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Daily MCQs: 13-05-2024

1. Katchatheevu Island is a disputed territory between India and

- A) Pakistan
- B) Maldives
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Bangladesh

2. India's first Dark Sky Reserve proposed to be established in

- A) Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh
- B) Hanle, Ladakh
- C) Thar Desert, Rajasthan
- D) Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand

3. 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

4. Consider the following statements about NISAR

- 1) It is an Earth-observation satellite developed by the European Space Agency (ESA).
- 2) The primary objective of the mission is to study the composition of Mars' atmosphere.

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

5. The Enforcement Directorate is responsible for the enforcement of which of the following Acts?

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- 1) The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)
- 2) The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)
- 3) The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)

Select the correct answer using the codes given below

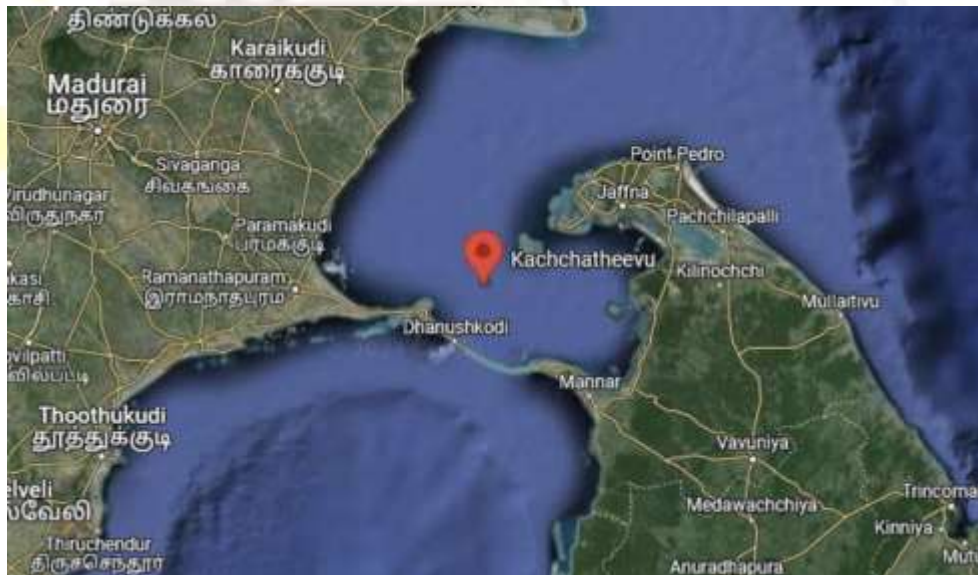
- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1,2 and 3

Solutions:

1. Answer: C

Explanation

- Katchatheevu Island, a 285-acre stretch, is located about **33 kilometres from the Indian coast**, in the **Palk Strait** between Rameswaram in India and Sri Lanka.
- Fishermen from both countries used the Katchatheevu Island, which was initially part of the **Madras Presidency**.



- Katchatheevu had been a **disputed territory** between India and Sri Lanka since the British era. A dispute broke out again after Independence **over fishing rights around the island**.
- The Central government led by **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** agreed to cede it to the island nation under the **1974 "Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime Agreement."**
- The island had little strategic value then, but over the last decade, geopolitical dimensions changed due to the **rising clout of China** and its growing influence over Sri Lanka, making it a **location of strategic importance for India**.

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2. Answer: B

Explanation

- The **Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR)** is India's first Dark Sky Reserve situated in Eastern Ladakh.
 - *A Dark Sky Reserve is public or private land with a **distinguished nocturnal environment and starry nights** that has been **developed responsibly to prevent light pollution**.*
- HDSR aims to control man-made light pollution in the area in order to preserve the pristine dark skies for **astronomical research**.



- The Reserve is promoted as a **tourist destination** for enjoying the night sky, and also helps in **socio-economic development** of the local villages.
- The site is also home to the **Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO)** and hosts many professional telescopes due to its dark skies and dry weather.
 - Situated at 14,000 ft above sea level, IAO is laid out on the mountain called **Digpa-Ratsa Ri, aka Mt Saraswati**.
 - IAO houses the **Major Atmospheric Cherenkov Experiment Telescope (MACE)** built by a consortium of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, the Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. and the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA).
 - Its goal is to **detect Cherenkov radiation** from space. This is a special kind of light from **gamma rays**, or the most energetic sources of radiation, that can **result from dying stars or several galactic events**.
 - The IAO provides **multiple vantage points to observe a range of cosmic phenomena and investigate the mysteries of the universe**.

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3. Answer: B

Explanation

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

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The FCRA 2010 regulates the acceptance and utilization 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 fulfil definite criteria to be eligible for foreign funds.
- The registration is initially **valid for five years** and it can be renewed subsequently if they comply with all norms.
- Registered associations can receive foreign contributions for **social, educational, religious, economic and cultural purposes.**
- Filing of annual returns, on the lines of Income Tax, is compulsory.

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 organization.

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

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- Organizations 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%**.

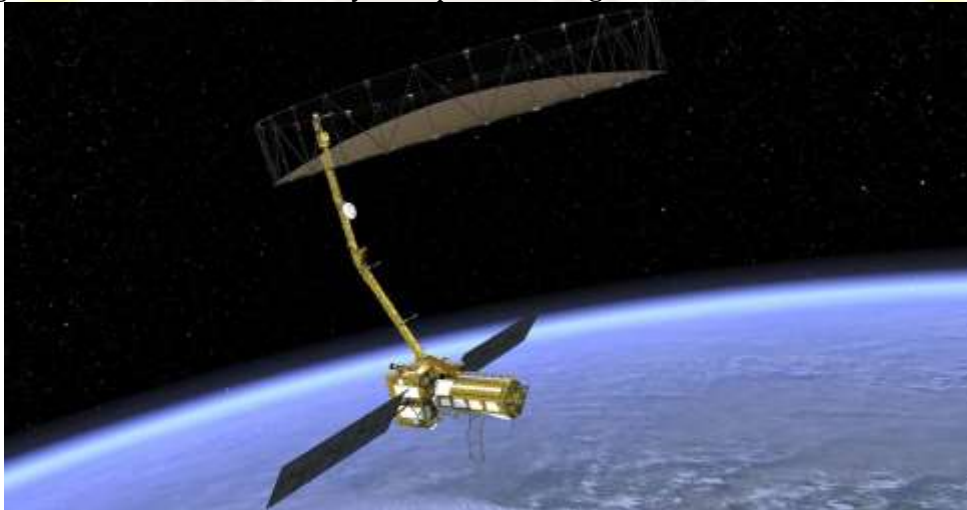
Suspension of registration

- 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**.

4. Answer: D

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) is an **Earth-observation satellite jointly developed by U.S. space agency NASA and ISRO** under a partnership agreement signed in 2014.
- The 2,800 kilograms satellite consists of both L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radar (SAR) instruments, which makes it a **dual-frequency imaging radar satellite**.
- While NASA has provided the L-band radar, GPS, a high-capacity solid-state recorder to store data, and a payload data subsystem, ISRO has provided the S-band radar, the GSLV launch system and spacecraft.
- Another important component of the satellite is its large **39-foot stationary antenna reflector**. Made of a gold-plated wire mesh, the reflector will be used to focus the radar signals emitted and received by the upward-facing feed on the instrument structure.



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What is the mission?

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Once launched into space, NISAR will **observe subtle changes in Earth's surfaces**, helping researchers better understand the **causes and consequences** of such phenomena.
- Designed as a **low earth orbit (LEO) observatory**, NISAR will map the entire globe in **12 days** and provide **spatially and temporally consistent data** for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, groundwater and natural hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.
- Synthetic Aperture Radar refers to a **technique for producing high-resolution images**. Because of the precision, the radar can penetrate clouds and darkness, which means that it **can collect data day and night in any weather**.

Why in the News?

- The ambitious NISAR mission has encountered a slight delay, pushing back the launch to the second half of the year.
- The mission will be launched from **Sriharikota's Satish Dhawan Space Centre**, onboard ISRO's **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark 2**.

5. Answer: D

Explanation About ED

- It was constituted in **1956** for **handling Exchange Control Laws violations** under the **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA)**.
- At present, the **administrative control** of the Enforcement Directorate is with the **Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance**.
- The ED today is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with **investigation of the offense of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws**.

Statutory Functions

- The statutory functions of the Directorate include **enforcement of following Acts:**

1. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):

- It is a criminal law enacted to **prevent money laundering** and to provide for **confiscation of property** derived from, or involved in, money-laundering and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- ED has been given the **responsibility to enforce the provisions of the PMLA** by conducting investigation to trace the assets derived from proceeds of crime, to provisionally attach the property and to ensure prosecution of the offenders and confiscation of the property by the Special court.

2. The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):

- It is a civil law enacted to consolidate and amend the laws relating to **facilitate external trade and payments** and to promote the **orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India**.

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- ED has been given the responsibility to conduct **investigation into suspected contraventions** of foreign exchange laws and regulations, to **adjudicate** and **impose penalties** on those adjudged to have contravened the law.

3. The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA):

- This law was enacted to **deter economic offenders** from evading the process of Indian law by **remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts**.
- It is a law whereby the Directorate is mandated to **attach the properties of the fugitive economic offenders** who have escaped from India warranting arrest and provide for the confiscation of their properties to the Central Government.

4. Sponsoring agency under COFEPOSA:

- Under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA), the Directorate is empowered to **sponsor cases of preventive detention** with regard to contraventions of FEMA.
 - COFEPOSA was enacted to provide for **preventive detention** in certain cases for the purposes of **conservation and augmentation of foreign exchange and prevention of smuggling activities**.

