

ForumIAS

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## Prelims Marathon

17th to 23rd August,  
2020

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*HISTORY*  
*ECONOMICS*  
*POLITY*  
*SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY*  
*GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT*

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## History

**Q.1)** The term “**shroffs**” in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century is related to which of the following?

- a) Village headmen’s
- b) Money changers
- c) Village protectors
- d) Agricultural labours

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Commercial institutions were also well-developed to promote such extensive trade.

- Because a variety of coins were in circulation, there were **money-changers or shroffs** to test coins for their purity and decide their value in current terms.
- They also served as local bankers.

**Q.2)** With reference to European rulers/traders, the term “**Batavia**” is related to which of the following country?

- a) India
- b) Myanmar
- c) Japan
- d) Indonesia

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** In early 18<sup>th</sup> Century the Dutch had given up Pulicat and moved their headquarters further south to Nagapattinam.

**They had decided to shift their focus to the spice-producing islands of Indonesia and established their capital at Jakarta (Batavia).**

**Q.3)** The “**Cartaz system** – protection against piracy” was introduced by which of the following colonial power in India?

- a) Portuguese
- b) Dutch
- c) French
- d) English

**ANS: A**

**Explanation: The Portuguese threatened disruption of trade by violence unless their protection, cartaz, was bought.**

- Under the cartaz system, the Portuguese exacted money from the traders as price for protection against what they termed as piracy.
- But much of this was caused by Portuguese freebooters themselves and so the whole system was a blatant protection racket.

**Q.4)** Which of the following pair (s) is/are correctly matched?

<b>Treaty</b>	:	<b>Governor General</b>
1. Treaty of Perpetual friendship	:	Lord Hastings
2. Treaty of Bassein	:	Lord Wellesley
3. Treaty of Salbai	:	Warren Hastings

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: C**

**Explanation: Treaty of Salbai:** It was signed on 17 May 1782, by representatives of the Maratha Empire and the British East India Company after long negotiations to settle the outcome of the First Anglo-Maratha War it was signed between Warren Hastings and Mahadaji Scindia.

**Treaty of Bassein:** It was a pact signed on December 31, 1802 between the British East India Company (Lord Wellesley) and Baji Rao II, the Maratha peshwa of Pune (Poona) in India after the Battle of Poona.

The treaty was a decisive step in the dissolution of the Maratha Confederacy, which led to the East India Company's usurpation of the peshwa's territories in western India in 1818.

**Treaty of Perpetual friendship:** Maharaja Ranjit Singh, also called Sher-i-Punjab was born November 1780 at Gujranwala. When he was 12 years old he became the chief of his own misl after the death of his father in 1792.

Ranjit Singh wanted to annex Sind but could not do so because of the English opposition. In 1831 he signed the treaty of perpetual friendship with the English (William Bentinck).

**Q.5) The "Zeliangrong or Haomei movement" was related to which of the following area?**

- a) Chotanagpur plateau
- b) Madras presidency
- c) North West Frontier Province
- d) Naga Hills

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** The ongoing national movement influenced the tribal movements in the early decades of 20th century: The Tana Bhagat movement of Gumla in Ranchi district, and the **Zeliangrong movement in the Naga Hills** were two such instances.

- Jadonang (1905-1931), who set up the Haraka religious cult with three basic objectives started the complex Zeliangrong or Haomei movement in 1925.
- The first aimed at reformation of the tribes, particularly the Zemi, Liangrnei and Rangmei, to enable them to face the onslaught of Christianity.
- Secondly, the overthrows of the exploitative colonial laws by attacking British rule.
- And third, establishment of the Naga Raj.
- The movement was also aimed against the Kuki tribe, the "outsider".
- From 1927 onwards, influenced by Gandhi, Jadonang began a civil disobedience movement in the area.
- On 13 June 1931, Jgdonang was arrested and sentenced to death, and finally hanged on 29 August 1931

**Q.6) Which of the following are the provisions of the "Subsidiary Alliance System"?**

1. An Indian ruler entering into Subsidiary Alliance with the British had to dissolve his own armed forces and accept British forces.
2. If Indian ruler failed to pay army's maintenance, a portion of his territory would be taken away and ceded to the Zamindars.
3. No other Indian power to interfere in its internal affairs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only

- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Wellesley broadened the scope of this arrangement by his Subsidiary Alliance System, bringing under it Hyderabad, Mysore, Lucknow, the Maratha Peshwa, the Bhonsle (Kolhapur) and Sindhia (Gwalior).

The provisions of the Subsidiary Treaty are:

- **An Indian ruler entering into Subsidiary Alliance with the British had to dissolve his own armed forces and accept British forces and a British Resident in his territory.**
- **He had to pay for the British army's maintenance. If he failed, a portion of his territory would be taken away and ceded to the British.**
- The protected prince was to sever all connections with European powers other than the British, especially the French.
- No European should be employed without the permission of the British.
- No negotiation with any Indian power should be held without the Company's permission and
- **No other Indian power to interfere in its internal affairs.**

**Q.7)** The 17 year old teenage girl Gaidinliu, led the civil disobedience movement in 1932 and she was sentenced to life imprisonment. Who among the following called her as "**Rani Gaidinliu**"?

- a) Jawaharlal Nehru
- b) Gandhiji
- c) Subhash Chandra Bose
- d) Sardar Vallabhai Patel

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Gaidinliu a teenage girl took over the leadership of the civil disobedience movement.

- In March 1932, the entire village of Bopugoanrni in the Naga Hills was burnt down by the government forces, in retaliation to the attack on the Assam Rifles outpost by Gaidinliu's followers.
- Finally the seventeen year old leader, called **Rani Gaidinliu by Nehru**, was arrested on 17 October 1932, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

**Q.8)** "Our position is not that truths are to be in all religions, but that all established religions of the World are true" – was described by which of the following personality?

- a) Swami Vivekananda
- b) Keshab Chandra Sen
- c) Ramakrishna Paramahansa
- d) Raja Ram Mohan Roy

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The development of the Western culture and ideology forced the traditional institutions to revitalize themselves.

- During the second half of the nineteenth century, the expression of protest and desire for change were articulated through various reform movements.

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- What gave these reform movements an ideological unity were rationalism, religious universalism and humanism.
- For example, Raja Rammohun Roy repudiated the infallibility of the Vedas and during the Aligarh Movement, Syed Ahmed Khan emphasized that religious tenets were not immutable.
- **As Keshab Chandra Sen said, 'Our position is not that truths are to be in all religions, but that all established religions of the World are true.'**

**Q.9)** The “**anandamath**”, a semi-historical novel written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, is based on which of the following civil uprising?

- a) Vizayanagaram revolt
- b) Sanyasi revolt
- c) Indigo revolt
- d) Santhal uprising

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The disastrous famine of 1770 and the harsh economic order of the British compelled a group of sanyasis in Eastern India to fight the British yoke.

- Originally peasants, even some evicted from land, these sanyasis were joined by a large number of dispossessed small zamindars, disbanded soldiers and rural poor.
- They raided Company factories and the treasuries, and fought the Company's forces. It was only after a prolonged action that Warren Hastings could subdue the sanyasis.
- Equal participation of Hindus and Muslims characterised the uprisings, sometimes referred to as the Fakir Rebellion.
- Majnum Shah (or Majnu Shah), Chirag Ali, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak and Debi Chaudhurani were important leaders.
- Debi Chaudhurani's participation recognizes the women's role in early resistances against the British.
- **Anandamath, a semi-historical novel by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, is based on the Sanyasi Revolt.**

**Q.10)** Who among the following Governor-General started the “policy of Ring-Fence”?

- a) Warren Hastings
- b) Lord Cornwallis
- c) William Bentinck
- d) Lord Hastings

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Warren Hastings took charge as the governor-general at a critical period of British rule when the British were to encounter the powerful combination of the Marathas, Mysore and Hyderabad.

- **He followed a policy of ring-fence which aimed at creating buffer zones to defend the Company's frontiers.**
- Broadly speaking, it was the policy of defence of their neighbours' frontiers for safeguarding their own territories.
- This policy of Warren Hastings was reflected in his war against the Marathas and Mysore.

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## *Economy*

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**Q.1)** The word “**monetary transmission**” often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) To contain growing Non-Performing Assets (NPA's) of commercial banks.
- b) The pass-through of the RBI's rate actions to the economy at large.
- c) Smooth transmission of tax devolution to states from centre.
- d) Providing timely credit for agriculture and other economically weaker sections.

**ANS: B**

**Explanation: Monetary transmission is the pass-through of the RBI's rate actions to the economy at large.**

- As you know, the RBI's most important task is to keep tabs on inflation by adjusting money supply.
- It also monitors the exchange rate. To control all this, the RBI uses many monetary tools.
- The repo rate, reverse repo rate and cash reserve requirement are being the key instruments.
- Let us take the repo rate, for instance. This is the rate at which the RBI lends short-term funds to banks to manage their day-to-day operations.
- When the RBI wants to stimulate growth, it cuts the repo rate to reduce the cost of borrowings.
- Banks get money at a cheaper rate. If this is passed on to borrowers, then monetary transmission is said to have happened smoothly.

**Q.2)** The term “**Side Pocketing**” often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Commercial Banks
- b) Mutual Funds
- c) Skill sector
- d) Self help groups

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Simply put, side pocketing is a framework that allows mutual funds to segregate the bad assets in a separate portfolio within their debt schemes.

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced the framework in December — primarily triggered by the IL&FS fiasco — after it emerged that many fund houses have huge exposure to the beleaguered entity and could potentially take a huge hit on their net asset value thereby affecting investor returns.
- If a debt instrument is downgraded to default rating by credit rating agencies, then the fund house has the option to create a side pocket so that good assets can be ring-fenced.
- Side pocketing segregates the bad assets from the good ones.
- All existing investors in the scheme are allotted equal number of units in the segregated portfolio as held in the main portfolio and no redemption or subscription is allowed in the segregated portfolio.
- Thereafter, the units have to be listed on a stock exchange within 10 days to facilitate exit of the unit holders.

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- Effectively, this makes the price discovery of the bad assets a transparent procedure with investors having the freedom of either selling it at prevailing price or holding it if they expect the value to recover in future.

**Q.3)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**steel sector in India**”:

1. India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of crude steel in the world from 2017 onwards.
2. The per-capita consumption of finished steel in India is less than world average.

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** In CY 2019, the world crude steel production reached 1870 million tonnes (mt) and showed a growth of 3.4% over CY 2018.

- China remained world’s largest crude steel producer in same period (996 mt) followed by India (111mt), Japan (99mt) and the USA (88mt).
- **Per capita finished steel consumption in 2018 was 224.5 kg for world and 590.1 kg for China** (Source: World Steel Association).
- **The same for India was 73.3 kg in 2018** (Source: JPC) and 75.7 kg (provisional) in 2019. The per capita consumption of India in 2018-19 was 74.1 kg and that in 2019-20 was 74.6 kg (prov.)

The Indian steel industry has entered into a new development stage, post de-regulation, riding high on the resurgent economy and rising demand for steel.

- **Rapid rise in production has resulted in India becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of crude steel during 2018 and 2019 (prov), from its 3<sup>rd</sup> largest status in 2017.**
- The country was also the largest producer of Sponge Iron or DRI in the world and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest finished steel consumer in the world after China & USA in 2019 (prov.)

**Q.4)** The term “**Harmonized System (HS)**” often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Service sector
- b) International product nomenclature
- c) International Financial Services
- d) Global Renewable Sector

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The Harmonized System, or simply ‘HS’, is a six-digit identification code developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO).

- **Called the “universal economic language” for goods, it is a multipurpose international product nomenclature.**
- Over 200 countries use the system as a basis for their customs tariffs, gathering international trade statistics, making trade policies, and for monitoring goods.
- The system helps in harmonizing of customs and trade procedures, thus reducing costs in international trade.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry allocated a separate Harmonized System (HS) code for Khadi, India’s signature handspun and hand-woven cloth that was made iconic by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle.

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- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in its press release said, “Khadi has once again come out of its customary veil, marking its presence in the exclusive HS code bracket, issued by the central government on November 4, 2019, to categorize its products in export.”

**Q.5)** Which of the following organization conducts the “**Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS)**”?

- a) NITI Aayog
- b) Central Statistical Office
- c) National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)
- d) Ministry of Labour

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** PLFS is an initiative aimed at generating estimates of various labour force indicators.

- The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation conducts the survey.
- Quarterly survey (For urban areas only) – Captures only the current weekly status (CWS) data.

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements regarding the **economic census**:

1. It is conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
2. Till now it was conducted six times.

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The government will kick off a massive exercise aimed to get a complete count of all economic units in the country-the Seventh Economic Census- from July 29 (2019) from the north eastern state of Tripura.

- The census, conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), will be held this year after a gap of five years.
- The ministry partnered with CSC e-Governance services India Ltd (CSC SPV) to conduct the census.
- **The First Economic Census was conducted throughout the country, except Lakshadweep, during 1977 in collaboration with the States/ Union Territories (UTs).**
- **The subsequent Censuses were conducted in the years 1980, 1990, 1998, 2005 . The 6th and the latest census was conducted in 2013.**

**Q.7)** Which of the following is/are **eligible** for Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme?

1. Small and marginal farmers holding land up to 2 hectares.
2. Institutional land holders.
3. Farmer families holding constitutional posts.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only



- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) None

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Delivering its poll promise, the Central Government on Saturday notified a decision to extend the benefit of ₹6,000 per year under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme to all 14.5 crore farmers in the country, irrespective of the size of their landholding.

- Notifying the decision, the Union Agriculture Ministry has written to all State Governments, asking them to identify beneficiaries subject to the existing exclusion factors.
- “All the state/UT governments are, therefore, requested to expedite 100 per cent enlistment of eligible beneficiaries as per the revised scheme so that farmers are able to avail the benefit of the scheme,” the Ministry said.
- Those excluded from the PM-KISAN include institutional land holders, farmer families holding constitutional posts, serving or retired officers and employees of State or Central government as well as Public Sector Undertakings and Government Autonomous bodies.
- Professionals like doctors, engineers and lawyers as well as retired pensioners with a monthly pension of over ₹10,000 and those who paid income tax in the last assessment year are also not eligible for the benefits.

**Q.8)** Which of the following method (s) is/are used to **calculate the black money?**

1. Monetary method.
2. Global indicator method.
3. Straightforward survey.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** There is no official definition of black money in economic theory, with several different terms such as parallel economy, black money, black incomes, unaccounted economy, illegal economy and irregular economy all being used more or less synonymously.

- The simplest definition of black money could possibly be money that is hidden from tax authorities.
- That is, black money can come from two broad categories: illegal activity and legal but unreported activity.

Methods used to calculate black money:

**One of the more popular methods is the monetary method.**

- This method assumes that the existence of and changes in the share of unaccounted income is reflected in the stock or flow of money in the system.
- In other words, track the money in the economy and you'll get an idea of how much has not been accounted for.

**Another method is the global indicator or input-based method.**

- In this method, unaccounted income is modelled using a single universal variable with which it is assumed to be highly correlated, therefore these estimates are also called input-based estimates.

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- Basically, the estimated level of activity in these indicators is compared to the reported level of GDP to arrive at an estimate of under-reporting.
- One common input used in this method is the quantity of land freight transport.
- The idea is that matching the actual amount of freight transported in the country to the reported amount of economic activity in the related sectors could give an estimate of how much is not being reported.

### **A third method to measure black money is a straightforward survey.**

This one, however, requires voluntary information from people and businesses concealing their incomes and so is prone to inaccuracies.

**Q.9)** The “**Package programme**” was introduced by the government of India to promote which of the following sector?

- a) Industrial sector
- b) Agricultural sector
- c) Service sector
- d) Mining sector

**ANS: B**

**Explanation: Popularly known as Package Programme, the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme (IADP) was taken up in 1961 and it paved the way to an Adoption Breakthrough for Green Revolution in India.**

- It aimed at diffusing technical know-how, credit and agricultural technology to step up agricultural production in selected districts so that it may have demonstration effect.
- The relevance of IADP experiment (1961-64) arises from the fact that it provided a crucial and much needed ‘adoption breakthrough’-adoption of modern techniques of agricultural growth which, when coupled with the epochmaking ‘biological breakthrough, gave birth to the Green Revolution in India’.
- The pilot project was launched first in 7 districts of 7 different states. Out of these, four were rice producing, two wheat producing and one millets producing.
- The programme was a grand success and it created new dynamism in the stagnant countryside. It was extended to a total of 114 districts in 1964-65.

**Q.10)** “**Fiscal Stimulus**” is provided to different sectors of an economy to promote the growth. Which of the following measure (s) is/are constitutes fiscal stimulus?

1. Increasing taxes
2. Monetary incentives
3. Export subsidies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** A stimulus package is a number of incentives and tax rebates offered by a government to boost spending in a bid to pull a country out of a recession or to prevent an economic slowdown.

- A stimulus package can either be in the form of a monetary stimulus or a fiscal stimulus.

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- A monetary stimulus involves cutting interest rates to stimulate the economy.
- When interest rates are cut, there is more incentive for people to borrow as the cost of borrowing is reduced.
- An increase in borrowing means there'll be more money in circulation, less incentive to save, and more incentive to spend.
- Lowering interest rates could also weaken the exchange rate of a country, thereby leading to a boost in exports.
- When exports are increased, more money enters the economy, encouraging spending and stirring up the economy.

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## *Polity*

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**Q.1)** With reference to the **modern democracies**, which of the following is/are the types of **power sharing arrangements**?

1. Power sharing between different organs of the government.
2. Power sharing among governments at different levels.
3. Power sharing among different social groups.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** In modern democracies, power sharing arrangements can take many forms.

**Power is shared among different organs of government, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary.**

- Let us call this horizontal distribution of power because it allows different organs of government placed at the same level to exercise different powers.
- Such a separation ensures that none of the organs can exercise unlimited power.
- Each organ checks the others. This results in a balance of power among various institutions.

**Power can be shared among governments at different levels – a general government for the entire country and governments at the provincial or regional level.**

- Such a general government for the entire country is usually called federal government.
- In India, we refer to it as the Central or Union Government.

**Power may also be shared among different social groups, such as the religious and linguistic groups.**

In some countries there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration.

**Power sharing arrangements can also be seen in the way political parties, pressure groups and movements control or influence those in power.**

- In a democracy, the citizens must have freedom to choose among various contenders for power.
- In contemporary democracies this takes the form of competition among different parties.
- Such competition ensures that power does not remain in one hand.
- In the long run power is shared among different political parties that represent different ideologies and social groups.

**Q.2)** With reference to the federalism, which of the following are the **features of federalism**?

1. There are two or more levels (or tiers) of government.
2. Different tiers of government have its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.

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3. The existence and authority of each tier of government is constitutionally guaranteed.
4. The fundamental provisions of the constitution can be unilaterally changed by one level of government.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country.

**Some of the key features of federalism:**

- There are two or more levels (or tiers) of government.
- Different tiers of government govern the same citizens, but each tier has its own JURISDICTION in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration.
- The jurisdictions of the respective levels or tiers of government are specified in the constitution. So the existence and authority of each tier of government is constitutionally guaranteed.
- The fundamental provisions of the constitution cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government. Such changes require the consent of both the levels of government.
- Courts have the power to interpret the constitution and the powers of different levels of government. The highest court acts as an umpire if disputes arise between different levels of government in the exercise of their respective powers.
- Sources of revenue for each level of government are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy.
- The federal system thus has dual objectives: to safeguard and promote unity of the country, while at the same time accommodate regional diversity.

**Q.3)** Which of the following is/are the example (s) of “**coming together federations**”?

1. United States of America
2. Australia
3. Belgium

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** There are **two kinds of routes** through which federations have been formed.

**The first route** involves independent States coming together on their own to form a bigger unit, so that by pooling sovereignty and retaining identity they can increase their security.

- This type of ‘coming together’ federations includes the **USA, Switzerland and Australia**.
- In this first category of federations, all the constituent States usually have equal power and are strong vis-à-vis the federal government.

**The second route** is where a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent States and the national government.

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- **India, Spain and Belgium are examples of this kind of ‘holding together’ federations.**
- In this second category, the central government tends to be more powerful vis-à-vis the States

**Q.4)** Which of the following provision (s) is/are comes under **union list**?

1. Sanctioning of cinematograph films for exhibition.
2. Money lending.
3. Preventive detention for maintenance of public order.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Sanctioning of cinematograph films for exhibition – comes under union list.

- Money lending and money lenders, relief of agriculture indebtedness comes under state list.
- Preventive detention for the reasons connected with the security of a state, the maintenance of public order, or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community **comes under concurrent list.**

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**Charter Act of 1833**”:

1. It made the Governor of Bengal as the Governor-General of Bengal.
2. The laws made under previous acts were called as Regulations while laws made under this act were called as Acts.
3. It ended the monopoly of East India Company however company’s monopoly in trade with china kept intact.

Which of the statements given above is/are **NOT** correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Features of the Act:

- **It made the Governor-General of Bengal as the Governor-General of India** and vested in him all civil and military powers.
- Thus, the act created, for the first time, a Government of India having authority over the entire territorial area possessed by the British in India.
- Lord William Bentick was the first governor-general of India.
- It deprived the governor of Bombay and Madras of their legislative powers. The Governor-General of India was given exclusive legislative powers for the entire British India.
- The laws made under the previous acts were called as Regulations while laws made under this act were called as Acts.
- It ended the activities of the East India Company as a commercial body, which became a purely administrative body.
- It provided that the company’s territories in India were held by it ‘in trust for His Majesty, His heirs and successors’.

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- The Charter Act of 1833 attempted to introduce a system of open competition for selection of civil servants, and stated that the Indians should not be debarred from holding any place, office and employment under the Company.
- However, this provision was negated after opposition from the Court of Directors.

**Q.6)** Which of the following are the features of the “**parliamentary government**”?

1. Presence of Nominal and Real executives
2. Majority party rule
3. Membership of ministers in the legislature
4. Dissolution of upper house

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 1, 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The parliamentary system is also known as the ‘Westminster’ model of government, responsible government and cabinet government.

The Constitution establishes the parliamentary system not only at the Centre but also in the states.

The features of parliamentary government in India are:

- Presence of nominal and real executives
- Majority party rule
- Collective responsibility of the executive to the legislature
- Membership of the ministers in the legislature
- Leadership of the prime minister or the chief minister,
- Dissolution of the lower House (Lok Sabha or Assembly).

**Q.7)** Which of the following provisions of the constitution is/are related to “**secular state of India**”?

1. The term secular was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1978.
2. The Preamble secures to all citizens of India liberty of belief, faith and worship
3. The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Constitution of India stands for a secular state. Hence, it does not uphold any particular religion as the official religion of the Indian State. The following provisions of the Constitution reveal the secular character of the Indian State:

- The term ‘secular’ was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976.
- The Preamble secures to all citizens of India liberty of belief, faith and worship.
- The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws (Article 14).

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- The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion (Article 15).
- Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of public employment (Article 16).
- All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate any religion (Article 25).
- Every religious denomination or any of its section shall have the right to manage its religious affairs (Article 26).
- No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes for the promotion of a particular religion (Article 27).

**Q.8)** Which of the following feature of Indian constitution is called as “**Instrument of Instructions**”?

- a) Fundamental Rights
- b) Fundamental Duties
- c) Directive Principles of State Policy
- d) Preamble

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Directive Principles resemble the ‘Instrument of Instructions’ enumerated in the Government of India Act of 1935.

- In the words of Dr B R Ambedkar, ‘the Directive Principles are like the instrument of instructions, which were issued to the Governor-General and to the Governors of the colonies of India by the British Government under the Government of India Act of 1935.
- What is called Directive Principles is merely another name for the instrument of instructions.
- The only difference is that they are instructions to the legislature and the executive’.

**Q.9)** The 42nd Amendment Act transferred some subjects from state list to concurrent list. Which of the following **state subjects** are transferred to concurrent list?

1. Education
2. Public health
3. Forests
4. Weights and measures

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Both, the Parliament and state legislature can make laws with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the Concurrent List.

- This list has at present 52 subjects (originally 47 subjects) like criminal law and procedure, civil procedure, marriage and divorce, population control and family planning, electricity, labor welfare, economic and social planning, drugs, newspapers, books and printing press, and others.
- The 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 transferred five subjects to Concurrent List from State List, that is, (a) education, (b) forests, (c) weights and measures, (d) protection of wild animals and birds, and (e) administration of justice; constitution and organization of all courts except the Supreme Court and the high courts.



**Q.10)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**Cantonment Board**”:

1. A cantonment board is created by Central government but administered by the state government.
2. Both the elected members and nominated members hold office for a term of five years.
3. The executive officer of the cantonment board is appointed by the president of India.

Which the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** A cantonment board is established for municipal administration for civilian population in the cantonment area.

- It is set up under the provisions of the Cantonments Act of 2006-a legislation enacted by the Central government.
- It works under the administrative control of the defense ministry of the Central government.
- Thus, unlike the above four types of urban local bodies, which are created and administered by the state government, a cantonment board is created as well as administered by the Central government.
- A cantonment board consists of partly elected and partly nominated members. The elected members hold office for a term of five years while the nominated members (i.e., ex-officio members) continue so long as they hold the office in that station.
- The military officer commanding the station is the ex-officio president of the board and presides over its meetings.
- The vice president of the board is elected by the elected members from amongst themselves for a term of five years.
- The functions performed by a cantonment board are similar to those of a municipality. These are statutorily categorised into obligatory functions and discretionary functions.
- The sources of income include both, tax revenue and non-tax revenue. The executive officer of the cantonment board is appointed by the president of India.
- He implements all the resolutions and decisions of the board and its committees. He belongs to the central cadre established for the purpose.

## Science and technology

**Q.1)** Consider the following statements regarding the “benzoic acid”:

1. It is white crystalline organic compound belongs to the family of carboxylic acid.
2. It is commonly used as a pH adjustor and preservative in food.

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Benzoic acid is an organic compound which is described by the chemical formula  $C_6H_5COOH$ .

- It consists of a carboxyl group attached to a benzene ring. Therefore, benzoic acid is said to be an aromatic carboxylic acid.
- **This compound exists as a crystalline, colorless solid under normal conditions.**
- **It is white and belongs to the family of carboxylic acid.**
- The term ‘benzoate’ refers to the esters and salts of  $C_6H_5COOH$ .
- The commercial production of benzoic acid is done via the partial oxidation of toluene with oxygen, catalyzed by manganese or cobalt naphthenates.

Some important uses of  $C_6H_5COOH$  are listed below.

- The **production of phenol** involves the use of benzoic acid.
- This compound is **used in ointments** that prevent or treat fungal skin diseases.
- $C_6H_5COOH$  is used as a **preservative in the food industry**.
- Benzoic acid is an ingredient in many **cosmetic products, such as lipsticks**.
- It is also a precursor to benzoyl chloride.
- One of the components of toothpaste, mouthwash, and face-wash creams is  $C_6H_5$
- This compound is also used in the manufacture of dyes and in insect repellants.

**Q.2)** The term “Keratinocytes” is related to which of the following?

- a) Primary skin cell
- b) Liver cells
- c) Muscle cells
- d) Sex cells

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Keratinocytes are the primary type of cell found in the epidermis, the outermost layer of the skin.

- In humans they constitute 90% of epidermal skin cells.
- Basal cells in the basal layer (stratum basale) of the skin are sometimes referred to as basal keratinocytes.
- **By using an indigenously developed hydrogel made of a polymer (polyacrylamide) in lieu of the conventional plastic tissue culture plates, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay have been able to achieve many-fold increase in the number of skin cells (keratinocytes) cultured in the lab.**

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- Unlike traditional methods, no feeder layer or drug is needed when cells are grown on the hydrogel substrate.

**Q.3)** The term “**Sagittarius \*A**” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Meteorite
- b) Black hole
- c) Goldilocks zone
- d) Asteroids

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The center of our Milky Way Galaxy is anchored by a black hole that is nearly 5 million times the mass of our Sun.

- Surrounding it is a chaotic city of stars, gas, and dust that we call Sagittarius A.
- We stacked false-color X-ray, infrared, and radio images into this single picture to show you the different structures hidden inside the core of our Galaxy.
- X-rays (purple) radiate from the super-hot gas trapped in the black hole’s grasp.
- The surrounding dust is heated by friction as it chaotically orbits around the black hole and then glows in infrared light (gold).
- And the enormous pools and three-armed rivers of gas shine in radio light (oranges and reds) to trace the complexity of magnetic fields in this violent neighborhood.

**NOTE:** A language professor has given a Hawaiian name — Powehi — to the black hole depicted in an image produced in a landmark experiment.

Though the Event Horizon Telescope set out to image **both M87 and Sagittarius A\* the black hole at the centre of the Milky way**, they have succeeded only in imaging the former, despite its being much further away.

**Q.4)** Besides earth, which of the following **celestial body** has places with standing bodies of liquid on the surface?

- a) Mars
- b) Saturn
- c) Titan
- d) Moon

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Titan and Earth are the solar system’s two places with standing bodies of liquid on the surface. Titan boasts lakes, rivers and seas of hydrocarbons: compounds of hydrogen and carbon like those that are the main components of petroleum and natural gas.

“Titan is the most Earth-like body in the solar system. It has lakes, canyons, rivers, dune fields of organic sand particles about the same size as silica sand grains on Earth”.

**Q.5)** The word “**Helium hydride ion (HeH<sup>+</sup>)**” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Ancient molecule
- b) Energy efficient battery
- c) High altitude balloons
- d) None

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Scientists have detected the most ancient type of molecule in our universe in space for the first time ever.

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- Helium hydride ion (HeH<sup>+</sup>) was the first molecule that formed when, almost 14 billion years ago, falling temperatures in the young universe allowed recombination of the light elements produced in the Big Bang.
- At that time, ionised hydrogen and neutral helium atoms reacted to form HeH<sup>+</sup>, said researchers from The Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy (MPIfR) in Germany.
- Despite its importance in the history of the early Universe, HeH<sup>+</sup> has so far escaped detection in astrophysical nebulae — cloud of gas and dust in outer space.
- Operating the GREAT far-infrared spectrometer onboard the flying observatory SOFIA, an international team reported unambiguous detection of the molecule towards the planetary nebula NGC 7027.

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**Indian Bullfrog**”:

1. It is native to the Indian subcontinent and is the largest frog in India.
  2. It is one of the invasive species on the islands of Andaman and Nicobar.
- 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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Indian bullfrog *Hoplobatrachus tigerinus* (native to the Indian subcontinent) has rapidly invaded the Andaman Islands after it was introduced there in the early 2000s.

- In human-dominated areas, it now shares space with other native (and often endemic) frog species.
- The bullfrogs are prolific breeders: they have short breeding seasons, and each egg clutch can contain up to 5,750 eggs.
- Its tadpoles are carnivorous and eat other tadpoles (including their own species).
- **It is native to the Indian subcontinent (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan) and is the largest frog in India.**

**Q.7)** Recently, which Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, named the **Bharati Script**?

- a) IIT – Madras
- b) IIT – Kanpur
- c) IIT – Bombay
- d) IIT – Hyderabad

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Taking a cue from European languages, several of which have the same (Roman letter-based) script, Srinivasa Chakravathy’s team at IIT Madras has, over the last decade, developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, named the Bharati script.

- The team has now gone a step further since developing the script: it has developed a method for reading documents in Bharati script using a multi-lingual optical character recognition (OCR) scheme.
- The team has also created a finger-spelling method that can be used to generate a sign language for hearing-impaired persons.
- In collaboration with TCS Mumbai, the researchers have found a way for persons with hearing disability to generate signatures using this finger-spelling technique.

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- **The scripts that have been integrated include Devnagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil.** English and Urdu have not been integrated so far.
- In general, optical character recognition schemes involve first separating (or segmenting) the document into text and non-text.
- The text is then segmented into paragraphs, sentences words and letters.
- Each letter has to be recognised as a character in some recognisable format such as ASCII or Unicode.
- The letter has various components such as the basic consonant, consonant modifiers, vowels etc

**Q.8)** The “**G Finder survey**” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Mobile Generations and their penetrations
- b) Research and development for neglected disease
- c) Geo-thermal energy survey
- d) Human Genome survey

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** It is encouraging that India was reported to be the fourth largest funder of research and development (R&D) in neglected diseases as per the **G Finder Survey which tracks global investments in R&D for the neglected diseases.**

- This reflects the government’s commitment towards addressing the innovation problem in neglected diseases.
- Neglected diseases are mostly tropical infectious diseases, and the market size for drugs for such diseases is small due to their limited geographical incidence.
- To highlight the common problem of lack of innovation for drugs, diagnostics and vaccines for this basket of diseases, WHO started addressing these as neglected diseases from late 1980s.
- Some examples of neglected diseases are malaria, tuberculosis, leishmaniasis (kala azar), dengue, leprosy, lymphatic filariasis and diarrhoeal diseases.

**NOTE:** These diseases face an innovation deficit as they are neglected in R&D efforts of the pharmaceutical industry.

- However, it is not just the neglected diseases in the developing world that face this innovation deficit.
- **Several rare diseases that affect the developed markets are called “orphan diseases.”**
- These are called orphans because the pharmaceutical industry does not find it profitable to develop and market products intended for only a small number of patients suffering from rare diseases.

**Q.9)** The word “**hobbits**” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Fossils of amphibian mammals
- b) Ancient Paleao-river stream
- c) Geological time period
- d) Archaic human species

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** The discovery of Homo luzonensis, a small-bodied hominin on April 2019, from the island of Luzon in the Philippines was based on studies carried out on seven teeth and six small bones that were recovered.

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- The hominin lived at least 50,000-67,000 years ago in the island.
- The discovery of Denisovans, an extinct species of human, in 2008 was based on fragmentary remains.
- Genetic studies carried on a small finger sample suggested that they survived for thousands of years and died out just 40,000 years ago.
- **Similarly, in the case of ‘hobbits’ (Homo floresiensis), which was discovered in 2004 in Flores, Indonesia and found to have survived till as recently as 12,000 years ago, the confirmation of its hominin nature came from studying a variety of bones.**
- Fairly complete cranium and mandible, right leg, less complete bones of the left leg, hands and feet, and fragments of vertebral column, ribs, sacrum (triangular bone at the base of the spine) among others were recovered and studied.

**Q.10)** The word “Yeti” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) High altitude Deer
- b) Giant creature (wild man) of Himalayas
- c) Ancient rock found in deep seas
- d) None

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** In 1951, a British explorer named Eric Shipton looking for an alternative route up Mt. Everest found a footprint that appeared to be hominoid.

- **He took a picture, and the mystery of the Yeti—a Sherpa word for “wild man”—cast a spell over the world.**
- Daniel Taylor, author of Yeti: The Ecology of a Mystery has been searching for signs of this “**Abominable Snowman**” in the high Himalayas since he was a child.

While there are only claims of sightings of Yeti and giant footprints on snow, results from two studies based on samples collected from the Himalayas do not provide any evidence in support of Yeti. Both studies have indicated that samples belonged to bears.

- An August 2014 paper in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B studied two hair samples — one from Ladakh and the other from Bhutan. These had close genetic affinity to polar bears or a previously unrecognised bear species.
- A November 2017 study published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B analysed 24 mitochondrial DNA samples of hair, tissue, bone, and faeces of Himalayan brown bears and purported Yeti collected from the Tibetan Plateau-Himalaya region.
- Eight of the nine purported Yeti samples matched regional bear populations, including the Himalayan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*).
- The results “strongly suggest that the biological basis of the Yeti legend is local brown and black bears”, the researchers concluded.

## Geography

**Q.1)** The term “**lucky latitudes**” is related to which of the following?

- Latitudes which are helpful to sailors in tropical belt.
- Latitudes of poles.
- Latitudes where the practice of domestication of wild plants and animals began to happen for the first time.
- Latitudes of frontal regions.

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Lucky latitudes refer to the geographical regions where the practice of domestication of wild plants and animals began to happen for the first time in human history.

- It includes land that lies between the latitudes of 20 and 35 degrees north in the Old World, and 15 degrees south and 20 degrees north in the Americas.
- These regions became more favourable to the rise of civilization when the rise in earth's temperature ended the last Ice Age around 12,000 years ago.
- Consequently, people located in these geographic regions gained a head-start over the rest of the world.
- The term was coined by Ian Morris in his book *Why the West Rules — For Now*.

**Q.2)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**debris-laden Himalayan glaciers**”:

- About 20% of Himalayan glaciers are debris-laden.
- Glaciers without debris cover the rate of melting increases as the elevation decreases.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Studying debris-laden Himalayan glaciers is important from the point of view of how climate change affects them.

- About 20% of Himalayan glaciers are debris-laden, and their dynamics are very different from the ones without debris cover.**
- In glaciers without a debris cover, the rate of melting increases as the elevation decreases.**
- However, in glaciers covered with debris, the thick cover partially insulates the glacier from the warm exterior and thereby slows down the melting.
- The thickness of the debris cover, by and large, increases as the glacier flows down.
- This works against the general trend that the lower the elevation, the higher the rate of melting.
- Matters are further complicated because the thickness of the debris cover is not uniform but fluctuates randomly.

**Q.3)** The words “**Pizol, Aletsch and Okjokull**” often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- Alpine glaciers

- b) High altitude lakes
- c) Geo-thermal points
- d) Deep sea canyons

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Dozens of people will undertake a “funeral march” up a steep Swiss mountainside on September 2019, to mark the disappearance of an Alpine glacier amid growing global alarm over climate change.

- Dressed in black, they will make the solemn two-hour “funeral march” up the side of **Pizol mountain** in northeastern Switzerland to the foot of the steep and rapidly melting ice formation, situated at an altitude of around 2,700 metres (8,850 feet) near the Liechtenstein and Austrian borders
- The move comes after Iceland made global headlines last month with a large ceremony and the laying of a bronze plaque to commemorate **Okjokull, the island’s first glacier** lost to climate change.
- The researchers indicated that the **Alps’ largest glacier, the mighty Aletsch**, could completely disappear over the next eight decades.

**Q.4)** Which of the following **rivers are originate/feed** from the glaciers of Hindu Kush – Himalaya region?

1. Ganges River
2. Indus River
3. Yellow River
4. Irrawaddy River

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- d) 1 and 2 only

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Two-thirds of Himalayan glaciers, **the world’s “Third Pole”**, could melt by 2100 if global emissions are not reduced, scientists warned in a major new study issued in 2019.

- And even if the “most ambitious” Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5° C is achieved, one-third of the glaciers would go, according to the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment.
- Glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) region are a critical water source for some 250 million people in the mountains as well as to 1.65 billion others in the river valleys below, the report said.
- **The glaciers feed 10 of the world’s most important river systems, including the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow, Amu Darya and Tarim.**
- And directly or indirectly supply billions of people with food, energy, clean air and income.

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**altitude of the midday sun**”:

1. The sun is vertically overhead at the equator only.
2. Beyond the tropics the sun is never overhead at any time of the year.

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** In the course of a year, the earth's revolution round the sun with its axis inclined at  $66\frac{1}{2}$  to the plane of the ecliptic changes the apparent altitude of the midday sun.

- The sun is vertically overhead at the equator on two days each year. These are usually 21<sup>st</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> September.
- After the March equinox the sun appears to move north and is vertically overhead at the tropic of Cancer on about 21<sup>st</sup> June.
- By about 22<sup>nd</sup> December, the sun will be overhead at the tropic of Capricorn.
- The tropics thus mark the limits of the overhead sun, for beyond these, the sun is never overhead at any time of the year.

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements regarding the "igneous rocks":

1. The acid igneous rocks are highly dense and darker in colour.
2. The basic igneous rocks are less dense and lighter in colour.

Which of the statements given above is/are **NOT** correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Igneous rocks may be subdivided on the basis of mineral composition.

- When they contain a high proportion of silica they are said to be acid.
- Acid igneous rocks, such as granite, are less dense and are lighter in colour than basic rocks.
- These contain a greater proportion of basic oxides, e.g. of iron, aluminum or magnesium, and are thus denser and darker in colour.

**Q.7)** Which of the following pair (s) is/are correctly matched?

**Instrument** : **Elements of weather**

1. Stevenson screen : Temperature
2. Beaufort scale : Humidity
3. Hygrometer : Precipitation

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:**

**Stevenson screen:** A Stevenson screen (also known as an instrument shelter) is a meteorological screen to shield instruments against precipitation and direct heat radiation from outside sources, while still allowing air to circulate freely around them.

It forms part of a standard weather station.

**Beaufort scale:** The Beaufort Scale is an empirical measure that relates wind speed to observed conditions at sea or on land. Its full name is the Beaufort wind force scale.

**Hygrometer:** Hygrometer, instrument used in meteorological science to measure the humidity, or amount of water vapour in the air.

**Q.8)** Which of the following pair (s) is/are correctly matched?

**Affected state : Cyclone**

1. Tamil Nadu : Ockhi
2. Gujarat : Fani
3. Odisha : Vayu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The effects of climate change are at our doorsteps.

- **Cyclones such as Thane, Vardah, Ockhi and Gaja have affected Tamil Nadu in recent times;**
- Chennai saw terrible floods in 2015.
- Floods wreaked havoc in Assam, Himachal Pradesh and Bihar this year, and Mumbai received record monsoon rains.
- Kerala witnessed floods for the second consecutive year.
- **Cyclone Fani devastated Odisha, Cyclone Vayu ravaged Gujarat this year. All these are because of climate change.**

**Q.9)** Which of the following **deserts** is/are influenced by ocean currents?

1. Atacama Desert
2. Namib Desert
3. Gobi Desert

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:**

**Namib Desert: the Namib Desert is a direct result of the Benguela Current.**

- Seamounts near to the coastline beneath the Atlantic's surface cause the icy Benguela River to flow very close to the Namibian coast.
- This causes a harsh coastal climate with very little rainfall.

**Atacama Desert: Cold ocean currents contribute to the formation of coastal deserts.**

- Air blowing toward shore, chilled by contact with cold water, produces a layer of fog. This heavy fog drifts onto land.
- The Atacama Desert, on the Pacific shores of Chile, is a coastal desert.
- Some areas of the Atacama are often covered by fog. But the region can go decades without rainfall. In fact, the Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth.

**Gobi Desert:** Interior deserts, which are found in the heart of continents, exist because no moisture-laden winds reach them.

- By the time air masses from coastal areas reach the interior, they have lost all their moisture. Interior deserts are sometimes called inland deserts.
- The Gobi Desert, in China and Mongolia, lays hundreds of kilometers from the ocean. Winds that reach the Gobi have long since lost their moisture.
- The Gobi is also in the rain shadow of the Himalaya Mountains to the south.

**Q.10)** The words “**macchia, maquis and chaparral**” is related to which of the following?

- a) Shrub vegetation
- b) Tropical vegetation
- c) Tundra vegetation
- d) Alpine vegetation

**ANS: A**

**Explanation: Chaparral is sclerophyllous vegetation that is tolerant of seasonal drought.**

- **It consists of small trees, woody grasses and oleose, xerophytic shrubs that form a nearly continuous cover of intertwined branches.**
- Usually less than 10 per cent of the ground is bare, though the proportion may be higher at inhospitable sites.
- Where annual precipitation is in the range 250–500 mm, plants may be only 1–2 m high, while crowns may reach 3.5–4 m where precipitation is 500–750 mm.
- In California chaparral is common at elevations of 300–1500 m. It occupies 3.4 million ha (8.5 per cent) of the state, particularly in its southern part and at moderate elevations.
- **The European synonym for chaparral, maquis (in Italian, macchia, plural macchie), is derived from the Corsican word for a species of sun rose (Cistus), which is often a striking component of the maquis community.**

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## Environment

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**Q.1)** The “**Bridgestone World Solar Challenge (BWSC)**” is often seen in news is conducted in which of the following country?

- a) Japan
- b) Australia
- c) United States of America
- d) Switzerland

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** For over 30 years, the Bridgestone World Solar Challenge has welcomed the greatest minds from around the world to Australia to push the limits of technological innovation and travel the outback in a vehicle powered only by the energy of the sun.

- **Traversing 3,000km from Darwin to Adelaide, teams comprise of tertiary and secondary students from over 30 countries.**
- These students and their support team have achieved greatness by engineering and building a vehicle with their own hands and powering it across some of the world's most challenging landscape.
- In 2017, the Bridgestone World Solar Challenge celebrated its 30th Anniversary. The 2021 competition marks the 16th journey from the Top End to Adelaide.
- Based on the original notion that a 1000W car would complete the journey in 50 hours, solar cars are allowed a nominal 5kW hours of stored energy, which is 10% of that theoretical figure.
- All other energy must come from the sun or be recovered from the kinetic energy of the vehicle. These are arguably the most efficient electric vehicles.

**Q.2)** According to IUCN, which of the following **vulture species** is/are **critically endangered**?

1. White-backed vulture
2. Indian Griffon vulture
3. Bearded vulture

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** There has been a sharp decline in the population of vultures in the country which has come down from 40 million to 19,000 in a span of over three decades, the Environment Ministry told the Parliament.

- Responding to a query on the status of vultures in the country, Union Environment Minister said there are three species of critically endangered resident Gyps vultures – white-backed vulture, long-billed vulture and slender-billed vulture – whose population as per the latest figures is 6,000, 12,000 and 1,000, respectively.
- The Minister said nationwide vulture surveys are being carried out by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) every four years sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Forest Departments of various States since 1990.

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- The major cause of mortality of vultures was found to be the veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug 'Diclofenac', given to cattle in pain and inflammation.
- It said that for protection and conservation of vultures in the country, the government has also upgraded the status of White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed vultures from Schedule IV to Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

**NOTE:** Indian Griffon vulture – Least Concerned and Bearded vulture – Near Threatened.

**Q.3)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**prescribed burning**”:

1. It is the process of planning and applying fire to a predetermined area, under specific environmental conditions, to achieve a desired outcome.
2. Recently it was practiced in both Eravikulam National Park (ENP) and Parambikulam Tiger Reserve.

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Prescribed burning is the process of planning and applying fire to a predetermined area, under specific environmental conditions, to achieve a desired outcome.

- Prescribed, controlled and planned burns are the same thing.
- Prescribed burning was experimentally introduced in the **Eravikulam National Park (ENP) and Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PKMTR)** recently.

**Q.4)** Which of the following institution (s) is/are announced/launched the “**Clean Air Initiative**”?

1. Climate and Clean Air Coalition.
2. World Health Organization (WHO).
3. United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment).

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Ahead of the upcoming 2019 Climate Action Summit, the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and Climate and Clean Air Coalition announced today the “Clean Air Initiative”, calling on governments at all levels to join the Initiative.

- The “Clean Air Initiative” calls on national and sub national governments to commit to achieving air quality that is safe for citizens, and to align climate change and air pollution policies by 2030.
- According to WHO, each year, air pollution causes 7 million premature deaths, of which 600,000 are children.
- According to the World Bank, air pollution costs the global economy an estimated US\$5.11 trillion in welfare losses and in the 15 countries with the highest greenhouse gas emissions, health impacts of air pollution are estimated to cost more than 4 per cent of GDP.

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- Meeting the Paris Agreement on climate change, however, could save over 1 million lives a year by 2050 and yield health benefits worth an estimated US\$54.1 trillion – about twice the costs of mitigation – through reduced air pollution alone.

**Q.5)** Recently researchers have found a **dragon tree species** for the first time in which of the following state?

- a) Kerala
- b) Tamil Nadu
- c) Arunachal Pradesh
- d) Assam

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Assam has added to India's botanical wealth a plant that yields dragon's blood — a bright red resin used since ancient times as medicine, body oil, varnish, incense and dye.

- A trio of researchers led by Assam forest officials has discovered *Dracaena cambodiana*, a dragon tree species in the Dongka Sarpo area of West Karbi Anglong.
- This is for the first time that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.
- *Dracaena cambodiana* is an important medicinal plant as well as an ornamental tree.
- It is a major source of dragon's blood, a precious traditional medicine in China.
- Several antifungal and antibacterial compounds, antioxidants, flavonoids, etc., have been extracted from various parts of the plant.

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**tiger census**” in India:

1. It is conducted for once in four years.
2. It was first conducted in 2002 by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

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

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Tiger census is conducted for once in four years.

- Since 2006, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) — an Environment Ministry funded body — has been tasked with coordinating the exercise.
- That year, the once in four years exercise calculated that India had only 1,411 tigers.
- This rose to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014 on the back of improved conservation measures and new estimation methods.
- India accounts for most of the 3,500-odd tigers that are scattered among Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- As part of an agreement in 2010 among these countries, there is a goal to double the global tiger count by 2022.

**Q.7)** Recently, Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) has released its latest variety - “**Arka Suprabath**” is related to which of the following?

- a) Mango
- b) Papaya
- c) Pine apple
- d) Banana

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) has released its latest variety, Arka Suprabath, much to the delight of fruit connoisseurs.

- Mango is a highly cross-pollinated and heterozygous crop, which means it is difficult to get all the desired characters/traits in a single variety.
- So, it was developed by, to combine the best of Amrapali (for pulp, colour, taste and bearing) and Arka Anmol (for size and colour).
- It is a double-cross hybrid developed by using parents Amrapali (which is a cross of Dashehari and Neelam) and Arka Anmol (which is a cross of Alphonso and Janardhan Pasand).
- Arka Suprabath is a rare variety as it has got Alphonso shape with the pulp colour of Amrapali.
- Tastewise, it is sweet with less acidic properties (0.12%). Its deep orange firm pulp is less fibrous than other varieties.
- Alphonso tends to show irregular bearing after 15 to 20 years of cultivation, but Arka Suprabath grows consistently in bunches.

**Q.8)** The “prickly pear cactus” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Bio-fuel
- b) Biodegradable plastics
- c) Wild Alien flora species
- d) None

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Mexico’s prickly pear cactus, which is emblazoned on the country’s flag, could soon play a new and innovative role in the production of biodegradable plastics.

- A packaging material that is made from the plant has been developed by a Mexican researcher and is offering a promising solution to one of the world’s biggest pollution conundrums.
- That substance is then mixed with non-toxic additives and stretched to produce sheets that are coloured with pigments and folded to form different types of packaging.

**Q.9)** Which of the following states prepared the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans with support from the World Bank?

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Kerala
3. West Bengal
4. Odisha
5. Gujarat

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 3, 4 and 5 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The objective of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Project is to assist Government of India (GoI) in building national capacity for implementation of comprehensive coastal management approach in the country, and piloting the integrated coastal zone management approach in states of Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal.

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- There are four components to the project, the first component being national ICZM capacity building. The national component will include mapping, delineation and demarcation of the hazard lines, and delineation of coastal sediment cells all along the mainland coast of India.
- The second component is the piloting ICZM approaches in Gujarat. This component will support capacity building of the state level agencies and institutions, including preparation of an ICZM plan for the coastal sediment cell that includes the Gulf of Kachchh, and pilot investments.
- The third component is the piloting ICZM approaches in Orissa. This component will include capacity building of the state level agencies and institutions, including preparation of an ICZM plan for the coastal sediment cells that include the stretches of Paradip-Dhamra and Gopalpur-Chilika, including a regional coastal process study, and pilot investments.
- Finally, the fourth component is the piloting ICZM approaches in West Bengal.

**Q.10)** The “**miscanthus, reed canary and switch grasses**” often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Energy grasses
- b) Bio fertilizers
- c) Bio pesticides
- d) None

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** A long-term research has revealed that reed canary grass can be turned into an excellent ‘green’ fuel for biomass power stations and, on a smaller scale, boilers in buildings like schools.

- The five-year research project was carried out by researchers from Teesside University’s Contaminated Land and Water Centre.
- Reed canary grass, which is native to Britain, is turned into bricks and pellets. These not only burn well but also don’t add to greenhouse gases or contribute to global warming.
- The research team experimented with four types of plant, willow trees, the current favourite for biomass power stations, & the miscanthus, reed canary and switch grasses.



**Crops under attack**

FAW IS A LONG-TIME AMERICAN PEST MUNCHING ITS WAY AROUND THE GLOBE, ATTACKING MOSTLY MAIZE, SORGHUM, MINOR MILLETS AND VEGETABLES.

The Fall Armyworm pest feeding on a plant on ICRISAT campus.

- It lays eggs on plants from which larvae hatch and start feeding on the leaves and stems, destroying them in the process.
- The female moth is a strong flyer and can cover 100 km in one night.
- In 2017-18, it damaged 20-25% crop yield worth \$3.5 billion to \$5 billion in about 40 African countries.
- In India, FAW infestation was first reported on maize in Karnataka in July 2018 followed by Telangana. It is now reported to have spread to Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and parts of West Bengal.
- India has imported 5 million tonnes maize, and one of the reasons for that could be large-scale FAW infestation. More than 80 crops were hit by the FAW.
- America addressed the problem by introducing BT Maize.

ICRISAT deputy director general Kiran Sharma, US Consul General Katherine Hadda, ICAR director general Trilochan Mohapatra and CMYYT Global Maize Programme director B.M. Prasanna addressing the media on the pest threat at the institute in Patancheru of Sangareddy district on Wednesday.

\*MOHD. ARIF



## *Reports, Acts & Indices*

**Q.1)** Which of the following committee (s) is/are related to **Defence** in British India?

1. Skeen Committee
2. Chatfield Committee
3. Babington Smith Committee

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The crucial link between the founding of a military academy and the attainment of independence was acutely realized by a section of Indian leadership in the days of struggle for independence, whose concerted efforts resulted in the recommendations of the Montague Chelmsford Reforms Committee that enabled ten Indians for receiving training at Sandhurst for induction as commissioned officers;

- **Setting up of the Skeen Committee in 1925** and later holding of Round Table Conference in London in 1930, which **recommended the establishment of the Indian Sandhurst.**
- As a follow up action, **a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode, the then Commander-in-Chief of India, to work out modalities for establishment of an Indian Sandhurst.**
- In Jul 1931, the committee recommended establishment of a military academy for induction of 40 Gentlemen Cadets (GC) in each term comprising 15 as Direct Entries, 15 from the ranks through Kitchner College, Nowgaon and 10 from princely states.
- The training span was initially envisaged for three years but later reduced to two and a half years.

**Q.2)** Which of the following Act (s) is/are passed during the period of **Indira Gandhi**?

1. The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act.
2. Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).
3. Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act (MRTP).

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Important acts were passed during the period of Indira Gandhi.

- **Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971 (MISA):** A controversial law which gave the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and law enforcement absolute power to search and seize properties without a warrant, put individuals under preventive detention and use wiretapping.

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- **Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 (MRTP):** The objective of the Act was to restrict monopolistic trade activities and to maintain the economy of the country in balance. In short, the law was to make sure that the wealth of the country does not remain concentrated in the hands of the rich.
- **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 (FERA):** What is now popularly known as FEMA, the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 was called FERA back in 1973. The Act aimed to regulate foreign payments and investments and the conversion of foreign exchange.
- **The Coal Mines (Nationalization) Act, 1973:** Acquisition, transfer of right, title and interest of the owners of coal mines was covered under the law.

**Q.3)** Which of the following pair (s) is/are correctly matched?

Committee	:	Organization
1. Sivaraman Committee	:	NABARD
2. B.D. Kumar Committee	:	EXIM Bank
3. Sukomoy Chakravarty committee:	:	SIDBI Bank

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The B.D. Kumar Committee, which submitted its report in 1975, recommended for setting up of an export-import Bank type institution to finance and promote exports of engineering goods and turnkey projects.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at the insistence of the Government of India, constituted a Committee to Review the Arrangements For Institutional Credit for Agriculture and Rural Development (CRAFICARD) to look into these very critical aspects.

- **The Committee was formed on 30 March 1979, under the Chairmanship of Shri B. Sivaraman, former member of Planning Commission, Government of India.**
- Its recommendation was formation of a unique development financial institution which would address these aspirations and formation of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was approved by the Parliament through Act 61 of 1981.

**Q.4)** The “Gender Social Norms Index” is released by which of the following institution?

- a) World Economic Forum
- b) UNESCO
- c) World Bank
- d) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Nine in 10 people are prejudiced against women, such as thinking university education is more important for men or that men deserve jobs more if work is scarce, the United Nations said.

More than a quarter of men and women also think it is justified for a husband to beat his wife, found the **Gender Social Norms Index by the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP)**, designed to measure how social beliefs obstruct gender equality.

**Q.5)** The “**principles for responsible banking**” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Bank of International Settlements.
- b) World Bank
- c) International Monetary Fund
- d) UNEP Financial Initiative

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** The banking sector plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development.

- It can lead the way to a more sustainable economy by lending to economic activities that yield the best return from society’s point of view and by guiding customers and stakeholders to manage social and environmental challenges and opportunities.
- At UNEP FI, we work hand in hand with our member banks to increase lending that supports socially and environmentally sustainable economic activities.
- The Principles for Responsible Banking are a unique framework for ensuring that signatory banks’ strategy and practice align with the vision society has set out for its future in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- More than 185 banks have now joined this movement for change, leading the way towards a future in which the banking community makes the kind of positive contribution to people and the planet that society expects.
- These banks represent more than a third of the global banking industry. This is a journey of unprecedented scale and scope at a time when such ambition is urgently needed.

**Q.6)** Which of the following are the **indicators of Democracy Index** 2019?

1. Electoral Pluralism
2. Democratic decentralization
3. Political culture
4. Fundamental Rights
5. Government functioning

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
- c) 1, 3 and 5 only
- d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The latest edition of the Democracy Index spells gloom for India. The world’s biggest democracy slipped 10 places in the 2019 global ranking to 51st place.

The report published by The Economist Intelligence Unit — the research and analysis division of The Economist Group, which is the sister company to The Economist newspaper — records how global democracy fared, analyzing 165 independent states and two territories.

India was graded in electoral process and pluralism (8.67), government functioning (6.79), political participation (6.67), political culture (5.63) and civil liberties (6.76).

## Liberty in jeopardy

Of all the five categories that make up the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, India's civil liberties index fell the most

Index	Value in 2019	Change from 2018
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>6.90</b>	<b>-0.33</b>
Electoral pluralism	8.67	-0.5
Government	6.79	0
Political participation	6.67	-0.55
Political culture	5.63	0
Civil liberties	6.76	-0.59

**Q.7)** The “**World Migration Report – 2020**” is published by which of the following institution/organization?

- UNESCO
- World Economic Forum
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** It is becoming clear that climate crisis is creating more refugees than war. Instead of focusing on weeding out ‘illegal immigrants’, the government should stress on what is a much larger issue: the irreversible damage we are causing our environment and the rise in climate refugees.

- Before you roll your eyes at the comparison, you may want to look at these hard-hitting statistics on environmental migrants from the **World Migration Report, 2020**.
- **It states that by end-2018, there were a total of 28 million new internal displacements across 148 countries and territories.**
- **Nearly 61% (17.2 million) of these new displacements were triggered by disasters, and 39% (10.8 million) were caused by conflict and violence.**
- **Brought out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**, the report highlights that, as in previous years, weather-related disasters triggered the vast majority of all new displacements across the world.

**Q.8)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**Consumer Protection Bill, 2019**”:

1. Under the new bill, definition of consumer as a person who buys any good or resale good or avails a service for a consideration.
2. Penalty up to 1crore for misleading advertisements.

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** The Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan on July 8, 2019. The Bill replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Key features of the Bill include:

- **A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration. It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose. It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.**
- **Six consumer rights have been defined in the Bill**, including the right to: (i) be protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property; (ii) be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services; (iii) be assured of access to a variety of goods or services at competitive prices; and (iv) seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices.
- The central government will set up a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers. It will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements.
- **The CCPA may impose a penalty on a manufacturer or an endorser of up to Rs 10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years for a false or misleading advertisement. In case of a subsequent offence, the fine may extend to Rs 50 lakh and imprisonment of up to five years.**
- Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) will be set up at the district, state, and national levels.
- Complaints against an unfair contract can be filed with only the State and National Appeals from a District CDRC will be heard by the State CDRC. Appeals from the State CDRC will be heard by the National CDRC. Final appeal will lie before the Supreme Court.

**Q.9)** Which of the following **acts relevant provisions** are subsumed by Code on Wages Bill, 2019?

1. The Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
2. The Payment of Wages Act, 1936.
3. The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.
4. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2 and 4 only

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Lok Sabha passed the Code on Wages Bill, 2019, which amends and consolidates laws relating to wages/bonus and universalizes the provisions of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all employees irrespective of the sector and wage ceiling.

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- At present, the provisions of both Minimum Wages Act and Payment of Wages Act apply to workers below a particular wage ceiling working in Scheduled Employments only.
- “This Bill would ensure Right to Sustenance for every worker and intends to increase the legislative protection of minimum wage from existing about 40% to 100% workforce.”
- **A release issued by the Ministry noted that the Code on Wages Bill, 2019, subsumes relevant provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965 and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.**
- After the enactment of the Bill, all these four Acts will get repealed.

**Q.10)** Consider the following statements regarding the “**Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019**”:

1. It defines golden hour as the time period of up to two hours.
2. It requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 15, 2019. The Bill seeks to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to provide for road safety.

The Act provides for grant of licenses and permits related to motor vehicles, standards for motor vehicles, and penalties for violation of these provisions.

**Compensation for road victims:** The central government will develop a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during golden hour.

- The Bill defines golden hour as the time period of up to one hour following a traumatic injury, during which the likelihood of preventing death through prompt medical care is the highest.
- The central government may also make a scheme for providing interim relief to claimants seeking compensation under third party insurance.
- The Bill increases the minimum compensation for hit and run cases as follows: (i) in case of death, from Rs 25,000 to two lakh rupees, and (ii) in case of grievous injury, from Rs 12,500 to Rs 50,000.

**Compulsory Insurance:** The Bill requires the central government to constitute a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.

**Good Samaritans:** The Bill defines a good samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident.

- The assistance must have been (i) in good faith, (ii) voluntary, and (iii) without the expectation of any reward.
- Such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in providing assistance to the victim.

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**Recall of Vehicles:** The Bill allows the central government to order for recall of motor vehicles if a defect in the vehicle may cause damage to the environment, or the driver, or other road users.

**Taxi aggregators:** The Bill defines aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes (taxi services). These aggregators will be issued licenses by state further they must comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000.

ForumIAS