DATE: 15.09.2026

1) Consider the following statements regarding the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN):
    1. It functions as an apex research body under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to study malnutrition and dietary requirements in India.
    2. The institute is legally empowered to issue food safety licenses and penalize manufacturers for food adulteration.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 only
    (c) Both 1 and 2
    (d) None of the above

2) Consider the following statements regarding MERCOSUR:
    1. Only South American countries are part of MERCOSUR.
    2. The official working languages of MERCOSUR are Spanish and Portuguese.
    3. India has signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with MERCOSUR.
    4. The core objective of MERCOSUR is to create a common market to accelerate economic development and promote regional integration among its member states.

   Which of the statements given above are correct?
    (a) 1 and 2 only
    (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
    (c) 2 and 3 only
    (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3) Consider the following statements regarding the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)
    1. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is a statutory body.
    2. Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRT) serve as the adjudicating authorities for corporate entities.
    3. Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) can be initiated by financial creditors, operational creditors and corporate debtor.

   Which of the statements given above are correct?
    (a) 1 and 3 only
    (b) 2 and 3 only
    (c) 1 and 2 only
    (d) 1, 2 and 3

4) Which of the following statements regarding the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) is/are correct?
    1. It is a fee charged to merchants for accepting digital payments.
    2. It is a single fixed rate applicable uniformly to all businesses and digital payment modes.
    3. Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and RuPay debit card transactions are subject to MDR charges.

   Select the correct answer using the code given below:
    (a) 1 only
    (b) 2 and 3 only
    (c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 1 and 3 only

5) Consider the following statements regarding Core Investment Companies (CICs):
   1. CICs are a specialised category of banks whose principal business involves the acquisition and holding of shares and securities of group companies.
   2. A CIC is required to hold at least 90% of its net assets in specified investments in group companies, of which at least 60% must be invested in equity instruments of group companies.
   3. CICs are permitted to freely trade in the shares and other securities of their group companies as part of their ordinary investment activity.

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) 1 and 2 only
   (d) 2 and 3 only

Explanation

1) Answer: (A)
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) is indeed an apex research body functioning under the aegis of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, focusing on studies related to malnutrition, food composition, and dietary requirements in India.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** NIN is **strictly a research and advisory body**. It does not possess any legal or regulatory powers to issue food safety licenses, inspect commercial manufacturing plants, or penalize food adulteration. These regulatory and enforcement duties are handled statutorily by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**.
- **Therefore, option A is the correct answer.**

2) Answer: (B)
- **Statement 1 is correct:** MERCOSUR comprises countries from South America. It was initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, with Venezuela and Bolivia subsequently joining the bloc.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Spanish and Portuguese are the official working languages of MERCOSUR.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India has not signed an FTA with MERCOSUR. India and MERCOSUR have a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).
- **Statement 4 is correct:** MERCOSUR seeks to create a common market, accelerate economic development and promote regional integration.
- **Therefore, option B is the correct answer.**

3) Answer: (A)
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is a statutory body established on October 1, 2016, under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 to regulate insolvency proceedings and entities in India.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** is the adjudicating authority for corporate entities, whereas Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRT) handle cases for individuals and partnership firms.

- **Statement 3 is correct:** The Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) can be triggered by financial creditors, operational creditors, or the corporate debtor itself upon a default.
- **Therefore, option A is the correct answer.**

4) Answer: (A)

- **Statement 1 is correct: Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** is the **fee charged to a merchant for accepting a digital payment**. It is a cost incurred by the merchant for using the digital payment infrastructure, and the amount is generally deducted from the transaction value during settlement.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** MDR is **not a single fixed rate** applicable uniformly to all businesses and digital payment modes. It may vary depending on the **payment mode, provider, merchant and applicable arrangement**. It can apply differently to cards, net banking, wallets, UPI, Electronic Mandate (EMI), Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), QR payments and other modes.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The **Government removed MDR on UPI and RuPay debit card transactions** to promote the adoption of digital payments. Therefore, stating that UPI and RuPay debit card transactions are subject to MDR charges is incorrect.
- **Therefore option A is the correct answer.**

5) Answer: (B)

- **Statement 1 is Incorrect:** Core Investment Companies (CICs) are a **specialised category of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), not banks**. Their principal business is the acquisition of shares and securities of group companies. Thus, calling them "banks" makes the statement incorrect.
- **Statement 2 is Correct:** Under the RBI framework, a CIC must hold **at least 90% of its net assets** in specified investments in group companies. Further, **at least 60% of its net assets** must be invested in **equity shares/equity instruments of group companies**. This reflects the CIC's primary role as an investment-holding entity within a corporate group.
- **Statement 3 is Incorrect:** CICs **cannot freely trade** in the shares and securities of their group companies as part of ordinary investment activity. The RBI framework places restrictions on such trading, although certain specified transactions, such as **block sale for dilution or disinvestment**, are permitted.
- **Therefore, option B is the correct answer.**