December MCQ Compilation

1. Consider the following statements about National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

1) National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a welfare programme being administered by the Ministry of Rural Development.

2) This programme is being implemented only in rural areas.

3) NSAP represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of Article 41 of the Constitution of India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 and 3 only

b) 2 only

c) 2 and 3 only

d) 1,2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation

About NSAP

- Launched in 1995, the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a welfare programme being administered by the **Ministry of Rural Development. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- This programme is being implemented in **rural areas as well as urban areas**. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**
- NSAP represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of **Article 41 of the Constitution of India** which directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want within the limit of its economic capacity and development. Hence **statement 3 is correct.**
- 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.

2. The main objective of the Zero Defect and Zero Effect (ZED) Scheme is

a) Providing affordable loans to street vendors.
b) Assessing the MSMEs for their process in achieving Zero defects in their products and processes.
c) Providing health insurance to COVID-19 frontline workers.
d) Implementing Direct Benefit Transfer for procurement of food grains by the Food Corporation of India.

Answer B

About the Scheme

- Zero Defect and Zero Effect (ZED) is a certification scheme. The MSMEs are **assessed for their process in achieving Zero defects in their products and processes.** Similarly the process which they adopt for production **should not affect the environment.**
- There are **three stages of assessment** based on which the MSMEs will be graded for certification under **five categories** as **Bronze, Silver, Gold, Diamond and Platinum.**
- The cost of certification in grading shall be **subsidized by Government of India up to 80% of the expenditure** and **financial assistance** is provided for interested MSMEs for Gap analysis, Handholding and consultancy for improving their rating and adopting measures for moving towards zero effect.

Objectives

- Scheme Endeavours to Attain the Following Key Goals
  - To promote and encompass ZED manufacturing processes in the MSMEs;
  - Encourage to attain a continuous momentum in improving the sector that contributes to the success of Make in India initiative;
  - Reassure to adapt Quality tools and systems, thus promote energy-efficient manufacturing;
  - Make sure that the MSMEs are constantly upgrading their tools and processes to obtain better products;
  - Most importantly, the acclimatization to ZED protocol to have a minimalist impact on the environment.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has announced that more than 20,000 MSMEs had registered with intent to adopt the principle of the Zero Defect Zero Effect Scheme.

3. Consider the following statements PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme (PM FME Scheme)

1) The focus will be on women and SC/ST owned units and those in Aspirational districts.

2) The scheme provides credit linked grants to enterprises with provision of seed capital to SHGs for meeting working expenses and purchase of small tools.

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

About the Scheme

- In 2020, the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** launched the PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme (PM FME Scheme) for providing financial, technical and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.
- With an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore, it was launched as a **centrally sponsored scheme** aimed at **covering two lakh enterprises over five years** from 2020-21 to 2024-2025.
- During the first year of implementation, the **total expenditure will be borne by the Central government**, but in successive years **centre and states will share the expenditure in a 60:40 ratio.**

Objectives

- Under the scheme, **capacity building of entrepreneurs** will be undertaken through technical knowledge, skill training and hand holding support services. **Credit flow to micro food processing industries** will be strengthened along with **support for their integration with organised supply chains** by providing brand and marketing facilitation.
- Apart from individual entrepreneurs, support will also be extended to Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), SHGs, producers co-operatives and co-operative societies engaged in food processing activities.

Potential of the scheme

- The focus will be on **women and SC/ST owned units and those in Aspirational districts** and a **cluster-based approach** (e.g. Mango in UP, Tomato in Karnataka, Chilli in Andhra Pradesh, Orange in Maharashtra etc.) will be followed to reap the benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**
- The scheme provides **credit linked grants** to enterprises with provision of seed capital to SHGs for meeting working expenses and purchase of small tools. Hence **statement 2 is correct.**
- The scheme is set to transform the unorganised micro food processing enterprises for the larger benefit of rural people and rural economy.

Role of Micro food processing industries

- Micro food processing industries represent the **unorganised food processing sector** comprising nearly 25 lakh units. **Nearly 74 percent of the total employment in the food processing sector** comes from these units.
- Micro food processing enterprises are a major contributor to the rural economy as nearly **66 percent of these units are located in rural areas** and **about 85 percent of them are family based enterprises supporting the livelihood of households.**
- These units play a significant role in **checking rural-urban migration.**

Why in the News?

- 876 micro-food processing individuals have been trained in 13 States/UTs through 34 Food Processing and Entrepreneurship training sessions under the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme till date.

4. The term Stablecoin is related to which of the following ?

a) Smartphone spyware

b) Newly discovered flightless bird species in Andaman Islands

c) Climate change coalition for new age climate governance

d) Digital currencies that are backed by a fiat currency

Answer: D

Explanation

- Stablecoins are digital currencies that are backed by a fiat currency such as the US dollar, thus giving it an intrinsic value.
- From an investor point of view, stablecoins become easier to understand considering the underlying reserve asset.
- There is also a case being made by sovereign governments for stablecoins such as Tether, USD Coin and Diem (proposed by Facebook's parent company Meta) given that it could increase the reach of their fiat currencies in the digital ecosystem.

5. 'Samagra Shiksha' subsumed which of the following schemes?

1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
2. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
3. Teacher Education

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12. The scheme has been prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes.
- It subsumes the three Schemes of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).**
- It was introduced in the Union Budget, 2018-19.

Objectives

- The major objectives of the Scheme are
  - Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
  - Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education;
  - Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;

- Ensuring minimum standards in schooling provisions;
- Promoting Vocationalisation of education and
- Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009;

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Education has given information about financial assistance provided to States/ UTs for various ICT and Digital initiatives for setting up ICT labs, smart classrooms, etc. under Samagra Shiksha.

6. Pehchan Scheme recently seen in the news is associated with which of the following?

a) Aims to create a junction in the form of a platform for all portals and websites of the Department of School Education

b) A platform for market intelligence for Indian exporters and entrepreneurs on global markets

c) An initiative to register and provide identity cards to handicraft artisans and link them to a national database.

d) To promote effective delivery of public services and implementation of schemes of Ministry of Labour and Employment

Answer: C

Explanation

About the Scheme

- 'Pehchan' cards scheme is a part of the initiative of the **Union Textile Ministry to register and provide identity cards to handicraft artisans and link them to a national database.**
- Launched in 2016, it is a new upgraded ID card for artisans that is linked with their Aadhaar numbers and bank accounts so that they can receive direct cash transfer benefits.
- The scheme was planned to facilitate the benefits of various schemes of the Union Government to flow directly into their accounts.
- Besides, the ID card enables the artisans to **avail easy loans at lower interest rate.**

Why in the News?

- 27.80 lakhs handicrafts artisans across the country have been registered under the PAHCHAN scheme this year.

7. Consider the following statements

1) It is a crop of tropical and subtropical areas requiring uniformly high temperature for its growth.

2) It is a drought-resistant crop ideal for arid climates and requires an average annual rainfall of 50- 100 cm.

3) It requires at least 210 frost-free days in a year for its optimal growth.

The above description refers to which of the following crops?

a) Sugarcane
b) Rice
c) Cotton
d) Groundnut

Answer: C

Explanation

- Cotton is a global commodity that is produced all over the world and a single tonne of cotton provides year-round employment for five people on average. It occupies just **2.1 % of the world's arable land**, yet it meets 27% of the world's textiles need.
- In addition to its fibre used in textiles and apparel, food products are also derived from cotton like **edible oil and animal feed** from the seed.
- It is a crop of **tropical and subtropical areas** requiring uniformly high temperature for its growth. Cotton is a **drought – resistant crop ideal for arid climates**
- Cotton plants need sufficient rainfall in the early stages of growth, but **sunny and dry weather is required after flowering.** Rainfall should be moderate, ranging between 50-100 cm
- Cotton is one of the **main raw materials for the cotton textile industry**. Cotton grows well in **drier parts of the black cotton soil** of the Deccan plateau.
- It requires high temperature, light rainfall or irrigation, **210 frost-free days and bright sun-shines for its growth**. It is a kharif crop and requires 6 to 8 months to mature.

- Major cotton-producing states are - Gujarat, Telangana,Maharashtra,Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has requested the Union Textiles Minister to direct the concerned ministries to remove import duty levied on cotton.

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

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

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

Explanation:

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) announced a pilot project to train 2,500 street food vendors in Delhi under the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) component of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0.

9. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

a) Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy and has a lower carbon footprint.

b) Brown hydrogen is produced using coal where the emissions are released to the air.

c) Grey hydrogen is produced from natural gas where the associated emissions are released to the air.

d) None of the above.

Answer D

Explanation

- **Green hydrogen** is produced by **electrolysis of water using renewable energy** (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.
- **Brown hydrogen** is produced **using coal** where the emissions are released to the air.
- **Grey hydrogen** is produced **from natural gas** where the associated emissions are released to the air.

Hence all the statements are correct.

10. Consider the following statements about the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

1. BIMSTEC came into existence through the Bangkok Declaration.
2. India is a founder member of BIMSTEC.
3. BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization with 14 priority areas of cooperation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only

B. 1 and 3 only

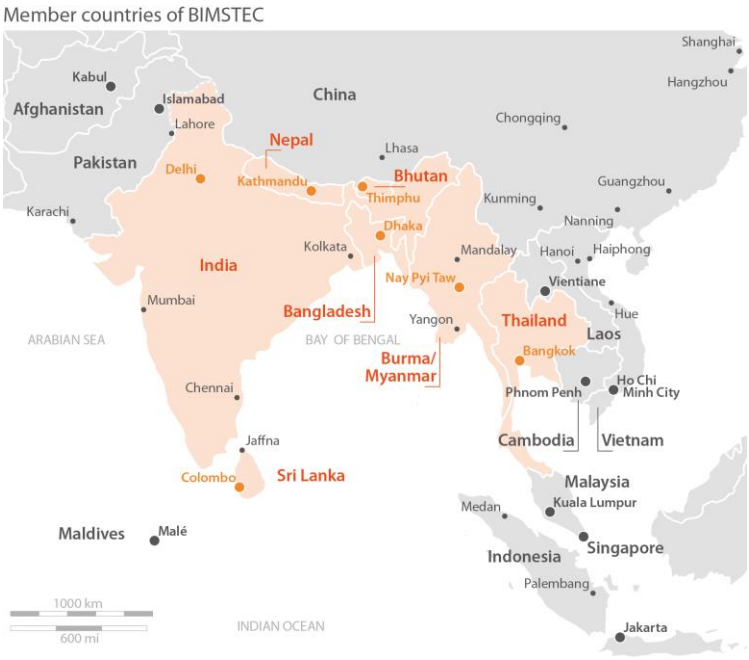
C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organisation that comprises **seven member states adjacent to the Bay of Bengal.**
- It includes: five deriving from South Asia, including **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka**, and two from Southeast Asia, including **Myanmar and Thailand.**
- It is headquartered in **Dhaka, Bangladesh.**



Background

- **Statement 1 is correct:** BIMSTEC came into existence on June 6, 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration**.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym **'BIST-EC'** (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation)
- Following the inclusion of **Myanmar** on 22 December 1997, the group was renamed 'BIMST-EC'.
- With the admission of **Nepal and Bhutan** in 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

Priority Sectors

- **Statement 3 is correct: BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization.**
- BIMSTEC has **14 priority areas** of cooperation, namely (i) Trade and Investment (ii) Technology (iii) Energy (iv) Transportation and Communication (v) Tourism (vi) Fisheries (vii) Agriculture (viii) Cultural Cooperation (ix) Environment and Disaster Management (x) Public Health (xi) People-to-People Contact (xii) Poverty Alleviation (xiii) Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime and (xiv) Climate Change.

Founding Principles

- The founding principles of BIMSTEC are as follows:
  - Cooperation within BIMSTEC will be based on respect for the **principle of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, no-interference in internal affairs, peaceful co- existence and mutual benefit.**
  - Cooperation within BIMSTEC will constitute an addition to and not be a substitute for bilateral, regional or multilateral cooperation involving the Member States.

Significance

- The BIMSTEC region is home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of the global population with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 2.7 trillion.
- The objective of BIMSTEC is to harness shared and accelerated growth through mutual cooperation in different areas of common interests.
- The regional group constitutes a **bridge between South and South East Asia** and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for **intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members**.

What's in the news?

- The 9th Meeting of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime was recently held.
- During the meeting, emerging traditional and non-traditional security threats in the BIMSTEC region were discussed.

11. 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) 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.

A person covered under New Pension Scheme (NPS) or Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme is also eligible to be covered under this scheme.

Answer: D

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 the News?

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has announced that more than 45 lakh unorganized workers have been registered under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan pension scheme.

12. The 'Krishi UDAN Scheme' sometimes seen in news is associated with which of the following?

a) Grievance redressal mechanism for sexual harassment of women at workplace

b) Restructuring of Non performing assets for public sector banks (PSB)

c) Assisting farmers in transporting agricultural products

d) Providing connectivity to un-served and under-served airports of the country

Answer C

Explanation

About the Scheme

- Krishi UDAN Scheme was launched to **assist farmers in transporting agricultural products so that it improves their value realisation.** The scope of the Krishi Udaan Scheme was expanded by including more districts/airports across the country with an aim to extend benefit to the farmers.
- The scheme aims to ensure seamless, cost-effective, time-bound air transportation and associated logistics for all Agri-produce originating especially from Northeast, hilly and tribal regions of the country.
- The objectives are to increase the share of air in the modal mix for transportation of Agri-produce, which includes horticulture, fishery, livestock & processed products.
- To achieve better convergence on various components catering to the development of sustainable and resilient Agri-produce value chains across various schemes of the Central and State Governments and their associated agencies as well as the resources committed by the private sector to improve supply chain competitiveness by

- Providing more air connectivity (national and international) between origin-destination airports aimed at bringing in improved logistics efficiency.
- Improving infrastructure and performance in processing of air cargo by all stakeholders, including Agri-produce, horticulture, fisheries, livestock products at airports and off-airport facilities, by regulatory participating governmental agencies (PGAs).
- Imparting special focus to air freight of organic and natural produce of NER, Tribal and Hilly Districts.
- Achieving better and timely mapping of Agri-produce production/ supply centres with domestic demand clusters and international markets in sync with the marketing strategies.
- Promoting adoption of plant and animal quarantine and other regulatory requirements (at airport) in the export supply chains end-to-end.
- Enabling paperless and contactless interface with all stakeholders through digitization and digitalization via integration with existing e-platforms and their creation as required.

Why in the News?

- The Ministry Of Civil Aviation has conducted an awareness programme about the Krishi UDAN scheme.

13. The Strait of Malacca is situated between 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: B

Explanation

Strait of Malacca, a narrow stretch of water between the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. It connects the Andaman Sea and South China Sea.

Option A refers to the Strait of Hormuz.

Option C refers to Bab-Al- Mandan strait.

Option D refers to the Bosporus strait.

14. Consider the following pairs:

Revolution - Related to

1. Green Revolution - Food grain Production
2. Silver Revolution - Egg/Poultry Production
3. Yellow Revolution - Horticulture

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

A. 1only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Explanation:

Green Revolution	Food grain Production
White Revolution	Milk Production
Silver Revolution	Egg/Poultry Production
Yellow Revolution	Oil seed Production

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

1. It aims to achieve a national-level target of 20-30% reduction reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration between 2017 and 2024
2. Niti Aayog 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: B

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** of PM2.5 and PM10 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.

16. Which of the following is/are examples of Assisted Reproductive Technology?

1) Gamete donation
2) In-vitro-fertilisation
3) Gestational surrogacy

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)Bill,2020 defines ART to include all techniques that seek to **obtain a pregnancy by handling the sperm or the oocyte** (immature egg cell) **outside the human body** and transferring the gamete or the embryo into the reproductive system of a woman.
- **Examples** of ART services include
  - Gamete (sperm or oocyte) donation,
  - In-vitro-fertilisation (fertilising an egg in the lab), and
  - Gestational surrogacy (the child is not biologically related to surrogate mother).
- **ART services** will be provided through:

  (i) ART clinics, which offer ART related treatments and procedures, and

  (ii) ART banks, which store and supply gametes.

17. The "Accessible India campaign" recently in news is related to which of the following?

a) Right based framework for transgenders to improve their quality of life

b) Encouraging youth to participate in civic engagement for the general elections

c) Skill development initiatives for tribal youth

d) Making public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities

Answer: D

Explanation

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

- It was launched in 2015 by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) as a nation-wide Campaign for **achieving universal accessibility** for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). It aims at providing equal opportunity to PwDs to participate in all the aspects of life and live independently.
- The Accessible India Campaign comprises of the following three components:
  - **Built Environment Accessibility:** It aims to provide an accessible physical environment for everyone. To achieve this, measures need to be undertaken to eliminate obstacles and barriers to indoor and outdoor facilities including schools, medical facilities, and workplaces.
  - **Transportation System Accessibility:** It focuses on providing persons with disabilities an equal right to travel and use public and private transportation infrastructure with dignity and independence.
  - **Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility:** Access to information refers to all information. This can range from actions such as being able to read price tags, to physically enter a hall, to participate in an event, to read a pamphlet with healthcare information, to understand a train timetable, or to view webpages.

18. Consider the following statements

1) Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 fulfills the obligations to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

2) India is a signatory to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

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

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- The Act fulfills the obligations to the **United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, to which India is a signatory and subsequently ratified the same on 1st October, 2007. Hence **both the statements are correct.**

Disabilities covered

- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from **existing 7 to 21** and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.

Rights and entitlements

- All Government institutions of **higher education** and those getting aid from the Government are required to **reserve at least 5% of seats** for persons with benchmark disabilities.
- **4% reservation** for persons with benchmark disabilities is to be provided in **posts of all Government establishments** with differential quotas for different forms of disabilities.
- **Incentives to employers in the private sector** are to be given who provide 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disability. **Special employment exchanges** for the PWD are to be set up.

Establishment of Authorities

- Broad based **Central & State Advisory Boards on Disability** are to be set up to serve as apex policy making bodies at the Central and State level.
- The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the State Commissioners will act as regulatory bodies and Grievance Redressal agencies and also monitor implementation of the Act.

19. Consider the following statements about Swadhar Greh Scheme

1) The Scheme targets the women victims of difficult circumstances who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation.
2) The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the scheme.
3) Under the Scheme, Swadhar Greh will be set up in every district which provides temporary residential accommodation for women victims.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: A

Explanation

About the scheme

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** is implementing the Swadhar Greh Scheme which targets the **women victims of difficult circumstances** who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity. **Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Swadhar Greh targets the following categories of women in difficult circumstances without economic and social support:
  - Deserted women;
  - Women rendered homeless due to natural calamities;
  - Women ex-prisoners;
  - Trafficked women/girls rescued or runaway from brothels;
  - HIV/AIDS affected women;
  - Women victims of domestic violence, family tension or discord driven out from their homes and facing marital litigations;
  - Women victims of terrorist violence

Objectives

- **Statement 3 is correct:** Under the Scheme, Swadhar Greh will be set up in **every district.** Swadhar Greh provides **temporary residential accommodation** with the following objectives:
  - To cater to the **primary need** of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic support.
  - To enable them to regain their **emotional strength** that gets hampered due to their encounter with unfortunate circumstances.
  - To provide them with **legal aid and guidance** to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society.
  - To **rehabilitate** them economically and emotionally.
  - To act as a **support system** that understands and meets various requirements of women in distress.
  - To enable them to start their life afresh with dignity and conviction.
- For big cities and other districts having **more than 40 lakh population** or those districts where there is a need for additional support to the women, **more than one Swadhar Greh could be established.**
- The Swadhar Greh Scheme initially introduced as a central sector scheme has been revised in 2016 as a sub-scheme of the **Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme "Protection and Empowerment of Women".**
- Funds are released through the States, with a cost sharing ratio of **60:40** between the Centre and the States excepting for the North Eastern and Himalayan States where it shall be **90:10** and for UTs it is **100%.**

Why in the news?

- Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani provided details about the Swadhar Greh Scheme in the Lok Sabha.

20. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

1) It is a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme under which cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.

2) The scheme covers pregnant and lactating mothers for the birth of the first and second child.

3) The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

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: C

Explanation

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a **Maternity Benefit Programme** that is implemented in all the districts of the country.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The scheme is implemented by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development.**
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2016.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It is a **direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme** under which cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.
- Under the scheme, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) receive a cash benefit of **Rs. 5,000 in three installments** on fulfilling the respective conditionality, viz. early registration of pregnancy, ante-natal check-up and registration of the birth of the child and completion of the first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The scheme covers pregnant and lactating mothers for the **birth of the first child.**

- All Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother **except** those who are in regular employment with the Central Government or State Government or Public Sector Undertaking or those who are in receipt of similar benefits are eligible to claim benefits under PMMVY.

Why in the News?

As on 22.11.2021, maternity benefits of ₹ 9420.58 crores have been disbursed amongst more than 2.17 crores eligible beneficiaries under PMMVY since inception of the scheme.

21. Consider the following statements about Dam safety Bill,2019

1) The Bill proposes to help all states and Union Territories adopt uniform dam safety procedures.
2) It provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all specified dams across the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

Explanation

What is the Dam Safety Bill?

Main Objective

- The Bill proposes to help all states and Union Territories **adopt uniform dam safety procedures. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- It provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of **all specified dams** across the country. Hence **statement 2 is correct.**
- These are dams with **height more than 15 metres, or height between 10 metres to 15 metres** with certain design and structural conditions.
- As of 2019, India has 5,745 large dams. Of these, 5,675 large dams are operated by states, 40 by central public sector undertakings, and five by private agencies. Over 75% of these dams are more than 20 years old and about 220 dams are more than 100 years old.
- Due to the lack of legal and institutional architecture for dam safety in India, dam safety is an issue of concern. Unsafe dams are a hazard and dam break may cause disasters, leading to huge loss of life and property. Therefore, monitoring dam safety is essential.

National Committees

- The Bill constitutes two national bodies: the **National Committee on Dam Safety**, whose functions include evolving policies and recommending regulations regarding dam safety standards; and the **National Dam Safety Authority**, whose functions include implementing policies of the National Committee, providing technical assistance to State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), and resolving matters between SDSOs of states or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state.

State Bodies

- It also constitutes two state bodies: **State Committee on Dam Safety**, and **State Dam Safety Organisation.** These bodies will be responsible for the surveillance, inspection, and monitoring the operation and maintenance of dams within their jurisdiction.
- The state dam safety organisation must also report events such as dam failures to the National Dam Safety Authority and also maintain records of major dam incidents of each specified dam.
- Functions of the national bodies and the State Committees on Dam Safety have been provided in **Schedules to the Bill.** These Schedules can be amended by a government notification.

Penalties

- An offence under the Bill can lead **to imprisonment of up to two years, or a fine, or both.**

What's in the news?

- The Parliament has passed the Dam Safety Bill.
- While it was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2019, it was cleared by Rajya Sabha recently.

22. 'EKUVERIN' is a military exercise held between which of the following countries?

a) India and France
b) India and Japan
c) India and Maldives
d) India and Bangladesh

Answer: C

Explanation

- Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN- India and Japan
- Exercise SAMPRITI- India and Bangladesh
- Exercise SHAKTI- India and France

Exercise Ekuverin

- The 11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN between **India and Maldives** is set to start at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives.

- The exercise will enhance synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both nations in terms of understanding transnational terrorism both on land and at sea, conducting Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations and sharing best military practices and experiences.
- Besides rigorous training, the joint military exercise will also include cultural and sports activities to enhance defence cooperation and bilateral relations.

23. 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** but compiled and constructed by **IHS Markit**, a London–based global information provider.
- PMI is an **investor sentiment tracking index** and is more 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.
- PMI, which is usually released at the **start of the month**, serves as a leading indicator of economic activity. It comes before the official data on industrial output, core sector manufacturing and GDP growth.

How to read PMI?

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

Why in the News?

- According to the latest Purchasing Managers' Index, India's services sector activity expanded at the second-fastest pace in more than a decade during November, driven by sustained rise in new work and improvement in market conditions.
- The Purchasing Managers' Index for the service sector was at 58.1 in November, fractionally down from 58.4 in October. The November figure points to the second-fastest rise in output since July 2011.
- For the fourth straight month, the services sector witnessed an expansion in output.

24. Project RE-HAB is related to which of the following?

a) Project to eliminate TB by the year 2025 against the global target of 2030
b) Project aimed at reducing the elephant-human conflict using bees.
c) Project aimed at bringing beneficiaries of PMAY (urban) into the fold of other central schemes
d) Project to encourage the birth and education of girl children

Answer: B

Explanation

Project RE-HAB

- Last year, the Khadi Village Industries Commission launched the project **Reducing Elephant Human Attacks using Bees (RE-HAB)** in Karnataka **to reduce the elephant-human conflict.**
- Under Project RE-HAB, "Bee-fences" are created by setting up bee boxes in the passageways of elephants to block their entrance to human territories. The boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug or pull causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further.

What are the benefits?

- Project RE-HAB is an effective way of restricting elephants from entering the villages because **elephants are naturally afraid of bees** as they might sting the elephants in their eyes and inner trunk. Furthermore, the buzzing of the bees in certain frequencies also make the elephants irritable and subsequently drive them away.
- It is a unique way of preventing elephant-human conflicts without causing any harm to the animals and the humans.
- It is extremely **cost-effective** as compared to various other measures such as digging trenches or erecting fences.
- The night vision cameras installed at these locations show evidence of the success of the project. The bee boxes not only reduced the movement of elephants at the respective points but also recorded footage of a number of elephants backing off from the points where the bee boxes had been installed.

- Since 2015, approximately 2,400 people have been killed in elephant attacks, and huge damage to property and crops have been recorded. Various state governments had taken several preventive measures like digging up trenches, electric fencing, spiked pillars etc., but nothing came off as effective and harmless as project RE-HAB.

About KVIC

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.**
- Established in 1956, KVIC aims to plan, promote, facilitate, organize, and assist in the establishment and development of Khadi and Village industries in the rural areas.
- Over the years, the main thrust of KVIC activities has been to provide a larger share of employment to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and women.

Why in the News?

- Following the success of its innovative Project RE-HAB in Karnataka, KVIC has now replicated the project in Assam.

  The project has been implemented in Assam with the support of the local forest department.

25. Consider the following statements regarding the Anganwadi centres

1. It was set up under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
2. These centers provide package of six services including the pre-school non-formal education

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

- **Anganwadis or day-care centres are set up under the Integrated Child Development Services** (ICDS) by the Women and Child Development Ministry to provide a package of six services.
- The services include **supplementary nutrition; pre-school non-formal education; immunisation, nutrition and health education; as well as referral services**.
- The aim of the ICDS scheme is to **reduce infant mortality and child malnutrition**. Beneficiaries include children in the age group of six months to six years, and pregnant women and lactating mothers.

26. Which among the following is the main objective of 'PM SVANidhi' Scheme'?

A:) To provide social security benefits to urban street vendors

B:) To map residential land ownership in the rural sector using modern technology

C:) Enabling the access to digital platforms in order to bridge digital divide in India

D:) A common national programme to develop and contribute towards the e-learning content

Answer: A

Explanation

- The Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** for **providing affordable Working Capital loans to street vendors** to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown. It was launched in 2020.
- Under the Scheme, vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to **Rs. 10,000**, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of **one year.** The loans would be **without collateral.**
- If the vendor repays the instalments in time or earlier, they will develop his credible credit score that makes him eligible for a higher amount of term loan to 20 thousand rupees and so on.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an **interest subsidy @ 7% per annum** will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan. The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month.
- The scheme targets to benefit over **50 lakh street vendors**. The duration of the scheme is till March 2022.
- **SIDBI** is implementing the scheme.
- The lending institutions under the Scheme include Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs, Microfinance institutions and Self Help Group banks.

Why in the News?

- More than 25 lakh beneficiaries have availed the working capital loan under the PM SVANidhi Scheme.

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

A:) It is an initiative of the Ministry of Labour & Employment

B:) Under the scheme, the Government is paying full employers' contribution of 12% towards Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Pension Scheme for new employees who have been registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

C:) The scheme can be availed by new employees registered with EPFO irrespective of their earnings

D:) The scheme incentivises the employers to recruit unemployed persons and also to formalize informal employees

Answer: C

Explanation

- The **Ministry of Labour & Employment** is implementing "Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana" (PMRPY) since 2016-17 with the objective to **incentivise employers for creation of new employment** and also aimed to **bring informal workers to the formal workforce.**
- Under the scheme, **Government of India is paying Employer's contribution i.e. 12% for a period of three years** to the new employees earning **wages less than or equal to Rs. 15,000/-** through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- The terminal date for registration of beneficiary through establishment was 31st March 2019.

Why in the News?

- Under PMRPY, benefit has been provided to 1.21 crore beneficiaries through 1.53 lakh establishments.

28. The main objective of the recently launched ASEEM portal is

A:) Creating an integrated platform for offering online courses and covering school to Postgraduate Level

B:) Collecting geotagged information on the nation's critical infrastructure

C:) To help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities

D:) Web based utility to fully digitize and automate the entire process of land acquisition

Answer: C

Explanation

- In an endeavour to improve the information flow and bridge the demand-supply gap in the skilled workforce market, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** launched 'Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)' portal in 2020 to **help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.** It acts as a **directory of skilled workforce.**
- Apart from recruiting a skilled workforce, the **Artificial Intelligence-based platform** has been envisioned
  - to strengthen their career pathways by handholding them through their journeys to attain industry-relevant skills and
  - to explore emerging job opportunities which will help migrant labour, who have been severely impacted by the socio-economic fallout of the COVID pandemic.

Benefits

- ASEEM is used as a **match-making engine to map skilled workers with the jobs available.**
- Through ASEEM, employers, agencies and job aggregators looking for skilled workforce in specific sectors have the required details at their fingertips.
- It also enables policymakers to take a more objective view of various sectors.

Why in the News?

Around 1.3 crore candidates have been registered on ASEEM portal

29. Which of the following statements is correct regarding Dhawan I?

A:) NASA's unmanned robotic mission to retrieve a near-Earth asteroid

B:) DRDO's Anti-Radiation Missile

C:) India's first privately developed fully cryogenic rocket engine

D:) None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

- **Skyroot Aerospace** successfully **tested Dhawan-1** and became the **country's first privately developed fully cryogenic rocket engine** running on two high-performance r**ocket propellants — liquid natural gas (LNG) and liquid oxygen (LoX).**
- The **indigenous engine** was developed using 3D printing with a **superalloy.**
  - **Superalloys**, or high performance alloys, are alloys that exhibit **excellent mechanical strength and creep resistance at high temperatures, good surface stability, and corrosion and oxidation resistance**. The development of superalloys has primarily been driven by the **aerospace and power industries.**

30. Consider the following statements

1) A cryogenic rocket engine is one that employs fuel or oxidizer, which are gases that have been liquefied and kept at extremely high temperatures.
2) A Cryogenic rocket stage is less efficient when compared to solid and earth-storable liquid propellant rocket stages.

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

- A **cryogenic rocket engine** is one that **employs cryogenic fuel or oxidizer,** which means that its **fuel or oxidizer (or both) are gases that have been liquefied and kept at extremely low temperatures. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.**

- A Cryogenic rocket stage i**s more efficient and provides more thrust** for every kilogram of propellant it burns **compared to solid and earth-storable liquid propellant rocket stages.** Hence statement 2 is incorrect.

31. With reference to Digi yatra, which of the following statements is correct?

A:) Its objective is to preserve the character of the soul of heritage city and facilitate inclusive heritage linked urban development.

B:) It aims to connect pilgrims across the country and abroad to pilgrimage destinations of their choice.

C:) It is related to biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports.

D:) It is an awareness campaign to protect elephants from Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

Answer: C

Explanation

What is Digi Yatra?

- Digi Yatra initiative **aims to make air travel paperless and hassle-free in the country,** and proposes to simplify passenger-related processes at various checkpoints at the airport by using **Facial recognition technology-based biometric scanning.**
- Once implemented, air **travelers** who choose to use the service **won't have to show their tickets, boarding passes, or physical identity cards** at several points at the airport. This in turn would **reduce queue waiting time and accelerate processing time.**
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation plans to build a**n identity management platform** that will **enable biometric-based scanning** across all airports in India. The platform will include **passengers' digital identities, like Aadhaar, passport details or other identity cards.**
- The **'Common Digi Yatra ID'** platform will be used to **enroll passengers, authenticate their data, and share consenting passengers' profiles** with other airport partners. The app-based interface will be built as a **shared national infrastructure, which will provide APIs to airports**. It will also allow other apps to be integrated with it.
- According to the Aviation ministry, the **biometric information collected from the passengers will be deleted 24 hours after flight departure** and will also be compliant with the country's data privacy and protection practices.

32. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

1) It is a flagship scheme for integrated, sustainable, inclusive development of the marine and inland fisheries sector in the country.
2) It comes under the Ministry of Jalshakti.

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 PMMSY

- The central government launched the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in 2020 to bring about the **Blue Revolution** through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India.
- It comes under the Department of Fisheries, **Ministry of Fisheries,Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**
- It is a flagship scheme for **integrated, sustainable, inclusive development of marine and inland fisheries sector** in the country with an estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores for its implementation during a period of 5 years from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 in all States/Union Territories. Hence **statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims at enhancing **fish production by an additional 70 lakh tonne** by 2024-25, increasing fisheries **export earnings to Rs.1,00,000 crore** by 2024-25, **doubling of incomes** of fishers and fish farmers, **reducing post-harvest losses** from 20-25% to about **10%.**
- It is designed to address critical gaps in fish production and productivity, quality, technology, post-harvest infrastructure and management, modernization and strengthening of value chain, traceability and establishing a robust fisheries management framework and fishers' welfare.

- It primarily focuses on adopting **'Cluster or Area based approaches'** and creation of Fisheries clusters through backward and forward linkages.

Why in News?

- Under PMMSY, the Department of Fisheries has accorded approval of project proposals to the tune of Rs. 5336.96 crores.

33. Consider the following statements about Agricultural Technology Management Agency Scheme

1) The main aim of this scheme is to impart technical knowledge on a broad scale to the farmers in getting fruitful results and better per unit income.
2) The scheme promotes a centralized farmer-friendly extension system in the country in the form of an Agricultural Technology Management Agency at national level only.

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

About ATMA Scheme

- The Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Scheme is a **centrally sponsored scheme** launched in 2005-06.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The main aim of this scheme is to **impart technical knowledge on a broad scale to the farmers** in getting fruitful results and better per unit income.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The scheme promotes a **decentralized farmer-friendly extension system** in the country in the form of an Agricultural Technology Management Agency at district level. It aims to make available the latest agricultural technologies and good agricultural practices in different thematic areas of agriculture and allied areas to farmers through different extension activities viz; Farmers Training, Demonstrations, Exposure Visits, Kisan Mela, Mobilization of Farmers Groups and organizing Farm Schools etc.

- ATMA has active participation of farmers/farmer-groups, NGOs, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Panchayati Raj Institutions and other stakeholders operating at district level and below.
- Presently, the scheme is being implemented in 691 districts of 28 states & 5 UTs in the country.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has provided details of Farmers benefited under ATMA Scheme for the year 2021-22 in the Parliament.

34. Panex-21 recently seen in the news is related to which of the following?

A:) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise for the member nations of BIMSTEC countries.

B:) Maritime Bilateral Exercise between Singapore and India.

C:) Agreement that enables the sharing of military intelligence between India and USA

D:) None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

- An inaugural event for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, PANEX-21, for the member nations of BIMSTEC countries, was held in New Delhi.
- The exercise is planned to be conducted from 20-22 Dec 21 at Pune and will witness participation from subject matter experts and delegates from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The culmination of the event will be with the capability demonstration by Indian Industries in association with FICCI to showcase their capabilities, innovations and range of products available to assist government agencies in planning, preparation and conduct of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.

35. Consider the following statements regarding India- Russia relations

1) Russia is the key and principal supplier of arms and armaments to the Indian armed forces accounting for over 60% of weapons.
2) India recently inducted the S-400 Triumf missile systems from Russia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A:) 1 only

B:) 2 only

C:) Both 1 and 2

D:) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

Both the statements are correct.

Russia is the key and principal supplier of arms and armaments to the Indian armed forces accounting for over 60% of weapons.India recently inducted the S-400 Triumf missile systems from Russia.

36. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Gramin

1) It aims to provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.

2) Identification of beneficiaries will be done as per the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 after due verification by Gram Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

About PMAY-G

- The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched in 2016 to address the housing gaps existing in the rural areas. It aims to provide a **pucca house with basic amenities** to all rural families who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022. Hence **Statement 1 is correct.**
- It was initiated with the objective of achieving **"Housing for All" by 2022.**

Features

- The houses built under the PMAYG scheme are **low-cost and disaster-resilient.**
- The minimum size of the houses built under the PMAYG scheme is **25 sq. mt.**
- The Central and State governments share the cost of assistance at a ratio of **90:10** in the hilly areas and **60:40** in the plain areas.
- Identification of beneficiaries will be done as per the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed **under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011** after due verification by **Gram Sabha. Hence statement 2 is correct.**

Financial Assistance

- Under PMAY-G, each beneficiary is given **100% grant of Rs.1.20 lakh** (in plain areas) and **Rs.1.30 lakh** (in Hilly States/North Eastern States/Difficult areas/UT of J&K and Ladakh/Left Wing Extremism (LWE) districts).
- The beneficiaries of PMAY-G, in addition to the unit assistance, are also provided support of unskilled labour wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and assistance of Rs. 12,000 for construction of toilets through Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), MGNREGS or any other dedicated source of funding.
- The scheme has provisions for convergence with other schemes of Government of India and State/UTs for providing LPG connection under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Scheme, electricity connection, access to safe drinking water under Jal Jeevan Mission, etc.

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin beyond March 2021 till March 2024 as per the existing norms to complete remaining houses within a cumulative target of 2.95 crore houses.
- The continuation of the scheme till March, 2024 ensures that the remaining 155.75 lakh households within the overall target of 2.95 crore houses under PMAY-G would be provided

assistance for construction of Pucca houses with basic amenities to achieve the objective of "Housing for All" in rural areas.

37. Consider the following statements about CPGRAMS

1) CPGRAMS is an online web-enabled system developed by the National Informatics Centre.

2) It provides the facility to lodge and track a public grievance online from any geographical location.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

About CPGRAMS

- The Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), is an online web-enabled system developed by the **National Informatics Centre** in association with the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- It has been developed with an objective of **speedy redress and effective monitoring of grievances** by Ministries/Departments/Organizations of Government of India.
- The CPGRAMS provides the facility to lodge a grievance online **from any geographical location**. Hence **statement 2 is correct.**
- It enables the citizen to track online the grievance being followed up with Departments concerned and also enables DARPG to monitor the grievance.

Why in News?

- The government announced a total of more than 1 crore grievances have been filed under CPGRAMS platforms in the last 10 years and most of them have been disposed of.
- Similarly, more than 50000 appeals were filed in CPGRAMS since the introduction of the **appeal facility** in CPGRAMS in **January 2021.**

About NIC

- The National Informatics Centre was established in 1976, as an attached office under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.**
- The NIC provides infrastructure to help support the delivery of government IT services and the delivery of some of the initiatives of Digital India.

38. Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana is related to which of the following?

a) Providing unemployment allowance to workers rendered jobless due to the "changing pattern"

b) Provide for the welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations.

c) Aid, assist and advice farmers on how to improve their farming techniques and raise their incomes

d) India's endeavor to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship employment

Answer: B

Explanation

About PMKKKY

- Launched in 2015, the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) is meant to provide for the **welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations.**

Objectives

- The overall objective of PMKKKY scheme include
  - to implement various **developmental and welfare projects/programs in mining affected areas**, and these projects/ programs will be complementing the existing ongoing schemes/projects of State and Central Government;
  - to **minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts**, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and
  - to ensure **long-term sustainable livelihoods** for the affected people in mining areas.

Implementation

- PMKKKY is implemented by the **District Mineral Foundations (DMFs)** of the respective districts using the funds accruing to the DMF.
- The **Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015**, **mandated the setting up of District Mineral Foundations in all districts in the country affected by mining related operations.**
- Where mining leases are granted after 2015, miners will have to contribute an **amount equal to 10% of the royalty payable by them to the DMFs.**
- Using the funds generated by this contribution, the DMFs are expected to implement the PMKKKY.
- **At least 60% of PMKKKY funds will be utilized for high priority areas** like: (i) drinking water supply; (ii) environment preservation and pollution control measures; (iii) health care (iv)education; (v) welfare of women and children; (vi) welfare of aged and disabled people; (vii) skill development; and (viii) Sanitation.
- The rest of the funds will be utilized **undertaking works** like for: (i) physical infrastructure; (ii) irrigation; (iii) energy and watershed development; and (iv) any other measures for enhancing environmental quality in mining districts.

Why in News?

- The Union Government has released the details of funds allocated from the District Mineral Fund to various projects to be taken up through Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana.

39. Which of the following is/are the features of Special Economic Zones?

1) A designated duty free enclave to be treated as a territory outside the customs territory of India for the purpose of authorised operations in the SEZ
2) No licence required for import
3) No routine examination by customs authorities of export/import cargo

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation

About SEZs

- Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is a geographic area in which the **business and trade laws are different from the rest of the country.**
- The objective of developing SEZs include increasing the balance of trade and attracting newer inward-investments into the country, and creating newer jobs.
- **Financial incentives** are granted to those setting up SEZs and cover a wider gamut of benefits for investors across taxation, customs, labour regulations, etc.
- The **Special Economic Zones Act, 2005**, provides the umbrella legal framework, covering all important legal and regulatory aspects of SEZ development in the country.
- Presently, 378 SEZs are notified, out of which 265 are operational.

Salient Features

- The salient features of the SEZ scheme are:-
  - A **designated duty free enclave to be treated as a territory outside the customs territory of India** for the purpose of authorised operations in the SEZ;

- No licence required for import;
- Manufacturing or service activities allowed;
- The Unit shall achieve **Positive Net Foreign Exchange** to be calculated cumulatively for a **period of five years** from the commencement of production;
- Domestic sales subject to full customs duty and import policy in force;
- SEZ units will have freedom for subcontracting;
- No routine examination by customs authorities of export/import cargo;
- SEZ Developers /Co-Developers and Units enjoy tax benefits as prescribed in the SEZs Act, 2005.

Objectives

- The notification of SEZs in the country is guided by the following:-
- generation of additional economic activity;
- promotion of exports of goods and services;
- promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources;
- creation of employment opportunities;
- development of infrastructure facilities.

Why in News?

- The Government has approved eight Special Economic Zones for the Agro and Food Processing sector in India.

40. Consider the following statements about Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA)

1) AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".
2) The Central government only can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

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 Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA)

- The Act came into force in the context of increasing **violence in the North-eastern** States decades ago, which the State governments found difficult to control.
- **AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas". Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of **five or more persons** in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also **arrest a person without a warrant;** enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.

Disturbed Areas

- A disturbed area is the one which is declared by notification under **Section 3 of the AFSPA.** It can be invoked in places where the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.
- An area can be considered to be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The **Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator** of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Once declared 'disturbed', the region is maintained as disturbed for a **period of three months** straight, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976. The government of the state can suggest whether the Act is required in the state or not.

41. With reference to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) post, consider the following statements.

1. CDS acts as the principal military adviser to the defence minister on all tri-service matters.
2. CDS acts as the permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
3. CDS do not exercise any military command including over three service chiefs.

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:** CDS is a four star officer and the principal military adviser to the defence minister on all tri-service matters. But the three Chiefs will continue to advise the defence minister on matters exclusively concerning their respective services.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** In addition to heading the newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA), the CDS also acts as the permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The three service chiefs will be members of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** However, CDS do not exercise any military command including over three service chiefs.

Role and responsibilities of CDS:

- As the head of the DMA, the CDS has to facilitate restructuring of military commands for **optimal utilisation of resources** by bringing about **jointness in operations**, including through establishment of joint/ theatre commands.
- The key focus of the CDS office will be involved in **procurement of military equipment** for all the three armed forces.
- CDS will be a **member of Defence Acquisition Council and Defence Planning Committee.**
- Implement Five-Year Defence Capital Acquisition Plan (DCAP), and Two-Year roll-on Annual Acquisition Plans (AAP), as a follow-up of Integrated Capability Development Plan (ICDP).
- Assign inter-Services prioritisation to capital acquisition proposals based on the anticipated budget.
- Prepare strategy papers on military matters for consideration of the competent authority.

Why in News?

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat perished when an Indian Air Force (IAF) Mi-17V5 helicopter crashed into the Nilgiris in western Tamil Nadu.

42. Consider the following statements about the mobile app Bhasha Sangam

1) The objective of the app is to help people acquire basic conversation ability in languages other than one's mother tongue.
2) This is an initiative that comes under Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

Explanation

What's in the news?

- The Ministry of Education has launched a mobile app called Bhasha Sangam in order to **help people acquire basic conversation ability in languages other than one's mother tongue** to at least 75 lakh people.
- This language learning initiative has been taken under **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Programme.**
- The App has more than 100 sentences of common usage, both in text and audio format, in 22 Indian languages.

Related Information

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- The initiative 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 31st October, 2015 to commemorate the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel to **revive a sense of 'nationhood'.**
- The programme aims to **actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures** living in different States and UTs in India, with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding amongst them.
- As per the programme, each year, **every State/UT would be paired with another State/UT** in India for reciprocal interaction between the people.

- It is envisaged through this exchange, that the knowledge of the language, culture, traditions and practices of different states will lead to an enhanced understanding and bonding between one another, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.
- The broad objectives of the initiative are as follows:
  - **To CELEBRATE** the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country;
  - **To PROMOTE** the spirit of national integration through a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union Territories through a year-long planned engagement between States;
  - **To SHOWCASE** the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either State for enabling people to understand and appreciate the diversity that is India, thus fostering a sense of common identity
  - **TO ESTABLISH** long-term engagements and,
  - **TO CREATE** an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experiences.

43. The E-Shram Portal is related to which of the following?

a) Providing information about government authorities and departments suo motu to the public

b) Electronic platform that aims at involving Centre, State, District, Governments, civil society and the general public in achieving the target of child labour free society

c) Aims in the creation of a national database of unorganised workers such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors and domestic workers, among others.

d) Online portal to improve the business environment in the country by enabling fast and efficient access to Government-to-Business (G2B) services

Answer: C

Explanation

About the Portal

- In August 2021, the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** unveiled the e-shram portal which aims to **register 38 crore unorganised workers**, such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors and domestic workers, among others.

- The workers will be issued an **e-Shram card containing a 12 digit unique number**, which will help in including them in social security schemes.
- The portal would lead to the creation of a **national database of unorganised workers.**
- Apart from being **Aadhaar-linked**, it **will collect details of the name, occupation, address, educational qualification, skill types and family of the registered workers.**
- The portal was developed by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, in technical collaboration with the **National Informatics Centre** (an attached office under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology).
- The portal is open to workers engaged in the **unorganised sector** and **aged between 16 and 59.**

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has announced that more than seven lakh gig and platform workers registered with eSHRAM portal.

44. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

1) Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aims to safeguard the health of women & children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel – LPG.
2) The scope of PMUY has now been expanded to cover all the poor families in the country
3) Under the scheme, cash assistance of Rs. 16000 is given to the beneficiaries to get a deposit-free new connection.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: A

Explanation

- The **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas** launched PMUY in 2016 to **provide clean cooking fuel to poor households. Statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims to provide **8 crore deposit free LPG connections to poor households.** The connections are issued in the **name of women** of the households.

- The scheme increases the usage of LPG and helps in reducing health disorders, air pollution and deforestation. Use of fossil fuels and conventional fuel like cow-dung, firewood etc. has serious implications on the health of rural women and children.
- Initially, the beneficiaries were identified through Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), 2011 data. The **scope of PMUY has now been expanded to cover all the poor families in the country** subject to fulfilling the terms and conditions. Hence **statement 2 is Correct.**
- Under the scheme, **cash assistance of Rs. 1600** is given to the beneficiaries to get a deposit-free new connection. Further, interest free loans are provided to purchase a stove and refill by Oil Marketing Companies. Hence **statement 3 is incorrect.**

PMUJ 2.0

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana - Ujjwala 2.0.
- During Ujjwala 1.0, launched in 2016, a target was set to provide LPG connections to 5 crore women members of BPL households. Later, the target was revised to **8 Crore LPG connections which was achieved in August 2019**.
- In the **Union budget for Financial Year 2021-22, a provision for an additional one crore LPG connection** under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was announced. These one crore additional connections under Ujjwala 2.0 aim to provide **deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families who could not be covered under the earlier phase of this scheme.**
- Along with a deposit free LPG connection, Ujjwala 2.0 will **provide first refill and hotplate free of cost to the beneficiaries.**

Why in News?

- Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Rameswar Teli said a special provision has been made in the second edition of the Ujjwala Scheme for migrant families to avail new LPG connections.
- Migrant applicants can give a self-declaration as the proof of address and family composition to get LPG connections.
- The average consumption of LPG cylinders under Ujjwala 2.0 was three cylinders of 14.2 kilograms in 2019-20, which has increased to 4.39 cylinders in the last financial year.

45. The terms 'neutral', 'calibrated tightening', 'accommodative' sometimes seen in the news are related to

A. Fiscal policy

B. Monetary policy

C. External trade

D. Inflation

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- These terms indicate the central bank's monetary policy stance on deciding policy rates like repo rate.
- "Accommodative" indicates that the central bank is telling the market to expect a rate cut anytime, "neutral" means that RBI could either increase or reduce repo rates as per liquidity conditions, "calibrated tightening" means that a cut in the repo rate is unlikely in the current rate cycle.

46. Consider the following statements about FAME scheme

1) The objective of the FAME India scheme is to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same.
2) Under the scheme upfront incentives are offered on purchase of Electric vehicles and a necessary charging Infrastructure for electric vehicles is also to be established.

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 **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020** is a National Mission document providing the vision and the roadmap for the faster adoption of electric vehicles and their manufacturing in the country.

- As part of the NEMMP 2020, the **Department of Heavy Industry** (under the Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises) formulated a Scheme viz. Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India) Scheme in 2015.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The objective of the FAME India scheme is to **promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle technology and to ensure sustainable growth of the same.**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The scheme encourages adoption of Electric and hybrid vehicles by **offering upfront incentives** on purchase of Electric vehicles and establishing a necessary charging Infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- The scheme aims at **addressing the issue of environmental pollution and fuel security.**

Phase-I

- The Phase-I of this Scheme was initially launched for a period of 2 years, commencing from 1st April 2015, which was subsequently extended up to 31st March 2019.
- The 1st Phase of FAME India Scheme was implemented through four focus areas namely (i) Demand Creation, (ii) Technology Platform, (iii) Pilot Project and (iv) Charging Infrastructure.

Phase-II

- Phase-II of FAME India Scheme is being implemented for a period of 3 years w.e.f. 01st April, 2019.
- This phase focuses on **supporting electrification of public & shared transportation** and aims to support, through subsidies, approximately 7000 e-Buses, 5 lakh e-3 Wheelers, 55000 e-4 Wheeler Passenger Cars and 10 lakh e-2 Wheelers.
- In addition, **creation of charging infrastructure** is also supported for electric vehicles.

Key Objectives

- Encourage faster adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles by way of offering **upfront Incentive on purchase of Electric vehicles.**
- Establishing necessary charging Infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- To address the issue of environmental pollution and fuel security.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Heavy Industries has announced that it has supported 520 Charging Stations/ Infrastructure under the phase-I of FAME India Scheme.

- Further, under phase-II of FAME-India Scheme, Rs. 1000 Cr. is allocated for the development of charging infrastructure.

47. Consider the following statements about National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021

1) The policy clearly mentioned the definition of rare disease.
2) The Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with increased focus on indigenous research.
3) The Policy also envisages a crowd funding mechanism in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support through a robust IT platform for treatment of rare diseases.

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: B

Explanation

- The Union Health & Family Welfare Ministry is taking measures to spread awareness about the "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021".

What is a rare disease?

- A rare disease is a health condition of **low prevalence that affects a small number of people** compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- Rare diseases include genetic diseases, rare cancers, infectious tropical diseases and degenerative diseases.
- **80% of rare diseases are genetic in origin** and hence disproportionately impact children.

Definition of a rare disease

- There is **no universally accepted definition** of rare disease.
- These diseases have **differing definitions** in various countries and range from those that are prevalent in 1 in 10,000 of the population to 6 per 10,000. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** registry definition, "A disease or disorder is defined as Rare in India when it **affects fewer than 1 in 2500 individuals".**

- So far about 450 rare diseases have been recorded in India and it is estimated that about 6-8% of the country's population is affected by a rare disease.

Challenges associated with rare diseases

- There are 7,000-8,000 classified rare diseases, but **less than 5% have therapies available to treat them.** About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- The field of rare diseases is very complex and heterogeneous and prevention, treatment and management of rare diseases have multiple challenges. **Early diagnosis** of rare diseases is a major challenge owing to a variety of factors that include **lack of awareness among primary care physicians, lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities etc.**
- There are also fundamental challenges in the **research and development** for the majority of rare diseases as relatively little is known about the pathophysiology or the natural history of these diseases particularly in the Indian context.
- Rare diseases are also **difficult to research upon** as the patients pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience. **Availability and accessibility to medicines** are also important to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with rare disease.
- The **cost of treatment of rare diseases is prohibitively expensive.** Various High Courts and the Supreme Court have also expressed concern about lack of a national policy for rare diseases.

National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021

- To address all these challenges, the Union Health & Family Welfare Ministry approved the "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021" in April 2021.

Highlights of the Policy

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:**In the new policy, rare diseases have not been defined but **classified into three groups.**
  - **Group 1** has disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment, including osteopetrosis and Fanconi anaemia.
  - **Group 2** has diseases requiring long-term or lifelong treatment with relatively lower cost of treatment and benefit has been documented in literature, including galactosemia, severe food protein allergy, and homocystinuria.

- **Group 3** has diseases for which definitive treatment is available, but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, and very high cost and lifelong therapy, covering diseases such as spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), Pompe disease, and Hunter syndrome.

Lowering the Cost of Treatment

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Rare Diseases Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with **increased focus on indigenous research** with the help of a **National Consortium** to be set up with the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as convenor.
- Increased focus of research and development and local production of medicines will lower the cost of treatment for rare diseases.

National Hospital Based Registry

- The policy also envisages creation of a **national hospital based registry of rare diseases** so that adequate data is available for definition of rare diseases and for research and development related to rare diseases within the country.

Screening, Prevention & Treatment

- The Policy also focuses on **early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care infrastructure** such as Health and Wellness Centres and District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) and through counselling for the high-risk parents.
- Screening will also be supported by **Nidan Kendras** set up by the Department of Biotechnology.
- Policy also aims to **strengthen tertiary health care facilities** for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through **designating 8 health facilities as Centre of Excellence (CoEs)** and these CoEs will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs 5 crores for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.

Crowd Funding Mechanism

- **Statement 3 is correct:** Besides, the Policy also envisages a **crowd funding mechanism** in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support through a robust IT platform for treatment of rare diseases.
- Funds collected will be utilized by Centres of Excellence for treatment of all three categories of rare diseases as first charge and then the balance financial resources could also be used for research.

Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi

- A provision for **financial support up to Rs. 20 lakhs under the Umbrella Scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi** is proposed for treatment of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under **Group 1** in the rare disease policy).
- **Beneficiaries** for such financial assistance would **not be limited to BPL families,** but the benefit will be **extended to about 40% of the population,** who are eligible under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- The **state governments** would be asked to undertake treatment of diseases covered under **Group 2** which largely include disorders managed with special dietary formulae or food for special medical purposes (FSMP) and disorders that are amenable to other forms of therapy.
- For diseases classified under **Group 3,** which require life-long expensive treatments, the government would create a **digital platform to bring together Centres for Excellence, patients undergoing treatment and corporate donors or prospective voluntary individuals who could help fund treatment.**

48. Which of the following statements about GI Tag is incorrect?

a) A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
b) The registration of GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.
c) It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods.
d) None of the above

Answer: D

Explanation

All the three statements are correct.

- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- It is used for **agricultural, natural and manufactured goods**. **Darjeeling tea** became the first GI tagged product in India.
- The registration of GI is valid for **10 years** after which it needs to be renewed.
- It should be noted that registration of a product is **not compulsory.**

- Registration affords better legal protection to facilitate an action for infringement
- The registered proprietor and authorised users can initiate infringement actions
- The authorised users can exercise the exclusive right to use the geographical indication.

Legislations

- In India, GI is given under the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- The Act is administered by the **Controller General of Patents, Designs & TradeMarks, GI (CGPDTM-India)** under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- India enacted its GI legislation to comply with India's obligations under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights **(TRIPS) agreement**.
- GI registration gives to the registered proprietor and its authorized users, the legal right to the exclusive use of the GI and also the right to obtain relief in case of its infringement.
- GI is a **collective intellectual property right** and is thus owned by all the producers within the defined GI territory unlike intellectual properties like patent and trademark which are owned by an individual or a business entity.

Benefits of registration of Geographical Indications

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

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Textiles has announced that so far, 72 handloom products and 06 product logos are registered under GI Act to protect them from imitation or their unauthorized use by others.

49. Consider the following statements about National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan)

1) It is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Health and Family welfare.
2) The mission targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight each by 10% per annum.

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

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** POSHAN Abhiyaan (also known as **National Nutrition Mission**) is a flagship programme of the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** that aims to improve nutrition amongst children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.
- Launched in 2018, it is a multi-ministerial convergence mission with the vision to ensure attainment of **malnutrition free India by 2022.**
- **Statement 2 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.
- The mission also strives to achieve a reduction in **Stunting** from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 **(Mission 25 by 2022)**.

Significance

- Amongst India's most serious yet marginally addressed development challenges is malnutrition, which contributes significantly to the country's disease burden.
- Even as **National Family Health Survey 2015-16 (NFHS-4)** data shows that the country's malnutrition rates have gone down, half of all children from families in the lowest income quintile are still stunted (51 percent) or underweight (49 percent).
- Today, India is home to the largest number of stunted children (46.6 million) and wasted children (25.5 million) in the world. **More than a third of children under five suffer from stunting and wasting** and **40% of children between one and four are anaemic.**

- According to the NFHS-4, **over 50% of pregnant and non-pregnant women were found to be anaemic**.

Poshan Maah

- To ensure community mobilisation and bolster people's participation, every year the month of September is celebrated as Rashtriya Poshan Maah under POSHAN Abhiyaan across the country.
- The activities in the Poshan maah are focussed on **Social Behavioural Change and Counselling (SBCC).** The broad themes are: antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding (early and exclusive), complementary feeding, anaemia, growth monitoring, girls' education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene, and sanitation, eating healthy and food fortification.

Why in news?

- According to Government figures, State governments and Union Territories utilised only **56% of the total funds** released under the Poshan Abhiyan or Nutrition Mission in the past three years.
- Out of a total amount of ₹5,312 crore disbursed by the Centre between financial years 2019 to 2021, a sum of ₹2,985 crore was utilised

News in detail

- The five States and UTs with **lowest utilisation** were **Arunachal Pradesh (25.14%), Puducherry (28.03%), Ladakh (31.2%), Punjab (33.62%) and Uttar Pradesh (33.73%).**
- The five States and UTs that made the **most use** of the funds were **Nagaland (98.34%), Meghalaya (98.14%), Mizoram (94.22%), Sikkim (93.13%) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (88.2%).**
- West Bengal, which has refused to adopt Poshan Abhiyan, was allocated ₹267 crore in the past three years but continued to have zero utilisation.
- According to a survey conducted by States, the total number of **"severely acute malnourished" children in the country was less than 15 lakh.**

50. Which of the following is/are objective(s) of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme?

1. To prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
2. To ensure survival and protection of the girl child
3. To ensure education and participation of the girl child

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: **D**

Explanation:

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme is a **tri-ministerial initiative** of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource which focuses on awareness and advocacy campaign for changing mind-sets, multi-sectoral action, enabling girls' education and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.
- Launched in 2015, BBBP **addresses the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of women empowerment over a life-cycle continuum.**
- The objectives of the Scheme are as under:
  - To prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
  - To ensure survival and protection of the girl child
  - To ensure education and participation of the girl child

First Phase

- The 100 districts have been identified on the basis of low Child Sex Ratio as per Census 2011 covering all States/UTs as a pilot with at least one district in each state.

Second Phase

- The scheme has further been expanded to 61 additional districts selected from 11 States/UT having CSR below 918.

Pan India Expansion of BBBP

- The Pan India Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao covering all 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the country was launched on 8th March 2018.

51. Consider the following statements about International Solar Alliance

1) It was conceived as a coalition of solar-resource-rich countries which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to address their special energy needs.

2) Countries that do not fall between the Tropics can also join the ISA and enjoy all benefits as other members, with the exception of voting rights.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

About ISA

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former President of France Francois Hollande at the 21st session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in Paris, France.
- The **Paris Declaration** that established the ISA states that the countries share the collective ambition to undertake innovative and concerted efforts to reduce the cost of finance and technology for deployment of solar generation assets.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** ISA was conceived as a coalition of **solar-resource-rich countries** (which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn) to address their special energy needs.
- More than 60 countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement.
- As guided by the Framework Agreement of the ISA, the interests and objectives of the ISA are as follows:

- To collectively address key common challenges to scale up solar energy applications in line with their needs;
- To mobilize investments of more than **USD 1000 billion by 2030;**
- To take coordinated action through programmes and activities launched on a voluntary basis, aimed at better harmonization, aggregation of demand, risk and resources, for promoting solar finance, solar technologies, innovation, R&D, capacity building etc.;
- Reduce the cost of finance to increase investments in solar energy in member countries by promoting innovative financial mechanisms and mobilizing finance from Institutions;
- Facilitate collaborative research and development (R&D) activities in solar energy technologies among member countries.

- **Statement 2 is correct: Countries that do not fall between the Tropics can also join the ISA and enjoy all benefits as other members, with the exception of voting rights.**
- The Permanent Secretariat of ISA will be located in India at **Gurugram**, the first time that an inter-governmental treaty-based alliance will have its headquarters in India. The Interim Secretariat of the ISA is located at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gurugram.

Why in News?

- The UN General Assembly has conferred **Observer Status** to the International Solar Alliance, a historic decision which India said would help provide for a well-defined cooperation between the Alliance and the United Nations that would benefit global energy growth and development.
- In a short span of six years, the ISA has become an example of how positive global climate action can be taken forward through partnerships. ISA provides a dedicated platform for cooperation among Governments, multilateral organisations, industry, and other stakeholders to help achieve a common goal.
- The granting of Observer Status to ISA in the General Assembly would help provide for regular and well-defined cooperation between the Alliance and the United Nations that would benefit global energy growth and development.
- A total of 80 countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement and 101 countries have only signed the agreement.

52. Consider the following statements about the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

1. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.
2. UNHCR serves as the guardian of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

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 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in **1950** by the **United Nations General Assembly.**
- The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to **safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees.**
- It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people.

Legal Provisions

- The **1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** (commonly known as the **Refugee Convention**) **and its 1967 Protocol** are the key legal documents that form the basis of UNHCR's work.
- With **149 State parties** to either or both, they define the term 'refugee' and outline the rights of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.
- The core principle is **non-refoulement**, which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law.

- **Statement 2 is correct: UNHCR serves as the 'guardian' of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol.**
- **India** has not been a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol.

Why in News?

- The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has expressed grave concern at the migration of Afghan people to neighbouring countries. It has warned that the economic collapse of Afghanistan would add to the woes of the people there and trigger a massive wave of migration to neighbouring and world countries.

53. Consider the following statements.

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

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: **A**

Explanation

- Dark Matter refers to the hypothetical matter that scientists have not been able to locate in the universe - either through telescopes or using any other technological method.
- Dark matter works like an **attractive force** — a kind of cosmic cement that holds our universe together. This is because dark matter does interact with gravity, but it doesn't reflect, absorb or emit light.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Unlike normal matter, **dark matter does not interact with the electromagnetic force.** As a result, it **does not absorb, reflect or emit light**, making it extremely hard to spot.
- In fact, researchers have been able to infer the existence of dark matter only from the gravitational effect it seems to have on visible matter.
- In the 1930s, astronomer **Fritz Zwicky** speculated the presence of "dark matter" for the first time.

Dark energy

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

54. Consider the following statements about Pinaka Rocket

1) Pinaka is a multi barrel rocket launch (MBRL) system used by the Indian Army.
2) It was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
3) It is an all-weather, indirect fire, free flight artillery rocket system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Explanation

All the statements are correct.

- Pinaka is a **multi barrel rocket launch (MBRL) system** used by the Indian Army.
- It was **developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).**
- It is an **all-weather, indirect fire, free flight artillery rocket system.**

- It provides a unique capability to accurately deliver devastatingly lethal and responsive fire against a variety of area targets such as exposed enemy troops, armored and soft skin vehicles, communication centers, air terminal complexes, fuel and ammunition dumps.
- The Pinaka weapon system consists of Rocket, Multi Barrel Rocket launcher, Battery Command Post, Loader cum Replenishment Vehicle, Replenishment Vehicle and Digicora MET Radar

Why in News:

- **DRDO** has successfully tested Pinaka Extended Range (ER) multi-barrel rocket launcher system, Area Denial Munitions (ADM) and indigenously developed fuses have been carried out at various test ranges.
- The **Pinaka-ER is the upgraded version** of the earlier version which has been in service with the Army for the last decade.

  The **new Pinaka ER** gives it a **range of around 70 km,** over the 45 km existing range of the missile

55. Which of the following is/are member countries of G7?

1) Japan
2) Germany
3) Italy
4) Canada
5) India

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

a) 1,3 and 5 only
b) 1,2,3,4 and 5
c) 1,2,3 and 4 only
d) 12,4 and 5 only

Answer: C

Explanation

- The Group of Seven (G7) is a collective of seven of the world's most industrialized and developed economies. Their political leaders come together annually to discuss important global economic, political, social and security issues.

- The G7 member countries are the **United States, Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Italy, and Canada.**
- Russia belonged to the forum from 1998 through 2014, when the bloc was known as the G8, but was suspended following its annexation of Crimea.
- **India is not a member** of the G-7 grouping.

Why in News?

- Group of Seven nations' Foreign Ministers have exchanged their views on the upcoming 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics amid the call to boycott the games.
- The G-7 meeting in England is being held as Australia, UK and Canada have joined forces with the United States over a diplomatic boycott of the games citing China's human rights record.
- The United States, the United Kingdom and Canada have already announced a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

56. The 'SANKALP' scheme recently seen in the news in the context of which of the following?

a) Strengthening Industry-academia collaboration
b) Skill development
c) Digital literacy
d) Boosting Food processing sector

Answer: B

Explanation

About the Scheme

- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) is a **supporting programme to skill training schemes** which focuses on improvement of quality, strengthening of institutions and inclusion of weaker sections in skill training.
- It is a **World Bank loan assisted programme of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** with **three key Result Areas (RA),** namely
  - Institutional Strengthening at Central, State, and District level;
  - Quality Assurance of skill development programmes; and
  - Inclusion of marginalized populations in skill development programmes.
- The **implementation period of SANKALP is till March, 2023.**

Outcomes

- SANKALP has undertaken several initiatives to contribute to improvement in employability, some of which are as under:
  - **Strengthening of District Skill Committees** for improved access to and demand driven skill trainings for employment.
  - **Emphasis on skill certification in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** at Gram Panchayat level for improving employment qualitatively.
  - Funded development of an IT system namely **"Skill India Portal"** to capture the data for skilling related activities across the country.
  - **Global Skill Gap study** was conducted to identify the global gaps in demand and supply of skilled manpower as well as overseas employment opportunities for skilled workers from India. The Report helped in identifying important countries of interest as destination and job roles of interest.
  - A **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** has been prepared for promoting inclusion of women in Short term skilling and livelihood opportunities.

Why in News?

- This information was given by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in the Parliament recently.

57. Consider the following statements about Kashi Vishwanath temple complex

1) Kashi Vishwanath Temple is one of the most famous temples in Varanasi, also known as the Golden temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

2) It was built in the 11th century by King Indradyumna.

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

Why in News:

- The 400-metre-long Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi connecting the ancient temple dedicated to Lord Shiva to the banks of the Ganges was inaugurated by Prime Minister

About the temple

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Kashi Vishwanath Temple is **one of the most famous temples in Varanasi,** also known as the **Golden temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.**
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It was **constructed in the year 1780 by the Maratha monarch, Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore.**
- The temple stands on the western bank of the holy river Ganga, and is **one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest of Shiva temples.**
- The main deity is known by the name **Vishvanatha or Vishveshvara** meaning **Ruler of The Universe.**

Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor

- The project entails a **complete overhaul of the sacred shrine and its surroundings.** This is the **first major renovation since the Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar** of Indore **rebuilt the temple and surrounding region in 1780 AD.**
- The Kashi Vishwanath temple lacked direct access to the Ganga, and a 20-foot-wide corridor was envisaged to connect Lalita Ghat on the holy river to Mandir Chowk on the temple premises.
- **Pilgrims and travellers will** view a freshly erected museum exhibiting **Varanasi's ancient history and culture along the corridor.**

How did it help

- The **improvement of the infrastructure** in Varanasi is expected to give a **boost to tourism** in the holy city as well as in the region, **including the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Sarnath.**
- **Ganga cruises** are planned for tourists, **road infrastructure has been upgraded.**
- **LED screens will display information for tourists,** including on the history, architecture, and art of Kashi. The famous **Ganga Aarti and the aarti at the Kashi Vishwanath temple** will be shown on the screens throughout the city.
- During demolition of the buildings, more than 40 **'lost' temples** like the Gangeshwar Mahadev temple, the Manokameshwar Mahadev temple, the Jauvinayak temple, and the Shri Kumbha Mahadev temple **were discovered.**
- A gallery has been devoted to showcase some of the excavated remains at the National Museum in New Delhi, and to run a narrative on their histories on screens alongside.
- In Varanasi, **"smart signages"** have been erected to provide information on the cultural importance of heritage sites and the city's 84 ghats, which are known for their antiquity and **architectural significance.**

58. Consider the following pairs :

Important ports sometimes mentioned in the news

1. Duqm : Oman
2. Changi : Myanmar
3. Chabahar : Iraq
4. Gwadar : Pakistan

Answer: B

Explanation

1. Duqm : Oman
2. Changi : Singapore
3. Chabahar : Iran
4. Gwadar : Pakistan

Why in the news?

- Recently, the External Minister of India replied in the Parliament that the US sanctions on Iran have no bearing on India's Chabahar port project and the port is functioning well.

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

a) Encourage and promote traditional master artisans and craftsmen

b) Provide incubation and handholding to startups in their first five years.

c) Encourage learning through creative activities in primary schools.

d) Promote linkage of handlooms-based textile industry with the global market.

Answer: A

Explanation

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

USTTAD

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Ministry of Minority Affairs has organised the 34th Edition of Hunar Haat in Gujarat.

60. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

a) Gravitational waves are 'ripples' in space-time caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe.

b) Neutron stars are stellar objects that are formed when a massive star runs out of fuel and collapses.

c) A black hole is a place in space where gravity pulls so much that even light can not get out.

d) None of the above

Answer: D

Explanation

What are gravitational waves?

- Gravitational waves are **'ripples' in space-time** caused by some of the most violent and energetic processes in the Universe.
- **Albert Einstein predicted** the existence of gravitational waves in 1916 in his **general theory of relativity.** Einstein's mathematics showed that massive accelerating objects (such as neutron stars or black holes orbiting each other) would disrupt space-time in such a way that 'waves' of undulating space-time would propagate in all directions away from the source.
- These cosmic ripples **would travel at the speed of light**, **carrying with them information about their origins, as well as clues to the nature of gravity itself.**
- The strongest gravitational waves are **produced by** cataclysmic events such as **colliding black holes, supernovae** (massive stars exploding at the end of their lifetimes), and **colliding neutron stars**.
- Other waves are predicted to be caused by the rotation of neutron stars that are not perfect spheres, and possibly even the remnants of gravitational radiation created by the Big Bang.

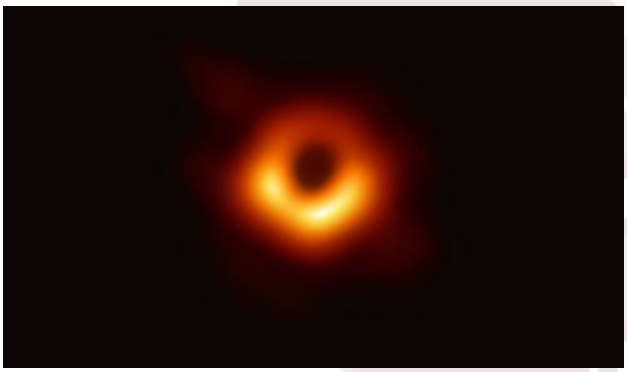
What is a neutron star?

- Neutron stars are stellar objects with a **mass about 1.4 times that of the sun.** Neutron stars are **formed when a massive star runs out of fuel and collapses.**
- When stars four to eight times as massive as the sun explode in a violent supernova, their outer layers can blow off in an often-spectacular display, leaving behind a small, dense core that continues to collapse.

- Gravity presses the material in on itself so tightly that protons and electrons combine to make neutrons, yielding the name "neutron star."

Blackhole

- The gravity is so strong because matter has been squeezed into a tiny space. This can happen **when a star is dying.**
- Because no light can get out, **people can't see black holes.**
- A black hole's "surface," called its **event horizon**, defines the boundary where the velocity needed to escape exceeds the speed of light, which is the speed limit of the cosmos.
- In 2019, astronomers using the **Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)** — an international collaboration that networked eight ground-based radio telescopes into a single Earth-size dish — captured an image of a black hole for the first time.
- It appears as a dark circle silhouetted by an orbiting disk of hot, glowing matter. The supermassive black hole is located at the heart of a galaxy called **M87**, located about 55 million light-years away, and weighs more than 6 billion solar masses.



How big are black holes?

- Black holes can be **big or small**. Scientists think the smallest black holes are as small as just one atom. These black holes are very tiny but have the mass of a large mountain. Mass is the amount of matter, or "stuff," in an object.
- Another kind of black hole is called **"stellar."** Its mass can be up to 20 times more than the mass of the sun. There may be many, many stellar mass black holes in Earth's galaxy. Earth's galaxy is called the Milky Way.
- The largest black holes are called **"supermassive."** These black holes have masses that are more than 1 million suns together. Scientists have found proof that every large galaxy contains a supermassive black hole at its center.

- The supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy is called **Sagittarius A* (aka Sgr A*, pronounced Sagittarius A-star).** It has a mass equal to about 4 million suns and would fit inside a very large ball that could hold a few million Earths.

  How do black holes form?
- Scientists think the smallest black holes **formed when the universe began.**
- Stellar black holes are made when the center of a very big star falls in upon itself, or collapses. When this happens, it causes a **supernova**. A supernova is an exploding star that blasts part of the star into space.
- Scientists think supermassive black holes were made at the same time as the galaxy they are in.

61. Consider the following statements about UNCLOS

1) It is an international treaty to ensure freedom of shipping navigation at sea.
2) India is a party to UNCLOS.

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

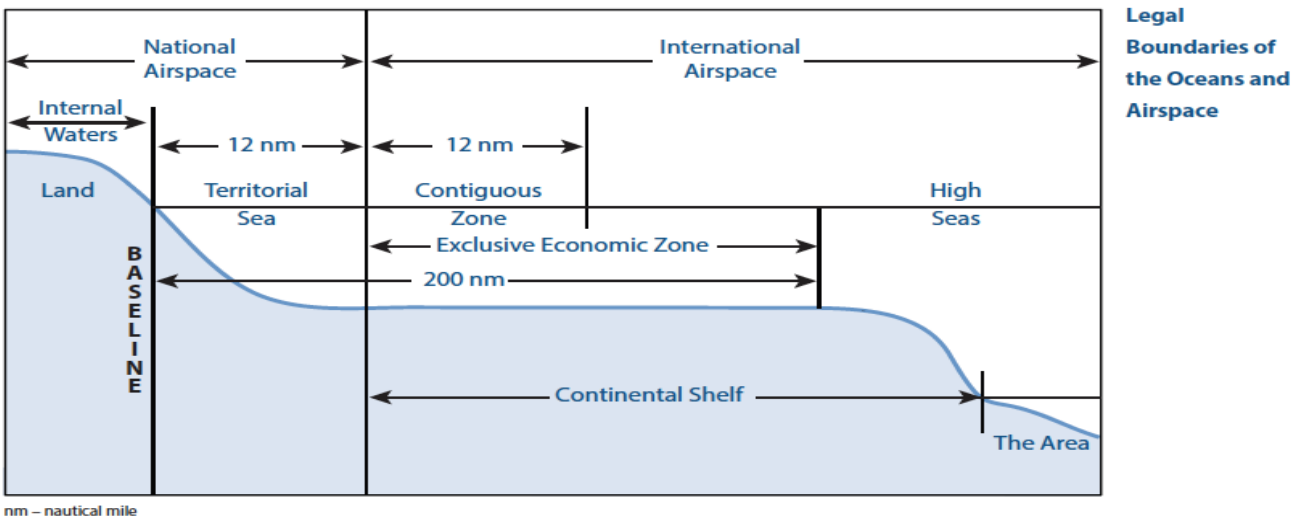
Answer: D

Explanation

About UNCLOS

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), also known as the **Law of the Sea Treaty**, is an international treaty which was adopted and signed in 1982. The Convention was formed to ensure freedom of shipping navigation at the sea.
- The Convention has created three new institutions on the international scene :
  - **the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea,**
  - **the International Seabed Authority,**
  - **the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.**
- **Statement 2 is correct: India** is a party to UNCLOS.

- UNCLOS classifies marine areas into five zones. They are:
  - Territorial sea
  - Contiguous zone
  - Exclusive economic zone
  - Continental shelf
  - High Sea



Territorial sea

- According to UNCLOS, the territorial sea can be defined as the area which extends up to **12 nautical miles** from the baseline of a country's coastal state. The territorial sea is under the jurisdiction of that particular country; however, foreign ships (both merchant and military) ships are allowed passage through it.
- This type of passage of territorial passage of foreign ships is known as an **innocent passage.** However, the right to the innocent passage can be suspended if there is a threat to the security of the coastal state.

Contiguous Zone

- The contiguous zone can be defined as the belt which **extends 12 nautical miles beyond the territorial sea limit.**
- A coastal state's control on this area is limited to prevention of actions which can infringe its customs, fiscal, and immigration laws. It can also act if any activity in the contiguous zone threatens regulations in the territorial sea.

Exclusive economic zone

- The exclusive economic zone can be defined as a belt of water which **extends up to 200 nautical miles** from the baseline of the coastal state. Thus it **includes both territorial sea and contiguous zone.**
- The exclusive economic zone provides the coastal state **control over all economic resources** such as fishing, mining, oil exploration, and marine research.
- The coastal state also has jurisdiction regarding protection and preservation of natural resources and marine environment.

Continental Shelf

- The continental shelf can be defined as the area whose outer limit **shall not exceed 350 nautical miles from the baseline** or **shall not exceed 100 nautical miles from the 2500 meters isobath.**
  - *Isobath is a line connecting points of equal underwater depth.*
- The coastal state has exclusive rights for exploring and exploiting its natural resources in this area. The state also has the exclusive rights to authorize and regulate drilling on the shelf for all purposes.

High Seas

- High seas can be defined as the part of the sea that is **not included** in the exclusive economic zone, in the territorial sea, or in the internal waters of a coastal state or archipelagic waters of an archipelagic state.
- High seas are **open to all states** for freedom of navigation, freedom of overflight, freedom to construct artificial islands installation, freedom of fishing, and freedom of scientific research.

Why in News?

- The Centre has informed Parliament that India supports UNCLOS and the country is committed to promoting a free, open and rules-based order rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion.
- As a State party to the UNCLOS, India promoted utmost respect for the UNCLOS, which established the international legal order of the seas and oceans.
- India developed its maritime cooperation with regional partners in consonance with the Government's vision of **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).**
- The steps taken include **'Mission based Deployments'** of naval ships and aircraft to enhance Maritime Domain Awareness, promote maritime security and address contingencies that may arise.

  In addition, India proactively engaged with regional and extra-regional maritime forces through multilateral exercises, joint surveillance, coordinated patrols among others to promote maritime security in the region in an inclusive and cooperative

62. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

1) It aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.
2) It is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- **Both the statements are incorrect.**
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is a flagship scheme of Government of India to **"fund the unfunded"** by bringing such enterprises to the formal financial system and extending affordable credit to them.

- Launched in 2015 to promote entrepreneurship, PMMY provides loans upto **Rs. 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.**
- Under PMMY collateral free loans of upto Rs. 10 Lakh are extended by **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** viz Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Non Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) etc.
- The loans are given for **income generating activities in manufacturing, trading and services sectors and for activities allied to agriculture.**
- Mudra loans are offered in three categories namely, 'Shishu', 'Kishore' and 'Tarun' which signifies the stage of growth or development and funding needs of the borrowers:-
  - **Shishu :** covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/-
  - **Kishore :** covering loans above Rs. 50,000/- and upto Rs. 5 lakh
  - **Tarun :** covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh and upto Rs. 10 lakh
- With an objective to promote entrepreneurship among the new generation aspiring youth, it is ensured that **more focus is given to Shishu Category loans and then Kishore and Tarun categories.**

Why in News?

- As on 26.11.2021, over 32.11 crore loans involving a sanctioned amount of Rs. 17 lakh crore have been extended under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), since its inception in 2015.

63. Consider the following statements about National Digital Health Mission

1) It seeks to provide efficient and affordable health coverage through a wide-range of data and infrastructure services.
2) Enrollment in the initiative is mandatory for every individual of the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are Correct?

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

Answer: A

Explanation

What is the NDHM?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 2020 Independence Day speech announced a major digital initiative in the form of National Digital Health Mission (NDHM).
- The project will provide a **health ID to every person in the country**, and benefit the poor.

NDHM in Detail

- **Statement 1 is correct:** NDHM seeks to **provide efficient and affordable health coverage through a wide-range of data and infrastructure services.**
- The key feature of this mission is the **technology part** - it will leverage open digital systems to provide high-quality healthcare for all. It will integrate various digital health services to create an ecosystem which can assimilate existing health information systems.
- The government has said that it **will ensure security and privacy of personal information.**

What is a health ID?

- Under NDHM, Indian citizens will get a **digital health ID** which is basically a **digital format of all his/her health records** which will be linked to the registry of doctors and health facilities across the country.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The government has said that enrollment in the initiative will be **voluntary**.
- The health ID will contain information about medical data, prescriptions and diagnostic reports and summaries of previous discharge from hospitals for ailments. The mission is expected to bring efficiency and transparency in healthcare services in the country.

Expected Benefits

- The NDHM aims to liberate citizens from the challenges of finding the right doctors, seeking appointment with them, payment of consultation fee, making several rounds of hospitals for prescription sheets and will empower all Indians with the correct information and sources enabling them to take an informed decision to avail the best possible healthcare.
- The NDHM comprises **six key building blocks or digital systems** - HealthID, DigiDoctor, Health Facility Registry, Personal Health Records, e-Pharmacy and Telemedicine - that will enable access to timely, safe and affordable healthcare through a 'citizen-centric' approach.

Implementing agency

- The **National Health Authority (NHA),** the apex agency responsible for the implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), has been given the mandate by the government to design, build, roll-out and implement the NDHM in the country.
  - *NHA is an attached office of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with full functional autonomy.*

Why in News?

- As on 3rd December 2021, 14,15,49,620 health IDs have been created in the country under the National Digital Health Mission.

64. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

1) The objective of the scheme is to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected Habitations.
2) A habitation which was earlier provided all-weather connectivity is also eligible even if the present condition of the road is bad.
3) It shall cover only the rural areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

Explanation

About PMGSY

- The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), was launched in 2000 as **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) as part of a poverty reduction strategy.
- The **Ministry of Rural Development** along with state governments is responsible for the implementation of PMGSY.

- **Phase III** of PMGSY was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2019. It involves the consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.

Guiding Principles of PMGSY

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The spirit and the objective of the scheme is to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected Habitations.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** A habitation which was earlier provided all-weather connectivity would not be eligible even if the present condition of the road is bad.
- The unit for this Programme is a **Habitation** and not a Revenue village or a Panchayat. A Habitation is a cluster of population, living in an area, the location of which does not change over time.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The PMGSY shall cover **only the rural areas**. Urban roads are excluded from the purview of this Programme.

Funding pattern

- The Union Government bears **90% of the project cost** in respect of projects sanctioned under the scheme in North-Eastern and Himalayan States, whereas for other states the Union Government bears **60% of the cost.**

Initiatives related to PMGSY

- **Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas (RCPLWEA)**: It was launched in 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.

Why in News?

- A total of 1,29,549 km road length has been constructed during the last three years and the current year under various interventions/verticals of PMGSY.

65. Uyghurs are the ethnic community associated with which of the following regions?

a) Pakistan

b) China

c) Chile

d) Israël

Answer: B

Explanation

- 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.

66. Gadgil Report and Kasturirangan Report, sometimes seen in the news, are related to?

a) To examine the equitable redistribution of the 27% quota for the Other Backward Castes.

b) To study various issues relating to data privacy.

c) To address the challenges faced by the current education system.

d) Development and environment protection of Western Ghats.

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)** headed by **Madhav Gadgil** was formed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in **2010** to study the impact of population pressure, climate change and development activities on the **Western Ghats.**

Gadgil Committee Recommendations

- Calling the Western Ghats region as **"Protector of Indian Peninsula"**, the panel designated the **entire western ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA),** with only limited development allowed in graded zones.
- It classified the 142 taluks in the Western Ghats boundary into **Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ) 1, 2 and 3**, with varying degrees of protection. ESZ-1 being of high priority, almost all developmental activities (mining, thermal power plants etc) were restricted in it.
- Gadgil Committee report specifies that the present system of governance of the environment should be changed. It asked for a **bottom to top approach (right from Gram sabhas)** rather than a top to bottom approach. It also asked for **decentralization and more powers to local authorities.**
- The commission recommended the constitution of a **Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA),** as a statutory authority under MoEFCC, with the powers under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The Gadgil report also called for decommissioning of big projects like dams, thermal power stations that have completed their shelf life.

Implementation Issues

- The Western Ghats region covers **six states** (Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu). The states have not shown much interest in implementing the recommendations of the Gadgil panel as states fear it may cause livelihood loss to thousands of people.
- Following protests by various groups and political parties against the recommendations, the government constituted the **K Kasturirangan committee in 2012 to examine the WGEEP report.**

Recommendations of Kasturirangan committee

- The Kasturirangan Commission **sought to balance the development and environment protection.**
- It made a **distinction between the 'cultural landscape' and 'natural landscape'.** According to this distinction:
  - 41 per cent of the Western Ghats is "natural landscape", having low population impact and rich biodiversity.

- The remaining 59 per cent is "cultural landscape" dominated by human settlements and agricultural fields

- Thus, instead of declaring the entire Western Ghats as ESA, the panel said that **90 per cent of the "natural landscape" should be protected**. This would be around 60,000 Km^2 **(37.5 % of the total area of the Western Ghats)** ecologically sensitive area against the 137000 Km^2 areas as stipulated in the Gadgil report.
- The committee recommended a **ban on all polluting industries** (including mining) categorised as most hazardous in the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It made **several pro-farmer recommendations**, including the exclusion of inhabited regions and plantations from the purview of ESA.

Why in News?

- Recently, the Karnataka Chief Minister informed the Centre that the **state is opposed** to the Kasturirangan Committee report on Western Ghats.

67. Which of the following about Zero Budget Natural Farming is/are correct?

1) Promotes soil aeration
2) Promotes intercropping
3) Discourages intensive irrigation
4) Against vermicomposting

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) :

- **Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices.**

- **It was originally promoted by Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar, who developed it in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution's methods driven by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and intensive irrigation.**

Components of ZBNF:

- **(i)** Instead of commercially produced chemical inputs, the **ZBNF promotes the application of *jeevamrutha*** — a mixture of fresh desi cow dung and aged desi cow urine, jaggery, pulse flour, water and soil — on farmland.
- **(ii) A similar mixture, called *bijamrita*,** is used to treat seeds, while concoctions using neem leaves and pulp, tobacco and green chillis are prepared for insect and pest management.
- (iii) The ZBNF method also **promotes soil aeration,** minimal watering, **intercropping**, bunds and topsoil mulching and **discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing**.
- (iv) The **ZBNF method is against vermicomposting**, which is the mainstay of typical organic farming, as it introduces the the most common composting worm, the European red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*) to Indian soils.
- **Hence all the statements are correct.**
- Zero budget farming model promises to cut down farming expenditure drastically and end dependence on loans.
- Andhra Pradesh is the first state to implement full fledged roadmap towards ZBNF.

Why in News?

- The PM is set to promote the **ZBNF's benefits** and provide more details on the strategies to implement it at a national conclave in **Anand, Gujarat.**

68. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

1. The vision of the scheme is to ensure access to some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms in the country.
2. The scheme aims to enhance the adoption of precision-irrigation and other water saving technologies.
3. PMKSY adopts a decentralized State level planning and projectized execution structure.

Which among the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: **D**

Explanation:

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

Broad objectives of PMKSY

- Achieve **convergence of investments in irrigation** at the field level (preparation of district level and, if required, sub district level water use plans).
- **Enhance the physical access of water** on the farm and expand cultivable area under assured irrigation (Har Khet ko pani),
- Integration of water source, distribution and its efficient use, to make best use of water through appropriate technologies and practices.
- **Improve on-farm water use efficiency** to reduce wastage and increase availability both in duration and extent.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Enhance the adoption of **precision-irrigation and other water saving technologies (More crop per drop).**
- Enhance recharge of aquifers and introduce sustainable water conservation practices.

Four components of PMKSY:

- **Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP),**
  - To focus on faster completion of ongoing Major and Medium Irrigation including National Projects.
- **Har Khet Ko Pani ('all fields will get water'),**

- Activities including Creation of new water sources through Minor Irrigation and Creation and rejuvenation of traditional water storage systems like Jal Mandir (Gujarat); Khatri, Kuhl (H.P.); Zabo (Nagaland); Eri, Ooranis (T.N.); Dongs (Assam); Katas, Bandhas (Odisha and M.P.) etc. at feasible locations.

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

Implementation

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

Why in News?

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana for 2021-26 with an outlay of Rs.93,068 crore.

69. Consider the following statements about United Nations Security Council

1) It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
2) The permanent members of UNSC can **veto** any substantive Security Council resolutions, except those on the admission of new member states.

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 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.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** 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?

- India voted against a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council linking climate to security, saying it was an attempt to shift climate talks from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to the Security Council and a "step backward" for collective action on the issue.
- The resolution was sponsored by Ireland and Niger, and it did not pass, with 12 UNSC members voting for it, India and Russia voting against it and China abstaining.
- India joined the UNSC in January 2021 for a two year term as one of the 10 rotating non permanent members.

70. Consider the following statements

1) The sixth schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration and control of Scheduled Areas as well as Scheduled Tribes residing in any State.
2) The Home Ministry is the central authority for declaring an area as a "tribal area".
3) So far no union territory is included in the sixth schedule.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram** according to **Article 244** of the Indian Constitution. The administration and control of **scheduled areas and scheduled tribes in any state** except the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram **are dealt by 5th schedule** of the Constitution.

- **Statement 2 is correct**: The **Home Ministry is the central authority** for declaring an area as a "tribal area"
- It seeks to safeguard the **rights of tribal population** through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC). ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying **degrees of autonomy** within the state legislature.
- The **governors** of these states are **empowered to reorganise boundaries of the tribal areas.** In simpler terms, she or he can choose to include or exclude any area, increase or decrease the boundaries and unite two or more autonomous districts into one.
- The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of tribal areas after setting up autonomous district and regional councils. In all, there are **10 areas in the Northeast that are registered as autonomous districts** – three in Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram and one in Tripura.
- **So far no Union territory is included in the sixth schedule.**

Why in the news?

- Recently, a demand has been raised in Parliament to include the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to safeguard land, employment, and cultural identity of the local population.

71. Udyam Sakhi portal is an initiative related to which of the following?

a) Improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training
b) Pension scheme for unorganised workers
c) Network to nurture women entrepreneurship
d) Integrated Online Junction for School Education

Answer: C

Explanation

Udyam Sakhi portal

About the Portal

- Udyam Sakhi portal (http://udyamsakhi.msme.gov.in/) was launched in 2018 to **provide information regarding financial schemes, policies and programmes of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** to existing/prospective women entrepreneurs in the MSME sector.

- The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient.
- The portal provides assistance through its platform for entrepreneurship learning tools, incubation facility, training programs for fundraising, providing mentors, one-on-one investor meet, market survey facility and technical assistance.

Why in News?

- The Ministry for MSME announced that a total of 2952 women have so far benefitted from the Udyam Sakhi portal.

72. Which of the following missions comes under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)?

1) National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem
2) National Water Mission
3) National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
4) National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
5) National Solar Mission

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation

About NAPCC

- The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) was formally launched in 2008.
- The NAPCC identifies measures that promote development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively.
- There are **eight "National Missions"** which form the core of the National action plan. They focus on promoting understanding of climate change, adaptation and mitigation, energy efficiency and natural resource conservation.

Missions under the NAPCC

1. National Solar Mission

- This initiative was started to promote the use of solar power.
- The Mission has set the ambitious target of deploying **100 GW** of grid connected solar power by 2022. It is under the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.**

2. National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency

- The initiative was undertaken to promote the market for energy efficiency by fostering innovative policies and effective market instruments.
- Implementation agencies of the Mission- **BEE - Bureau of Energy Efficiency** & **EESL - Energy Efficiency Services Limited.**

3. National Mission on Sustainable Habitat

- It aims to make cities sustainable through improvements in energy efficiency in buildings, management of solid waste and shift to public transport.
- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** backs the mission.

4. National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem

- Aimed at protecting the Himalayas, it has mapped institutes and civil society organisations working on the Himalayan ecology for ease of coordination between governmental and non-governmental agencies.
- It is the **only area-specific mission** under the NAPCC.

5. National Mission for a Green India

- It aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.
- It is driven by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC).**

6. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

- It has been formulated for enhancing agricultural productivity especially in rain-fed areas focusing on integrated farming, water use efficiency, soil health management and synergizing resource conservation.

7. National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

- The mission seeks to build a dynamic and vibrant knowledge system that informs and supports national policy and action for responding effectively to climate change challenges, while not compromising on the nation's growth goals.

- The **Ministry of Science and Technology** drives the mission.

8. National Water Mission

- The main objective of NWM is conservation of water, minimizing wastage and ensuring its more equitable distribution both across and within states through integrated water resources development and management.
- At present, it is driven by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has provided details of fund released and fund utilisation under the National Mission for a Green India in the Parliament.

73. The main objective of the Setu Bharatam Scheme is

a) To make all national highways free of various railway crossings.
b) Assessing the MSMEs for their process in achieving Zero defects in their products and processes.
c) Providing health insurance to COVID-19 frontline workers.
d) Implementing Direct Benefit Transfer for procurement of food grains by the Food Corporation of India.

Answer: A

Explanation

- The Setu Bharatam scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2016. It was an initiative to **make all national highways free of various railway crossings.**
- The scheme was launched with the **focus towards the importance of road safety.** The initiative aims at developing stronger infrastructure with proper planning and implementation.
- This project aims to replace railway crossings on National Highways by Road over Bridges (ROBs) /Road Under Bridges (RUBs).

Why in News?

- Administrative approval and financial sanction for construction of 123 nos of RoBs/RuBs have been accorded till date under Setu Bharatam Programme.

74. Consider the following statements with respect to the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT)

1. Under the MLAT, a country can request for obtaining evidence for criminal investigations and prosecutions from another country
2. Ministry of External Affairs is the designated central authority for seeking and providing mutual legal assistance in criminal law matters

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:

What is a mutual legal assistance treaty?

Statement 1 is correct : A mutual legal assistance treaty is an agreement between two or more countries for the purpose of gathering and exchanging information in an effort to enforce public or criminal laws.Under the MLAT, a country can request for obtaining evidence for criminal investigations and prosecutions..India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties(MLAT) with 42 countries and is signatory to various International Conventions for cooperation in criminal matters.

Statement 2 is incorrect : The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is the designated 'Central Authority' for seeking and providing mutual legal assistance in criminal law matters. Generally, assistance is sought and received in the form of Mutual Legal Assistance Requests/Letters Rogatory and Service of Summons/Notices/Judicial documents on persons residing abroad.

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Government of India and Poland.

75. Which of the following statements about Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana is incorrect?

a) Under ABRY, the government will provide subsidies for provident fund contributions for adding new employees to establishments registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).

b) The Centre will provide the subsidy for ten years for workers who lost jobs between March 1 to September 30 and for new workers employed on or after October 1,2020.

c) Under the scheme, the Government of India will pay both 12% employees' contribution and 12% employers' contribution i.e. 24% of wages towards Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) in respect of new employees in establishments employing upto 1000 employees for two years.

d) None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- Last year, the Union Cabinet gave its approval for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY).
- Under ABRY, the government will provide **subsidy for provident fund contributions** for adding new employees to establishments registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- The Centre will provide the **subsidy for two years** for workers who lost jobs between March 1 to September 30 and for new workers employed on or after October 1,2020.

Salient features of ABRY

- Under the scheme, the Government of India will pay **both 12% employees' contribution and 12% employers' contribution** i.e. 24% of wages towards Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) in respect of **new employees in establishments employing upto 1000 employees for two years.**
- The Government of India will pay **only employees' share of EPF contribution** i.e. 12% of wages in respect of **new employees in establishments employing more than 1000 employees for two years.**

Eligibility

- The beneficiaries include **new employee drawing less than Rs. 15,000 per month**, who falls under one of the following categories:-

- who was not working in any establishment registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) and did not have a Universal Account Number (UAN) prior to 1st October 2020
- any EPF member possessing Universal Account Number (UAN) drawing monthly wage of less than Rs. 15000/- who made exit from employment during Covid pandemic from 01.03.2020 to 30.09.2020 and did not join employment in any EPF covered establishment up to 30.09.2020.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment provided details about the State-wise number of beneficiaries under ABRY.

76. Consider the following statements regarding the Durga Pooja

1. It is a tribal festival celebrated in the state of Odisha
2. It was recently granted the UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage of humanity tag.

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

Why in News:

- Unesco's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the **Intangible Cultural Heritage** "**Durga Puja in Kolkata**" on the **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**

About the festival

- **Durga Puja** is a five-day event that begins on the fifth night of the nine-day **Navratri festival** and c**oncludes on Dashami, the tenth day.**
- At this time, people worship and invoke **Goddess Durga, also known as Shakti.**
- It is A**sia's first festival to be designated as a UNESCO ICH of Humanity.**
- The event **includes folk music, culinary, craft, and performing arts traditions.**

- It recognises the festival's contribution to sustaining and safeguarding a plethora of traditional arts and crafts, community well-being and economic empowerment, and energising creativity.

- The total **economic worth** of the creative activities involved in **Durga Puja festival** is about **₹32,377 crore** and the festival contributes **2.58% of West Bengal's GDP,** reveals a study carried out by the British Council.

About UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The **list was created in 2008,** when the Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage went into force.
- This l**ist includes intangible heritage aspects that illustrate the richness of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its significance.**
- According to UNESCO, cultural heritage **does not end at monuments and collections of objects.** It **includes traditions or living expressions** inherited from our ancestors and passed down to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practises, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practises concerning nature and the universe, or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.
- Intangible cultural heritage, according to UNESCO, is "traditional, contemporary and living at the same time", "inclusive", "representative", and "community-based". It is "an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalisation" — and "an understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life".

Related initiative in India

- India's **Ministry of Culture** has also published a **draft National List of India's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).**
- The National ICH List is an attempt to acknowledge the diversity of Indian culture as it is embodied in intangible heritage.
- This effort is also part of the **Ministry of Culture's Vision 2024.**

Intangible Cultural Heritage from India

- With the inclusion of Durga Puja, the number of elements in the **list of Intangible Cultural Heritage from India has increased to 14.**

- The latest inclusion in the list prior to the Durga Puja is the Kumbh Mela, the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, which was inscribed in 2017. Yoga was included in 2016. Besides **Durga Puja in Kolkata (2021), the India list has: Kumbh Mela (2017); Nowruz (2016); traditional brass and copper utensil-making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab (2014); Sankirtana of Manipur (2013); Buddhist chanting of Ladakh (2012); Chhau dance, Kalbelia dance of Rajasthan, and Mudiyettu of Kerala (2010); Ramman festival of Garhwal (2009); and Kutiyattam Sanskrit theatre, Ramlila, and Vedic chanting (2008).**

77. 'LogiXtics' Hackathon is organized by which of the following?

a) Ministry of rural development
b) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
d) None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

What's in the news?

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon – 'LogiXtics' in order to **crowdsource more ideas which will benefit the logistics industry.**
- ULIP is designed to enhance efficiency and reduce logistics cost in India by creating a transparent platform that can provide real time information to all stakeholders and remove all asymmetry information.
- The ULIP Hackathon – LogiXtics is organised by **NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission** and supported by **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) and NICDC Logistics Data Bank Services Limited (NLDSL).**
- NITI Aayog was entrusted by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020 with the task of exploring the role of technology in various sectors. ULIP was conceptualised as one of the technology platforms in the logistics sector.

- ULIP is being developed as a technology platform in the logistics sector which will provide real time information to all stakeholders and will converge visibility of multi-modal transport across the existing systems of various Ministries/Departments working in silos.
- Once completed, one can see huge efficiencies in the logistics sector, which will transform it by bringing down the logistics cost and enhancing India's competitiveness in the global trade.

78. With reference to the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, consider the following statements.

1. The act superseded Vishakha Guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997.
2. Every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 50 or more employees.
3. The act covers both the organised and unorganised sectors under its ambit.

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: C

Explanation:

- 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.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.
- Sexual harassment is defined to include unwelcome sexually determined behaviour such as physical contact, request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, screening of pornography, or any other conduct of sexual nature.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee** at each office or branch with **10 or more employees.**
- The District Officer will constitute a **Local Complaints Committee** (LCC) in every district 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.
- A workplace is defined as "any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey."
- **Statement 3 is correct:** As per this definition, a workplace covers both the organised and unorganised sectors.
- It also includes all workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign company having a place of work in India.
- 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.

- The Act defines the Unorganised Sector as:
  - Any enterprise owned by an individual or self-employed workers engaged in the production or sale of goods or providing services of any kind;
  - Any enterprise which employs less than 10 workers.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development issued advisories to States/ UTs and the Central Ministries/ Departments for strict implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and the SHe-Box portal to create a women friendly work environment.

79.'SHe-box' is sometimes mentioned in news with reference to

a) An initiative to make rural households digitally literate
b) An online complaint management system to report sexual harassment at workplace.
c) An initiative to encourage energy efficiency technologies in light of Global Warming.
d) Government e-commerce portal for buying and selling dairy products.

Answer:B

Explanation

- The **Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box)** is an effort by **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India to provide a **single window access to every woman,** irrespective of her work status, whether working in organised or unorganised, private or public sector, to facilitate the **registration of complaint related to sexual harassment.**
- Any woman facing sexual harassment at workplace can register their complaint through this portal. Once a complaint is submitted to the 'SHe-Box', it will be **directly sent to the concerned authority** having jurisdiction to take action into the matter.
- This was made to ensure the effecive implementation of the **Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.** The act aims to create a safe and secure workplace for women. This Act caters to women

working both in organised and unorganised sector and establishes a **redressal mechanism** for the disposal of their complaints

80. Consider the following statements about FDI inflows to India

1) Computer Software and Hardware sector attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by Service, Trading and Telecommunications.

2) Singapore is the topmost country from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 to India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer:C

Explanation

What's in the news?

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that **India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of 81.97 billion dollar in 2020-21**.
- FDI inflows in the last seven financial years is over 440 billion dollars, which is nearly 58 percent of the total FDI inflow in the last 21 financial years.
- **Both the statements are correct.**
- Top five countries from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 are **Singapore, Mauritius, USA, Netherlands and Japan.**
- **Computer Software and Hardware sector** attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by **Service, Trading and Telecommunications.**

81. Consider the following statements about Tuberculosis (TB)

1) Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis which most often affect the lungs.

2) It is a non contagious disease which does not spread from person to person.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 and 2

Answer: A

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by **bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis** which most often affect the **lungs.**
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It is a **contagious** disease which spreads from person to person through the air.
- When a person develops active TB disease, the symptoms such as cough, fever, night sweats, or weight loss may be mild for many months.
- People with active TB can infect 5–15 other people through close contact over the course of a year.
- It is **curable and preventable.**

Symptoms

- **Common symptoms of active lung TB are**

a) Cough with sputum and blood at times,

b) Chest pains,

c) Weakness,

d) Weight loss,

e) Fever and

f) Night sweats.

Why in news?

- The Vice-president at a **national conference on "Women Winning against TB"** urged parliamentarians, MLAs and heads of local bodies to be **catalysts** in the **campaign against**

tuberculosis and ensure a gender-sensitive approach to eradicate it.

News in detail

- TB affects over **10 lakh women and girls and more than 3 lakh children** every year in our country.
- The VP emphasised that while the prevalence of TB is higher among men, it can have a disproportionately **higher impact on women** as women are more susceptible because adequate priority is **not given to their health and nutrition.**
- TB is responsible for more deaths among women of reproductive age than all causes of maternal mortality combined.
- There are a large number of **unreported and untreated cases of TB amongst women** as they face the misery of abandonment and violence if found to have TB.
- Eg: Only 18 lakh of the 26 lakh estimated new TB cases in 2020 were reported to the TB programme signifying a wide gap of 8 lakh because of the stigma attached to the disease.
- He also underlined that ensuring nutrition to women and children will be key in the fight against TB.
- Hence it is vital to ensure women and children not only have **equitable access to healthcare** but also actively seek and complete appropriate TB regimes in order to achieve the target of **eradicating TB by 2025.**

82. PM GatiShakti was recently launched with the main objective of?

a) Phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion

b) Creating an enabling environment for equal participation of women in science, technology, engineering, medicine and mathematics disciplines

c) Providing multimodal connectivity to various Economic Zones in the country.

d) Protecting the remaining population of crocodilians in their natural habitat by creating Sanctuaries

Answer: C

Explanation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched PM GatiShakti National Master Plan for **providing multimodal connectivity to various Economic Zones** in the country.

- PM GatiShakti **aims to reduce the logistics cost.** Currently, the logistics cost in India is about **13% of the GDP** whereas in other developed countries it is to the extent of 8%.
- Government is committed to reduce the cost of logistics to ensure competitiveness of our manufacturing sector, better realisation of prices to farmers and availability of goods at cheaper prices to consumers.
- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is the nodal department for PM GatiShatki.

Why in News?

- The Government has constituted an Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) headed by Cabinet Secretary with Secretaries of 20 Infrastructure and Economic User Ministries as members of EGoS to monitor implementation of PM GatiShakti.

83. Consider the following statements about Sainik Schools

1) The objective of establishing Sainik schools is to provide quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas.

2) The government aims to establish Sainik school in every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal 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: D

Explanation

Both the statements are incorrect.

- Sainik Schools are residential schools for boys, providing **Public School Education with Military bias.**
- The schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi and are supported by Central and State funding.

- The scheme to establish Sainik Schools was introduced in 1961 with the primary aim of preparing boys academically, physically and mentally for entry into the National Defence Academy.
- They are established and managed by Sainik Schools Society under the Ministry of Defence.

Why in News?

- The Government has approved a scheme to set up 100 Sainik Schools in partnership with NGOs, Private Schools and the State governments.
- The aims and objectives of the Scheme is to provide an educational and training environment on the pattern of training provided in existing Sainik Schools. It aims to extend the benefits of a system that combines academic rigour with a degree of discipline and regimentation.

84. Consider the following statements regarding the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

1. It is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament
2. It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises with regard to khadi and village industries within India
3. The wider objective of KVIC includes creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up a strong rural community spirit.

Which of the statements given above is/are INCORRECT?

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

Answer: D

Explanation

Statement 1 and 2 are correct : The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a **statutory body established by an Act of Parliament**It is an apex organization under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** with regard to khadi and village industries within India

Statement 3 is correct:

The broad objectives of KVIC

- 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 :

- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programs for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- To promote the sale and marketing of khadi and/or products of village industries or handicrafts, the KVIC may forge linkages with established marketing agencies wherever feasible and necessary.
- The KVIC is also charged with the responsibility of encouraging and promoting research in the production techniques and equipment employed in the Khadi and Village Industries sector.
- The KVIC is entrusted with the task of providing financial assistance to institutions and individuals for development and operation of Khadi and village industries and guiding them through supply of designs, prototypes and other technical information.

Why in the news?

- KVIC has rolled out self-employment schemes to empower rural artisans in UP's Bundelkhand Region.

85. With reference to the Agni class of missiles, consider the following statements.

1. Agni series was one of the components under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.
2. The longest of the Agni series, Agni-V is an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile with a range of over 5,000 km.
3. All missiles of Agni series have a range of 2000 kms and above.

Which of the above statements 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

Agni Class of Missiles

- **Agni class** of missiles are the **mainstay of India's nuclear launch capability** which also includes the Prithvi short range ballistic missiles, submarine launched ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The **longest** of the Agni series, **Agni-V,** an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.

Evolution of Agni

- Agni I: Range of 700-800 km. **Hence, statement 3 is incorrect.**
- Agni II: Range more than 2000 km.
- Agni III: Range of more than 2,500 Km
- Agni IV: Range is more than 3,500 km and can fire from a road mobile launcher.
- Agni-V: The longest of the Agni series, an **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile** (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 to 8000 km. An intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) is a missile with a minimum range of 5,500 kilometres primarily designed for nuclear weapons delivery

IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Program)

- It was conceived by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to enable India attain self-sufficiency in the field of missile technology.
- The 5 missiles developed under this program are:
  - **Agni**: Ballistic missiles with different ranges, i.e. Agni (1,2,3,4,5) **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - **Akash**: Medium range surface to air missile.
  - **Prithvi**: Short range surface to surface ballistic missile.
  - **Trishul**: Short range low level surface to air missile.
  - **Nag**: 3rd generation anti-tank missile.

Why in News?

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) successfully **tested** the new-generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile **Agni Prime.**

About Agni-P

- Agni-P is a **new generation advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles**. It is a **canisterised missile** with range capability between **1,000 and 2,000 km.**
- Agni-P has **improved** parameters including **manoeuvring and accuracy.**
- **Canisterisation** of missiles **reduces the time** required to **launch the missile** while **improving its storage and mobility.**
  - Canister-based launch system—serves as a transporting container, a shelter to store in a ship, and gives operational flexibility.

86. **Consider the following statements about the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).**

1. It is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations.
2. India is 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

1)Answer: **A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect: India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC.**
- 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.

- 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 News?

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held a meeting recently in Islamabad which ended with a promise to set up a fund to provide humanitarian aid through the **Islamic Development Bank (IDB)** to provide a cover for countries to donate without dealing directly with the country's Taliban rulers.

87. Consider the following statements regarding the Swadesh Darshan

1. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Jal Shakti under the Swachh Bharat Mission
2. It aims to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country on the principles of competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- The Swadesh Darshan Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** in 2014.
- **Objective:** To develop **theme-based tourist circuits** in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** and efforts are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.

The scheme has following objectives:

- Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and job creation;
- Develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner;
- Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions;
- Follow community based development and pro-poor tourism approach;
- Create employment through active involvement of local communities;
- Projects under the scheme shall be under the following identified themes; **Eco-tourism, Wildlife, Buddhist, Desert, Spiritual, Ramayana, Krishna, Coastal, Northeast, Rural, Himalayan, Tribal and Heritage.**

  Why in News?

  The Ministry of Tourism under 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme has sanctioned **5 projects under Buddhist circuit theme**.

88. The KAPILA campaign sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following?

a) Aimed to increase awareness regarding protection and exploitation of Intellectual Property (IP)
b) Aimed at encouraging youth to participate in civic engagement for the general elections
c) Aimed to Stop Illegal Wildlife Trafficking
d) Aimed at discouraging unnecessary prescription and over-the-counter sale of antibiotics

Answer: A

Explanation

- The government has launched a campaign namely Kalam Program for Intellectual Property Literacy and Awareness Campaign (KAPILA) on 15th October, 2020 to **increase awareness regarding protection and exploitation of Intellectual Property (IP)** and also to provide funding support in order to promote filing of the Intellectual Property (IP)in Higher Education Institutions.
- A **KAPILA portal** has also been launched for this purpose.
- Under the initiative, activities like IP Clinic, Case Studies/ Articles regarding Innovation and Intellectual Property and online awareness programs and National Intellectual Property Literacy Week (NIPLW) have been conducted.

Why in News?

- More than 46,000 users have registered for KAPILA awareness programs.

89. With reference to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, (FCRA), 2010, consider the following statements.

1. It regulates the acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions by individuals, associations and companies.
2. Under the Act, NGOs are barred from receiving foreign funds.

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

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

- **Statement 1 is correct:** 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.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect: All societies, companies, associations and NGOs** have to register themselves under the FCRA and fulfill 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.

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.

2020 Amendment Act

- 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 the news?

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010 registration of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

90. The Panna Tiger Reserve is located in

a) Madhya Pradesh
b) Maharashtra
c) Karnataka
d) Odisha

Answer: A

Explanation

- Situated in the Vindhyan mountain range, Panna Tiger Reserve is located in **Madhya Pradesh.**
- Flowing from the south to the north through the reserve is the **River Ken.** The reserve is also dotted with two thousand year-old rock paintings.
- The tree species Acacia catachu dominates the dry steep slopes of the plateaus here. These habitats make for a heterogeneous landscape.
- This Protected Area is very important because it links the eastern and western populations of wild animals through the Vindhyan ranges that run from north-east to south-west. Apart from the tiger, it is home to other animals like the leopard, nilgai, chinkara, chousinga, chital, rusty spotted cat, porcupine, and sambhar. Gharials (long snouted crocodiles) and muggars (marsh crocodiles) can be found in River Ken.

Why in the news?

- Recently, an Indian Desert Cat has been spotted for the first time in Madhya Pradesh's Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR).

91. Beej Gram Yojana is related to which of the following?

a) Improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training
b) Pension scheme for unorganized workers
c) Network to nurture women entrepreneurship
d) To upgrade the quality of farmer's saved seeds.

Answer: D

Explanation

What's in the news?

- The Government of India has been implementing **Seed Village Programme (Beej Gram Yojana)** since 2014-15 to **upgrade the quality of farmer's saved seeds.**
- Under this programme **financial assistance for distribution of foundation/certified seeds** at 50% of seed cost for cereal crops and 60% for pulses, oilseeds, fodder and green manure crops is available for **up to one acre per farmer.**
- The Government of India also organizes **Zonal Seed Review Meeting** twice a year before onset of each sowing season i.e. Kharif & Rabi. In these meetings, Department of Agriculture of different States/UTs, National & State Level Seed Producing Agencies, Seed Certification Agencies were called to assess the requirement and availability of seed across the country prior to every season, to ensure timely availability of seed to farmers.

Why in News?

- This information was given by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

92. Consider the following statements about rare diseases

1) A disease or disorder is defined as Rare in India when it affects fewer than 1 in 2500 individuals according to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
2) Rare diseases include rare cancers, infectious tropical diseases and degenerative diseases except genetic diseases.

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

What is a rare disease?

- A rare disease is a health condition of **low prevalence that affects a small number of people** compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Rare diseases include genetic diseases, rare cancers, infectious tropical diseases and degenerative diseases.
- **80% of rare diseases are genetic in origin** and hence disproportionately impact children.

Definition of a rare disease

- There is **no universally accepted definition** of rare disease.
- These diseases have **differing definitions** in various countries and range from those that are prevalent in 1 in 10,000 of the population to 6 per 10,000. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** registry definition, "A disease or disorder is defined as Rare in India when it **affects fewer than 1 in 2500 individuals". Statement 1 is correct.**
- So far about 450 rare diseases have been recorded in India and it is estimated that about 6-8% of the country's population is affected by a rare disease.

Challenges associated with rare diseases

- There are 7,000-8,000 classified rare diseases, but **less than 5% have therapies available to treat them.** About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- The field of rare diseases is very complex and heterogeneous and prevention, treatment and management of rare diseases have multiple challenges. **Early diagnosis** of rare diseases is a major challenge owing to a variety of factors that include **lack of awareness among primary care physicians, lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities etc.**
- There are also fundamental challenges in the **research and development** for the majority of rare diseases as relatively little is known about the pathophysiology or the natural history of these diseases particularly in the Indian context.

- Rare diseases are also **difficult to research upon** as the patients pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience. **Availability and accessibility to medicines** are also important to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with rare disease.
- The **cost of treatment of rare diseases is prohibitively expensive.** Various High Courts and the Supreme Court have also expressed concern about lack of a national policy for rare diseases.

Why in News?

- In order to provide facilities for treatment and care of patients suffering from rare diseases, eight Centres of Excellence have been notified, which are premier Government tertiary hospitals with facilities for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of rare diseases.

93. Which among the following is an objective of 'Swamitva Scheme'?

a) To provide social security benefits to urban street vendors
b) To map residential land ownership in the rural sector using modern technology
c) Enabling the access to digital platforms in order to bridge digital divide in India
d) A common national programme to develop and contribute towards the e-learning content

Answer: B

Explanation

- SVAMITVA (Survey of villages and mapping with improvised technology in village areas) scheme is a collaborative effort of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Panchayati Raj Departments, State Revenue Departments and Survey of India.**
- It is a **central sector scheme** that aims to provide rural people with the **right to document their residential properties** so that they can use their property for economic purposes. The scheme is for surveying the land parcels in rural inhabited areas using **Drone technology.**

Objectives

- The outcome from the scheme would include updating the record of rights in the revenue/property registers and issuance of property cards to the property owners. This would facilitate **monetisation of rural residential assets** for credit and other financial services.

- It will also lead to creation of **accurate land records** for rural planning and determination of **property tax.**
- Through the SVAMITVA scheme, the government hopes that **property disputes and legal cases will be reduced.**
- Other gram panchayats and community assets like village roads, ponds, canals, open spaces, school, anganwadi, health sub-centres etc will also be surveyed and GIS maps will be created. These maps can be used to prepare better quality gram panchayat development plans.

Coverage

- There are about 6.62 lakh villages in the country which will be eventually covered in this scheme. The entire work is likely to be spread over a period of four years (2020 -2024).
- Presently, the pilot phase is being approved for the year 2020-21. Pilot Phase will extend to **8 states** – Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)** is the Nodal Ministry for implementation of the scheme. **Survey of India** shall work as the technology partner for implementation.

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj provided details about the proposed state-wise villages to be covered under SVAMITVA Scheme in the Parliament.

94. Consider the following statements.

1. Options and futures are types of derivatives.
2. Futures contract holder is obligated to execute the contract, whereas in an options contract, there is no obligation on the buyer to buy or sell.
3. Options and futures are allowed in commodity markets in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- A derivative is a contract between two parties which derives its value/price from an underlying asset. Generally stocks, bonds, currency, commodities and interest rates form the underlying asset.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The most common types of derivatives are futures, options, forwards and swaps.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** An option gives an investor the right, but not the obligation, to buy (or sell) shares at a specific price at any time, as long as the contract is in effect.
- A futures contract requires a buyer to purchase shares, and a seller to sell them, on a specific future date unless the holder's position is closed before the expiration date.
- Commodity Market is a market where different commodities such as gold, silver, soyabean base metals, etc. are traded on its derivative contract.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Recently, Capital markets regulator SEBI, permitted stock exchanges with commodity derivative segment to introduce futures on indices. The regulator has already permitted commodity options in commodity derivative markets.

Why in the news?

- Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has banned the derivative trade of seven agricultural commodities on the future's platform of National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) for a year.

95. Which one of the following is the natural habitat for the Gharials in India?

a) Pulicat Lake
b) Chambal River
c) Deepor Beel
d) None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- The gharial also known as the **fish-eating crocodile**, is a crocodilian in the family Gavialidae and among the longest of all living crocodilians
- Gharial prefers **deep fast flowing rivers**, however adult gharial have also been observed in still water branches of rivers and in comparatively velocity-free aquatic environments of deepholes at river bends and confluences.

- Historically, gharial were found in the river system of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and southern part of Bhutan and Nepal. Today **they survive only in the waters of India and Nepal**.
- The surviving population can be found within the tributaries of the Ganges river system: Girwa (Uttar Pradesh), Son (Madhya Pradesh), Ramganga (Uttarakhand), Gandak (Bihar), **Chambal (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) and Mahanadi (Orissa).**
- Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and **as Critically Endangered on IUCN Red List**
- **Dam, barrages, and water abstraction adversely affects** gharial by turning suitable river habitats into marginal/ unsuitable lakes, and by altering the quantity and quality of water available to downstream river sections.
- Gharial, with its long, toothy rostrum is particularly **vulnerable to entanglement in fishing nets**, where it is frequently trapped underwater and drowns.

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

List I		**List II**
1) ARISE	-	To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.
2) Atal Tinkering Labs	-	Creating a problem solving mindset across schools in India.
3) Mentor India Campaign	-	A national network to support all the initiatives of the Atal Innovation mission

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is the Government of India's flagship initiative to **promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship** in the country. AIM's objective is to **develop new programmes and policies** for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy,

create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country

Major initiatives

- **Atal Tinkering Labs -** Creating problem solving mindset across schools in India.
- **Atal Incubation Centers** - Fostering world class startups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.
- **Atal New India Challenges** - Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.
- **Mentor India Campaign** - A **national Mentor network** in collaboration with public sector, corporates and institutions, **to support all the initiatives of the mission**
- **Atal Community Innovation Center** - To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved /underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- **Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE) -** To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

Atal Tinkering Labs

- With a vision to '**Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators'**, Atal Innovation Mission has established Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India.
- The objective of this scheme is to **foster curiosity, creativity and imagination** in young minds; and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc
- Young children will get a **chance to work with tools and equipment** to understand the concepts of STEM **(Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)**

Mentor India Campaign

- Mentor India Campaign is a **strategic nation building initiative** to engage leaders who **can guide and mentor students** in thousands of Atal Tinkering Labs and startups and incubators under the programs of Atal Innovation Mission across India
- It is **aimed at maximising the impact** of Atal Tinkering Labs. These labs are non-prescriptive by nature, and mentors are expected to be enablers rather than instructors.

Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE)

- ARISE is an initiative to **promote research, innovation and competitiveness of Indian startups** and small enterprises including Micro, Small, and Medium enterprises.
- The program's objective is to catalyze research, innovation, find solutions to the sectoral problems and subsequently **trigger creation of new industrial sectors**, through support of Central Government Ministries / Departments
- It aims to inculcate a **culture and mindset of engaging and co-creating** amongst the industry as well as the government, to **improve India's import substitution** capabilities, develop export leadership in nation-critical sectors, and provide indigenous solutions for challenges in India.

What's in the news?

- Niti Aayog has launched the first of its kind Vernacular Innovation Program under the **Atal Innovation Mission** which aims to **enable innovators and entrepreneurs to have access to the innovative ecosystem in 22 mother tongue languages.**
- By providing access to learning in one's language and culture, the programme aims to **create equal opportunity for the vernacular innovators.**

To build the necessary capacity for the Vernacular Innovation Program, Atal Innovation Mission has identified and will be training a **Vernacular Task Force** in each of the 22 scheduled languages. Each task force comprises vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centres.

97. Consider the following statements about Minimum Support Price

1) Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a form of market intervention by the Government to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
2) It is announced by the Government at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

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

- Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a form of **market intervention** by the Government to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- The minimum support prices are announced by the Government at the **beginning of the sowing season** for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).**

About CACP

- The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices is an attached office of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.** It came into existence in 1965.
- It is mandated to recommend MSPs to incentivize the cultivators to adopt modern technology and raise productivity and overall grain production in line with the emerging demand patterns in the country.
- As of now, CACP recommends MSPs of **23 commodities,** which comprise **7 cereals** (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi), **5 pulses** (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil), **7 oilseeds** (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, niger seed), and **4 commercial crops** (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute).
- CACP submits its recommendations to the government. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** takes a **final decision** on the level of MSPs and other recommendations made by CACP.

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to increase the Minimum Support Prices for copra increased to 10,590 rupees per quintal for 2022 season from 10,335 rupees per quintal.

98. Which of the following region is called as the '3rd Pole of Earth'?

a) Iceland
b) Central Siberian Plateau
c) Antarctica
d) Hindu-Kush Himalayan

Answer : D

Explanation

- The Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region is considered the **Third Pole** [after the North and South Poles].
- The name Hindu Kush derives from the Arabic for **"Mountains of India**."
- It is source to **10 major river systems in Asia** that provide water, ecosystem services and livelihoods to more than 210 million people.
- The HKH region spans **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**. It traverses about 5 million square kilometres and hosts a large and culturally diverse population. The Third Pole, which contains vast cryospheric zones, is also the world's **largest store of snow and ice outside the polar region**.
- The region holds and distributes water for more than 1.3 billion people living in downstream river basins.

99. It is an equatorial crop, but under special conditions, it is also grown in tropical and sub-tropical areas. It requires moist and humid climate with rainfall of more than 200 cm and temperature above 25°C. It is mainly grown in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andaman and Nicobar islands and Garo hills of Meghalaya.
The above description refers to which among the following crops?

a) Sugarcane
b) Rubber
c) Tea
d) Rice

Answer: B

Explanation

RUBBER

- It is an **equatorial crop**, but under special conditions, it is also grown in tropical and sub-tropical areas.
- It requires **moist and humid climate** with **rainfall of more than 200 cm** and temperature above 25°C. The rainfall should be well distributed throughout the year.

- Rubber is an important **industrial raw material**It is mainly grown in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Garo hills of Meghalaya.
- **Rubber tree (Hevea brasiliensis)** is a quick growing tall tree acquiring 20-30 metre height. It begins to **yield latex in 5-7 years after planting**.
- **Dry spell and low temperatures are harmful**. Deep **well drained loamy soils** on the hill slopes at elevations ranging from 300 to 450 metres above sea level provide the best conditions for its growth.
- **Top Rubber Producing States:** Kerala, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka.

100. The term 'Chillai Kalan' Recently seen in news is related to

a) waterwheel used in the irrigation of land in medieval India
b) most distant world ever explored by a space mission
c) traditional 40-day long period of extreme cold in Kashmir
d) empower the youth of the country with skill sets to make them productive

Answer: C

Explanation

- **Chillai Kalan** is a **Persian term which means 'major cold'.**
- It is a **traditional 40-day long period of extreme cold in Kashmir** starting from 21 December to January 29 every year, **followed by Chillai-Khurd and Chillai-Bachha.**
  - **Chillai Khurd (small cold)** is a 20-day long period that occurs between January 30 and February 18
  - **Chillai-Bachha (baby cold)**, a 10-day long period which is from February 19 to February 28.
- **Chillai Kalan**, considered the **heart of winter,** typically **brings snowfall**, **sub-zero temperatures**, and the **freezing of water bodies**, and the shutdown of roadways.
- It is said the snow during the period lasts longer and **replenishes the streams, rivers and lakes of Kashmir.**

Why in News:

- Kashmir's 40-day harshest spell of winter, locally called 'chillai kalan', has started with the minimum temperature already sub-zero in the entire Valley.

101. Mission Karmayogi recently seen in the news is related to

a) Facilitating organic farmers to sell their organic produce

b) Facilitate reporting of labour inspections and submission of Returns.

c) Aviation Jobs Portal for Aspirants and prospective Employers

d) Programme to lay the foundation for capacity building of civil servants.

Answer: D

Explanation

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

Unfolding of Mission Karmayogi

- The Mission Karmayogi programme will be delivered by setting up a digital platform called **iGOTKarmayogi.**
- The platform will act as a launchpad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, which will enable a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at the individual, institutional and process levels.
- **NPCSCB** will be **governed by the Prime Minister's Human Resource Council,** which will also include state Chief Ministers, Union Cabinet ministers and experts. This council will approve and review civil service capacity building programmes.
- Besides this, there will be a **Cabinet Secretary Coordination Unit** comprising select secretaries and cadre controlling authorities.

- Also, there will be a **Capacity Building Commission**, which will include experts in related fields and global professionals. This commission will prepare and monitor annual capacity building plans and audit human resources available in the government.
- There will be a wholly-owned **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which will govern the iGOT-Karmayogi platform.**
- The SPV will be a "not-for-profit" company which will create and operationalise the content, market place and manage key business services of iGOT-Karmayogi platform.
- To cover around 46 lakh central employees, a sum of Rs 510.86 crore will be spent over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25. The expenditure is partly funded by multilateral assistance to the tune of $50 million.

Why in the News?

- The Government of India conducted a workshop on Mission Karmayogi.
- The aim of "Mission Karmayogi" is to impart futuristic vision to civil services which could effectively determine the roadmap for next 25 years and shape the Century India of 2047.

102. The Bharatmala Pariyojana is related to

a) Making all national highways free of various railway crossings.
b) Optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps.
c) To promote, develop and harness the potential of tourism in India.
d) To provide connectivity to unconnected Habitations as part of a poverty reduction strategy.

Answer: B

Explanation

- Bharatmala Pariyojana is a new umbrella program for the highways sector that focuses on **optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement** across the country by **bridging critical infrastructure gaps** through effective interventions like development of Economic Corridors, Inter Corridors and Feeder Routes, National Corridor Efficiency Improvement, Border and International connectivity roads, Coastal and Port connectivity roads and Green-field expressways.
- It was launched in **2017.**

- All key aspects of the scheme will be managed by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.**

Highlights of Bharatmala Pariyojana

- **Improvement in efficiency of existing corridors** through development of Multimodal Logistics Parks and elimination of choke point;
- Enhance focus on improving connectivity in **North East** and leveraging synergies with **Inland Waterways;**
- Emphasis on **use of technology & scientific planning** for Project Preparation and Asset Monitoring.

Key features of the scheme

- **Improving the quality of roads -** The launch of the scheme has been done to bring a new wave of development in the nation in the form of well-maintained and developed roads. Under this project, the construction of roads in all parts of the nation will be undertaken.
- **Total road construction -** As per the draft of the scheme, the government and the ministry will strive to complete new roads, which will add up to a whopping 34, 800 kms.
- **Integrated scheme -** The Bharatmala is the name that is given to the road development and it will include many other related schemes as well. With the completion of all the schemes, the overall success of the scheme will be guaranteed.
- **Total tenure of the program -**The central government has the plans of finishing the scheme within a span of five years. Thus, all is set for finishing the first phase before the end of 2022.

Why in the News?

- Till now, a length of about 6,750 km has been completed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I.

103. Consider the following statements about National Creche Scheme

1) The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements the Centrally Sponsored National Crèche Scheme.
2) It aims to provide day care facilities to children (age group of 6 months to 16 years) of working mothers.

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

What's in the news?

- **Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is incorrect.** The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements the **Centrally Sponsored** National Crèche Scheme to **provide day care facilities to children (age group of 6 months to 6 years) of working mothers.**
- It was launched in 2017.
- The Scheme provides an integrated package of the following services:
  - Day care facilities including sleeping facilities.
  - Early stimulation for children below 3 years and pre-school education for 3 to 6 years old children
  - Supplementary nutrition (to be locally sourced)
  - Growth monitoring
  - Health check-up and immunization.

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has announced that the number of functional creches in the country under the National Creche Scheme during the last three years (2017--18, 2018-19 and 2019-20) was 18040, 8018 and 6458 respectively.
- Creches have not been functional in the country since the outbreak of Coved-19 to prevent spread of the pandemic.

104. 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.

105. With reference to Olive ridley turtles, consider the following statements.

1. Olive ridleys are found only in warmer waters, including the southern Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.
2. Famous mass nesting places including Gahirmatha beach and mouth of Rushikulya are located in Odisha.

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

Mass nesting

- The Olive Ridley Turtles come to the beaches of Odisha coast annually between November and December and stay on until April and May for mass nesting. Such mass nesting events are called ***arribadas*.**
- 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.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Olive Ridley turtles turn up in millions for mass nesting along the Odisha coast every year. **Gahirmatha beach in Odisha** is acclaimed as the **world's largest-known nesting site** for the marine species.
- Apart from Gahirmatha, turtles turn up at the **mouths of Rushikulya and Devi river** (both in Odisha) for mass nesting.

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.

Why in the news?

- Researchers of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) are carrying out tagging of Olive Ridley turtles at three mass nesting sites – Gahirmatha, Devi River mouth and Rushikulya.

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

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

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- The Constitution provides for the legislature to make laws, the government to implement laws, and the courts to interpret and enforce these laws. While the judiciary is independent from the other two branches, the government is formed with the support of a majority of members in the legislature. Therefore, the government is collectively responsible to Parliament for its actions. This implies that Parliament (i.e. Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) can hold the government accountable for its decisions, and scrutinise its functioning.
- The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha is empowered to pass a vote of censure against the ministry. Whenever such a motion is passed, the ministry has to resign.
- Both the houses exercise control over the executive through **asking questions,** discussing matters of urgent public importance, moving call- attention notices and **adjournment motions,** and also by appointing various committees such as public accounts committee, estimates committee, committee on public undertakings, committee on government assurances, the committee on privileges, the committee on subordinate legislation etc.

All the statements are correct.

107. Consider the following pairs:

Landscapes	Country
Daryâche-ye Orumiye (Lake Urmia)	Iraq
Yellow Sea	North Korea
Rakhine State	Bangladesh

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 2 only

d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: C

Explanation

- Lake Urmia is a very hot topic in Iran regarding its environmental degradation. It has been shrinking since 2016. It is a salt water lake.

- Yellow sea touches North Korea

- Rakhine state is part of Myanmar, not Bangladesh.

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

a) Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park

b) Malvan Marine Sanctuary

c) Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary

d) Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park

Answer: C

Explanation

Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary

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

Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park

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

Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park

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

Malvan Marine Sanctuary

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

109. Pratyaksh Hanstantrit Labh (PAHAL) scheme sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following?

a) aimed to reduce diversion and eliminate duplicate or bogus LPG connections.

b) aimed at encouraging youth to participate in civic engagement for the general elections

c) aimed to Stop Illegal Wildlife Trafficking

d) aimed at discouraging unnecessary prescription and over-the-counter sale of antibiotics

Answer: A

Explanation

- The **Pratyaksh Hanstantrit Labh (**PAHAL) or **Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG** (DBTL) aims to reduce diversion and eliminate duplicate or bogus LPG connections.
- Under the PaHaL scheme, LPG cylinders are sold at market rates and entitled consumers get the subsidy directly into their bank accounts.
- This is done either through an Aadhaar linkage or a bank account linkage.

110. Which of the following statements about Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) is *incorrect?*

a) DICGC is a wholly owned subsidiary of RBI
b) It was established for the purpose of providing insurance of deposits and guaranteeing credit facilities.
c) DICGC insures all bank deposits including deposits of state and central government.
d) DICGC does not cover NBFC's deposits and Primary cooperative societies.

Answer: C

Explanation

- **Option A is correct:** Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is a **wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).** The functions of the DICGC are governed by the provisions of **'The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961'** (DICGC Act) and 'The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation General Regulations, 1961' framed by the **Reserve Bank of India** in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (3) of Section 50 of the said Act.
- **Option B is correct:** The preamble of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 states that it is an Act to provide for the establishment of a Corporation for the **purpose of insurance of deposits and guaranteeing of credit facilities** and for other matters connected therewith
- Each depositor in a bank is **insured upto a maximum of 5,00,000 (Rupees Five Lakhs)** for both principal and interest amount held by him
- With a view to **providing a greater measure of protection** to depositors in banks, the DICGC has raised the limit of insurance cover for depositors in insured banks from the

present level of **1 lakh to 5 lakh per depositor** with effect from February 4, 2020 with the approval of Government of India

Banks that are insured by the DICGC

- **Commercial Banks :** All commercial banks including **branches of foreign banks** functioning in India, local area banks and **regional rural banks** are insured by the DICGC
- **Cooperative Banks :** All State, Central and Primary cooperative banks, also called **urban cooperative banks**, functioning in States / Union Territories
- **Option D is correct:** Primary cooperative societies and **NBFCs deposits are not insured by the DICGC**

Exceptions

- The DICGC **insures all deposits such as savings, fixed, current**, recurring, etc. deposits **except the following types** of deposits

➢ Deposits of foreign Governments;

➢ **Option C is incorrect: Deposits of Central/State Governments**

➢ Inter-bank deposits;

➢ **Deposits of the State Land Development Banks** with the State co-operative bank

➢ Any amount due on account of and deposit received outside India

➢ Any amount, which has been **specifically exempted by the corporation** with the previous approval of Reserve Bank of India

111. Arrange the following Islands in Indian Ocean as one proceeds from north to south?

1. Seychelles
2. Mauritius
3. Comoros

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

a) 1-3-2

b) 3-1-2

c) 2-1-3

d) 3-2-1

Answer: A

Explanation

What's in the news?

- As part of yet another deployment undertaken by the Indian Navy since 2020 under Mission SAGAR, Indian Naval Ship Kesari entered the Port of Maputo, Mozambique recently.
- This is the eighth such deployment in consonance with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of **Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).**
- These deployments were conducted in solidarity with India's extended Maritime Neighbourhood and highlights the importance accorded by India to these special relationships.
- 500 Tons of food aid has been shipped by INS Kesari to support the efforts of Government of Mozambique to cope with ongoing drought and concurrent challenges of pandemic.
- INS Kesari, a Landing Ship Tank (Large) had undertaken similar mission in May – June 2020 to provide humanitarian and medical assistance to **Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros,** including deployment of Medical Assistance Teams of the Indian Navy in multiple locations.
- Since May 2020, the Indian Navy has deployed ships to 15 Friendly Foreign Countries under SAGAR missions. These deployments spanned over 215 days at sea have delivered a cumulative assistance of more than 3,000 MT of food aid, over 300 MT LMO, 900 Oxygen Concentrators and 20 ISO containers.

112. With reference to the Smart Cities Mission, consider the following statements.

1. It is an urban renewal and retrofitting program with the mission to develop 100 cities across the country making them citizen friendly and sustainable.
2. The implementation of the Mission at the City level will be done by the respective local governance institutions.

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

- Smart Cities Mission is an urban renewal and retrofitting program launched by the Government of India in 2015 with the mission to develop **100 cities across the country** making them citizen friendly and sustainable.
- The Smart Cities Mission is meant to set examples that can be replicated both within and outside the Smart City, catalysing the creation of similar Smart Cities in various regions and parts of the country.
- The strategic components of area-based development in the Smart Cities Mission are city improvement (retrofitting), city renewal (redevelopment) and city extension (greenfield development) plus a Pan-city initiative in which Smart Solutions are applied covering larger parts of the city.

Implementation

- The implementation of the Mission at the City level will be done by a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** created for the purpose.
- The SPV will plan, appraise, approve, release funds, implement, manage, operate, monitor and evaluate the Smart City development projects.
- Each smart city will have a SPV which will be headed by a full time CEO and have nominees of Central Government, State Government and ULB on its Board.

Key Objectives of the Mission

- To provide a **fillip to the development of new and innovative smart solutions** that directly impact the needs of cities;
- To ensure **availability of funding** for practice research of direct relevance to the outcomes desired under the missions;
- To make available a large body of **pilot-tested and proven smart solutions** that can be adopted by cities as per their specific needs; and
- To promote a **culture of innovation** within the urban sector.

Why in News?

- The Central Government has released more than 27 thousand crore rupees so far under the Smart Cities Mission. Over 22 thousand crore rupees has already been utilized out of the total released amount. Six thousand 452 projects worth more than one lakh 84 thousand crore rupees have been tendered so far.

113. With reference to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), consider the following statements.

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development.
2. The scheme aims at helping the rural poor by enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services.
3. Beneficiaries of the scheme are restricted to women with no exceptions.

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:** Aajeevika-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) in 2011.**

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Aided in part through investment support by the **World Bank,** the scheme aimed at helping the rural poor by enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services.
- NRLM has the mandate of reaching out to 100 million rural poor in 6 lakh villages across the country.
- **In 2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).**

Mission

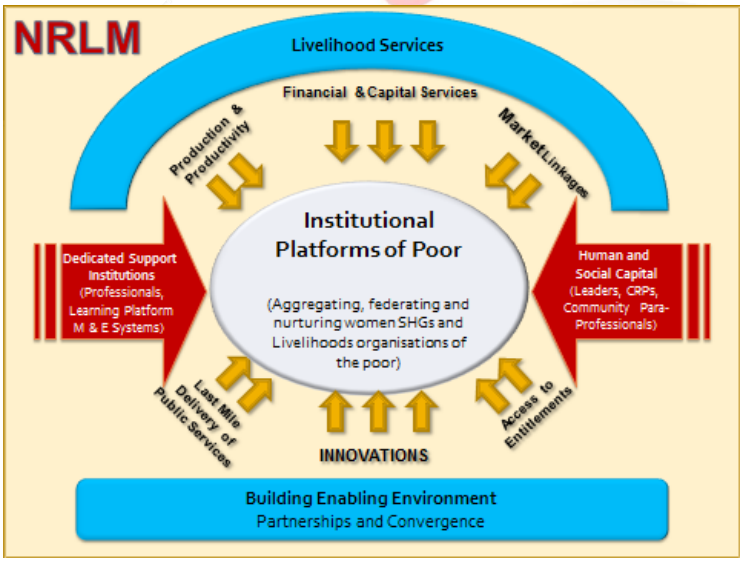
- The poor have innate capabilities to overcome poverty. DAY-NRLM believes in harnessing these innate capabilities of the poor and complements them with capacities (information, knowledge, skills, tools, finance and collectivization) to participate in the growing economy of the country.
- NRLM rests on **three major pillars – universal social mobilization, financial inclusion and livelihood enhancement.**

Implementation

- It works towards **bringing at least one member (preferably a woman) from all poor families into the Self Help Group (SHG) network.**
- The SHGs and their federations offer their members microfinance services such as – savings, credit, bank linkages, insurance, remittances, equity etc. They also offer collectivization and group activities. The SHGs offer social security and social action in various fronts including health, nutrition, food, gender, convergence etc., directly or through their federations.
- NRLM facilitates the SHGs to open and operate bank accounts and bank linkages. It also facilitates access to insurance to members. It encourages individual members too to open bank accounts.
- As the **Institutions of the Poor (IoP)** mature, they are facilitated to take up livelihoods/income-generating activities.
    - *SHGs, their federations at the village, cluster levels and beyond, and other collectives of the poor constitute IoP.*
- DAY-NRLM adopts a **demand driven approach,** enabling the States to formulate their own State specific poverty reduction action plans.

Beneficiaries

- NRLM's priority is to reach out to the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized. It **begins with targeting women** and they are considered as representatives of their households.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** In case of **extremely vulnerable persons** like Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), elders etc., NRLM mobilizes **both men and women.**
- The NRLM Target Households (NTH) are identified through the **Participatory Identification of Poor (PIP).** The PIP is a community-driven process where the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) themselves identify the poor in the village using participatory tools. The list of poor identified by the CBO is vetted by the Gram Sabha.



Why in the news?

- The government has launched a facility for **overdraft (OD) of Rs. 5,000/-** to verified SHG members under DAY – NRLM having accounts under the prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana. This facility has been initiated in pursuance of the announcement made by the Finance Minister in her budget speech of 2019-20.

114. Consider the following statements about Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme

1) The Scheme seeks to improve the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability Of all DISCOMs/ Power Departments including Private Sector DISCOMs.
2) The Scheme has a major focus on improving electricity supply for the farmers and for providing daytime electricity to them through solarization of agricultural feeders.

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

- In July 2021, the government launched a Reforms-based and Results-linked, Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Scheme seeks to **improve the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of all DISCOMs/ Power Departments excluding Private Sector DISCOMs.**
- It provides **conditional financial assistance** to DISCOMs for strengthening of supply infrastructure.
- The assistance will be based on meeting **pre-qualifying criteria** as well as upon achievement of basic minimum benchmarks by the DISCOM evaluated on the basis of an agreed evaluation framework tied to financial improvements.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Scheme has a major focus on **improving electricity supply for the farmers** and for **providing daytime electricity to them through solarization of agricultural feeders.**
- A key feature of the Scheme is to enable consumer empowerment by way of **prepaid smart metering** to be implemented in Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode. Smart meters would allow consumers to monitor their electricity consumption on a routine basis instead of monthly basis, which can help them in usage of electricity as per their own needs and in terms of the resources available.
- The Scheme would be available till the year **2025-26.**

Implementation

- Implementation of the Scheme would be based on the **action plan worked out for each state** rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Nodal agencies

- **Rural Electrification Corporation (REC)** and **Power Finance Corporation (PFC)** have been nominated as nodal agencies for facilitating implementation of the Scheme.

Scheme Objectives

- **Reduction of AT&C** (Aggregate Technical & Commercial) **losses** to pan-India levels of 12-15% by 2024-25.
- **Reduction of cost-revenue gap to zero** by 2024-25.
- **Developing Institutional Capabilities** for Modern DISCOMs.
- **Improvement in the quality, reliability, and affordability of power supply** to consumers through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient Distribution Sector.

Components

- Major components of the scheme includes
  - **Prepaid Smart Meters for all consumers except Agricultural consumers**
  - **Funding for feeder segregation for unsegregated feeders**
  - **Modernization of Distribution system in urban areas**
  - **Rural and Urban area System strengthening**

Special Category States

- All Special Category States including North-Eastern States of Sikkim and States/Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep will be treated as Special Category States.
- For **Prepaid Smart metering**, **grant of Rs 900 or 15%** of the cost per consumer meter worked out for the whole project, whichever is lower, shall be available for **"Other than Special Category" States.** For **"Special Category"** States, the corresponding grant would be **Rs 1350 or 22.5%** of the cost per consumer, whichever is lower.
- For works other than Smart metering, **maximum financial assistance** given to DISCOMs of **"Other than Special Category" States will be 60%** of the approved cost, while for the DISCOMs in **Special Category States**, the maximum financial assistance will be **90%** of the approved cost.

Why in News?

The Ministry of Power has reviewed the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.

115. The Mukurthi National Park, one of the habitats of Nilgiri tahr, is situated in

A. Kerala

B. Tamil Nadu

C. Karnataka

D. Goa

Answer: B

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 into the **Bhavani River (a tributary of Cauvery).**
- Major attraction of the park is **Nilgiri tahr** (endemic sheep, IUCN- Endangered).

116. Consider the following statements regarding Adaptation Fund.

1. It is an international fund that finances developing countries to adapt to the harmful effects of climate change.
2. It is set up under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
3. The World Bank serves as the trustee of the Adaptation Fund.

Which of the above given statements is/ are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 2 only

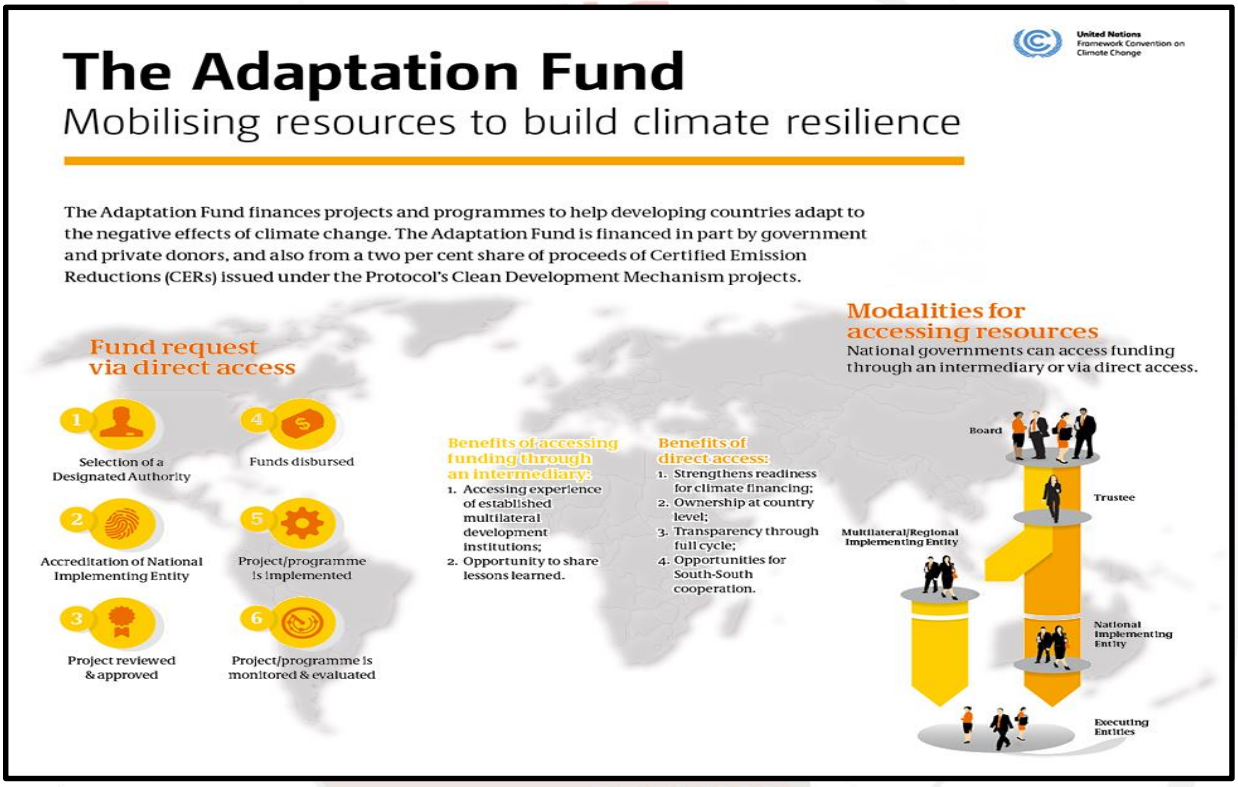
d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Explanation :

All the statements are correct.

- The Adaptation Fund is an international fund that finances projects and programs aimed at helping developing countries to adapt to the harmful effects of climate change.
- It is set up under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- The Adaptation Fund is managed by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB).



- The secretariat of the Adaptation Fund Board provides research, advisory, administrative, and an array of other services to the Board, and consists of an international staff based in Washington, DC.
- The World Bank serves as the trustee of the Adaptation Fund.
- The Adaptation Fund was initiated to be primarily financed by a share of proceeds from clean development mechanism (CDM) project activities and also with funds from other sources.

Clean Development Mechanism

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), defined in Article 12 of the Protocol, allows a country with an emission-reduction or emission-limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to implement an emission-reduction project in developing countries.

Such projects can earn saleable certified emission reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO2, which can be counted towards meeting Kyoto targets.

A CDM project activity might involve, for example, a rural electrification project using solar panels or the installation of more energy-efficient boilers.

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

117. With reference to 'Global Environment Facility', which of the following statements is/are correct?

a) It serves as financial mechanism for 'Convention on Biological Diversity' and 'United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change'

b) It undertakes scientific research on environmental issues at global level

c) It is an agency under OECD to facilitate the transfer of technology and funds to underdeveloped countries with specific aim to protect their environment.

d) Both (a) and (b)

Answer: D

Explanation:

- **Statement C is incorrect:** Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an **independent financial organization in the environment sector** that provides assistance or grants to both government and non-government entities for the implementation of projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants.
- The GEF Trust Fund was established on the eve of the **1992 Rio Earth Summit**, to help tackle the earth's most pressing environmental problems.
- **Statement A and B are correct:** The GEF unites 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.
- The GEF serves as a **"financial mechanism" to five conventions:**

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs),
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and

  Minamata Convention on Mercury.

118. It is a climate change mitigation solution developed by Parties to the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It incentivises developing countries to keep their forests standing by offering result based payments for actions to remove or reduce forest carbon emissions.

The above description refers to which of the following?

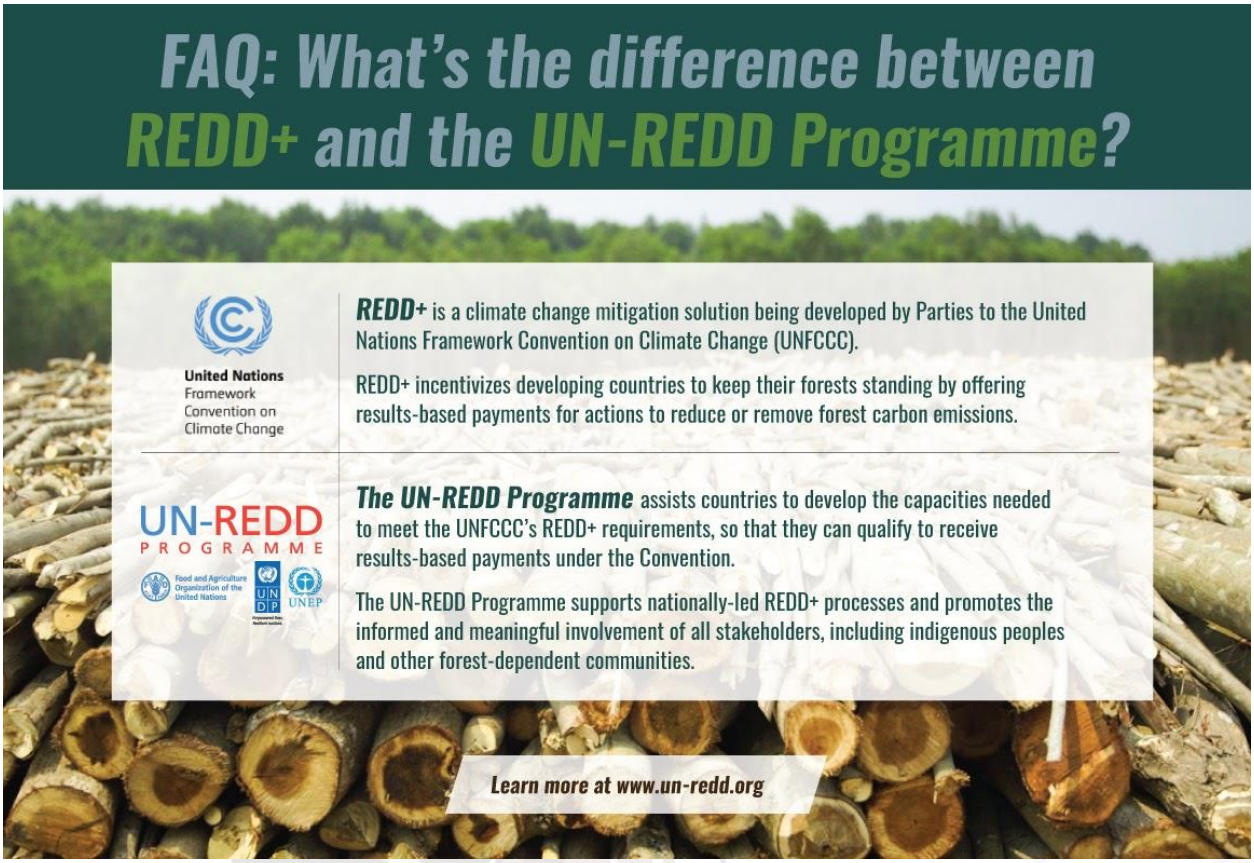
a) Kyoto Protocol
b) REDD+ initiative
c) Stockholm Convention
d) Montreal Protocol

Answer: B

Explanation:

REDD+ Initiative:

- **Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)** is a mechanism developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- It creates a **financial value for the carbon stored** in forests by offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.
- Developing countries would receive **results-based payments for results-based actions.**
- REDD+ goes beyond simply deforestation and forest degradation and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.



119. Consider the following statements about Magnetar

1) A magnetar is a rare compact type of neutron star teeming with high energy and magnetism.

2) They experience violent eruptions in the form of transient X-ray pulses which are several orders higher than that of the Sun.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only

b) 2 only

c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

- Both the statements are correct:

- A **magnetar** is a **rare compact type of neutron star** teeming with **high energy and magnetism.** They experience **violent eruptions or intense bursts** in the form of transient **X-ray pulses** which are several orders higher than that of the Sun.
- Magnetars are relatively rare objects, with only about thirty having been spotted within the Milky Way so far.

Why in News:

- An international group of **researchers** has **succeeded** in **measuring** for the first time the **characteristics of a flare on a distant magnetar.**
- The team includes astronomers from Norway, Spain and the Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital.
- The magnetar they have studied is about 13 million light years away, in the direction of the NGC 253, a prominent galaxy in the Sculptor group of galaxies.
- Scientists involved in the research say that the single event released energy equivalent to what the Sun would radiate in one lakh years.

How magnetars form

- During the course of their evolution, massive stars – with **masses around 10-25 times the mass of the Sun** – eventually **collapse and shrink to form very compact objects called neutron stars.** A **subset of these neutron stars** are the so-called **magnetars** which **possess intense magnetic fields**. These are **highly dense and have breathtakingly high rotation speed**s – they have rotational periods that can be just 0.3 to 12.0 seconds.
- **Magnetars have high magnetic fields** in the range of 10^{15} gauss and they **emit energy** in the range given by **luminosities** of 10^{37} – 10^{40} joules per second. Compare this to the luminosity of the sun which is in the order of 10^{26} joules per second.

Significance of the discovery

- **Eruptions** in **magnetars** are **believed** to be due to **instabilities in their magnetosphere,** or "**starquakes" produced in their crust -** a rigid, elastic layer about one kilometre thick. This c**auses waves in the magnetosphere**, and **interaction** between these waves **causes dissipation of energy.**
- This **instability triggers Alfven waves** that are **also common in the Sun**. The **interactions between multiple Alfven waves** ultimately **release massive energies**, appearing as giant flares lasting for a few milliseconds.

- Magnetars are **very difficult to observe** when they are silent. It is **only during a flare** that **they can be observed,** and these flares are so short-lived that it presents a formidable problem.
- **This is the first extragalactic magnetar** that has been **thoroughly researched.**
- **Comprehension** of these eruptions can **give information** on the **structure** of these **enigmatic things.**

  The **finding** might open the **path** for future **research** into **how magnetic stresses** are **generated around neutron stars.**

120. Consider the following statements regarding Dudhwa national park:

1. It is the only national park located in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
2. This national park is located in sub-Himalayan area called terai belt.
3. Previously, the region was abode of Great One-horned Rhinoceros, but now it is not found in this national park.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) All the above\

Answer: B

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct:

It is the only national park in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Statement 2 is correct:

This region comes under the sub Himalayan area called Terai belt. This Terai region is acknowledged as the most endangered ecosystems throughout the world. The park is also lying nearby the Indo-Nepal boundary having together the two most enchanting sanctuaries of the region called, Katerniaghat and Kishanpur wildlife sanctuaries to embody the beautiful greenery and forest area across the Terai region.

Statement 3 is incorrect:

Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh, a mixed landscape of Terai and wet grasslands resemble the landscape of Kaziranga National Park. Hence, in 1984 it was decided to rehabilitate Rhinos in Dudhwa and have them teeming the landscape as before. In 1984, two male and three female rhinos were transported from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam to Dudhwa National Park. Sadly, two of the rhinos couldn't survive the journey and died. In 1985, four more female rhinos were translocated from Nepal. An enclosure of roughly 27 square kilometres was created in Kakraha, Sonaripur range for the rhinos. The enclosure kept rhinos in the same space thus speeding the mating process and at the same time acted as a safety barrier. The program was a success and the enclosure has 30 rhinos as of 2018

121. Consider the following statements about the PM KUSUM scheme

1. The scheme aims at installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar and other renewable power plants in the country.
2. It was launched 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**

Sol:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evem Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme was launched in 2019 for installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar and other renewable power plants in the country.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It was launched by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.**
- Under the Kusum scheme farmers, panchayat, co-operative societies can apply to plant a solar pump. The total cost involved in this scheme is divided into three categories in which the Government will help farmers.
- Government will provide a subsidy of 60% to farmers and 30% of the cost will be given by Government in the form of loans. Farmers will only have to give 10% of the total cost of the project. The electricity generated from the solar panel can be sold by the farmers.

- The scheme consists of three components:
  - **Component-A:** 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.
  - **Component-B:** Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
  - **Component-C:** Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
- The scheme aims to add solar and other renewable capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022 with total central financial support of Rs. 34,422 Crore including service charges to the implementing agencies.

Benefits of the Scheme:

- The Scheme will have substantial environmental impact in terms of savings of CO2 emissions. All three components of the Scheme combined together are likely to result in saving about 27 million tonnes of CO2 emission per annum.
- Further, Component-B of the Scheme on standalone solar pumps may result in saving of 1.2 billion liters of diesel per annum and associated savings in the foreign exchange due to reduction of import of crude oil.

  The scheme has direct employment potential. Besides increasing self-employment the proposal is likely to generate employment opportunities equivalent to 6.31 lakh job years for skilled and unskilled workers.

122. Consider the following statements about the Production linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

1. Its objective is to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in the Indian manufacturing sector.
2. At present, the scheme is restricted for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **A**

Sol:

- In April last year, the central government had for the first time notified the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for **mobile phones and allied component manufacturing.**
- Under the scheme, 4% to 6% incentive will be provided on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India. These incentives will be offered for a period of 5 years.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** In November, the PLI scheme was **expanded to include 12 more sectors** such as automobile and automobile components, pharmaceutical drugs, textile products, food products, high efficiency solar photo-voltaic modules, white goods such as air conditioners and LED bulbs, and speciality steel products.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** Its objective is to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in the manufacturing sector in the country.

123. Government of India has constituted a high-level inter-ministerial Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) to generate a coordinated response on climate change matters that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement. The committee is headed by?

A. Prime Minister
B. Minister of Home Affairs
C. Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
D. Secretary, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Answer: **D**

Sol:

- The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding international treaty** on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on December 12, 2015 and **entered into force on November 4, 2016.**
- Its goal is to **limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius,** compared to pre-industrial levels.
- To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach a global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a **climate neutral world by mid-century.**

- The Paris Agreement is a landmark in the multilateral climate change process because, for the **first time, a binding agreement brings all nations into a common cause** to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

<u>How does the Paris Agreement work?</u>

NDC explainer:

- Implementation of the Paris Agreement requires economic and social transformation, based on the best available science.
- The Paris Agreement works on a **5- year cycle of increasingly ambitious climate action** carried out by countries.
- Countries submit their plans for climate action known as **nationally determined contributions (NDCs).**
- In their NDCs, countries communicate actions they will take to reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions in order to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- Countries also communicate in the NDCs actions they will take to build resilience to adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures.

Long-Term Strategies:

- To better frame the efforts towards the long-term goal, the Paris Agreement invites countries to formulate and submit **long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS).**
- LT-LEDS provide the long-term horizon to the NDCs. Unlike NDCs, they are **not mandatory.** Nevertheless, they place the NDCs into the context of countries' long-term planning and development priorities, providing a vision and direction for future development.

Tracking Progress:

- With the Paris Agreement, countries established an **enhanced transparency framework (ETF).**
- Under the ETF, starting in 2024, countries will report transparently on actions taken and progress in climate change mitigation, adaptation measures and support provided or received. It also provides for international procedures for the review of the submitted reports.

- The information gathered through the ETF will **feed into the Global stocktake** which will assess the collective progress towards the long term climate goals. This will lead to recommendations for countries to set more ambitious plans in the next round.

What is Achieved So Far?

- Although climate change action needs to be massively increased to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, the years since its entry into force have already **sparked low carbon solutions and new markets.**
- More and more countries, regions, cities and companies are establishing **carbon neutrality targets**.
- **Zero-carbon solutions** are becoming competitive across economic sectors representing 25% of emissions. This trend is **most noticeable in the power and transport sectors** and has created many new business opportunities for early movers. By 2030, zero-carbon solutions could be competitive in sectors representing over 70% of global emissions.

AIPA of India

- In another move that re-affirms India's seriousness to 'walk the talk' on climate change, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has constituted a **high-level inter-ministerial Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA)** under the **chairmanship of Secretary, MoEFCC.**
- The purpose of AIPA is to **generate a coordinated response on climate change matters** that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement including its Nationally Determined Contributions.
- Senior officials from fourteen ministries will serve as Members to AIPA who will oversee the progress in implementation of India's NDC and receive periodic information updates to monitor, review and revisit climate goals to fulfil the requirements of the Paris Agreement.
- Another key function of AIPA would be to **operate as a National Authority to regulate carbon markets in India** under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, formulate guidelines for consideration of projects or activities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, issue **guidelines on carbon pricing, market mechanism**, **and other similar instruments** that have a bearing on climate change and NDCs.

- It will take note of the contributions of the private sector as well as multi-/bi-lateral agencies in the field of climate change and provide guidance for aligning their climate actions with national priorities.
- The **year 2021 would mark the beginning of implementation of the Paris Agreement** and the constitution of AIPA is central to strengthening the national systems and institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring of climate actions.
- It will also ensure that India maintains its climate leadership as one the few countries in the world whose climate actions are consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- As education with skills is the need of the hour, the government launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) in 2019. It aims to **cover 50 lakh students by 2022 by providing 'on the job work exposure' and stipend.**
- SHREYAS is a programme conceived for students in degree courses, **primarily non-technical,** with a view to introduce employable skills into their learning, promote apprenticeship as integral to education and also amalgamate employment facilitating efforts of the Government into the education system so that clear pathways towards employment opportunities are available to students during and after their graduation.

124. With reference to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, consider the following statements.

1. It was reached between Iran and G 7 countries in 2015.
2. According to the deal, Iran was mandated to redesign, convert, and reduce its nuclear facilities in order to lift all nuclear-related economic sanctions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: **B**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was reached between Iran and six world powers known as

the **P5+1** (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) in July 2015.

What did Iran have to do to meet the requirements of the deal?

- **Statement 2 is correct:** According to this framework, Iran would **redesign, convert, and reduce its nuclear facilities** in order to lift all nuclear-related economic sanctions.
- The deal also allowed for the tracking of nuclear activities with robust transparency and inspections by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).**

U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA

- Former US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, claiming it did not address Iran's ballistic missile programme or its roles in Middle Eastern conflicts.
- The US also re-imposed tough economic sanctions against Iran.
- Reacting to the US' withdrawal, Iran announced that it will breach its limits set on its nuclear activity by the 2015 deal.

125. Consider the following statements about the International Space Station (ISS).

1. The ISS is solely owned by the U.S.
2. It is placed in a Low Earth Orbit.

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**

Sol:

- The International Space Station (ISS) is the **largest single structure humans ever put into space**.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The ISS is in a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) about 400 km to 420 km above Earth's surface
- Its main construction was completed between 1998 and 2011, although the station continually evolved to include new missions and experiments.

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** The ISS includes contributions from 15 nations. **NASA** (United States), **Roscosmos** (Russia) and the **European Space Agency** are the major partners of the space station who contribute most of the funding; the other partners are the **Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency** and the **Canadian Space Agency.**
- The ISS serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, human biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, and other fields.
- The station is divided into **two sections**, the **Russian Orbital Segment (ROS),** which is operated by Russia, and the **United States Orbital Segment (USOS),** which is shared by many nations.

126. Consider the following statements about the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.

1. The scheme provides an annual financial assistance of Rs 6,000/-.
2. The scheme is restricted to small and marginal farmers' families holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A:) 1 only

B:) 2 only

C:) Both 1 and 2

D:) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **A**

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from Government of India.
- **Aim :** To augment the income of the farmers by providing income support to all landholding farmers' families across the country.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to **cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.**

- Under the Scheme an amount of Rs. 6000/- per year is transferred in three 4-monthly installments of Rs. 2000/- directly into the bank accounts of the farmers, subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher income status
- **Eligibility :** All landholder farmer's families in the country are eligible for the PM-Kisan Scheme subject to the prevalent exclusion criteria. **Farmers who do not own any land are not eligible for this scheme.**
- **Excluded from the scheme**
  - Institutional land holders,
  - Farmer families holding constitutional posts,
  - Serving or retired officers and employees of state/central government as well as PSUs and government autonomous bodies.
  - Professionals like doctors, engineers and lawyers as well as retired pensioners with a monthly pension of over Rs 10,000 and those who paid income tax in the last assessment year.
- **Identification of beneficiaries :** The responsibility of identifying the eligible beneficiary farmers and uploading their data on PM-KISAN portal lies entirely with the state governments.

  https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1786069

127. With reference to the Paris climate agreement, which one of the following statements is not correct?

A:) The agreement reflects the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR).

B:) It is a legally binding global climate change agreement which entered into force in 2010.

C:) Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

D:) The Paris Agreement requires all Parties to put forward their best efforts through nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Answer: **B**

Sol:

- **Statement B is incorrect:** The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding** global climate change agreement, adopted at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015. The Agreement entered into force in **2016.**
- **Statement C is correct:** The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century **well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels** and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- **Statement A is correct:** A key feature of the Paris Agreement has been the way the agreement reflects the principle of **'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR)**. This principle acknowledges the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change.
- Under the Paris Agreement, developed countries are under obligation to mobilise **at least $100 billion every year** from the year 2020 in climate finance meant for the developing world. This amount has to be revised upwards after five years.
- **Statement D is correct:** The Paris Agreement requires all Parties to put forward their best efforts through **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** and to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead. This includes requirements that all Parties report regularly on their emissions and on their implementation efforts.

India's NDCs for Paris agreement

- To reduce the **emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent** by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- To achieve about **40 per cent** cumulative electric power installed capacity from **non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030**, with the help of transfer of technology and low-cost international finance, including from the Green Climate Fund.
- To create an **additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent** through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1785808

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

1. GI tag can be given for industrial goods only.
2. The registration of GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.
3. India enacted its GI legislation to comply with India's obligations to the International Monetary Fund.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A:) 1 only

B:) 2 only

C:) 2 and 3 only

D:) None of them are correct

Answer: **B**

Sol:

- A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** It is given for **agricultural, natural and manufactured goods**. **Darjeeling tea** became the first GI tagged product in India.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The registration of GI is valid for **10 years** after which it needs to be renewed.
- In India, GI is given under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- The Act is administered by the **Controller General of Patents, Designs & TradeMarks, GI (CGPDTM-India)** under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India enacted its GI legislation to comply with India's obligations under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights **(TRIPS) agreement**.
- GI registration gives to the registered proprietor and its authorized users, the legal right to the exclusive use of the GI and also the right to obtain relief in case of its infringement.
- GI is a **collective intellectual property right** and is thus owned by all the producers within the defined GI territory unlike intellectual properties like patent and trademark which are

owned by an individual or a business entity.

Benefits of registration of geographical indications

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

129. Dihing Patkai National Park, often known as "The Amazon of the east", is situated in the state of

A:) Assam

B:) West Bengal

C:) Arunachal Pradesh

D:) Sikkim

Answer: **A**

Sol:

- Dihing Patkai National Park is located in **Assam.** It encompasses the erstwhile Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, the Jeypore Reserve Forest and the western block of the Upper Dihing Reserve Forest.
- Dehing is the name of the river that flows through the reserve and Patkai is the hill at the foot of which the sanctuary lies.
- The Dehing Patkai forest area is often referred to as **"The Amazon of the east"** owing to its large area and thick wet tropical evergreen forests.
- Apart from the fact that it is a contiguous patch of rainforest, it is also the place with the highest concentration of the rare endangered **White Winged Wood Duck.** It is also a **major elephant habitat** and has 310 species of butterflies.

  The Dehing Patkai Forest is one of the most important forests of Assam in terms of **orchid diversity.** So far, 101 species of orchids within 45 genera have been recorded there.

130. Consider the following statements about Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).

1. It was launched to translate the comprehensive vision of Mahatma Gandhi about an ideal Indian village into reality, keeping in view the present context.
2. Under SAGY, each Member of Parliament adopts a Gram Panchayat and guides its holistic progress giving importance for social development at par with infrastructure.

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:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) was launched in **2014** with the aim to **translate the comprehensive vision of Mahatma Gandhi about an ideal Indian village into reality**, keeping in view the present context.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Under SAGY, **each Member of Parliament adopts a Gram Panchayat and guides its holistic progress giving importance for social development at par with infrastructure.**
- By involving villagers and leveraging scientific tools, a **village development plan** is prepared under the leadership of a Member of Parliament. The distinct feature of this Yojana is that it is:
  - Demand Driven
  - Inspired by Society
  - Based on People's Participation.

Objective of SAGY

- To trigger processes which lead to a **holistic development of the identified Gram Panchayats.**
- To **substantially improve the standard of living and quality of life of all section of the population** through -
  - Improved basic amenities
  - Higher productivity

- Enhanced human development
- Better livelihood opportunity
- Reduced disparities
- Access to right and entitlements
- Wider social mobilization
- Enriched social capital

- To generate **models of local level development and effective local government** which can motivate and inspire neighboring Gram Panchayats to learn and adapt.
- To nurture the identified Adarsh Grams as **schools of local development** to train other gram panchayats.

Different approach to achieve the objectives of SAGY

- Leveraging the leadership, capacity, commitment and the energy of the Member of Parliament to develop model Gram Panchayat.
- Engaging with and mobilizing the community for participatory local level development.
- Converging different government programs and private and voluntary initiatives to achieve comprehensive development in tune with people's aspiration and local potential.
- Building partner with a voluntary organization, co-operative and academic and research institutions.
- Focusing on outcomes and sustainability.

How to select a village for Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana?

- A **Gram panchayat** would be the basic unit. It will have a population of **3000-5000 in plain areas** and **1000-3000 in the hilly, tribal and difficult area.**
- The MP would be free to identify a suitable Gram Panchayat to be developed as Adarsh Gram, **other than his/her own village or that of his/her spouse.**
- The MP will identify one Gram Panchayat to be taken up immediately, and two other to be taken up little later.
- **Lok Sabha MP** has to choose a Gram Panchayat from **within his/her constituency** and for **Rajya Sabha MP** a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of a district of his/her choice in the **State from which he/she is elected.**

Activities in an Adarsh Gram

- An Adarsh Gram should evolve out of people's shared vision, using their capacities and available resources to the best extent possible, duly facilitated by the MP, the Gram Panchayat, civil society and the government machinery.
- Naturally, the elements of an Adarsh Gram would be context specific. However, it is still possible to broadly identify the important activities. They would include:
  - Personal Development
  - Social Development
  - Human Development
  - Economic Development
  - Environmental Development
  - Social Security
  - Basic amenities & services
  - Good Governance.

131. Consider the following statements about the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act

1. Gram Sabhas have been given the right of ownership of minor forest produce.
2. Gram Sabhas can manage minor and major water bodies in the Scheduled area

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: **A**

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct and statement 2 is incorrect

About PESA Act

- The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, came into existence for **ensuring tribal self-rule for people living in fifth scheduled areas of India.**

- The PESA Act conferred the **absolute powers to Gram Sabha**, whereas state legislature has given an **advisory role** to ensure the proper functioning of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.
- While the **73rd and the 74th Amendments** to the Indian Constitution passed in 1992 took the three-tier Panchayati Raj governance structure to rural and urban parts of the country, the Adivasi-dominated areas listed under the fifth schedule of the Constitution were **kept out of the purview of the Panchayati Raj Acts.**
- The PESA Act, enacted in 1996, took local self-governance rules to the areas listed under the fifth schedule. The fifth schedule areas, which deals with the administration of the districts dominated by the **Adivasi communities,** is in force in **10 states of the country.** These states include Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Features of PESA Act, 1996

- In pursuance of this objective, PESA **empowers gram sabhas to play a key role in approving development plans and controlling all social sectors.**
- The PESA is considered to be the **backbone of tribal legislation in India.**
- State governments were required to amend their respective Panchayat Raj Acts without making any law that would be inconsistent with the mandate of PESA.
- **Following legal powers** have been given to Gram Sabha under PESA Act:
  - **Safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs** of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution.
  - **Approve plans, programmes and projects** for social and economic development before such plans, programmes and projects are taken up for implementation by the Panchayat at the village level.
  - **Identification or selection of persons as beneficiaries** under the poverty alleviation and other programmes.
  - **Right to be consulted before making acquisition of land** in the Scheduled Areas for development projects and before re-settling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled Areas.
  - Right to plan and manage **minor water bodies** in the Scheduled Areas.
- **Hence, statement 2 is incorrect**

- Recommendations prior to **grant of prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals** and for grant of concession for the exploitation of minor minerals by auction in the Scheduled Areas.
- Power to **enforce prohibition or to regulate or restrict the sale and consumption of any intoxicant.**
- **Ownership of minor forest produce.**
- **Hence, Statement 1 is correct**
- Power to prevent alienation of land in the Scheduled Areas and to restore any unlawfully alienated land of a Scheduled Tribe.
- Power to **manage village markets.**
- Power to exercise **control over money lending to the Scheduled Tribes.**
- Power to exercise **control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors.**
- Power to **control over local plans and resources** for such plans including tribal sub-plans.

- The PESA Act thus enables **gram sabhas to maintain a safety net over their rights and surroundings** against external or internal conflicts.

Present Status of Act

- However, the law remains disempowered as **40% of the states under its purview have not been able to frame their rules for its implementation** even after 25 years of its existence.
- Once considered as one of the most powerful legislation supporting the **Adivasi community which constitutes around 9% of India's population**, a total of four states – Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha have not even framed the rules yet.
- But even in the states where the rules were formulated, the situation is not different. States were supposed to amend their law incorporating the provisions of PESA but even though some states managed to formulate the rules they performed quite poorly on ensuring their implementation.

Pathalgadi Movement

- A study conducted by the **Indian Institute of Public Administration** (2017) in six districts of three states – Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, highlights the **poor implementation of the PESA Act.**

- For example: In the Khunti district of Jharkhand, 65% of people whose land was acquired in 2017-18 said they were not even asked about it. From the same Khunti district, the **Pathalgadi movement** began and spread to several other districts and also to neighbouring states like Odisha and Chhattisgarh in 2017-2018.
- Pathalgadi is a practice adopted by many tribal villages to **declare their gram sabha as the only sovereign authority**, as per laws applicable in areas under fifth schedule of the Constitution.
- Under this practice, huge stone plaques, called Pathalgadi in the local dialect, were put up outside tribal settlements stating that laws made by the Parliament or the state Assembly were not applicable in the region, besides warning outsiders from entering, wandering, living or settling down in the village.
- The movement was, however, quelled in 2018, following police action and arrest of its leaders, most of whom were charged with sedition.

Why in News?

- The Chhattisgarh government has started the process to frame the rules to implement the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.
- Since the PESA Act was passed, six states – Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat – have made rules while Chhattisgarh , Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand have yet to do so for implementation of the Act.

132. With reference to the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, which one of the following statements is not correct?

A. It is a constitutional body

B. It is a non-permanent body

C. It is an independent body

D. It gives advise on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

Answer: **A**

Sol:

Statement A is incorrect.

EAC-PM

- Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) is a **non-constitutional, non-permanent and independent body** constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.
- The Terms of Reference of EAC-PM include analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon, addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister.
- These could be either **suo-motu or on reference** from the Prime Minister or anyone else.
- The chairman is appointed from time to time when the body is constituted.

Why in News?

- A meeting of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) was held recently.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/eac-pm-takes-up-issue-of-anaemia-spike-in-nfhs-5/articleshow/88578896.cms

133. With reference to the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, consider the following statements.

1. It is only for domestic companies.
2. Incentives are given for incremental sales
3. The scheme now covers mobile phones

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. None of them are correct

Answer: **C**

Sol:

About the scheme

- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) aims to give companies **incentives on incremental sales from products manufactured in domestic units.** Apart from **inviting foreign**

companies to set shop in India, the scheme also aims to **encourage local companies to set up or expand existing manufacturing units.**

- **Hence statement 1 is incorrect and statement 2 is correct.**

- In April last year, the central government had for the first time notified the PLI scheme for **mobile phones and allied component manufacturing.**
- **Hence statement 3 is correct**
- As a part of the scheme, companies which set up new mobile and specified equipment manufacturing units or expanded their present units would get **incentives of 4 to 6 per cent**, after they achieve their investment and production value target for each year.
- It aimed at **making India a hub for manufacturing and exports.**
- In November, the government announced **expansion of the PLI scheme to include 12 more sectors** such as automobile and automobile components, pharmaceutical drugs, textile products, food products, high efficiency solar photo-voltaic modules, white goods such as air conditioners and LED bulbs, and speciality steel products.

Why is the production linked scheme needed?

- According to experts, the idea of PLI is important as the government cannot continue making investments in these **capital intensive sectors** as they need **longer times to start giving the returns.** Instead, what it can do is to invite global companies with adequate capital to set up capacities in India.
- At this point, if the government can focus on **labour intensive sectors** like textiles, it would be really helpful to boost the economy.

Why in News?

- The Government approved the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Textiles, with an approved outlay of Rs. 10683 crore over a five year period.

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1785855

134. Which of the following countries if associated with the term "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)"

A. Iraq
B. North Korea
C. India
D. Iran

Answer: **D**

Sol:

- **The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**, more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, was reached between Iran and six world powers known as the **P5+1** (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) in July 2015.

What did Iran have to do to meet the requirements of the deal?

- According to this framework, Iran would **redesign, convert, and reduce its nuclear facilities** in order to lift all nuclear-related economic sanctions.
- The deal also allowed for the tracking of nuclear activities with robust transparency and inspections by the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).**

U.S. withdrawal from JCPOA

- Former US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, claiming it did not address Iran's ballistic missile programme or its roles in Middle Eastern conflicts.
- The US also re-imposed tough economic sanctions against Iran. Iran reacted by violating many of the deal's restrictions on its nuclear programme.

Why in News?

- Iran said nuclear talks that are set to resume in Vienna should focus on lifting sanctions on the Islamic republic and “guarantees” that the U.S. will return to the fold.
- Negotiations to salvage the 2015 Iran nuclear deal resumed in late November, after a five-month hiatus following the election of ultraconservative Iran President Ebrahim Raisi. The talks seek to bring back the United States, after it withdrew from the accord in 2018 under then President Donald Trump and began imposing sanctions on Iran.

https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/tehran-seeks-assurances-as-vienna-nuclear-talks-resume/article38051078.ece

135. Consider the following statements about Electoral Bonds.

1. It is available at all the Pubic Sector Banks(PSBs)
2. A citizen of India as well as a foreign national can buy them

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**

Sol:

Statement 1 and 2 is incorrect

What are Electoral Bonds?

- An electoral bond is designed to be an **interest-free bearer instrument** like a **Promissory Note** — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand.
- It can be purchased by any **citizen of India or a body incorporated in India.** A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
  - **Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- The electoral bonds were announced in the **2017 Union Budget.**
- 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.**
  - **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
- They can be bought by the donor with a **KYC-compliant account.**

Features

- 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.
- The donor will remain **anonymous.** The electoral bonds will **not bear the name of the donor.** The intention is to ensure that all the donations made to a party will be accounted for in the balance sheets **without exposing the donor details to the public.**
- Political parties are allotted a verified account by the Election Commission and all the electoral bond transactions are done through this account only.

- **Only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951** and have **secured no less than one per cent votes** in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, are eligible to receive electoral bonds.
- 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 a criminal case by any law enforcement agency.**

Criticisms

- The key critique is that, for something meant to bring transparency to the system, electoral bonds actually make political funding **more opaque – but only for the public.** Companies don't have to say who they are donating money to and parties don't need to say from whom they're getting the cash.
- Experts have said this undercuts the freedom of political information, which is an integral element of **Article 19(1)(a)** of the Constitution (the free expression clause).
- Prior to 2017, **Companies Act, 2013**, stipulated that a company can donate **only up to 7.5% of its average profit of the last three years**. Now, through the electoral bonds, there is **no limit** to the amount companies can donate, and the requirement for such firms to **have existed for the last three years on a profit-making basis** has also been deleted.
- The implication is that even **loss-making companies or shell companies** can be used to purchase electoral bonds.
- In 2016 and 2017, **amendments were made to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010**, with retrospective effect. Thus, **enabling the Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies to make donations to political parties** through electoral bonds.
- This allows **anonymous financing by foreign entities** opening Indian elections to the influence of foreign interests.

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Election Commission** had both said the sale of electoral bonds had become an avenue for shell corporations and entities to park illicit money and even proceeds of bribes with political parties.
- The Election Commission of India criticised electoral bonds saying it would **wreck transparency** in political funding and allow for **unchecked foreign funding** of Indian political parties.
- However, the government defended the scheme, saying it allowed anonymity to political donors to protect them from "political victimisation".

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Finance released details about the electoral bonds scheme.
  https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1786345

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