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Daily MCQs: 03-06-2024

1. The primary objective of a windfall tax is

- A) To encourage investment in renewable energy sources
- B) To tax unexpected and excessive profits earned by businesses through an unprecedented event
- C) To discourage excessive exploration of natural resources
- D) To incentivize companies to reduce carbon emissions

2. With reference to Adopt a Heritage 2.0, consider the following statements

- 1) The scheme aims at inviting corporate stakeholders to enhance amenities at monuments by utilizing their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.
- 2) It was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

3. The objective of the Shangri-La Dialogue is

- A) To promote free trade in Asia
- B) To discuss regional security issues in Asia
- C) To establish a common currency in Asia
- D) To negotiate peace treaties

4. In which of the following regions of India are you most likely to come across the 'Hoolock Gibbons' in its natural habitat?

- a) Sand deserts of northwest India
- b) High altitude wetlands of Ladakh
- c) Eastern Himalayas
- d) Western Ghats

5. Consider the following factors

- 1) Extensive vegetation cover
- 2) High albedo surfaces
- 3) High concentration of concrete buildings and roads

How many of the above factors contribute to the Urban Heat Island effect?

- A) Only one
- B) Only two
- C) All three
- D) None

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Solutions:

1. Answer: B

Explanation

What is a windfall tax?

- Windfall taxes are designed to **tax the profits a company derives from an external, sometimes unprecedented event**— for instance, the energy price-rise as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- These are profits that cannot be attributed to something the firm actively did, like an investment strategy or an expansion of business.
- Governments typically levy a **one-off tax retrospectively over and above the normal rates of tax on such profits**, called **windfall tax**.
- One area where such taxes have routinely been discussed is **oil markets**, where price fluctuation leads to volatile or erratic profits for the industry.

Why in News?

- The Indian government has cut the windfall tax on petroleum crude to Rs 5,200 per metric tonne from Rs 5,700.
- The tax, which is **revised every fortnight**, remains unchanged at zero for diesel and aviation turbine fuel.

2. Answer: A

Explanation

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Archaeological Survey of India has launched the '**Adopt a Heritage 2.0**' programme, which seeks to **invite corporate stakeholders to enhance amenities at monuments** by utilizing their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds.
- Under this programme, ASI invites corporate stakeholders who will undertake the responsibility of developing, providing, and maintaining amenities that cover hygiene, accessibility, safety, and knowledge dissemination categories.
- The programme is a revamped version of the earlier scheme launched in 2017.

Value addition

About ASI

- The Archaeological Survey of India is the premier organization for the **archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage** of the nation.
- **It is an attached office under the Ministry of Culture. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Besides, it regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**. It also regulates the **Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972**.

History

- Archaeological and historical pursuits in India started with the efforts of **Sir William Jones**, who put together a group of antiquarians to form the **Asiatic Society** in **1784 in Calcutta**.

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- The Archaeological Survey of India was eventually formed in **1861** by a statute passed into law by **Viceroy Lord Canning** with **Alexander Cunningham** as the first Archaeological Surveyor.

3. Answer: B

Explanation

- The Shangri-La Dialogue is a **unique platform for debate** among government ministers and senior officials, as well as business leaders and security experts, on **Asia's developing security challenges**.
- **Held annually in Singapore** by an independent think tank, the **International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)**, the Dialogue is **Asia's premier defence summit**.
- It enables decision-makers from across the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe and the Middle East to gather together to discuss the most pressing **regional security issues** and to **share policy responses**. Hence **option B is correct**.
- It features **plenary debates** led by government ministers, as well as important opportunities for **bilateral discussions** among delegations.

Why in News?

- The 2024 Shangri-La Dialogue is being held in Singapore.

4. Answer: C

Explanation

- Hoolock Gibbons are native to the **forests of the Eastern Himalayas** in India, specifically in the northeastern states such as **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of Meghalaya**.
- These regions provide the dense, **tropical rainforests** that form the natural habitat necessary for the survival of Hoolock Gibbons.
- They are **arboreal animals**, meaning they live in trees, and they require large stretches of contiguous forest canopy to move around using brachiation (swinging from branch to branch).

Types of Gibbons Found in India

- **Hoolock gibbons** are the **only apes found in India**. They were divided into two species: the Western Hoolock Gibbon and the Eastern Hoolock Gibbon.
 - **Western Hoolock Gibbon:** It is found in the northeastern states of India, including **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya**. Western Hoolock gibbons have a **white or pale browband**, distinguishing them from Eastern Hoolock gibbons.
 - **Eastern Hoolock Gibbon:** Also found in northeastern India, particularly in **Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland**. Eastern Hoolock gibbons have a distinct **dark browband**.
- Until 2021 there were two known species of Gibbon, however a study conducted by the **Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB)** in Hyderabad could not find any **genetic differences** between the two gibbons which were earlier differentiated based on skin coat colour.

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- This study revealed that there is only one species of Hoolock Gibbon in India

Threats

- **Habitat Loss and Fragmentation:** One of the primary threats to gibbons is habitat loss due to deforestation, agriculture, logging, and urban expansion.
- **Illegal Wildlife Trade:** Gibbons are sometimes captured and sold for their body parts, which are used in traditional medicine or for ornamental purposes.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The construction of roads, dams, and other infrastructure projects can fragment gibbon habitats, disrupt their movement patterns, and increase the risk of accidental deaths due to collisions with vehicles.

Conservation status

- Western hoolock gibbon is classified as endangered and the eastern hoolock gibbon as vulnerable as per the IUCN Red list
- **Hoolock gibbons** are protected under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act 2022**.

Why in news?

- As railway lines are going to be laid through the **Hollongapar gibbon sanctuary**, **Canopy bridges** will be constructed on top of railway tracks for gibbons to move across regions in the sanctuary with ease.
 - **Canopy bridges** refer to **artificial and natural crossing structures**, built across roads and railway tracks to enable **arboreal animals** to traverse with ease. **Refer to the image provided below.**



5. Answer: A

Explanation

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- The **Urban Heat Island effect** refers to localized areas within **cities** or **metropolitan areas** that experience significantly **higher temperatures** when compared to surrounding regions.
- Urban heat island is basically induced due to **trapped heat** between establishments made up of **concrete**.
- **Extensive vegetation cover:** Vegetation helps to cool urban areas through processes like shading and evapotranspiration. Thus, extensive vegetation cover mitigates the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect rather than contributing to it. Hence **statement 1 is incorrect**.
- **High albedo surfaces:** High albedo surfaces reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat, which helps to reduce temperatures. Thus, high albedo surfaces also mitigate the UHI effect. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**.
- **High concentration of concrete buildings and roads:** Concrete buildings and roads absorb and retain heat, significantly contributing to the UHI effect. Hence **statement 3 is correct**.

