

ForumIAS

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## Prelims Marathon

19th to 25th October,  
2020

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*HISTORY  
ECONOMICS  
POLITY  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT*

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## History

**Q.1)** Consider the following pairs:

<b>Ancient city</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Adjacent River</b>
1. Harappa	:	Ravi River
2. Mohenjo-daro	:	Indus River
3. Lothal	:	Mahi River

Which of the above pair/pairs is /are **NOT** correctly matched?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Indus Civilisation.

- The Indus Civilization represents the earliest manifestation of urban development in the plains of the Indus valley and its extension along the Arabian sea-coast.
- The four principal settlements so far excavated provide the material to reconstruct the cultural content of the civilization.
- Two lie in Pakistan: **Harappa**, usually identified with Hariyupiya of the Rigveda, is situated on an old bed (sukbrawa) of the **river Ravi** in Sahiwal District of Punjab, **and Mohenjo-daro** (literally 'mound of the dead') is on the right bank of the **Indus river** in Larkana District of Sind.
- The other two sites are in western India; **Lothal is situated on the Sabarmati river** at the head of the gulf of Cambay on the west coast of India, and **Kalibangan (literally 'black bangles') lies some 310 km north-west of Delhi along the left bank of the now-dry Ghaggar** (old Sarasvati) river in northern Rajasthan.

Source: Poonam Dahiya

**Q.2)** Which of the following statements is/are correct about "**Pottery development**" in Harappan Civilization?

- 1. Both Plain and painted pottery was developed in Harappan cities.
- 2. Most of the potteries that have been found are being handmade.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The **potteries found at the excavation sites can be broadly classified into two kinds – plain pottery and painted pottery.**

- The painted pottery is also known as Red and Black pottery as it used red colour to paint the background and glossy black paint was used to draw designs and figures on the red background.
- Trees, birds, animal figures and geometrical patterns were the recurring themes of the paintings.

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- **Most of the potteries that have been found are very fine wheel-made wares, with a very few being handmade.**
- Some examples of polychrome pottery have also been found, though very rare.

Source: Nitin Singhania

**Q.3)** Which of the following animals is/are found in the abacus of the “**Sarnath Pillar**”?

1. Horse
2. Elephant
3. Rhinoceros
4. Tiger

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The abacus and the animal part of the Sarnath pillar forms the official national emblem of India.

- In the abacus of the Sarnath pillar, **four animals are shown representing four directions – a galloping horse (west), a bull (east), an elephant (south) and a lion (north).**
- The animals seem to follow each other turning the wheel of existence till eternity.

Source: Nitin Singhania

**Q.4)** Which of the following statements is/are correct about “**Stupas**”?

1. Stupas were burial mounds prevalent in India from the Mauryan period.
2. During the period of Ashoka, the art of stupas reached its climax.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Stupas were burial mounds prevalent in India from the Vedic period.

- It is a conventional representation of a funeral cumulus in which relics and ashes of the dead were kept.
- **During the period of Ashoka, the art of stupas reached its climax.**
- Almost 84000 stupas were erected during his period.
- **Although a Vedic tradition, stupas were popularised by the Buddhists.**

Source: NCERT

**Q.5)** Which of the following statements is/are correct about “**Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple**”?

1. It is one of the most illustrious lord Shiva temples in the country.
2. It is situated on the island of Srirangam that is bounded by the two rivers of Cauvery and Vellar.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

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- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, also known as **Thiruvaranga Tirupati**, is one of the most illustrious Vaishnav temples in the country, dedicated to Ranganatha, a reclining form of Hindu deity, Bhagwan (God or Lord) Vishnu.

- Situated in an **ethereal setting on the island of Srirangam that is bounded by the two rivers of Cauvery and Kollidam** (a tributary of Cauvery), this living temple and sacred centre of pilgrimage is counted as the first and foremost among the 108 Divya Desams dedicated to Bhagwan Vishnu.

Source: CCRT

**Q.6)** The places “**Kupgallu, Piklihal and Tekkalkota**” are related to which of the following?

- a) Ashoka’s Inscriptions
- b) Early rock paintings
- c) Sacred groves
- d) Ancient cave temples

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** First discovery of rock paintings in the world was made in India (1867-68) by an Archaeologist, **Archibold Carlleyle**, and twelve years before the discovery of Altamira in Spain (site of oldest rock paintings in the world).

- In India, remnants of rock paintings have been found on the walls of caves situated in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.
- Some of the examples of sites early rock paintings are **Lakhudiyar in Uttarakhand, Kupgallu in Telangana, Piklihal and Tekkalkotta in Karnataka, Bhimbetka and Jogimara in Madhya Pradesh etc.**

Source: ASI

**Q.7)** Consider the following statements regarding the **bronze-casting technique** of Indus-valley civilization:

1. The bronze statues were made using the ‘lost wax’ technique.
2. Bronze casting was popular at all the major centers of the Indus Valley Civilization.

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 art of bronze-casting was practised on a wide scale by the Harappans. Their **bronze statues were made using the ‘lost wax’ technique** in which the wax figures were first covered with a coating of clay and allowed to dry.

- Then the wax was heated and the molten wax was drained out through a tiny hole made in the clay cover.
- The hollow mould thus created was filled with molten metal which took the original shape of the object. Once the metal cooled, the clay cover was completely removed.
- In bronze we find human as well as animal figures, the best example of the former being the statue of a girl popularly titled ‘Dancing Girl’.

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- Amongst animal figures in bronze the buffalo with its uplifted head, back and sweeping horns and the goat are of artistic merit.
- **Bronze casting was popular at all the major centres of the Indus Valley Civilisation.**
- The copper dog and bird of Lothal and the bronze figure of a bull from Kalibangan are in no way inferior to the human figures of copper and bronze from Harappa and Mohenjodaro.
- Metal-casting appears to be a continuous tradition.

Source: Nitin Singhania

**Q.8)** The **Badakshan mines** of Indus valley civilization are famous for which of the following?

- a) steatite
- b) Lapis lazuli
- c) Diamonds
- d) Agate-carnelian

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Past human cultures used various raw materials found from the natural context, for example, **shell species of Turbinella pyrum from the Gulf of Kachchh, agate-carnelian from Khandak** near the Harappan site of Surkotada and other locations in Gujarat, **lapis lazuli from the Badakshan mines of Afghanistan, high quality steatite from northern Rajasthan**, and **turquoise from Central Asia**.

Source: NCERT

**Q.9)** Consider the following statements regarding the **Sattriya dance**:

1. Sattriya dances are devotional in nature as they were intended for propagation of neo-Vaishnavism.
2. Sattriya was given the status of a classical dance in the year 2000 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
3. Dr. Sunil Kothari was recently bestowed the prestigious Madhabdev Award by the Government of Assam for his work in making Sattriya popular in India and abroad.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** **Sattriya originated in Sattria, monastery, as a part of neo-Vaishnavite movement started by Srimanta Sankardev in the 15th Century**. He propagated the “ek sharan naama dharma” (chanting the name of one God devotedly).

- “Sattriya dances are devotional in nature as they were intended for propagation of neo-Vaishnavism. Its highlights are intense emotional fervour, and in its solo avatar now dramatic abhinaya is prominent in contrast to nritya, pure dance”.
- **Dr. Sunil Kothari was recently bestowed the prestigious Madhabdev Award by the Government of Assam for his work in making Sattriya popular in India and abroad.**
- **Though long recognised as a traditional dance form, Sattriya was given the status of a classical dance in the year 2000 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.**

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- Highlighting on how it differs from other forms, Kothari says, “In its basic stance for male and female known as Purush Pak and Prakriti Pak, Sattriya dances differ from other dance forms.
- They have special mnemonic bols, typical Assamese music known as Borgeet, musical instruments like large cymbals, drums, colourful costumes which stand out from other dance styles, besides complicated choreographic patterns using various talas for each stanza sung by the vocalist.
- Dance-dramas are distinct living tradition and use vachikabhinaya, dialogues. Special masks are also used in dance-dramas.”

Source: The HINDU

**Q.10)** The **Kathputli** is a traditional string puppet of which of the following state?

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Gujarat
- c) Kerala
- d) Uttar Pradesh

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The traditional **string puppets of the Rajasthan area known as Kathputli**, which derives its name from kath meaning wood and putli meaning doll.

- The puppets are covered in traditionally bright Rajasthani dress. The show is accompanied by a dramatic folk music.
- A unique feature of the puppets is the absence of legs. The strings are attached to the finger of the puppeteer.

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## *Economy*

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**Q.1)** Which of the following is/are part of “**revenue expenditure**”?

1. Interest payments on loans raised by government.
2. Subsidies forwarded to all sectors by the government.
3. Grants given by the government to Indian states and foreign countries.

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:** All expenditures incurred by the government are either of revenue kind or current kind or compulsive kind. The basic identity of such expenditures is that they are of consumptive kind and do not involve creation of productive assets. They are either used in running of a productive process or running a government. A broad category of things that fall under such expenditures in India are:

- Interest payment by the government on the internal and external loans;
- Salaries, Pension and Provident Fund paid by the government to government employees;
- Subsidies forwarded to all sectors by the government;
- Defense expenditures by the government;
- Postal Deficits of the government;
- Law and order expenditures (i.e., police & paramilitary);
- Expenditures on social services (includes all social sector expenditures as education, health care, social security, poverty alleviation, etc.) and general services (tax collection, etc.);
- Grants given by the government to Indian states and foreign countries.

Source: Ramesh Singh

**Q.2)** Which of the following is **NOT** part of Mundell’s “**impossible trinity**”?

- a) Environmental Issues
- b) Free capital flows
- c) Fixed exchange rate
- d) Independent monetary policy

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** More recent trilemmas in economics, the prima donna of all of them is Mundell’s ‘impossible trinity’. This old trilemma asserts that a country cannot maintain, simultaneously, all three policy goals of —

- free capital flows,
- a fixed exchange rate, and
- an independent monetary policy.

The impossible trinity has seen enough waters flowing down the time since it were articulated almost five decades ago which a strong theoretical foundation in the Mundell-Fleming Model has developed in the 1960s.

Source: Ramesh Singh

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**Q.3)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Expenditure Management Commission (EMC)**”:

1. It is created by Expenditure management Act, 2014.
2. Ranga rajan is the first chairman of EMC.

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:** By early September 2014, the Government of India constituted an Expenditure Management Commission (EMC) through a Resolution.

- The EMC will look into various aspects of expenditure reforms to be undertaken by the government and other issues concerning Public Expenditure Management.
- The Commission has one full time, one part time and one ex-officio members other than Chairman of (Cabinet rank).
- Dr. Bimal Jalan is its first Chairman.

Source: Ramesh Singh

**Q.4)** In economics “**Dutch disease**” is related to which of the following?

- a) Sustainable Development
- b) Animal rearing
- c) Banking provisions
- d) Exports

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** When an increase in one form of net exports drives up a country’s exchange rate, it is called the Dutch Disease.

- Such instances make other exports noncompetitive in the world market and impair the ability of domestic products to compete with imports.
- The term originated from the supposed effect of natural gas discoveries on the Netherlands economy.

Source: Ramesh Singh

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding “**World Food Programme**”:

1. It is an initiative of World Economic Forum.
2. It is funded entirely by voluntary donations.
3. It provides food assistance and tackles the underlying causes of hunger.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The World Food Programme is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.

- Funded entirely by voluntary donations, in 2018 WFP raised a record US\$7.2 billion.



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- WFP has more than 17,000 staff worldwide of who over 90 percent are based in the countries where the agency provides assistance.
- WFP is governed by a 36-member Executive Board.
- It works closely with its two Rome-based sister organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.
- WFP partners with more than 1,000 national and international NGOs to provide food assistance and tackle the underlying causes of hunger.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements regarding **ARTIS (Applications for Remedies in Trade for Indian Industry and other Stakeholders)**:

1. It is an online system developed to deal with various trade remedial measures such as anti-dumping duty, safeguards duty and countervailing duty.
2. It is launched by Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched ARTIS (Applications for Remedies in Trade for Indian Industry and other Stakeholders).

It is an online system developed for filing applications by the domestic industry with respect to various trade remedial measures such as anti-dumping duty, safeguards duty and countervailing duty.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.7)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Social Progress Index**”:

1. It is compiled and released by World Economic Forum.
2. It is based on three dimensions of social progress, basic Human Needs, foundations of Wellbeing, and opportunity.

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 (“SPI”), compiled by the Social Progress Imperative, a US-based non-profit, ranks 149 countries’ social performance over six years (2014-2019).

- It uses 51 indicators including: nutrition, shelter, safety, education, health, personal rights and inclusiveness.
- The Social Progress Index is the first holistic measure of a country’s social performance that is independent of economic factors.
- The index is based on a range of social and environmental indicators that capture three dimensions of social progress: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity.
- The 2019 Social Progress Index includes data from 149 countries on 51 indicators.

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- The index captures outcomes related to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is a comprehensive snapshot of a country's overall progress towards the achievement of the goals.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.8)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Effective Revenue Deficit**” (ERD):

1. It is the difference between revenue deficit and grants for creation of capital assets.
2. It is suggested by the Rangarajan Committee on Public Expenditure.
3. The ERD target for 2020-21 has been set under 1% of GDP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Effective Revenue Deficit is the difference between revenue deficit and grants for creation of capital assets.

- The concept of effective revenue deficit has been suggested by the Rangarajan Committee on Public Expenditure.
- It is aimed to deduct the money used out of borrowing to finance capital expenditure.
- The concept has been introduced to ascertain the actual deficit in the revenue account after adjusting for expenditure of capital nature.
- Focusing on this will help in reducing the consumptive component of revenue deficit and create space for increased capital spending.
- Though the Budget documents have given targets for revenue deficit, the amendments to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2003 has proposed to substitute the definitions of “effective revenue deficit” and “revenue deficit” with those of “Central government debt” and “general government debt” respectively.

Source: Ramesh Singh

**Q.9)** Consider the following statements regarding the **strategic disinvestment or strategic sale**:

1. It implies the sale of the Government shareholding of central public sector enterprises (CPSE) of up to 50%, or such higher percentage.
2. It is approved by the Ministry of Finance.

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:** When the government decides to transfer the ownership and control of a public sector entity to some other entity, either private or public, the process is called strategic disinvestment.

- The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) which comes under the Finance Ministry defines Strategic disinvestment as follows:

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- “Strategic disinvestment would imply the sale of a substantial portion of the Government shareholding of central public sector enterprises (CPSE) of up to 50%, or such higher percentage as the competent authority may determine, along with transfer of management control.”
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approves the strategic divestment of government holdings.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.10)** With reference to the **new Non Performing Assets (NPA) recognition norms**, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The new norms replace all the earlier resolution plans except Joint Lenders Forum (JLF).
2. The lenders can initiate the process of a resolution plan (RP) even before a default.
3. The lenders shall undertake a prima facie review of the borrower account within 30 days from the day of default.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 7, 2019 issued a new framework for resolution of bad loans, replacing the previous norms quashed by the Supreme Court in April, offering a 30-day gap for stress recognition instead of the one-day default earlier.

- The **new norms replaces all the earlier resolution plans such** as the framework for revitalising distressed assets, corporate debt restructuring scheme, flexible structuring of existing long-term project loans, strategic debt restructuring scheme (SDR), change in ownership outside SDR, and scheme for sustainable structuring of stressed assets (S4A), and **the joint lenders’ forum** with immediate effect.
- The central bank said lenders shall recognise incipient stress in loan accounts, immediately on default, by classifying such assets as special mention accounts (SMA).
- Since default with any lender is a lagging indicator of financial stress faced by the borrower, it is expected that the **lenders initiate the process of implementing a resolution plan (RP) even before a default.**
- The central bank said once a borrower is reported to be in default by any lenders, financial institutions, small finance banks or NBFCs, **the lenders shall undertake a prima facie review of the borrower account within 30 days from the day of default.**

Source: The Hindu

## *Polity*

**Q.1)** “Part X” of the Indian Constitution is related to which of the following?

- a) Anti-Defection
- b) Scheduled and Tribal Areas
- c) Election Commission
- d) Foreign Affairs

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Article 244 in Part X of the Constitution envisages a special system of administration for certain areas designated as ‘scheduled areas’ and ‘tribal areas’.

- The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration and control of scheduled areas and scheduled tribes in any state except the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, on the other hand, deals with the administration of the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.2)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Election Commission of India**”:

1. It is a Permanent and Independent body.
2. It deals with elections to parliament, state legislature and local bodies.

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:** The Election Commission is a permanent and an independent body established by the Constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.

- Article 324 of the Constitution provides that the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections to parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice-president of India shall be vested in the election commission.
- Thus, the Election Commission is an all-India body in the sense that it is common to both the Central government and the state governments.
- It must be noted here that the election commission is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.3)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Finance Commission**”:

1. It is a quasi-judicial body.
2. It is constituted by the Prime Minister of India every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

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- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Article 280 of the Constitution of India provides for a Finance Commission as a quasi-judicial body.

It is constituted by the president of India every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.4) “Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)”** is an Agreement between India and which of the following Country?

- a) Pakistan
- b) Nepal
- c) Myanmar
- d) Bangladesh

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** India and Bangladesh signed several milestone agreements today, for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements.

- Briefing media persons in New Delhi, Shipping Secretary Shri Gopal Krishna, and his Bangladesh counterpart Shri Md. Abdus Samad informed that the two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India.
- A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services.
- In addition to this, an addendum to ‘Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade’ (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh has been signed for inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaonin Bangladesh as new Ports of Call.
- These agreements will facilitate easier movement of goods and passengers between the two countries, giving an impetus to trade and tourism.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding “International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)”:**

1. It is led by United States of America.
2. Its primary objective was to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** NATO took the lead of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan on 11 August 2003.

- Mandated by the United Nations, ISAF’s primary objective was to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country and develop new Afghan security forces to ensure Afghanistan would never again become a safe haven for terrorists.

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- From 2011, responsibility for security was gradually transitioned to Afghan forces, which took the lead for security operations across the country by summer 2013.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.6)** Which of the following statements is/are correct about “**Blue Dot Network**”?

1. It is jointly launched by USA, Japan, Australia and India to counter China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
2. It is launched on the sidelines of the 33<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Singapore.
3. It is an initiative that aims to bring governments, the private sector and civil society together to promote “high quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development”.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Blue Dot Network.

- Led by the **US’s International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), the Blue Dot network was jointly launched by the US, Japan (Japanese Bank for International Cooperation) and Australia** (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) in November 2019 on the sidelines of the 34th ASEAN Summit in Thailand.
- It is meant to be a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to bring governments, the private sector and civil society together to promote “**high quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development**”.

Source: Indian Express

**Q.7)** India is a member of which among the following?

1. Asia –Pacific Economic Cooperation
2. ASEAN
3. Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)
4. Quad

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:**

- The **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.** At SCO summit, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on June 2004, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) was established. The Head of RATS is elected to a three-year term. Each member state also sends a permanent representative to RATS.
- The **grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US and Japan–** known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad, was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn’t move ahead with Australia

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pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure. With the aim to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region, India, Australia, US and Japan, formed the "quadrilateral" coalition on November 12, 2017.

- India is not a member of both Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and ASEAN.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.8)** Which of the following are member countries of the "European Free Trade Association (EFTA)"?

1. Iceland
2. Sweden
3. Switzerland
4. Norway
5. Finland

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is the intergovernmental organisation of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It was set up in 1960 by its then seven Member States for the promotion of free trade and economic integration between its members.

Source: EFTA

**Q.9)** Which of the following statements is/are correct about "Global Refugee Forum"?

1. It is launched in 2016 to deal with the migrant crisis in Middle East region.
2. It is a joint initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Germany.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Global Refugee Forum

- The **first ever Global Refugee Forum took place on 17 and 18 December 2019** and was a true milestone in the advancement of the international refugee regime.
- It brought the international community together to demonstrate solidarity with the world's refugees and the countries and communities that host them, to announce pledges and contributions that support them, and to commit to a continued search for solutions.
- We—Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—were honoured to serve as co-convenors of this historic event, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **We thank Switzerland for co-hosting the Forum with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and all those who actively contributed to making the Forum a success**, including governments, international organizations, representatives from across the humanitarian and development worlds, business

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leaders, civil society, sports organizations, faith groups, academia, and refugees themselves.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.10)** With respect to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, India has improved its ranking in which of the following indicators?

- a) Political Empowerment
- b) Health and survival
- c) Educational attainment
- d) Economic participation

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Global Gender Gap Report, 2020 by World Economic Forum benchmarks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions:

- Economic Participation and Opportunity
- Educational Attainment
- Health and Survival, and
- Political Empowerment.

India slipped four places to 112th rank and has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap (score of 66.8%). While India has improved in political empowerment, it has fallen in other three indicators. India is the only country among the 153 countries studied where the economic gender gap is larger than the political one.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.11)** According to Article 348 (1) of Indian Constitution, which of the following area (s) is/are **English language** officially used?

1. Supreme Court
2. High Court
3. Drafting bills

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:** The higher judiciary appeared to be the sole exception to this English-to-Hindi journey as Article 348(1) stipulates the use of English in the Supreme Court and High Courts as well as for drafting Bills, Acts and Orders.

But Article 348(2) read with Section (7) of the Official Languages Act 1963 provides for Hindi or other official languages to be used in High Courts "in addition to English".

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.12)** Arrange the following stages of **budget presentation** in Parliament:

1. Presentation of budget
2. General discussion
3. Voting on demands for grants
4. Scrutiny by departmental committees
5. Passing of appropriation bill

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5



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- b) 1 – 2 – 4 – 3 – 5
- c) 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 4
- d) 1 – 3 – 2 – 4 – 5

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The budget goes through the following six stages in the Parliament:

- Presentation of budget.
- General discussion.
- Scrutiny by departmental committees.
- Voting on demands for grants.
- Passing of appropriation bill.
- Passing of finance bill.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.13)** Consider the following statements regarding **Tribal Advisory Council (TAC)**:

1. Each state having scheduled areas has to establish a tribal advisory council.
2. It is to consist of 20 members, three-fourths of whom are representatives of the scheduled tribes in the state assembly.

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:** Each state having scheduled areas has to establish a tribal advisory council to advice on welfare and advancement of the scheduled tribes.

- **It is to consist of 20 members, three-fourths of whom are to be the representatives of the scheduled tribes in the state legislative assembly.**
- A similar council can also be established in a state having scheduled tribes but not scheduled areas therein, if the president so directs.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.14)** Consider the following statements regarding **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)**:

1. CAT exercises original jurisdiction in relation to recruitment and all service matters of public servants.
2. CAT is not bound by the procedure laid down in the Civil Procedure Code of 1908.

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: D**

**Explanation:** The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) was set up in 1985 with the principal bench at Delhi and additional benches in different states.

- At present, it has 17 regular benches, 15 of which operate at the principal seats of high courts and the remaining two at Jaipur and Lucknow.
- These benches also hold circuit sittings at other seats of high courts.
- **The CAT exercises original jurisdiction in relation to recruitment and all service matters of public servants covered by it.**

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- Its jurisdiction extends to the all-India services, the Central civil services, civil posts under the Centre and civilian employees of defence services.
- However, the members of the defence forces, officers and servants of the Supreme Court and the secretarial staff of the Parliament are not covered by it.
- The **CAT is not bound by the procedure laid down in the Civil Procedure Code of 1908**. It is guided by the principles of natural justice.
- These principles keep the CAT flexible in approach. Only a nominal fee of 50 is to be paid by the applicant. The applicant may appear either in person or through a lawyer.

Source: Lamikanth

**Q.15)** Consider the following statements regarding the **National Emergency (Article 352)**:

1. President proclaims a national emergency only after receiving a written recommendation from the cabinet.
2. President can declare a national emergency only on the actual occurrence of war or external aggression.

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:** Under Article 352, the President can declare a national emergency when the security of India or a part of it is threatened by war or external aggression or armed rebellion.

- It may be noted that the **president can declare a national emergency even before the actual occurrence of war or external aggression or armed rebellion**, if he is satisfied that there is an imminent danger.
- The President, however, **can proclaim a national emergency only after receiving a written recommendation from the cabinet**.
- This means that the emergency can be declared only on the concurrence of the cabinet and not merely on the advice of the prime minister.
- In 1975, the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi advised the president to proclaim emergency without consulting her cabinet. The cabinet was informed of the proclamation after it was made, as a fait accompli.
- The 44th Amendment Act of 1978 introduced this safeguard to eliminate any possibility of the prime minister alone taking a decision in this regard.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.16)** Consider the following statements regarding the **qualifications of Supreme Court Judge**:

1. He should be a citizen of India.
2. He should have been a Judge of a High Court for 5 years.
3. He should have been Advocate of a High Court for 7 years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

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**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** A person to be appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court should have the following qualifications:

1. **He should be a citizen of India.**
2. (A) **He should have been a judge of a High Court (or high courts in succession) for five years;** or (B) **He should have been an advocate of a High Court (or High Courts in succession) for ten years;** or (C) **He should be a distinguished jurist in the opinion of the president.**

From the above, it is clear that the Constitution has not prescribed a minimum age for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.17)** Consider the following statements regarding the **Quorum**:

1. It is the minimum number of members to be present at the sitting of house for valid transaction of its business.
  2. It is one-tenth of the total number of members in each house excluding presiding officer.
- 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:** Article 100 of the Constitution of India stipulates that at least 10% of total number of members of the House must be present to constitute the quorum to constitute a meeting of either House of Parliament.

- It means that there must be at least 55 members present in the Lok Sabha and 25 members present in the Rajya Sabha, if any business is to be conducted.
- Quorum also includes the presiding officer of the particular house (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha).
- If there is no quorum during a meeting of the House, it is the duty of the presiding officer either to adjourn the House or to suspend the meeting until there is a quorum.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.18)** Which of the following Act/Acts has/have been “**passed by Parliament on the request of the states**”?

1. The Prize Competition Act, 1955.
2. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
3. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

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:** When the legislatures of two or more states pass resolutions requesting the Parliament to enact laws on a matter in the State List, then the Parliament can make laws for regulating that matter.

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- A law so enacted applies only to those states which have passed the resolutions. However, any other state may adopt it afterwards by passing a resolution to that effect in its legislature.
- Such a law can be amended or repealed only by the Parliament and not by the legislatures of the concerned states.
- **Some examples of laws passed under the above provision are Prize Competition Act, 1955; Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976; and Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994.**

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.19)** Consider the following pairs:

<b>List</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1. Union List	:	Public health
2. State List	:	Regulation of mines and mineral development
3. Concurrent List	:	Electricity

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Public health and sanitation, Regulation of mines and mineral development comes under State list. Electricity is in Concurrent list.

Source: Laxmikanth

**Q.20)** With reference to the “**Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**”, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The UPSC consists of a chairman and other members appointed by the president of India.
2. The Constitution authorizes the Parliament to determine the conditions of service of the chairman and other members of the Commission.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The UPSC consists of a chairman and other members appointed by the president of India.

- The Constitution, without specifying the strength of the Commission has left the matter to the discretion of the president, who determines its composition.
- Usually, the Commission consists of nine to eleven members including the chairman.
- The Constitution also **authorizes the president** to determine the conditions of service of the chairman and other members of the Commission.

Source: Laxmikanth

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## *Science and technology*

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**Q.1)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS)**”:

1. It is a satellite to satellite communication and transfer of data.
2. It will also be useful in monitoring launches and benefitting crew members of the Gaganyaan mission.
3. At present only USA and Russia have DRS system.

Which of the statements above given is/are correct?

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** India plans for its own space-to-space tracking and communication of its space assets this year by putting up a new satellite series called Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS).

- A set of 2 IDRSS satellites will be placed in geostationary orbit, enabling satellite to satellite communication and transfer of data. It will track, send and receive real-time information from other Indian satellites, in particular those in low-earth orbits (LEO) which have limited coverage of earth.
- It will also be useful in monitoring launches and benefitting crew members of the Gaganyaan mission ensuring mission control throughout their travel.
- First satellite will be launched by 2020 end and second one by 2021. India will join US, China, Japan and Europe who already have such DRS systems.

Source: ISRO

**Q.2)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Cartosat-3**”:

1. It is an earth observation satellite and helps to detect changes in natural geographical or man-made features.
2. The mission life of the Cartosat-3 is 10 years.

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: B**

**Explanation:** Cartosat satellites are earth observation satellites, used mainly for large-scale mapping of the Earth through high-resolution cameras.

- They help to detect changes in natural geographical or man-made features.
- Cartosat-3 satellite is a third-generation agile advanced satellite having high resolution imaging capability.
- The mission life of the Cartosat-3 is 5 years.
- It will be followed by additional satellites of the same design, namely Cartosat-3A and 3B, next year.

Source: ISRO

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**Q.3)** Consider the following statements with respect to “5G”:

1. It is a wireless communication technology uses radio waves or radio frequency (RF) energy to transmit and receive data.
2. It will provide the capacity and bandwidth to accommodate technologies such as Internet of Things.

Which of the following above statements is/are correct?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** 5G is a wireless communication technology using radio waves or radio frequency (RF) energy to transmit and receive data.

- It is the next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks.
- 5G technologies will enter services gradually, beginning in 2019 and advance to a full range of services by 2024.
- 5G will provide the capacity and bandwidth as per the need of the user to accommodate technologies such as Internet of Things.
- It will provide Faster Data Speed, Ultra-low latency etc.

Source: ISRO

**Q.4)** “RAISE 2020” is recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) CoVID-19
- b) Environmental Conservation
- c) Artificial Intelligence
- d) Organic farming

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020 (RAISE 2020) is a global meeting of minds to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for social empowerment, inclusion and transformation in key areas like Healthcare, Agriculture, Education and Smart Mobility amongst other sectors.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding “Astra Missile”:

1. It is an indigenously developed Surface to Air Missile.
2. It works on beyond visual range air to air missile (BVRAAM) technology.

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:** Recently India successfully test-fired its first indigenous air-to-air missile ‘Astra’.

- It is designed and developed by DRDO.
- It works on beyond visual range air to air missile (BVRAAM) technology that enables fighter-pilots to shoot precisely at the enemy targets which are beyond their visual range.

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- It was launched from Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jet and will be further integrated with other jets such as Mirage 2000, the MiG-29 and Tejas.
- With this India joined the league of other countries having this technology such as France, Germany, UK, South Africa etc.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.6)** Consider the following statements with respect to “**Uranium Corporation of India limited (UCIL)**”:

1. It is a public sector enterprise under Ministry of Power.
2. Uranium ore mined in India is of very high grade.

Which of the following codes below given is/are correct?

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Uranium Corporation of India Limited was incorporated on 4th October 1967.

- It is a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Atomic Energy with a special standing at the forefront of Nuclear Power cycle.
- Fulfilling the requirement of uranium for the Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors, UCIL plays a very significant role in nuclear power generation of the country.
- Uranium ore mined in India are of very low grade as compared to those available in other countries.
- After recovery of uranium in the mill, bulk of the material processed emerges as tailings.
- Its radioactivity content is very low.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.7)** Which of the following missile is an “**Anti-Tank Missile**”?

- a) Agni Missile
- b) Nag Missile
- c) Trishul Missile
- d) Prithvi Missile

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Nag is a third-generation; fire-and-forget, anti-tank guided missile developed by India’s state-owned Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to support both mechanised infantry and airborne forces of the Indian Army.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.8)** “**Skybot F850**” is recently in news, is related to which of the following?

- a) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
- b) Humanoid robot
- c) Nano Satellite
- d) None

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** Russia sent the humanoid robot Fedor, also known as Skybot F850 to International Space Station.

- It will spend 10 days in space to assist astronauts.

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- Fedor is Russia's first robot in space.

Source: Indian Express

**Q.9)** Consider the following statements with respect to “**Clearspace -1 Mission**”:

1. Mission is to be launched by French Space Agency.
2. Mission is about cleaning up Earth's orbit Space trash.

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 European Space Agency (ESA) is planning to launch Clearspace -1 Mission by 2025.

- Mission is to launch a four-armed robot, Chaser, to clean up Earth's orbit.
- Chaser is to be developed by a Swiss start-up ClearSpace under ClearSpace-1 mission.

Source: The European Space Agency

**Q.10)** Consider the following statements with respect to “**Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)**” technology:

1. It is an electronic tag that can exchange data with an RFID reader through radio waves.
2. It is faster connection and its operational range is about 10m.

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:** RFID technology is an electronic tag that can exchange data with an RFID reader through radio waves.

RFID is faster connection and its operational range is about 100m.

Source: The Hindu



## Geography

**Q.1)** Which of the following river (s) is/are **antecedent origin**?

1. Alaknanda
2. Gandak
3. Kosi

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** The drainage pattern was already present before a period of uplift and folding that formed the present structure.

- As the uplift took place, the rivers were able to cut down at approximately the same rate and so maintain their courses.
- This process is called antecedence and the drainage system thus developed is called antecedent drainage.
- **Many of the Himalayan Rivers have antecedent origin** i.e. these rivers existed even before the Himalayan ranges were uplifted.
- These rivers originate in the Tibetan side beyond the mountain ranges of Himalayas. The **Indus, Satluj, Alaknanda, Gandak, Kosi, Brahmaputra** all has an antecedent origin.
- Since these rivers are antecedent, they run transverse to the mountain ranges cutting deep V-shaped, steep-sided valleys (deep gorges).

Source: NCERT & ICSE

**Q.2)** Which of the following is/are **NOT** correctly matched?

<b>Pass</b>	:	<b>Significance</b>
1. Zoji la (Pass)	:	Connects Srinagar to Leh
2. Banihal Pass	:	Satluj River flows through this Pass
3. Nathu la (Pass)	:	Chumbi River flows through this Pass

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation: Zoji La:** Zoji La is a high mountain pass located in the Kargil district of Ladakh.

- The **pass links Leh and Srinagar** and provides an important link between Union Territories of Ladakh and Kashmir.
- In 2018, the Zojila tunnel project was launched.
- The tunnel is Asia's longest and strategic bi-directional tunnel, which will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh.

**Banihal Pass:** It is in Jammu & Kashmir. The National Highway No.1A that links Srinagar to Jammu goes through it.

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**NOTE:** Satluj River flows through Shipki La (Pass).

**Nathu La:** It is in Sikkim. It gives way to Tibet from Darjeeling and Chumbi Valley. The **Chumbi River flows through this pass.**

Source: Oriental Black Swan

**Q.3)** The **Gersoppa falls** is located in which of the following state?

- a) Karnataka
- b) Tamil Nadu
- c) Andhra Pradesh
- d) Kerala

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Jog Falls, also called Gersoppa Falls, cataract of the Sharavati River, western Karnataka state, southwestern India. The Jog Falls are located 18 miles (29 km) upstream from Honavar at the river's mouth on the Arabian Sea.

Source: Majid Singh

**Q.4)** Consider the following statements regarding the **Dharwar Rock System:**

- 1. These are the oldest sedimentary rocks.
- 2. The Aravali mountain range has been made with these rocks.

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:** Dharwar system is later than the Archean system but older than the other systems.

- The Dharwar period of rock formation has been largely fixed from 2500 million years ago to 1800 million years ago.
- Dharwar Rock System is special because it is the **first metamorphic sedimentary rocks in India.**
- They are named Dharwar system because they were first studied in Dharwar region of Karnataka.
- **But they are also found in Aravallis,** Tamil Nadu, Chota-nagpur plateau, Meghalaya, Delhi, and the Himalayas region.
- The Dharwar rocks are rich in iron ore, manganese, lead, zinc, gold, silver etc.

Source: NCERT

**Q.5)** Which of the following is/are **NOT** correctly matched?

<b>River</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Adjacent Town</b>
1. Yamuna River	:	Etawah
2. Musi River	:	Bhadrachalam
3. Kaveri River	:	Chennai

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) None

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Rivers and their adjacent towns.

**Tamil Nadu**

CITY	RIVER
Chennai	Cooum, Adyar
Coimbatore	Noyyal
Erode	Kaveri
Madurai	Vaigai
Thiruchirapalli	Kaveri
Tirunelveli	Thamirabarani

**Telangana**

CITY	RIVER
Hyderabad	Musi

**Uttar Pradesh**

CITY	RIVER
Agra	Yamuna
Allahabad	Ganges
Auraiya	Yamuna
Ayodhya	Saryu
Chakeri	Ganges
Etawah	Yamuna
Farrukhabad	Ganges
Fatehgarh	Ganges
Gorakhpur	Rapti

Source: Majid Singh

**Q.6)** Which of the following Soils is/are Zonal Soil?

1. Alluvial Soils
2. Red Soils
3. Black Soils

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Soils can be classified on the basis of dominating factors:

**Zonal Soil** – These soils occur in broad geographical areas or zones.

- They are influenced more by the climate and vegetation of the area rather than the rock-type.
- They are mature, as a result of stable conditions over a long period of time.
- For example – **red soils, black soils, laterite soils, desert soils** etc.

**Azonal Soil** – It is that soil which has been developed by the process of deposition by the agents of erosion.

- It means that it has been made by the fine rocky particles transported from the far-off regions.

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- These are immature soils and lack well-developed soil profiles.
- This may be due to the non-availability of sufficient time for them to develop fully or due to the location on very steep slopes which prohibits profile development.
- For Example – **alluvial and loess soils**.

**Intrazonal Soil** – These soils occur within other zonal soils.

- It is a well-developed soil reflecting the influence of some local factor of relief, parent material, or age rather than of climate and vegetation.
- For example, calcareous soil (soils which develop from limestone), peat soil.

Source: Khullar

**Q.7)** Which of the following state (s)/place (s) of India is/are come (s) under **Seismic Zone V**?

1. Entire North eastern India
2. Delhi-NCR region
3. Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

**ANS: B**

**Explanation:** The **Bureau of Indian Standards has classified regions in India into four seismic zones on the basis of historical seismic activity.**

- These are zones II, III, IV and V. Among these, Zone V is the most seismically active region and zone II is the least active.
- According to Modified Mercalli scale, the seismic zone intensity is/are classified as zone II (low intensity zone), zone III (moderate intensity zone), zone IV (severe intensity zone) and zone V (very severe intensity zone).

According to the Ministry of Earth Sciences:

- **Zone V includes entire northeastern India, parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, parts of North Bihar and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**
- **Zone-IV** includes the remaining parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. **Delhi-NCR region**, Sikkim, northern parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, parts of Gujarat and small portions of Maharashtra near the west coast and Rajasthan also fall in this zone.
- Regions under zone III are Goa, Kerala, Lakshadweep, and remaining parts of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal, parts of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Karnataka.
- The remaining portion of the country falls under zone II.

Source: Indian Express

**Q.8)** The **Beaufort Gyre** (Sea water current), sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Arctic Ocean
- b) Pacific Ocean
- c) Indian Ocean
- d) None

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**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** According to the scientists, including those from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the US, a sea-water current called the Beaufort Gyre keeps the polar environment in balance by storing fresh water near the surface of the Arctic Ocean.

- Wind blows the gyre in a clockwise direction around the western Arctic Ocean, north of Canada, where it naturally collects fresh water from the melting of glaciers, and river runoff.
- The researchers said this fresh water is important in the Arctic since it floats above the warmer, salty water, and helps protect the sea ice from melting - in turn regulating the Earth's climate.
- As the fresh water is slowly released by the gyre into the Atlantic Ocean over a period of decades, it allows the Atlantic Ocean currents to carry it away in small amounts.
- However, since the 1990s, the researchers said, the gyre has accumulated a large amount of fresh water - 8,000 cubic kilometres - or almost twice the volume of Lake Michigan in the US.
- According to the new study, the cause of this gain in freshwater concentration is the loss of sea ice in summer and autumn.
- Due to this decades-long decline of the Arctic's summertime ice cover, the Beaufort Gyre is more exposed to the wind, which has spun the gyre faster, trapping the fresh water in its current.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.9)** Consider the following statements regarding the **Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)**:

1. It is a large system of ocean currents that carry warm water from the tropics northwards into the North Atlantic.
2. Its circulation effects the location of droughts and frequency of hurricanes.

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 Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) is a large system of ocean currents that carry warm water from the tropics northwards into the North Atlantic.

- The AMOC is a large system of ocean currents, like a conveyor belt, driven by differences in temperature and salt content – the water's density.
- As warm water flows northwards it cools and some evaporation occurs, which increases the amount of salt.
- Low temperature and a high salt content make the water denser, and this dense water sinks deep into the ocean.
- The cold, dense water slowly spreads southwards, several kilometres below the surface (As that water cools and sinks it drives a slow circulation of the oceans that is critical to global climate, affecting the location of droughts and frequency of hurricanes).
- Eventually, it gets pulled back to the surface and warms in a process called "upwelling" and the circulation is complete.

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- This global process makes sure that the world's oceans are continually mixed, and that heat and energy are distributed around the earth. This, in turn, contributes to the climate we experience today.
- As that water cools and sinks it drives a slow circulation of the oceans that is critical to global climate, affecting the location of droughts and frequency of hurricanes.
- It also stores heat-trapping carbon dioxide deep in the ocean.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.10)** Which of the following Ocean current is called as “**Black Stream**”?

- a) Gulf Stream Current
- b) Labrador Current
- c) Kuroshio Current
- d) Alaska Current

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** THE KUROSHIO IS a warm northeasterly ocean current off the coast of Japan. This current is also called the gulf stream of the Pacific or Japan Current.

- **Kuroshio means “the black stream” in Japanese**, named after the deep ultramarine color of the high salinity water, which is found flowing north of the current's axis.
- The system includes the following branches: Kuroshio, up to 35 degrees N; Kuroshio extension, extending eastward into two branches up to 160 degrees E longitude;
- North Pacific current, a further eastward continuation, which throws branches to the south as far as 150 degrees W;
- Tsushima current, branches of the main current that run into the Japan Sea, along the west coast of JAPAN;
- And Kuroshio counter-current, the large swirl or eddy on the east and south east of the Kuroshio.

Source: ICSE

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## *Environment*

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**Q.1)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Tiger Reserves**”:

1. At present in India 50 tiger reserves in India.
2. The tiger reserves are constituted on core/buffer areas which don't have any legal status.
3. The buffer areas consist of forest land only.

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

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** The Government of India has launched the 'Project Tiger' in 1973.

- From 9 tiger reserves since its formative years, the Project Tiger coverage has increased to 50 at present, spread out in 18 of our tiger range states.
- The tiger reserves are constituted on a core/buffer strategy. The core areas have the legal status of a national park or a sanctuary.
- The buffer or peripheral areas are a mix of forest and non-forest land, managed as a multiple use area.
- The Project Tiger aims to foster an exclusive tiger agenda in the core areas of tiger reserves, with an inclusive people oriented agenda in the buffer.

Source: Envis

**Q.2)** Consider the following statements regarding “**Keystone Species**”:

1. Keystone species is an organism that helps hold the system together.
2. Predators, ecosystem engineers and mutualists are three types of keystone Species.

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:** In any arrangement or community, the “keystone” is considered one of the most vital parts. In a marine ecosystem, or any type of ecosystem, a keystone species is an organism that helps hold the system together.

There are three types of keystone species cited by many scientists: predators, ecosystem engineers, and mutualists.

- Predators help control the populations of prey species, which in turn affects the quantity of plants and animals further along the food web.
- An ecosystem engineer is an organism that creates, changes, or destroys a habitat.
- When two or more species in an ecosystem interact for each other's benefit, they are called mutualists.

Source: NCERT

**Q.3)** “**Lawalong Wildlife Sanctuary**” is located in which of the following state?

- a) Kerala

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- b) Arunachal Pradesh
- c) Jharkhand
- d) Chhattisgarh

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Lawalong Wildlife Sanctuary was set up in 1978 to the southwest of Hazaribagh in the Chhotanagpur plateau area.

- It covers an area of about 211 sq. kms. The terrain is undulating and dissected by rivers and streams.
- Located in the south-west part of Chatra district, Lawalong sanctuary has a rich wildlife, including tiger and bison.
- Different species of birds and serpents are also found here.
- A variety of wildlife including Tiger, Panther, Hyena, Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Nilgai are available in this sanctuary.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.4)** Which of the following is/are consists of “**River valleys**” of Arunachal Pradesh?

1. The Siang Valley
2. The Kameng Valley
3. The Tirap Valley

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:** All three valleys are located in Arunachal Pradesh.

- Rivers constitute an important part of the topography of the state. Arunachal Pradesh is divided into five major river valleys: 1. The Siang Valley 2. The Kameng Valley 3. The Subansiri Valley 4. The Lohit Valley 5. The Tirap Valley.
- These valleys are named after the important rivers of the state.
- The major rivers and their tributaries traversing the state are Siang, Kameng, Subansiri, Subansiri, Lohit, Tirap etc.
- All these and other countless rivers and rivulets are fed by snow from the Himalayas. Therefore, mostly these small rivulets are perennial in nature.

Source: Shodhganga

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding “**The World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)**”:

1. It advances environmental law around the globe by providing specialized knowledge and assistance to strengthen the legal foundations of the conservation of nature and sustainable development.
2. WCEL functions as an integral part of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

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



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**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** The World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL) advances environmental law around the globe by providing specialized knowledge and assistance to strengthen the legal foundations of the conservation of nature and sustainable development through the conceptual advancement of environmental principles, norms, and laws, and by building the capacity of communities to benefit from the environmental rule of law.

WCEL functions as an integral part of the IUCN Environmental Law Programme (ELP) that includes close collaboration with the Environmental Law Centre (ELC).

Source: UNFCCC

**Q.6)** Which of the following is/are characteristics of “**Persistent organic pollutants (POPs)**”?

1. Highly toxic to humans and wildlife.
2. Last for many years in the environment.
3. Long-range transport.

Which of the following codes below given is/are correct?

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are a group of chemicals possessing the following characteristics:

- They are highly toxic to humans and wildlife (harmfulness);
- They can last for many years in the environment before degrading into less dangerous forms (persistence);
- They bio-accumulate in the food chain (bio-accumulation);
- They are transported over large distances through air and water and can be found worldwide (long-range transport).

Source: Rotterdam Convention

**Q.7)** “**Nitrogen fixation**” on earth is/are accomplished by which of the following ways?

1. Organic matter decomposition.
2. Thunder and lightning.
3. The Haber-Bosch process.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**ANS: A**

**Explanation:** Nitrogen is a critical limiting element for plant growth and production.

- It is a major component of chlorophyll, the most important pigment needed for photosynthesis, as well as amino acids, the key building blocks of proteins.
- It is also found in other important bio-molecules, such as ATP and nucleic acids.
- Even though it is one of the most abundant elements (predominately in the form of nitrogen gas (N<sub>2</sub>) in the Earth’s atmosphere), plants can only utilize reduced forms of this element.

Plants acquire these forms of “combined” nitrogen by:

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- the addition of ammonia and/or nitrate fertilizer (from the Haber-Bosch process) or manure to soil,
- the release of these compounds during organic matter decomposition,
- the conversion of atmospheric nitrogen into the compounds by natural processes, such as lightning, and
- Biological nitrogen fixation.

Source: NCERT

**Q.8) “Askot Wildlife Sanctuary”** is located in which of the following state?

- a) Himachal Pradesh
- b) Gujarat
- c) Chhattisgarh
- d) Uttarakhand

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Himalayan tailless bush blue, *Arhopala ganesa ganesa*, is a butterfly that is usually present in the elevation between 1200 meters and 2400 meters in the states of Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand.

- It later recorded an altitude 3577 meters in Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttarakhand.
- Researchers believe that these butterflies have migrated in search of a suitable climate where the climates in several Himalayan mountain ranges have already noticed significant changes.

Source: The Hindu

**Q.9)** Consider the following bio-geo-chemical cycles:

1. Phosphorous cycle
2. Nitrogen cycle
3. Sulphur cycle

Which of the above comes under Sedimentary bio-geo-chemical cycle?

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

**ANS: C**

**Explanation:** Biogeochemical cycles can be classed as gaseous, in which the reservoir is the air or the oceans (via evaporation), and **sedimentary, in which the reservoir is the Earth's crust.**

Gaseous cycles include those of **nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, and water**; sedimentary cycles include those of **iron, calcium, phosphorus, sulphur** and other more earthbound elements.

Source: NCERT

**Q.10)** Consider the following protected areas:

1. Kanha
2. Panna
3. Satpuda
4. Sanjay

Which of the above is/are Tiger reserves located in Madhya Pradesh?

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only

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

**ANS: D**

**Explanation:** Madhya Pradesh is also known as the '**Tiger State**' as it harbors **nearly 20%** of India's Wild Tiger Population and nearly 10% of the world's tiger population as per the current estimates. The six Tiger Reserves in MP are:

- Kanha Tiger Reserve
- Pench Tiger Reserve
- Panna Tiger Reserve
- Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve
- Satpuda Tiger Reserve
- Sanjay Tiger Reserve

Source: Envis

