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Daily MCQs: 18-12-2024

1. The implementation of the Smart Cities Mission at the City level is done by

- A. Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- B. State Ministry of Urban Affairs
- C. Urban Local body
- D. A Special Purpose Vehicle created for the purpose

2. Consider the following statements about the Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022.

- 1) It is mandatory to consult the Gram Sabha in the management plan for all Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- 2) The amendment empowers the central government to regulate the trade of invasive alien species.
- 3) The amendment allows transport of a captive elephant for religious purposes by anybody having a valid certificate of ownership.

Which of the above given statement(s) is/are correct?

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

3. With regard to the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), consider the following statements.

- 1) The NIRF holds the benchmarks to rank the various auditing institutions of the country based on comprehensive parameters.
- 2) The NIRF was established by the Ministry of Commerce

Which of the above given statement(s) is/are incorrect?

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

4. Consider the following:

- 1) Individual farmers
- 2) Oral lessees
- 3) Fish farmers
- 4) Institutional corporate farmers

Which of the above given group(s) is/are eligible to receive benefits under Kisan Credit Card Scheme?

- A. 1, 2 and 3
- B. 1, 3 and 4
- C. 2, 3 and 4
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

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5. Consider the following statements.

Statement-I: Hunting is a significant threat to the hornbill population in the country.

Statement-II: Meat of hornbill is believed to be medicinal.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- A. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- B. Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- C. Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.
- D. Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

Solutions:

1. Answer: D

Explanation:

Smart Cities Mission

- The Smart Cities Mission was launched in **2015**.
- The main objective of the Mission is to **promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life** to their citizens through the application of **'smart solutions'**.



Implementation by SPV

- 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,

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implement, manage, operate, monitor and evaluate the Smart City development projects.
Hence answer is option D.

- 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.
- The SPV will be a **limited company** incorporated under the **Companies Act, 2013** at the city-level, in which the **State/UT and the ULB** will be the promoters having **50:50 equity shareholding**.

2. Answer: D

Explanation:

Highlights of the Wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022

Streamlining the Schedules:

- The amendment **streamlines the Schedules of protected native wildlife to three Schedules (Schedule I and II for animals; Schedule III for plants)**.
- The Act **removes the present schedule for vermin species** and inserts a **new schedule (Schedule IV) for specimens listed for extinction under CITES**.
- There has been a **significant addition of species to Schedule I**.

Obligations under CITES:

- The fresh amendments intend to **regulate wildlife trade** and to **implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, which is an international agreement between governments to regulate international trade in species threatened with extinction.
- The latest amendments seek to **increase the protected species as listed in the appendices under CITES**.
- The Act provides for **designation of a management authority**, which would be empowered to **grant export or import permits** for trade of specimens.
- The Act also provides for designating a **scientific authority**, which would **monitor the export permits** granted for the specimens listed in the schedule as well as the actual export of the specimens.
- An export permit would not be granted for certain species unless the scientific authority advises that the export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species.

Regulating Invasive Species:

- For the first time, a **regulatory mechanism to deal with 'invasive alien species'** has been inserted in the Act.
- It **empowers the central government to regulate or entirely prohibit the import, trade, possession or proliferation of invasive alien species. Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- An invasive alien species is defined as "a species of animal or plant which is **not native to India** and whose introduction or spread may **threaten or adversely impact wildlife or its habitat**".

Role of Gram Sabha:

- The amendment also makes it **mandatory to consult the Gram Sabha** in the **management plan for all Wildlife Sanctuaries. Hence statement 1 is correct.**

Protection of Elephants:

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- The original act categorises **elephants as Schedule 1 animals**, at par with tigers, but allows them to be held **captive legally**. In other words, the law prohibits capturing any Schedule 1 animal, irrespective of their wild or captive nature, except in certain circumstances with prior permission of the chief wildlife warden.
- The amendment adds a clause, allowing **transfer or transport of a captive elephant for “religious or any purpose”** by anybody having a valid certificate of ownership, subject to terms and conditions prescribed by the central government. **Hence statement 3 is correct.**
- Many animal protection organisations have urged the government to remove this clause. Experts have also argued that the provision enlarges scope for exploitation of captive elephants.

Increased Penalties:

- The Act also **increased the penalties under the act**. For general violations, the amendment proposes an increase of the **maximum fine to Rs 1 lakh** from Rs 25,000 and for violating provisions related to specially protected animals, it increases the fine to **at least Rs 25,000** from at least Rs 10,000.

3. Answer: C

Explanation:

- The **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)** was established by the **Ministry of Education** in 2015 and holds the benchmarks to rank the various higher education institutions of the country based on comprehensive parameters. **Hence statements 1 and 2 are incorrect.**
- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) parameters includes,
 - Teaching
 - Learning & assessment resources
 - Research
 - Graduate employment & other outcomes
 - Community engagement
 - Widening participation and reputation

4. Answer: A

Explanation:

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

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- **Note:** The aggregate of components 'a' to 'e' above will form the **short term credit limit portion** and the aggregate of components under 'f' will form the **long term credit limit portion**.
- Under the KCC Scheme, a **flexible limit of Rs.10,000 to Rs.50,000** has been provided to marginal farmers (as Flexi KCC) based on the land holding and crops grown.
- The beneficiaries under the scheme will be issued with a **Smart card/ Debit card**.
- It enables farmers to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. and draw cash to satisfy their agricultural and consumption needs.
- Cards issued under the scheme are **valid for 5 years subject to annual review**.
- The Government of India provides **interest subvention** and **Prompt Repayment Incentive** to the farmers under KCC scheme.
- The Scheme is implemented by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives**.

Eligibility

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

5. Answer: A

Explanation:



- Hornbills are a family of **tropical and sub-tropical birds** which are found extensively in **Africa, Asia and Melanesia**.

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- Famously dubbed as the '**Farmers of the Forest**', these frugivores (fruit-eating birds) help in **seed dispersal** of several endemic trees and are important for survival and upkeep of entire forests.
 - In India, **9 subspecies** of hornbills are found. They are: The Great Hornbill, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Narcondam Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Oriental Pied Hornbill, White-throated Brown Hornbill, Malabar Grey Hornbill, and the Indian Grey Hornbill.
 - Five species are found in the **northeastern states** of which the Wreathed hornbill, Rufous-necked hornbill and the White-throated brown hornbill are restricted to this region within India, although they have a wider distribution in South-east Asia.
 - The **Narcondam hornbill** is found only on **Narcondam island** (part of the Andaman Islands) **in the Bay of Bengal**.
 - The **Indian grey hornbill** occurs in the **Indian subcontinent**, while the **Malabar Pied Hornbill** is found only in **India and Sri Lanka**.
 - The **Malabar grey hornbill** is **endemic to the Western Ghats**.
- Threats to hornbill population**

- Hornbills are threatened mainly by **habitat loss due to deforestation**.
- They are **hunted** for their meat, fat and body parts like casque and tail feathers, which are used as adornments. **Hence Statement-I is correct**.
- The beaks and head are used in charms and the flesh is believed to be medicinal. **Hence Statement-II is correct and rightly explains Statement-II**.

