off the moon, thus resulting in an eclipse – partial or total.
- A **total lunar eclipse** is dramatic, as the earth's shadow (**umbra**) **completely covers the moon**. This **can happen only** when the **sun, the earth and the moon** are **perfectly aligned**.

- Anything less than perfection will create a partial lunar eclipse or no eclipse at all. An eclipse does not appear every full moon because the orbit of the moon (around the earth) lies in a different plane than that of the earth (around the sun).

### What is a supermoon?

- The moon's orbit around the earth is distinctly elliptical. The **point** when the **moon** is **closest** to the **earth** is called **Perigee** and the **point** when it is **farthest** from it is called **Apogee**.
- **When** a full **moon** occurs at its **perigee**, it is called a **supermoon**.
- It is a rare event, as it has to satisfy **two conditions** – the moon must be **closest** to the **earth** and it **should** be a **full moon**. At this point, the moon is observed to be 30% brighter and appears 14% larger.

### What is a Blood Moon?

- When the **Moon** is **completely covered by Earth's shadow** it will darken, but doesn't go completely black. Instead, it **takes** on a **red** color, which is why total lunar eclipses are sometimes called red or blood moons.
- Sunlight contains all colors of visible light. The particles of gas that make up Earth's atmosphere are more likely to scatter blue wavelengths of light while redder wavelengths pass through. This is called **Rayleigh scattering**, and it's why the sky is blue and sunrises and sunsets are often red.
- In the case of a **lunar eclipse**, **red light** can **pass through** the **Earth's atmosphere** and is **refracted** – or bent – **toward the Moon**, while blue light is filtered out. This leaves the moon with a pale **reddish** hue during an **eclipse**.

115. Consider the following pairs regarding the volcanic mountains and regions in which they are located

#### LIST I

1. Taal volcano -
2. Mount Etna -
3. White island -

#### LIST II

- Indonesia
- Italy
- Australia

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

- a) 1 and 2 only

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

**Answer: B**

### **Explanation**

#### **Taal volcano**

- Taal volcano is in a caldera system located in southern Luzon island and is one of the most active volcanoes in the **Philippines**.
  - Taal is classified as a “**complex**” volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).
- Ø A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that **doesn't have just one main vent or cone but several eruption points**. Another such example is Mount Vesuvius on the west coast of Italy.
- It needs to be noted that the Philippines is situated at the **boundaries of two tectonic plates — the Philippines Sea Plate and the Eurasian plate** — thus susceptible to earthquakes and volcanism.

#### **White Island**

- White Island is **New Zealand's most active cone volcano** which has been built up by continuous volcanic activity over the past 1,50,000 years
- **About 70% of the volcano lies under the sea** and the Island forms the tip of the volcano
- Including its underwater base, White Island is the **largest volcanic structure in New Zealand**
- The island is also known by name **Whakaari**

#### **Mount Etna**

- It is an **active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy**, in the Metropolitan City of Catania, between the cities of Messina and Catania
- It lies above the **convergent plate margin between the African Plate and the Eurasian Plate**.
- It is the **highest active volcano in Europe** outside the Caucasus and the highest peak in Italy south of the Alps with a current height of 3,326 m though this varies with summit eruptions.



116. It is the largest country in the Middle East, and the second-largest country in the Arab world. It is the only country with a coastline along both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The above description refers to which of the following countries?

- a) Saudi Arabia
- b) Yemen
- c) Iraq
- d) Egypt

**Answer: A**

**Explanation**



- Saudi Arabia is the **largest country in the Middle East**, and the second-largest country in the Arab world.
- It is bordered by Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait to the north; by the Persian Gulf, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman to the east; by a portion of Oman to the southeast; by Yemen to the south and southwest; and by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba to the west.
- Saudi Arabia is the only country with a coastline along both the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

**Why in the News?**

- Saudi Arabia has announced that only 60,000 people from all countries will be allowed for Haj this year with COVID-19 protocol

### What is Hajj?

- In **Islamic terminology**, **Hajj** is a **pilgrimage** made **to the Kaaba**, the "House of God", in the sacred city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia..
- It is one of the **Five Pillars of Islam**, alongside Shahadah, Salat, Zakat and Sawm.

117. **"Ten Principles of Bandung" is related to the affairs of which of the following?**

- a) ASEAN
- b) Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
- c) Mekong–Ganga Cooperation (MGC)
- d) African Union

**Answer: B**

### Explanation

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created and founded during the **collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles** of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War.
- Throughout its history, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has played a **fundamental role in the preservation of world peace** and security
- The Non-Aligned Movement was **founded and held its first conference (the Belgrade Conference)** in 1961 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia.
- It has **120 members** comprising 53 countries from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 2 from Europe (Belarus, Azerbaijan). There are 17 countries and 10 international organizations that are Observers at NAM

- While some meetings with a third-world perspective were held before 1955, historians consider that the **Bandung Asian-African Conference** is the most immediate antecedent to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement.
- This Conference was held in **Bandung on April 18-24, 1955** and gathered 29 Heads of States belonging to the **first post-colonial generation of leaders from the two continents** with the aim of identifying and assessing world issues at the time and pursuing out joint policies in international relations
- The principles that would govern relations among large and small nations, known as the "**Ten Principles of Bandung**", were proclaimed at that Conference.
- Such principles were adopted later as the **main goals and objectives of the policy of non-alignment**. The fulfillment of those principles became the **essential criterion for Non-Aligned Movement membership**; it is what was known as the "**quintessence of the Movement**"
- The primary of objectives of the non-aligned countries focused on the **support of self-determination, national independence and the sovereignty and territorial integrity** of States; opposition to apartheid etc..
- NAM has sought to "create an **independent path in world politics** that would not result in member **States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers**."
- It identifies the **right of independent judgment**, the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and the use of moderation in relations with all big powers as the three basic elements that have influenced its approach. At present, an addition goal is facilitating a **restructuring of the international economic order**

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

The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare virtually participated in a meeting with Ministers of Health of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) Countries recently.

### **118. Which of the following initiatives target food security for the population?**

1. Mid-Day meals
2. Fair Price Shops
3. Antyodaya Anna Yojana

4. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

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

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

- According to the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.
- All the given initiatives target food security for the population.
- The Mid-day Meal Scheme is a school meal programme of the Government of India designed to improve the nutritional status of school-age children nationwide.
- Fair Price Shops are shops which are licensed to distribute essential commodities to the ration card holders under the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) is one of the public distribution system schemes in India. All beneficiaries under AAY scheme will get food and other important commodities for daily needs in subsidized process. Distribution of food grains to beneficiary will be done through public distribution system.
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is the world's largest community based programme. The scheme is targeted at children upto the age of 6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers and women 16–44 years of age. The scheme is aimed to improve the health, nutrition and education of the target community.

**Why in the news?**

The Ministry of Education has approved the proposal to provide monetary assistance to students through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of the cooking cost component of the Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Scheme, to all eligible children.



**119. Consider the following statements about Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)**

- 1) The scheme enables Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on creation of durable community assets based on locally felt needs.
- 2) The Ministry of finance is responsible for the policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism for implementation of the Scheme.

**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 the Scheme**

- The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is meant to enable **Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature** with emphasis on **creation of durable community assets based on locally felt needs** to be taken up in their constituencies in the area of national priorities namely drinking water, education, public health, sanitation, roads etc.
- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has been responsible for the policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism for implementation of the Scheme.

**Features**

- The MPLADS is **fully funded** by the Government of India. The **annual** MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is **Rs. 5 crore**.
- Funds under the MPLADS are **non-lapsable**.
- **Lok Sabha Members** can recommend works within their Constituencies and **Elected Members of Rajya Sabha** can recommend works within the State of Election (with select exceptions). **Nominated Members** of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.

- All works to meet locally felt infrastructure and development needs, with an emphasis on creation of durable assets in the constituency are permissible under MPLADS as prescribed in the scheme guidelines.

- The MPLADS funds can be merged with other schemes such as MGNREGA and Khelo India.

#### **Allocation for SC & ST**

- The guidelines recommend MPs to suggest works costing at least 15 per cent of their MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Caste population** and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by **Scheduled Tribe population**.
- In case there is insufficient tribal population in the area of Lok Sabha Member, they may recommend this amount for the creation of community assets in tribal areas outside of their constituency but within their State of election.

#### **Implementation**

- Under MPLADS, the role of the MPs is limited only upto recommendation of works. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the **District Authority** to sanction, execute and complete the works recommended by Members of Parliament within the stipulated time.
- The District Authority shall identify the Implementing Agency capable of executing the eligible work qualitatively, timely and satisfactorily. It shall be responsible for timely and effective implementation of such works.
- Information on MPLADS (the number and cost of works sanctioned, implementing agencies, projects completed, etc) should be made available to citizens under the **Right to Information Act**.
- **At least 10% of the projects** under implementation in the district are to be **inspected** every year by the district authority.

#### **Suspension of MPLADS**

- In June 2020, the central government announced suspension of MPLADS for two years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Suspension of the MPLAD Scheme will make Rs 7,800 crore available to the government which will go to the Consolidated Fund of India to fight COVID-19 .

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

- Member of Parliament Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to restart the MPLAD scheme and make MPLAD funds available to MPs.

- Mr. Chowdhury said it is critical to have access to MPLAD funds because of the second wave of COVID-19 and the devastation caused by the cyclonic storm Yaas that made its landfall in Odisha and impacted neighbouring Bengal.

**120. Which of the following is/are the global targets for 2030 under WHO's global technical strategy for Malaria?**

- 1) Reducing malaria case incidence by at least 90 per cent
- 2) Reducing malaria mortality rates by at least 90 per cent
- 3) Eliminating malaria in all the countries
- 4) Preventing a resurgence of malaria in all countries that are malaria-free

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

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

**Answer: C**

**Explanation**

- The **WHO Global Malaria Programme** is responsible for coordinating WHO's global efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
- Its work is guided by the “**Global technical strategy for malaria 2016–2030**” adopted by the WHA in May 2015.
- WHO's global technical strategy provides a technical framework for all malaria-endemic countries working towards malaria control and elimination.
- Its global targets for 2030 include:
  - **Reducing malaria case incidence by at least 90 per cent**
  - **Reducing malaria mortality rates by at least 90 per cent**
  - **Eliminating malaria in at least 35 countries**
  - **Preventing a resurgence of malaria in all countries that are malaria-free**

**121. Consider the following statements about YUVA programme**

- 1) It is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors below 30 years.
- 2) It was launched by the Ministry of Culture.

**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 Ministry of Education has launched YUVA- Prime Minister's Scheme For Mentoring Young Authors.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors below 30 years.
- The launch of YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) is in tune with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to **encourage young writers to write about India's freedom struggle.**
- YUVA is a **part of India@75 Project** to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers on themes like Unsung Heroes, Freedom Fighters, Unknown and Forgotten Places.

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

**Ethnic communities- Region associated**

- 1) Tutsi- Rwanda
- 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:**

**What's in the news?**

- French President Emmanuel Macron has acknowledged his country's "overwhelming responsibility" in the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which about 800,000 people, mostly ethnic Tutsis, were killed.
- Mr. Macron said France chose "silence over examination of the truth" for too long, but stopped short of issuing an apology, saying France had not been an accomplice in the genocide.
- France, which enjoyed close ties with Rwanda's Hutu-led government of President Juvénal Habyarimana, has long been criticised for its role in the killings of the Tutsi minorities in the months of April to June 1994.

**Tutsi**

- Tutsi are a **Bantu-speaking ethnic group** of probable Nilotic origin, and the **second largest of three main ethnic groups in Rwanda and Burundi** (the other two being the largest Bantu ethnic group Hutu and the Pygmy group of the Twa).
- Hema, a small tribe of Nilotic nomads, also live near the Tutsi in Rwanda and travel through the Northern and northeastern portions of Rwanda

**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.

**123. Which of the following statements about the GST council is correct?**

- a) The Prime Minister acts as the chairman.
- b) Decisions of the council are made by voting with a 3/4<sup>th</sup> majority.
- c) State governments and the centre have an equal share of voting.
- d) One-third of the total number of Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall constitute the quorum at its meetings.

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

- Goods & Services Tax Council is a **constitutional body** under Article 279A of the amended Constitution, for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.
- The Council was introduced by the **Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016**.
- **Option A is incorrect:** The GST Council is chaired by the **Union Finance Minister** and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

**Mandate of GST Council**

- The Goods and Services Tax Council shall make recommendations to the Union and the States on—
  - the **taxes, cesses and surcharges** levied by the Union, the States and the local bodies which may be subsumed in the goods and services tax;
  - the goods and services that may be **subjected to, or exempted** from the goods and services tax;
  - the **threshold limit of turnover** below which goods and services may be exempted from goods and services tax;
  - the **rates including floor rates with bands** of goods and services tax;
  - the date on which the goods and services tax be levied on **petroleum crude, high speed diesel, motor spirit (commonly known as petrol), natural gas and aviation turbine fuel**.
- **Option D is incorrect: Quorum:** **One-half** of the total number of Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall constitute the quorum at its meetings.

- **Option B is correct: Voting share:** Every decision of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be taken at a meeting, by a majority of **not less than three-fourths** of the weighted votes of the members present and voting, in accordance with the following principles, namely: —
  - the vote of the **Central Government** shall have a weightage of **one-third** of the total votes cast, and
  - the votes of all the **State Governments** taken together shall have a weightage of **two-thirds** of the total votes cast, in that meeting. **Hence, Option C is incorrect.**
- No act or proceedings of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be invalid merely by reason of—
  - any vacancy in, or any defect in, the constitution of the Council; or
  - any defect in the appointment of a person as a Member of the Council; or
  - any procedural irregularity of the Council not affecting the merits of the case.
- **Dispute adjudication:** The Goods and Services Tax Council shall establish a mechanism to adjudicate any dispute
  - between the Government of India and one or more States; or
  - between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other side; or
  - between two or more States, arising out of the recommendations of the Council or implementation thereof.

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

The 43rd Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meeting was held recently.

**124. Which of the following is/are categorised as Neglected Tropical Diseases?**

- 1) Chikungunya
- 2) Scabies
- 3) Leishmaniasis
- 4) Snakebite envenomation
- 5) Leprosy

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



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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

**Neglected Tropical Diseases(NTDs)**

- Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) **are a diverse group of communicable diseases** that **prevail in tropical and subtropical conditions** in 149 countries which will affect more than one billion people and cost developing economies.
- Populations living in poverty without adequate sanitation and in close contact with infectious vectors and domestic animals and livestock are those worst affected.
- The WHO's Roadmap for NTD contains a list of **20 diseases** among which the **important diseases like Dengue,Chikungunya,Leprosy(Hansen's disease) and Lymphatic Filariasis, Scabies, Leishmaniasis, Snakebite envenomation** are also present.

**Why in the news?**

The ongoing 74th World Health Assembly declared 30th January as 'World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day.

**125. "Nine-dash line" sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of**

- A. Middle East region
- B. South China sea
- C. India-China
- D. North America

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

- Nine-dash line is related to the South China sea dispute.
- Currently, among the most disputed topics in the world, in the South China Sea (SCS) dispute, the governments of six countries (Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and China) claim that they are the rightful owner of **Paracel and Spratly islands**, and among them, China has been the most aggressive one.

- The disputed sea is composed of approximately 100 to 230 islands wherein small islands called islets are usually included in it. Submerged in water, shoals, banks, atolls, reefs and cays, which covers an area of approx. 180,000 sq. km.<sup>3</sup>
- The Chinese government claims an enormous area under what is known as the “**nine-dash line**” that is over 2000 km long, starting from mainland China and reaching waters close to Indonesia and Malaysia. China maintains that the area has been under Chinese rule since ancient times.
- China has been building military bases on small islands and also expanding the area of islands artificially.



### Importance of the South China Sea

- This sea route, connecting Asia with Europe and Africa, is an **important trade passageway** for international trade.
- The **Strait of Malacca**, along with the **Lombok Strait** and **Sunda strait** are all connected with SCS and responsible for oil and LNG imports by major countries such as China, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and others from Gulf countries.
- It is estimated that around 15 million barrels each day are transported through the Strait of Malacca, making it the **second busiest strait** after the Strait of Hormuz in terms of oil transportation with respect to volume.
- The economy of China depends upon the oil import in which 80% of the oil is transported through the Strait of Malacca and then through SCS to China, which means that full control and easy access through this strait is the justification behind economic prosperity of the Chinese nation.
- Apart from the strategic importance of the SCS, this region is also blessed with **large deposits of natural resources beneath the sea**.

- Aside from oil and gas reserves, this region is also gifted with **one-third of the total marine biodiversity of the Earth**, which means that substantial revenue can also be generated through **fishing** alone.

