



1. The Sea of Azov is connected to the Black Sea through which strait?

- A) Bosphorus Strait
- B) Kerch Strait
- C) Dardanelles Strait
- D) Bab-el-Mandeb Strait

Answer: B

Explanation:

- The Sea of Azov is an inland shelf sea in Eastern Europe connected to the Black Sea by the narrow **Strait of Kerch**, and is sometimes regarded as a **northern extension of the Black Sea**.
- *Shelf sea is a shallow water region which submerges a part of the continent.*
- The sea is bounded by **Russia** on the east, and by **Ukraine** on the northwest and southwest.





2. Consider the following statements about the Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- 1) It was launched by the Ministry of Tourism.
- 2) It aims to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer:C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Swadesh Darshan Scheme was launched by the **Ministry of Tourism** in 2014.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** It aims 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 **completely funded by the central government of India.**
- 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.**

Swadesh Darshan 2.0

- The Ministry of Tourism has revamped its Swadesh Darshan scheme as **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** for **development of sustainable and responsible tourist destinations.**
- The Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme envisages an **increase in private sector investment** in tourism & hospitality.
- It would help in **increasing Public Private Partnerships (PPP)** in the field of tourism and operation and maintenance of the created assets under the scheme.

3. Consider the following statements about coal

- 1) India occupies the second position globally in terms of coal production.
- 2) Peat has a lower carbon content compared to Anthracite.
- 3) More than 90 per cent of India's total coal reserves are gondwana coal.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer:C

Explanation:



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All the statements are correct.

- India occupies the **second** position globally in terms of **coal production** and possesses the **fourth-largest estimated coal reserves**.
- Given that **72% of the electricity in India is generated from coal**, it becomes a very strategic sector for the nation's development.
- This fossil fuel is found in a form of **sedimentary rocks** and is often known as '**Black Gold**'.
- It originated from **organic matter wood**. When large tracts of forests are buried under sediments, wood is burnt and decomposed due to heat from below and pressure from above. The phenomenon makes coal but **takes centuries to complete**.

Classification of Coal

| Classification | Anthracite | Bituminous | Lignite | Peat |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Carbon content | Anthracite is the best quality of coal which carries 80 to 95 percent carbon content . | Bituminous carries 60 to 80 percent of carbon content and a low level of moisture content . | Lignite is often brown in color. It carries 40 to 55 percent carbon content . | Peat has less than 40 per cent carbon content . |

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| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Calorific Value | It ignites slowly with a blue flame. It has the highest calorific value . | It is widely used and has high calorific value . | It is an intermediate stage which happens during the alteration of woody matter into coal. It has high moisture content so it gives smoke when burnt. | It is in the first stage of transformation from wood to coal. It has low calorific value and burns like wood. |
| Distribution | It is found in small quantities in Jammu and Kashmir . | It is found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh . | It is found in Rajasthan, Lakhimpur (Assam), and Tamil Nadu . | Peat deposits are found primarily along the western coast of India , particularly in the states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Goa . |

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Types of coal on the basis of a time period

- **Gondwana coal:** Around 98 per cent of India's total coal reserves are from Gondwana times. This coal was formed about 250 million years ago.
- **Tertiary coal** is of younger age. It was formed from 15 to 60 million years ago.



4. Consider the following statements about rat-hole mining:

1. Rat-hole mining method of extracting coal prevalent in Meghalaya.
2. This practice is legal and widely supported by environmental regulations in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Answer:A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Rat-hole mining is a **method of extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams**. This practice is prevalent in **Meghalaya**.
- The term “**rat hole**” refers to the **narrow pits dug into the ground**, typically just large enough for one person to descend and extract coal.
- Once the pits are dug, miners descend using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach the **coal seams**.
- The coal is then **manually extracted** using **primitive tools** such as pickaxes, shovels, and baskets.

Concerns

- Rat hole mining poses significant **safety and environmental hazards**. The mines are **typically unregulated**, lacking safety measures such as proper ventilation, structural support, or safety gear for the workers.
- The mining process can cause **land degradation, deforestation, and water pollution**.
- This method of mining has faced severe criticism due to its **hazardous working conditions**, and **numerous accidents** leading to injuries and fatalities.



- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The **National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned** the practice in **2015**, but it continues to persist due to the absence of viable alternative livelihoods for the local population.

5. Consider the following statements about the Sangeet Natak Akademi

- 1) It is the apex body in the field of performing arts in India.
- 2) The President of India is the Chairman of the Akademi.
- 3) It is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statements 1 and 3 are correct:** Sangeet Natak Akademi is the **apex body in the field of performing arts** in India. It is an **autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture**.
- The Akademi was set up in **1953** for the **preservation and promotion of the vast intangible heritage of India's diverse culture** expressed in forms of music, dance and drama.
- The management of the Akademi vests in its **General Council**.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The **Chairman** of the Akademi is appointed by the **President of India** for a term of **five years**.
- Its headquarters is located in **New Delhi**.



6. Consider the following statements about the University Grants Commission (UGC)

- 1) It is a statutory organization under the Ministry of Education.
- 2) It serves as a vital link between the Union and state governments and institutions of higher learning.

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 University Grants Commission (UGC) came into existence in 1953.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It became a **statutory organization under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, by an Act of Parliament (UGC Act) in 1956.**
- It was established for the **promotion and co-ordination of University education** and for the **determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities**, and for the purpose of performing its functions under the UGC Act.

- The **offices of the UGC** are located in three locations in **Delhi.**

Responsibilities

- The UGC has the unique distinction of being the only grant-giving agency in the country which has been vested with two responsibilities:
 - Providing funds and
 - Coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education.
- **The UGC's mandate includes:**



- Promoting and coordinating university education.
- Determining and maintaining standards of teaching, examination and research in universities.
- Framing regulations on minimum standards of education.
- **Monitoring developments** in the field of collegiate and university education; disbursing grants to the universities and colleges.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Serving as a **vital link between the Union and state governments and institutions of higher learning.**
- Advising the Central and State governments on the measures necessary for improvement of university education

7. Kathakali, a classical dance form, belongs to which of the following states?

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Odisha
- D) Kerala

Answer:D

Explanation:





About

- Kathakali is a **classical dance** which developed around the **17th century in Kerala**.
- The themes of Kathakali include **mythic stories of the Hindu gods and goddesses** and **ancient Indian epics** such as **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**.
- Traditionally, Kathakali has been performed by **male dancers only but it has gradually opened up to female performers too**.
- It is accompanied by traditional music known as **Sopanam**, using instruments like **chenda, maddalam, and edakka**.
- It is a **group dance** and characters in a Kathakali performance are broadly divided into **satvika, rajasika and tamasika**.
 - Satvika are noble and heroic characters.
 - Rajasika are courageous but have an evil streak in them.
 - Tamasika refers to bearded characters.
- **Rita Ganguly** and **Gopinath** are famous proponents of Kathakali.

Related Information

Indian Classical Dance

- Indian classical dance is an umbrella term for **different regionally-specific Indian classical dance traditions**, rooted in predominantly Hindu musical theater performance, the theory and practice of which can be traced to the Sanskrit text **Natya Shastra**.
- The **Sangeet Natak Academy** recognizes **eight classical dances** in India: **Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Kathakali, Sattriya, Manipuri and Mohiniyattam**.
- The **Ministry of Culture** includes **Chhau** in its list, recognising **nine** total styles.



Classical Dance Forms of India

The Classical Dance Forms Recognised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi



Bharatanatyam
Tamil Nadu



Kathakali
Kerala



Kuchipudi
Andhra Pradesh



Odissi
Odisha



Mohiniyattam
Kerala



Kathak
Uttar Pradesh



Sattriya
Assam



Manipuri
Manipur

8. Consider the following species

- 1) Frogs
- 2) Lichens
- 3) Gangetic dolphins

How many of the above are examples of indicator species?

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



Answer: C

Explanation:

All the three given species are examples of indicator species.

- **Indicator species** are defined as species which can provide **information on environmental changes**.
- They are also referred to as **sentinel species, indicator organisms, biological indicators, etc**
- The presence or absence of indicator species can be used to **determine the health of the ecosystem**.
- They are **sensitive to changes** and also known as and give **early warning signals** regarding the ecosystem.
- For instance: **Frogs and toads** are very sensitive to habitat and climate change. Their absence denotes that a habitat is undergoing change and is under threat.
- Other examples of indicator species: **lichens, butterflies, gangetic dolphin, tubifex worms**.

9. Which one of the following antimicrobial drugs is suitable for treatment of leprosy?

- A) Isoniazid
- B) P-aminosalicylic acid
- C) Streptomycin
- D) Rifampicin

Answer:D

Explanation:

- Leprosy, also known as **Hansen's disease**, is a chronic infectious disease caused by a type of **bacteria** called ***Mycobacterium leprae***.



- The disease **affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.**
- Leprosy is known to **occur at all ages** ranging from early childhood to old age.
- Leprosy is **transmitted via droplets**, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.
- Leprosy is curable with **Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT)** and treatment during early stages can prevent disability.
- The currently recommended MDT regimen consists of three drugs namely **dapsone, rifampicin and clofazimine.**

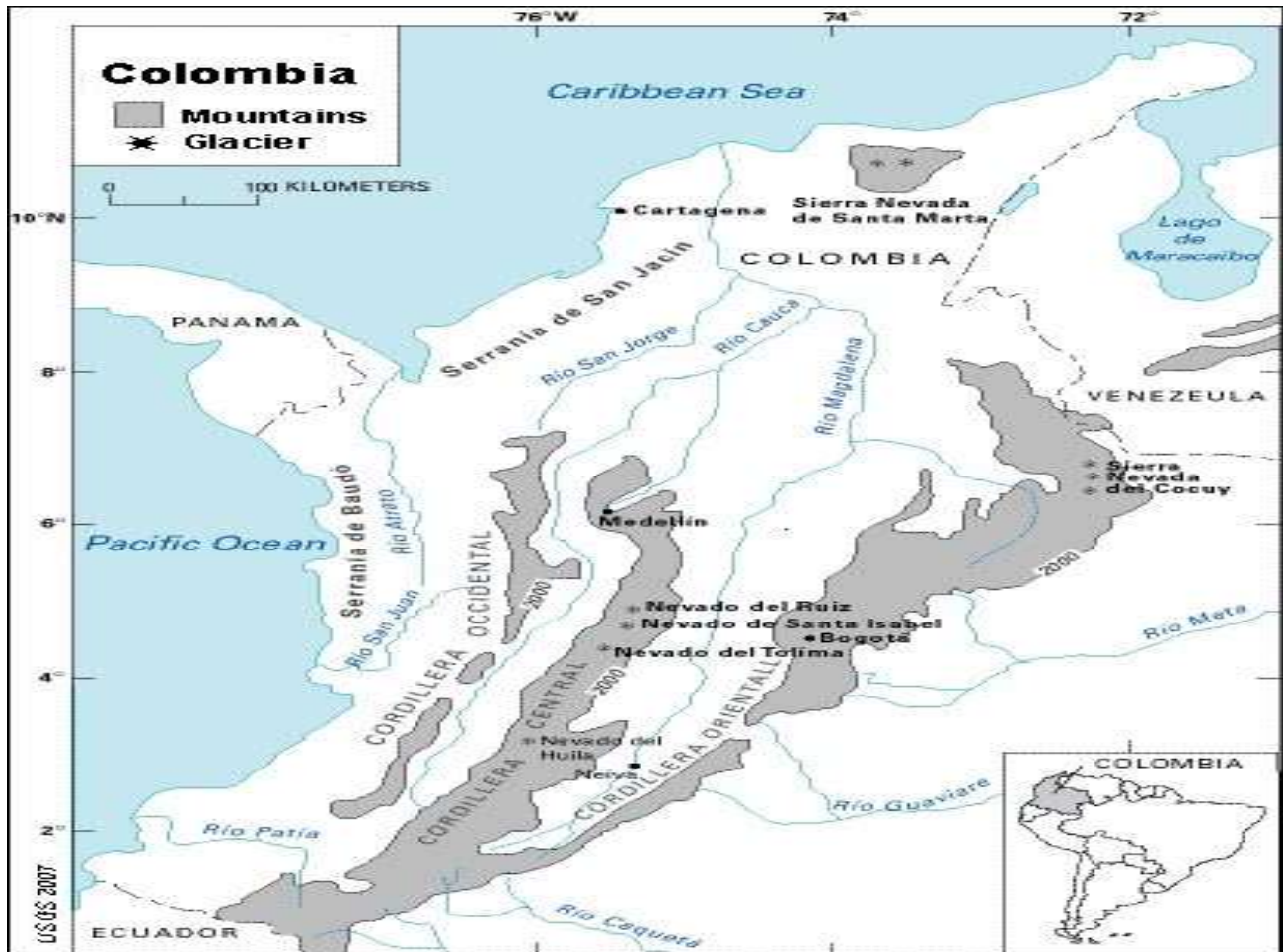
10. Ritacuba Blanco Glacier en in news due to a massive glacier melt recently, is located in

- A) Andes Mountains
- B) Rocky Mountains
- C) Sierra Nevada
- D) Cordillera Oriental

Answer: A

Explanation:

- Situated in the **Andes mountain range, Colombia, in South America.**
- It was in the news due to the **massive glacier melt** happening due to global warming and climate change.



11. The Rohingyas are a Muslim ethnic minority concentrated in which of the following countries?

- A) Myanmar
- B) Israel
- C) Iran
- D) Azerbaijan



Answer:A

Explanation:

- The Rohingya are an **ethnic group**, the majority of whom are **Muslim**, who have lived for centuries in the majority Buddhist Myanmar.
- The Rohingya speak **Rohingya or Ruaingga**, a dialect that is distinct to others spoken throughout Myanmar.
- They are not considered one of the country's 135 official ethnic groups and have been **denied citizenship in Myanmar** since 1982, which has effectively rendered them stateless.
- Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled persecution in **Myanmar's Rakhine State**, fueling a historic migration crisis.

12. The "Nagorno-Karabakh" region sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of

- A. China and Philippines
- B. Israel and Palestine
- C. Azerbaijan and Armenia
- D. Iraq and Iran

Answer: C

Explanation:

- Nagorno-Karabakh is a **landlocked, mountainous and forested region** located in the **South Caucasus region**, which straddles the border between **eastern Europe and western Asia**.
- **Armenia and Azerbaijan** have a long-standing border dispute, mostly centered on the region of **Nagorno-Karabakh**.



13. Consider the following statements about the Minimum Export Price (MEP)

- 1) It is the price below which an exporter is not allowed to export the commodity from India.
- 2) MEP is a kind of quantitative restriction to trade.

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:** Minimum Export Price (MEP) is the **price below which an exporter is not allowed to export** the commodity from India.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** MEP is a kind of **quantitative restriction to trade**.
- Government impose/increase MEP to restrict exports and increase the supply of commodities which will consequently reduce its price levels.

14. A rapid increase in the rate of inflation is sometimes attributed to the “base effect”. What is “base effect”?

- A) It is the impact of drastic deficiency in supply due to failure of crops
- B) It is the impact of the surge in demand due to rapid economic growth
- C) It is the impact of the price levels of previous year on the calculation of inflation rate
- D) None of the statements (a), (b) and (c) 'given above is correct in this context



Answer: C

Explanation:

- Base effect refers to the **impact of the rise in price level in the previous year over the corresponding rise in price levels in the current year.**
- For example: While calculating inflation, if the price index had risen at a high rate in the corresponding period of the previous year leading to a high inflation rate, some of the potential rise is already factored in, therefore a similar absolute increase in the Price index in the current year will lead to a relatively lower inflation rates.
- On the other hand, if the inflation rate was too low in the corresponding period of the previous year, even a relatively smaller rise in the Price Index will arithmetically give a high rate of current inflation.

15. Consider the following statements about the Lion tailed Macaque

- 1) It is endemic to the north eastern Himalayas.
- 2) It is nocturnal in nature.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer:D

Explanation:



- The lion-tailed macaque (*Macaca silenus*) is an 'Old World' monkey found in the three southern states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. These macaques are endemic to the Western Ghats mountain range within these states. Hence **statement 1 is incorrect**.
- They are covered in black fur, and have a striking gray or silver mane that surrounds their face which can be found in both sexes.
- It is **arboreal** and is often found in the upper canopy of **tropical moist evergreen forests**.
- It is **diurnal**, meaning it is active exclusively in daylight hours. Hence **statement 2 is incorrect**.
- They are **omnivores**, primarily eating indigenous fruits, seeds, flowers, insects, snails, and small vertebrates.

Conservation Status

- IUCN Red List: **Endangered**.
- Wildlife Protection Act, 2022: **Schedule I**.
- CITES: **Appendix I**.



16. Consider the following statements about the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

- 1) It is constituted under the Companies Act, 2013.
- 2) It is the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the order of the National Financial Reporting Authority.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer:C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under the **Companies Act, 2013** for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the **National Company Law Tribunal** under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)**.
- NCLAT is also the **Appellate Tribunal** for hearing appeals against the orders passed by **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** and the **Competition Commission of India**.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against the orders of the **National Financial Reporting Authority**.
- NCLAT decisions can be **challenged in the Supreme Court** on a point of law.
- NCLAT is functioning from the **Principal Bench in New Delhi**.



17. 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.
- Instead of providing LPG cylinders at subsidized price, those were sold at market price, and applicable subsidy was directly transferred to an individual's bank account electronically. This reduced "ghost" accounts and illegal use of household cylinders for commercial purposes, ensuring that only the intended beneficiaries receive the benefits.

18. With reference to digital rupee, consider the following statements

- 1) It is issued by the Reserve Bank of India.
- 2) It is not yet recognised as legal tender by the RBI.
- 3) Deposits held in banks can never be converted into digital rupees.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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



Answer:A

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The digital rupee, or the **e-rupee**, is a **central bank digital currency (CBDC)** issued by the RBI.
- It is similar to the physical cash that you hold in your wallet except that the **e-rupee is held electronically in a digital wallet overseen by the RBI.**
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The digital rupee is recognised as **legal tender** by the RBI, and thus has to be **accepted by everyone in the country as a medium of exchange.**
- It is, however, different from deposits that you hold in a bank. Unlike deposits which are paid interest, the digital rupees in your wallet are **not paid any interest by the central bank.**
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** **Deposits held in banks can be converted into digital rupees and vice-versa.**

CBDC can be classified into two types

- **Retail (CBDC-R):** Retail CBDC would be potentially available for use by all;
- **Wholesale (CBDC-W):** Designed for restricted access to select financial institutions.

CBDC vs Cryptocurrency

- The central bank digital currency **should not be mistaken with a cryptocurrency.**
- A CBDC is a **central bank issued digital currency which is backed by some kind of assets** in the form of either gold, currency reserves, bonds and other assets, **recognised by the central banks as a monetary asset.**
- This guarantee from a central bank reduces the CBDC risk, volatility, and ensures a larger acceptance across the globe.



- On the other hand, a **cryptocurrency is issued by a network and backed by a crypto asset which may or may not have the backing of any monetizable asset or physical asset.** Therefore, the risk is higher and there is more price volatility and less acceptance as a money instrument globally.

19. Which of the following have coral reefs?

- 1) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- 2) Gulf of Kachchh
- 3) Gulf of Mannar
- 4) Lakshadweep

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Coral reefs are large underwater structures composed of the skeletons of colonial **marine invertebrates called coral.**
- The coral species that build reefs are known as **hermatypic, or "hard," corals** because they extract **calcium carbonate (CaCO₃)** from seawater to create a hard, durable exoskeleton that protects their soft, sac-like bodies.
- Other species of corals that are not involved in reef building are known as "soft" corals. These types of corals are flexible organisms often resembling plants and trees and include species such as sea fans and sea whips.



Symbiotic relationship

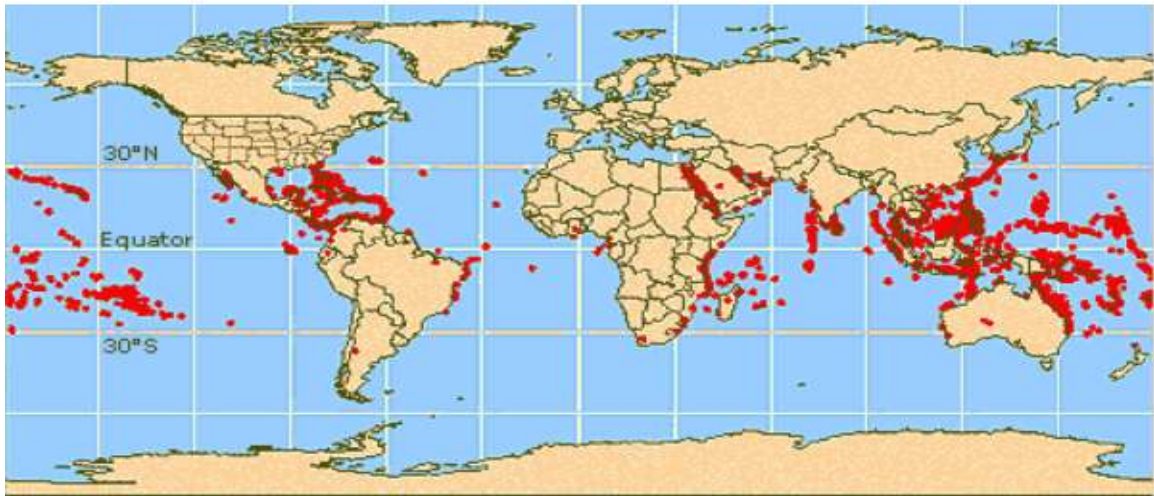
- Most reef-building corals contain photosynthetic algae, called **zooxanthellae**, that live in their tissues. The corals and algae have a **symbiotic relationship**.
- The coral provides the algae with a protected environment and compounds they need for photosynthesis. In return, the algae produce oxygen and help the coral to remove wastes. The presence of the zooxanthellae also provides colored pigments to help protect the coral's white skeleton from sunlight.

Significance of Coral reefs

- Coral reefs only occupy 0.1% of the area of the ocean but they support 25% of all marine species on the planet. Hence **coral reefs host far more number of animal phyla** than those hosted by tropical rainforests.
- Because of the diversity of life found in the habitats created by corals, reefs are often called the **"rainforests of the sea."**

Geographical distribution

- The reef-building corals prefer to grow at
 - depths shallower than 30 m (100 ft), however it can grow upto 150 ft depth or
 - where the temperature range is between 16-32°C, (preferably 20°C)
 - light levels are high
- Coral reef life **needs saltwater to survive** and requires a certain balance in the ratio of salt to water. This is why corals don't live in areas where rivers drain fresh water into the ocean.
- The majority of reef building corals are found within tropical and subtropical waters. These typically occur between **30°N and 30°S of the equator**.
- The largest of these coral reef systems, the **Great Barrier Reef** in Australia, is more than 1,500 miles long (2,400 kilometers).



Coral reefs in India

- Coral reefs are present in the areas of **Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep Islands and Malvan coast of Maharashtra. Hence all the statements are correct.**

20. What is the primary objective of setting up the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India?

- A) To promote export-oriented industries
- B) To encourage foreign direct investment in manufacturing sector
- C) To provide world-class financial services for investors
- D) To foster responsible innovation in financial services

Answer: C

Explanation:

- An International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) is a jurisdiction that provides **world class financial services to non-residents and residents** in a currency other than the domestic currency (Indian Rupee) of the location where the IFSC is located.



- **Services provided by an IFSC:**

- Fund-raising services for individuals, corporations and governments
- Asset management and global portfolio diversification undertaken by pension funds, insurance companies and mutual funds
- Wealth management
- Merger and acquisition activities among trans-national corporations, etc.

GIFT City

- India's 1st IFSC has been set up at the **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar.**
- Operationalized in 2015, it is intended to **provide Indian corporates with easier access to global financial markets, and to complement and promote the further development of financial markets in India.**
- It seeks to bring back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centers by Indian corporate entities and overseas branches / subsidiaries of financial institutions (FIs) to India by offering a business and regulatory environment that is comparable to other leading international financial centers in the world like London and Singapore.
- *The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** was established in 2020 as a unified authority for the development and regulations of IFSCs in India.*

21. Consider the following statements about Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

- 1) It is an inherited genetic disease.
- 2) The disease burden from Sickle Cell anaemia in India is prevalent in tribal populations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- E) 1 only
- F) 2 only



- G) Both 1 and 2
H) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Sickle cell anaemia (SCA) is an **inherited genetic disease**. Haemoglobin which is tasked with carrying oxygen to all parts of the body has **four protein subunits — two alpha and two beta**. In some people, **mutations in the gene** that creates the beta subunits **impact the shape of the blood cell and distort it to look like a sickle**, similar to the letter C.
- A round red blood cell can move easily through blood vessels because of its shape but sickle red blood cells **end up slowing and even blocking the blood flow**. Moreover, sickle cells **die early**, resulting in a **shortage of red blood cells that deprive the body of oxygen**.
- These obstructions and shortages may cause **chronic anemia, pain, fatigue, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and a host of other serious health complications**.

Prevalence

- **India is the second-worst affected country in terms of predicted births with SCA — i.e. chances of being born with the condition.**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The disease burden from Sickle Cell anaemia in India is **prevalent in tribal populations**. Tribes like **Pawara, Bhil, Madia, Gond and Pardhan from Maharashtra** have a very high prevalence.
- Sickle cell anaemia is **most prevalent in the central India belt covering states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and parts of Bengal**. There are **pockets in the south, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and parts of Telangana**.
- There is a **lack of screening awareness and inadequate screening centers/facilities** in tribal and rural areas. Also, **failure to access primary healthcare** is a concern.



Treatment

- Sickle cell anemia is a **genetic disorder, making complete “elimination” a challenge** that requires a major scientific breakthrough.
- The only cure comes in the form of **gene therapy and stem cell transplants** — both **costly and still in developmental stages**.
- In gene therapy, the DNA inside the hemoglobin gene is edited to stop the disease while in stem cell transplants, the bone marrow affected by sickle cell anemia is replaced with healthy bone marrow from a donor. Both interventions are currently being tested in **clinical trials** globally.
- **Blood transfusion**, wherein red blood cells are removed from donated blood and given to a patient, is also a trusted treatment in the absence of permanent cures. But challenges include a **scarcity of donors, fears around safe supply of blood, risk of infection etc.**

22. Which of the following statements about the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards is correct?

- A) They are awarded annually by the Prime Minister.
- B) They recognize outstanding achievements in the fields of literature and poetry.
- C) They are given in the fields of music, dance, and drama.
- D) They were first awarded in 1954.

Answer:C

Explanation:

- **Statement A is incorrect:** The **Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards** are the **highest national recognition conferred on practicing artists by the Sangeet Natak Akademi**.
- **Statement B is incorrect and statement C is correct:** Akademi Awards may be conferred on **eminent practitioners, gurus and scholars of music, dance and theater** for sustained individual achievement of high professional order.



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- The **Akademi Awards** have been conferred since **1952**. Hence **statement D is incorrect**.
- The Akademi also confers **Fellowships** (Akademi Ratna) on **eminent artists and scholars of music, dance and drama**. It is considered as the **highest honor given to an eminent artist in the field of performing arts** for his/her exceptional contribution to his/her performing art form.
- The Fellowship of the Akademi is a most prestigious and rare honor, which is **restricted to 40 at any given time**.
- The first Fellow of the Akademi was elected in **1954**.
- The award of Akademi Fellow carries a prize money of Rs 3 lakh, while the Akademi award carries a prize money of Rs 1 lakh, besides a 'tamrapatra' (inscriptions on copper plates) and 'angavastram' (a traditional shoulder cloth).

23. Which of the following is NOT a function of TRAI?

- E) Regulating the telecom services
- F) Fixing tariffs for telecom services
- G) Granting licenses for telecom services
- H) Promoting and ensuring orderly growth of the telecom sector

Answer: C

Explanation:

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was established in 1997 by an **Act of Parliament**, called the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997**, to **regulate telecom services, including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services** which were earlier vested in the Central Government.



- TRAI's mission is to **create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications** in the country in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society.
- One of the main objectives of TRAI is to **provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.**
- The TRAI Act was amended by an ordinance in 2000, establishing a **Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)** to take over the adjudicatory and disputes functions from TRAI.
- TDSAT was set up to adjudicate any dispute between a licensor and a licensee, between two or more service providers, between a service provider and a group of consumers, and to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction, decision or order of TRAI.
- The responsibility for **granting licenses to telecom service providers rests with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** under the Ministry of Communications, Government of India. The DoT is the licensing authority and oversees the issuance and management of licenses for telecom services. Hence **option C is the correct answer.**

24. Which of the following is a criterion for a startup to be recognized by DPIIT?

- A) The startup should be working towards innovation, development, or improvement of products or processes.
- B) The startup must have been in existence for over 10 years.
- C) The startup should have an annual turnover exceeding INR 100 crore.
- D) None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:



- As per the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade's (DPIIT) definition, an entity shall be considered a "Startup" –
 1. If it's incorporated as **either Private Limited Company or Registered Partnership Firm or Limited Liability Partnership**. A sole proprietorship or a public limited company is not eligible as startup.
 2. If it is **up to 10 years** from the date of its incorporation/registration. **Hence statement B is incorrect.**
 3. If its **turnover** for any of the financial years has **not exceeded INR 100 crore**. **Hence statement C is incorrect.**
 4. If it is **working towards** innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or if it is a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation. **Hence statement A is correct.**
 5. **Should not have been formed by splitting up or reconstruction** of a business already in existence.

25. Darfur, a region that has been most affected by conflict and famine is located in which of the following countries?

- A) Chad
- B) Sudan
- C) Ethiopia
- D) Azerbaijan

Answer: B

Explanation:

- Darfur, a region that has been severely affected by **conflict and famine**, is located in **Sudan**.



- Darfur is a region in western Sudan, bordering Chad to the west, Central African Republic to the southwest, and Libya to the northwest.
- It has been plagued by a **prolonged conflict involving government forces, rebel groups, and militia** since the early 2000s, resulting in significant humanitarian crises, including widespread **famine and displacement of populations**.
- The conflict in Darfur has been primarily driven by ethnic tensions, competition for resources, and political factors.

26. Consider the following statements about the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

- 1) It is a constitutional body.
- 2) Its mandate is to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

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 and statement 2 is correct:** 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.

27. Consider the following statements about the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

- 1) It was established under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- 2) It regulates insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies, and information utilities.
- 3) It functions under the Ministry of Finance.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is a **statutory body** which functions under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** It was established in 2016 under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016**.
- It is a **unique regulator: regulates a profession as well as processes**.



- **Statement 2 is correct:** It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies, Insolvency Professional Entities and Information Utilities.
- It writes and enforces rules for processes, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code.
- It has also been designated as the '**Authority**' under the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation Rules), 2017 for regulation and development of the profession of valuers in the country.
- The affairs of the IBBI are governed by a **Governing Board** constituted by the **Central Government**.
- It is headquartered in **New Delhi**.

28. Which of the following statements about the pro-tem speaker is incorrect?

- A) A pro-tem Speaker is appointed by the President temporarily until the speaker is elected in the new loksabha.
- B) It is not mentioned in the Constitution.
- C) The primary duty of the pro-tem Speaker is to administer oaths to the new MPs.
- D) According to the constitution, the senior-most member of the house is selected for the post.

Answer:D

Explanation:

- The **Speaker** of the Lok Sabha plays a vital role in overseeing the day-to-day proceedings of the House.
- **Statement A is correct:** In a new Lok Sabha, the Speaker is elected by a **simple majority**. Until the Speaker is elected, a **pro-tem Speaker** is appointed by the **President to fulfill essential duties temporarily**.



- The word 'pro-tem' means 'for the time being' or 'temporarily'.

Legal Provisions

- **Statement B is correct:** The 'pro-tem' post is **not mentioned in the Constitution**.
- The '**Handbook on the Working of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs**', however, mentions the 'Appointment and Swearing in of Speaker pro tem.'

How is the pro-tem Speaker picked?

- As per convention, the **senior-most member** of the house is selected for the post. There have been **exceptions**, though. Hence **statement D is incorrect**.

What is the role of a pro-tem Speaker?

- **Statement C is correct:** The primary duty of the pro-tem Speaker is to **administer oaths to the new MPs**.
- He also enables the House to **elect the new speaker**.
- Once the new speaker is elected, the office of the pro-tem speaker ceases to exist. He also **administers the floor test**.

29. Recently Burkina Faso was in the news for which one of the following reasons?

- A) Discovery of rich deposits of rare earth elements
- B) Establishment of Chinese military bases
- C) Southward expansion of Sahara Desert
- D) Successful coups

Answer:D

Explanation:

- Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa.



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- Burkina Faso has been in the news recently due to a series of **successful military coups**.

30. Which of the following countries has its largest port, Odessa, located on the Black Sea?

- A) Romania
- B) Georgia
- C) Ukraine
- D) Russia

Answer: C

Explanation:

- Odessa is the **largest port city in Ukraine**, located on the northwestern shore of the Black Sea.
- It serves as a major seaport and transportation hub for the country.