

ForumIAS

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Prelims Marathon

23rd to 29th Aug, 2021

HISTORY
ECONOMICS
POLITY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

International Relations

Q.1) Recently, which of the following country led a UN resolution to set up a separate convention on cybercrime?

- a) Israel
- b) Iran
- c) China
- d) Russia

ANS: D

Explanation: The Russian proposal entitled “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes” was recently put forth in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

- India voted in favour of a cybercrime resolution led by Russia in a committee of the United Nations General Assembly.
- The resolution seeks to set up new cyber norms considered as counter alternative to the US backed Budapest Accord.

Source: The Hindu

Q.2) The term “2010 Strategic Concept” is related to which of the following?

- a) NATO
- b) Warsaw Pact
- c) Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
- d) START treaty

ANS: A

Explanation: Strategic Concepts lay down the Alliance’s core tasks and principles, its values, the evolving security environment and the Alliance’s strategic objectives for the next decade.

The 2010 Strategic Concept defines NATO’s cores tasks as: collective defense, crisis-management and cooperative security.

Source: Indian Express

Q.3) Which of the following agreement/agreements is/are signed by India and United States of America (USA)?

1. General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
2. Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).

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: C

Explanation: Agreements signed by India and USA.

- India had signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002 and the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016.
- The last one remaining is the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) is not yet signed by India.

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FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS		
<p>Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide logistic support, refuelling & berthing facilities for each other's warships & aircraft on barter/equal-value exchange basis ➤ Will not involve stationing of US troops on Indian soil. Nor will India extend support if US goes to war with "a friendly country" ➤ Good for US forces re-balancing to Asia Pacific. Indian forces rarely operate far away from their shores but access to Djibouti & Diego Garcia could be useful 	<p>Communication Interoperability & Security Memorandum Agreement (CISMOA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Technology enabler to help transfer high-tech avionics, encrypted communication & electronic systems to India ➤ US says CISMOA will boost 'interoperability' as well as ensure secrecy of its C4ISR (command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems ➤ But fears that US will be able to track & snoop on Indian warships/aircraft equipped with such systems 	
	<p>Basic Exchange & Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ US says BECA will help India with advanced satellite & topographical data for long-range navigation & missile-targeting ➤ But India, which has its own satellite imaging capabilities, unwilling for American digital sensors to be positioned on its soil 	

Source: The Hindu

Q.4) Which of the following treaty/treaties is/are related to European Union?

1. Treaty of Lisbon
2. Treaty of Nice
3. Treaty of Amsterdam

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: D

Explanation: The European Union is based on the rule of law. This means that every action taken by the EU is founded on treaties that have been approved voluntarily and democratically by all EU member countries. A treaty is a binding agreement between EU member countries. It sets out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries. The main treaties are:

- Treaty of Lisbon: Signed on 13 December 2007, to make the EU more democratic, more efficient and better able to address global problems, such as climate change, with one voice.
- Treaty of Nice: Signed on 26 February 2001, to reform the institutions so that the EU could function efficiently after reaching 25 member countries.
- Treaty of Amsterdam: Signed on 2 October 1997, to reform the EU institutions in preparation for the arrival of future member countries.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding BASIC group:

1. The member countries of the group consist of India, Brazil, South Korea and China.
2. The main objective of the group is to promote industrialization.

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 BASIC group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by the four countries on November 28, 2009.

- They are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- The main objective of the BASIC group is to have a broadly common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the massive funds that are needed to fight climate change.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.6) Consider the following statements regarding the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU):

1. The Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration.
2. All Central Asian countries except Turkmenistan and Russia are member countries of Eurasian Economic Union.

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 Eurasian Economic Union is an international organization for regional economic integration. It has international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.

- The EAEU provides for free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union.
- The Member-States of the Eurasian Economic Union are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation.
- The Union is being created to comprehensively upgrade, raise the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and to promote stable development in order to raise the living standards of the nations of the Member-States.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.7) Consider the following statements regarding the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):

1. OPEC is a permanent, Informal organization.
2. OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.

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 Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was founded in Baghdad, Iraq, with the signing of an agreement in September 1960 by five countries namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. They were to become the Founder Members of the Organization.

- OPEC is a permanent, intergovernmental organization.
- The current OPEC members are the following: Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, and the Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia (the de facto leader), the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Ecuador, Indonesia and Qatar are former members.
- OPEC's objective is to co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers; an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry.
- OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.

Source: OPEC

Q.8) Consider the following statements regarding the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities:

1. It is a multilateral agreement between the nuclear weapon states.
2. It is entered into force in 1971.

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: Both India and Pakistan have exchanged their list of nuclear installations under the bilateral agreement.

- The list was handed over in accordance with Article-II of the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India, signed on December 31, 1988, the Foreign Office (FO).
- The agreement was entered into force on January 27, 1991, provides, inter alia, that the two countries inform each other of nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the agreement on the first of January of every calendar year.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.9) The term "Protecting Power" is recently in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Diplomatic relations
- b) Foreign exchange reserves
- c) Defense treaties
- d) Bilateral defense exercises

ANS: A

Explanation: Following the killing of Iranian military and intelligence commander Major General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in a drone attack carried out by the United States, the Iranian government registered its protest with the Swiss Embassy in Tehran.

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- Switzerland represents the interests of the US in Iran. This is because the US itself does not have an embassy there. Iran's interests in the United States, on the other hand, are represented by the Pakistan Embassy in Washington.
- In an arrangement such as this, Switzerland is the "Protecting Power" of the United States' interests in Iran. The instrument of Protecting Powers is provided for under the 1961 and 1963 Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations.
- "If diplomatic relations are broken off between two States, or if a mission is permanently or temporarily recalled... the sending State may entrust the protection of its interests and those of its nationals to a third State acceptable to the receiving State," the 1961 Vienna Convention states.
- And the 1963 Convention reiterates: "A sending State may with the prior consent of a receiving State, and at the request of a third State not represented in the receiving State, undertake the temporary protection of the interests of the third State and of its nationals."

Source: Indian Express

Q.10) Which of the following are the priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the East Asia Summit (EAS)?

1. Environment and energy
2. Pandemic diseases
3. Finance
4. Natural Disaster Management
5. Security

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: The East Asia Summit is a unique Leaders-led forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity.

- It has evolved as a forum for strategic dialogue and cooperation on political, security and economic issues of common regional concern and plays an important role in the regional architecture.
- Established in 2005, EAS allows the principal players in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues of common interest and concern, in an open and transparent manner, at the highest level.
- The membership of EAS consists of ten ASEAN Member States (i.e. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the USA.
- EAS is an initiative of ASEAN and is based on the premise of the centrality of ASEAN.
- There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS. These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.
- India endorses regional collaboration in all six priority areas.

Source: ForumIAS

International Relations

Q.1) Which of the following are the members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)?

1. Bangladesh
2. India
3. Sri Lanka
4. Myanmar
5. Bhutan
6. Nepal
7. Thailand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7
- b) 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 only
- c) 1, 2, 3 and 7 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3 only

ANS: A

Explanation: The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.

- This sub-regional organization came into being on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- Following the inclusion of Myanmar on 22 December 1997 during a special Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the Group was renamed 'BIMST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting (February 2004, Thailand), the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.2) Which of the following country is recently re-joined the Commonwealth group?

- a) Nepal
- b) Ethiopia
- c) Yemen
- d) Maldives

ANS: D

Explanation: The Maldives re-joined the Commonwealth, more than three years after the Indian Ocean island nation quit the association amid mounting criticism of its human rights record then.

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- In 2016, the Maldives pulled out of the Commonwealth terming “unjust” the grouping’s decision to penalise the country over former President Mohamed Nasheed’s controversial ouster in 2012.
- It followed the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)’s warning to Maldives of suspension from the bloc, voicing “deep disappointment” over the country’s lack of progress in resolving the political crisis during former President Abdulla Yameen’s presidency, whose authoritarian slant sparked concern domestically and internationally.

Source: The Hindu

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding the G-20:

1. It is an inter-governmental treaty between 19 member countries and European Union.
2. It was created after the gulf war to promote economic growth among developing and developed countries.

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 Group of Twenty, or the G20, is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. The G20 comprises 19 countries and the European Union.

- The 19 countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The G20 brings together the leaders of both developed and developing countries from every continent.
- Collectively, G20 members represent around 80% of the world’s economic output, two-thirds of global population and three-quarters of international trade.
- Throughout the year, representatives from G20 countries gather to discuss financial and socioeconomic issues.
- Originated in 1999 at the level of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, the G20 gathered for high-level discussions on macro-financial issues.
- In the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, the G20 was elevated to include the leaders of member countries.
- The first G20 Leaders’ Summit took place in Washington D.C. in November 2008.
- Consequently, the G20 agenda expanded beyond macro-financial issues, to include socio-economic and development issues.

Source: Indian Express

Q.4) Which of the following country is NOT part of QUAD?

- a) Australia
- b) New Zealand
- c) Japan
- d) India

ANS: B

Explanation: In a significant development for the region, the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue (“the Quad”) between India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. held its first Minister-level meeting since it was revived in 2017.

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- The group is seen as a regional counter-weight to China and has only met at the Joint or Assistant Secretary level since 2017.
- Members of the Quad, barring Australia, are currently engaged in the annual Malabar exercises – military exercises that started between India and the U.S. in 1994 and became trilateral (with Japan) in 2015.
- India has not permitted Australia to participate in these exercises, concerned about what message it would send to China, which is wary of the exercise.

Source: The Hindu

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding G – 77:

1. It is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations.
 2. It consists of Seventy seven member countries.
- 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 Group of 77 (G-77) was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries signatories of the “Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries” issued at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva.

- Beginning with the first “Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 in Algiers (Algeria) on 10 – 25 October 1967, which adopted the Charter of Algiers”, a permanent institutional structure gradually developed which led to the creation of Chapters of the Group of 77 with Liaison offices in Geneva (UNCTAD), Nairobi (UNEP), Paris (UNESCO), Rome (FAO/IFAD), Vienna (UNIDO), and the Group of 24 (G-24) in Washington, D.C. (IMF and World Bank).
- Although the members of the G-77 have increased to 134 countries, the original name was retained due to its historic significance.
- The Group of 77 is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations, which provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system, and promote South-South cooperation for development.

Source: <https://www.g77.org/doc/>

Q.6) Which of the following Multilateral Export-Control Regime is also called as London Club?

- a) Nuclear Suppliers Group
- b) MTCR
- c) Wassenaar arrangement
- d) Australia Group

ANS: A

Explanation: The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) first met in November 1975 in London, and is thus popularly referred to as the “London Club”.

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It is a Group of nuclear supplier countries that seek to prevent nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials, equipment and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) Which of the following countries are Baltic nations?

1. Estonia
2. Latvia
3. Lithuania

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: Baltic States, the northeastern region of Europe, includes the countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea.

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu concluded his 5-day tour to the three Baltic nations Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in August 2019.
- The visit was aimed at strengthening the bilateral engagements with the three nations, besides giving the relationships a fresh impetus in the context of a changing global order.
- Besides considering the strategic interests, the focus of the visit was also on improving cooperation in the fields of security, especially countering terrorism.

Source: Oriental Black swan

Q.8) The term “Debt Trap Diplomacy” is often seen in news is associated with which of the following country?

- a) China
- b) United States of America
- c) Japan
- d) Russia

ANS: A

Explanation: There has recently been a spate of articles and studies across the United States and Europe that seek to debunk the ‘debt trap diplomacy’ of China under its multi-billion dollar connectivity project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

- This type of diplomacy refers to offering projects/loans on terms that end up being too difficult for countries to repay, eventually compelling them to accept political or economic concessions.
- China’s BRI has resulted in several such unsustainable debt-for-infrastructure deals, which nevertheless, further Beijing’s geostrategic interests by increasing its global presence and influence.

Source: <https://thewire.in/world/china-debt-trap-diplomacy-south-asia-europe>

Q.9) Consider the following statements regarding the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF):

1. EEF was established in 2010 and forum conducts its meetings biannually.
2. India pledged to extend \$ 10 billion line of credit to Russia’s far eastern region at 5th EEF.

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 Eastern Economic Forum was established by decree of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin in 2015 to support the economic development of Russia's Far East and to expand international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Unveiling the Russian edition of India's 'Look East, Act East' policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged on September 2019 to extend a \$1 billion Line of Credit to Russia's Far East region (RFE).

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) The Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID) is related to which of the following?

- a) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- b) The United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- c) World Economic Forum
- d) International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD)

ANS: D

Explanation: The Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID) brings together key decision makers, stakeholders and practitioners who are engaged in the field of remittances and migration for development.

- Since its first forum in 2007, IFAD has gathered over 1,000 participants from the public and private sector, and the civil society, to facilitate the creation of partnerships and the exchange of best practices in maximizing the impact of remittances to the benefit of migrants' communities of origin.
- In doing so, IFAD partners with key international financial institutions and other prominent organizations, such as the European Commission (2015) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017).
- The forum is held biannually, in conjunction with the observance of the International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR) on 16 June.

Source: UN IFAD

International Relations & Organizations

Q.1) “Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity (PAHAL) – project” is often seen in news is launched with the help of which of the following nation?

- a) France
- b) Japan
- c) Israel
- d) United States of America

ANS: D

Explanation: Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity (PAHAL) is USAID flagship innovative financing platform to promote health financing models and provide catalytic support to social enterprises (IBMs) for improving access to affordable and quality healthcare solutions for the urban poor communities, with a focus on Tuberculosis, Maternal and Child Health and WASH.

- PAHAL has built a platform that provides unparalleled access to social enterprises for reducing cost and improving access to quality healthcare services.
- US announced that it will provide an additional \$3 million to India, through its aid agency USAID, for mitigating the spread of Covid-19.
- In coordination with the Indian government, USAID is providing these funds to the Partnerships for Affordable Healthcare Access and Longevity (PAHAL) project.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.2) “The freedoms of the air are a set of commercial aviation rights granting a country's airlines the privilege to enter and land in another country's airspace”. With reference to the freedom of air, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Total six freedoms of air rights formed by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
2. The sixth freedom of air includes the right to fly from a foreign country to another while stopping in one's own country for non-technical reasons.

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: The freedoms of the air (9 rights) are a set of commercial aviation rights granting a country's airlines the privilege to enter and land in another country's airspace.

- The Freedom of air was formulated in the Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944, known as the Chicago Convention.
- The fifth freedom of air includes the right to fly between two foreign countries on a flight originating or ending in one's own country.
- The sixth freedom of air includes the right to fly from a foreign country to another while stopping in one's own country for non-technical reasons.

Source: The Hindu

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Q.3) “Loya Jirga or Grand Council” is often seen in news is related to which of the following country?

- a) Nepal
- b) Bhutan
- c) Bangladesh
- d) Afghanistan

ANS: D

Explanation: A Loya Jirga, or "grand council", is a mass national gathering that brings together representatives from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan.

- The gathering involves participation of Afghan tribal elders, religious figures, and political leaders.
- The Loya Jirga is a centuries-old institution that has been convened at times of national crisis or to settle national issues.
- Historically, it has been used to approve a new constitution, declare war, choose a new king, or to make sweeping social or political reforms.
- It is considered the "highest expression" of the Afghan people, but it is not an official decision-making body.

Source: The Hindu

Q.4) “Most Favoured Nation (MFN)” is often seen in news is related to which of the following International Organization?

- a) International Monetary Fund
- b) United Nations
- c) World Economic Forum
- d) World Trade Organization

ANS: D

Explanation: According to the MFN principle of the WTO’s General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), each of the WTO member countries should “treat all the other members equally as ‘most-favoured’ trading partners.”

- If a special favour such as a lower customs duty rate is grant to someone by a nation, then it has to do the same for all other WTO members.
- Thus, in effect it means non-discrimination.
- Recently, India withdrew the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status from Pakistan.

Source: WTO

Q.5) “Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)” is recently in news is an initiative of which of the following country?

- a) Russia
- b) China
- c) Japan
- d) United States of America

ANS: D

Explanation: US President has signed ARIA act to counter the threat from China and to reinvigorate US leadership in the Indo-Pacific region.

- It aims to establish a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region.

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- The new law mandates actions countering China's illegal construction and militarization of artificial features in the South China Sea and coercive economic practices.
- ARIA recognizes the vital role of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and India in promoting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region and it calls for strengthening diplomatic, economic, and security ties between both the countries.
- It allocates a budget of \$1.5 billion over a five year period to enhance cooperation with America's strategic regional allies in the region.

Source: The Hindu

Q.6) The term "Industrial Security Annex (ISA)" is often seen in news is a bilateral arrangement between which of the following countries?

- a) India and Russia
- b) India and Japan
- c) India and USA
- d) India and France

ANS: C

Explanation: The Industrial Security Annex (ISA), signed between India and the U.S. at the second 2+2 dialogue in Washington, will open the door for U.S. defence companies to partner with the Indian private sector for several multi-billion dollar deals in the pipeline, especially the deal for 114 fighter jets.

- The ISA is a part of the General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which India signed with the U.S. long back.
- It became critical as India opened up the defense sector to the private sector and the Strategic Partnership policy, which has few big military platforms and is reserved for the Indian private sector. U.S. companies are in the race for multi-billion dollar deal for 114 fighter jets, among other deals.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.7) The "Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)" is often seen in news is located in which of the country?

- a) India
- b) Thailand
- c) Sri Lanka
- d) Maldives

ANS: A

Explanation: The Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), an initiative of the Indian Navy and supported by the Government of India launched in December 2018, has started functioning.

The IFC-IOR has been established at Gurugram along with the Information Management and Analysis Centre, jointly administered by the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.8) "Bishkek Declaration" is related to which of the following Organization?

- a) World Trade Organization
- b) UNCTAD
- c) Shangai Cooperation Oranization
- d) Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

ANS: C

Explanation: India and other members of the SCO condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and called on the international community to promote cooperation in combating the menace.

According to the Bishkek Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Heads of State Council, the member states stressed that acts of terrorism and extremism cannot be justified.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.9) The "Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN)" is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- UN Security Council reforms.
- UN resolution on International Terrorists.
- World Bank Group
- International Solar Alliance

ANS: A

Explanation: The G4 nations of Brazil, Germany, Japan and India have asserted that the mandate of the United Nations' Inter-Governmental Negotiations is to achieve the long-pending reforms of the UNSC and not endlessly debate it.

- The Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) format has long outlived its sell-by date and must be made transparent to ensure progress on the reform discussions, they said.
- India has been calling for the reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) along with Brazil, Germany and Japan for long, emphasising that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member.
- The G4 nations support each other's bids for permanent seats on the UNSC.

NOTE: In 2008 the General Assembly adopted Decision 62/557 "to commence intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) in informal plenary of the General Assembly".

- Up until the 22008 Decision was adopted, discussions on Security Council reform were nothing more than an oral exchange of views.
- With the creation of the IGN, the aim was have a text on which discussions could be based.
- The first round of the IGN was held on 19 February 2009.
- The General Assembly has renewed its mandate annually, and it remains the principal vehicle for Council reform discussions today.
- To date, the IGN has not been able to agree on a text to be negotiated

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) Consider the following statements regarding the "International Court of Justice (ICJ)":

1. The ICJ was established in 1945 by the same constitutive instrument as the Security Council, the UN Charter, to act as the principal judicial organ of the UN.
2. Judgments given in contentious cases between states are binding on the parties.

Which of the statements above given is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The UN Charter envisioned a symbiotic relationship between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the UN.

- However, the Council has scarcely made use of the ICJ as an instrument, or “tool”, in the exercise of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- In its latest research report on the rule of law of 20 December 2016, Security Council Report examines the relationship between the Security Council and the ICJ, including options for enhancing that relationship to assist the Council in its work.
- The ICJ was established in 1945 by the same constitutive instrument as the Security Council, the UN Charter, to act as the principal judicial organ of the UN.
- The Statute of the Court is annexed to the Charter itself, meaning that all UN member states are automatically parties to the Statute.
- The ICJ is mandated to settle contentious legal disputes submitted by states against other states in accordance with international law.
- Judgments given in contentious cases between states are binding on the parties.
- The Court also gives advisory opinions to the Council, the General Assembly and other authorized bodies on legal questions referred to it by these entities.

Source: ICJ

Schemes

Q.1) Consider the following statements regarding formation and promotion of Farmer Producers Organization (FPOs):

1. It is a central sector scheme aims to establish 1 lakh FPOs in five years.
2. It is implemented by District Rural Development Agency.

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: formation and promotion of Farmer Producers Organization (FPOs) is a Central Sector Scheme under Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW).

- Its objective is to establish 10,000 FPOs in five years period from 2019-20 to 2023-24 to ensure economies of scale for farmers.
- It is implemented by- Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
- Also, States can nominate their Implementing Agency in consultation with DAC&FW.

Source: PIB

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-dhan Yojana (PM-KMY):

1. It is an old age pension scheme to provide social security net to around 3 crore Small and Marginal old age farmers.
2. There is no ceiling of land owned by those who are opted for this scheme.

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: It is an old age pension scheme to provide social security net to around 3 crore Small and Marginal old age farmers as they have minimal or no savings to provide for old age and to support them in the event of consequent loss of livelihood.

- Small and Marginal Farmer (SMF) of age of 18- 40 years - a farmer who owns cultivable land up to 2 hectares as per land records of the concerned State/UT.
- Exclusions: SMFs covered under any other statutory social security schemes such as National Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation scheme, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan Yojana (PM-SYM) etc.

Source: PIB

Q.3) Which of the following schemes/missions are subsumed under Krishonnati Yojana?

1. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
2. Sub-Mission on Agriculture Extension (SMAE).
3. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

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: It is a Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme that has been implemented since 2016-17. It comprises of 11 schemes / missions:

- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)- to promote holistic growth of horticulture sector.
- National Food Security Mission (NFSM) including National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP)- to increase production of rice, wheat, pulses, coarse cereals, oilseeds and commercial crops through area expansion, restoring soil fertility and improving productivity.
- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)- to promote sustainable agriculture practices focusing on integrated farming, appropriate soil health management and synergizing resource conservation technology.
- Sub-Mission on Agriculture Extension (SMAE)- to strengthen ongoing programmes of states/local bodies to achieve food security, empowering farmers, strengthen programme planning, ICT usage etc.
- Sub-Mission on Seeds and Planting Material (SMSP)- to increase production of certified / quality seed, increase seed replacement rate (SRR) and upgrade the quality of farm saved seeds.
- Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)- to increase the reach of farm mechanization, promote 'Custom Hiring Centres' to offset the adverse economies of scale arising due to small landholding and high cost.
- Sub-Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine- to minimize loss to quality and yield of agricultural crops, shield agricultural bio-security, facilitate exports and promote good agricultural practices.
- Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census, Economics and Statistics- to undertake the agriculture census, study of the cost of cultivation of principal crops, to undertake research studies on agro-economic problems etc.
- Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation (ISAC)- to provide financial assistance for improving the economic conditions of cooperatives, remove regional imbalances.
- Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Marketing (ISAM)- to develop and provide agricultural marketing infrastructure, promote innovative and latest technologies and integrate markets through a common online market platform.
- National e-Governance Plan (NeGP-A) - to improve access of farmers to information & services, making available timely and relevant information to the farmers for increasing their agriculture productivity.

Source: The Hindu

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Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):

1. It aims to promote holistic development of Horticulture sector (excluding bamboo & coconut).
2. It is a Central Sector Scheme.

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: It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which was started from 2014-15 comprising of following sub-schemes and areas of operation –

- National Horticulture Mission: to promote holistic growth of horticulture sector through an area based regionally differentiated strategies
- Horticulture Mission for North East & Himalayan States: It is a technology mission which focuses on production of quality planting material, organic farming, efficient water management etc.
- Promote, develop and disseminate technologies and generate employment opportunities.
- National Horticulture Board is implementing various schemes under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) in all States and UTs.
- Coconut Development Board is implementing various schemes under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) in all Coconut growing states in the country.
- Central Institute for Horticulture, Nagaland for providing technical back stopping through capacity building and training of farmers and Field functionaries in the North Eastern Region.

It aims to promote holistic development of Horticulture sector (including bamboo & coconut).

Source: PIB

Q.5) Which of the following crops/programme is/are part of National Food Security Mission?

1. Rice
2. Wheat
3. Seed village programme

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: It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which was launched in 2007.

- From the years 2018-19 and 2019-20, NMOOP and Seed Village Programme are now a part of NFSM.
- NFSM will have eight components viz. (i) NFSM- Rice; (ii) NFSM-Wheat; (iii) NFSM-Pulses; (iv) NFSM-Coarse Cereals (Maize, Barley), (v) NFSM-Sub Mission on Nutri

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Cereals; (vi) NFSM-Commercial Crops; (vii) NFSM-Oilseeds and Oilpalm; and (viii) NFSM-Seed Village Programme

Source: PIB

Q.6) Participatory Guarantee System for India is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) MSMEs
- b) Solar energy
- c) Organic farming
- d) Energy efficiency

ANS: C

Explanation: Its aim is to promote domestic organic market growth and also to enable S&M farmers to have easy access to organic certification, a decentralized organic farming certification system called PGS-India is being implemented by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

- It is outside the framework of third-party system of certification (which is a pre-requisite to enter export market of organic produce) and it is a group-certification system including farmers, traders and consumers (hence the name) and it is supported by PKVY scheme.
- PGS ensures that their production takes place in accordance with laid-down quality standards. It is not applicable for off-farm activities like transport, storage etc.
- The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a statement

Source: PIB

Q.7) Consider the following statements regarding the “Atal Bhujal Yojana”:

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme aims to improve ground water management through community participation in identified priority areas in seven States.
2. It is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency.
3. It pays special attention to those areas where groundwater was very low.

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: A

Explanation: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Atal Bhujal scheme to strengthen the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management and bringing about behavioral changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management in seven States.

- The scheme will be implemented in about 8,350 gram panchayats in 78 districts of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Of the total outlay of ₹6,000 crore to be provided from 2020-21 to 2024-25, 50% will be in the form of World Bank loan to be repaid by the Central government.
- The remaining part will be made available via Central assistance from regular budgetary support.
- The entire World Bank’s loan component and the Central assistance will be passed on to the States as grants.

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- The Prime Minister said the scheme, or the guidelines related to the Jal Jeevan Mission, were big steps in proving the resolve to deliver water to every household in the country by 2024.
- He said the Jal Jeevan Mission would work towards delivering piped water supply to every house and Atal Bhujal scheme would pay special attention to those areas where groundwater was very low.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) The term “Jeevan Pramaan” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- A. It is an AADHAR Biometric Authentication based digital life certificates for Pensioners and facilitates online submission.
- B. It is a marriage incentive scheme for inter-caste marriage.
- C. It is a pension scheme for landless labour in rural areas.
- D. It is a newly launched pension scheme for women employees.

ANS: A

Explanation: One of the major requisite for the pensioners post their retirement from service, is to provide life certificates to the authorized pension disbursing agencies like Banks, Post offices etc., following which their pension is credited to their account.

- In order to get this life certificate the individual drawing the pension is required to either personally present oneself before the Pension Disbursing Agency or have the Life Certificate issued by authority where they have served earlier and have it delivered to the disbursing agency.
- Digital Life Certificate for Pensioners Scheme of the Government of India known as Jeevan Pramaan seeks to address this very problem by digitizing the whole process of securing the life certificate.
- It aims to streamline the process of getting this certificate and making it hassle free and much easier for the pensioners.
- With this initiative the pensioner's requirement to physically present him/her in front of the disbursing agency or the certification authority will become a thing of the past benefiting the pensioners in a huge way and cutting down on unnecessary logistical hurdles.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.9) Which of the following states are covered under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution?

1. Assam
2. Manipur
3. Tripura
4. Arunachal Pradesh
5. Mizoram

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The Sixth Schedule consists of provisions for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, according to Article 244a of the Indian Constitution.

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- Passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, it seeks to safeguard the rights of tribal population through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC).
- ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature.
- The governors of these states are empowered to reorganize boundaries of the tribal areas. In simpler terms, she or he can choose to include or exclude any area, increase or decrease the boundaries and unite two or more autonomous districts into one.
- They can also alter or change the names of autonomous regions without a separate legislation.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.10) Consider the following statements regarding the “Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)”:

1. Minimum age for joining the scheme is 55 years.
2. Policy term for the scheme is 20 years.
3. It is exempted from GST.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) is a Pension Scheme announced by the Government of India exclusively for the senior citizens aged 60 years and above which was available from 4th May, 2017 to 31st March, 2020.

- The scheme is now extended up to 31st March, 2023 for a further period of three years beyond 31st March, 2020.
- Pension is payable at the end of each period, during the policy term of 10 years, as per the frequency of monthly/ quarterly/ half-yearly/ yearly as chosen by the pensioner at the time of purchase.
- The scheme is exempted from GST.
- Loan up to 75% of Purchase Price shall be allowed after 3 policy years (to meet the liquidity needs).
- Loan interest shall be recovered from the pension installments and loan to be recovered from claim proceeds.
- On death of the pensioner during the policy term of 10 years, the Purchase Price shall be paid to the beneficiary.

Source: The Hindu

Schemes & Miscellaneous

Q.1) Which of the following is/are beneficiaries of Kisan Credit Card?

1. Individual Farmers
2. Oral lessees
3. Share croppers

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: KCC aims to provide adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under single window. The beneficiaries are:

- All farmers' individuals/Joint borrowers who are owner cultivators.
- Tenant farmers, Oral lessees and Share Croppers etc.
- SHGs or Joint Liability Groups of farmers including tenant farmers, share croppers etc.

Source: The Hindu

Q.2) Project ARYA is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- A. Agriculture
- B. Space Technology
- C. Nuclear reactors
- D. Artificial Intelligence

ANS: A

Explanation: The GOI launched ARYA – “Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture” in 2015.

- It is implemented through Krishi Vigyan Kendra in one district from each State.
- KVKs will involve the Agricultural Universities and ICAR Institutes as Technology Partners.
- In one district, 200-300 rural youths will be identified for their skill development in entrepreneurial activities and establishment of related micro-enterprise units.
- At KVKs also one or two enterprise units will be established so that they serve as entrepreneurial training units for farmers.

Source: PIB

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP):

1. It accentuates the relevance and quality of higher agricultural education in selected Agricultural Universities.
2. It is funded by NABARD and Government of India in equal share.

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 objectives of NAHEP are:

- Accentuate the relevance and quality of higher agricultural education in selected AUs
- Student and faculty development
- Improve learning outcomes, employability and entrepreneurship; and
- Enhancing institutional and system management effectiveness

It will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50 : 50 basis.

Source: PIB

Q.4) Which of the following pulses are grown under Accelerated Pulses Production Program?

1. Green Gram
2. Bengal Gram
3. Lentil
4. Red gram

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Accelerated Pulses Production Program aims to demonstrate plant nutrients and plant protection centric improved technologies and management practices in compact units of 1000 hectares each for five major pulse crops viz. Bengal gram, Black gram (Urdbean), Red gram (Arhar), Green gram (Moongbean), and Lentil (Masur)

- It is 100 % funding by Union Ministry of Agriculture and implemented under the NFSM-Pulses.
- It has been conceptualised to take up the active propagation of key technologies such as Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- Department of Agriculture Cooperation and farmer welfare is implementing this programme through i) Commissioners/Directors of Agriculture of pulse producing states, and ii) Central Government Institutes: NCIPM of ICAR.

Source: PIB

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding the “output gap”:

1. It refers to the difference between the actual output of the economy and its maximum potential.
2. It is used by policy makers to gauge inflation.

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 output gap is an economic measure of the difference between the actual output of an economy and its potential output.

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- Potential output is the maximum amount of goods and services an economy can turn out when it is most efficient—that is, at full capacity.
- Often, potential output is referred to as the production capacity of the economy.
- Policymakers often use potential output to gauge inflation and typically define it as the level of output consistent with no pressure for prices to rise or fall.
- In this context, the output gap is a summary indicator of the relative demand and supply components of economic activity.
- As such, the output gap measures the degree of inflation pressure in the economy and is an important link between the real sides of the economy—which produces goods and services—and inflation.
- All else equal, if the output gap is positive over time, so that actual output is greater than potential output, prices will begin to rise in response to demand pressure in key markets.
- Similarly, if actual output falls below potential output over time, prices will begin to fall to reflect weak demand.

Source: Economic Survey

Q.6) Which of the following is/are beneficiaries of STREE SWABHIMAN?

1. Women entrepreneurs from metropolitan areas
2. Women entrepreneurs from rural areas
3. Women entrepreneurs from semi urban areas

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: To facilitate the society at large by empowering its women entrepreneurs to not only provide sanitary pads at their common service centers (CSCs) but also to educate women to overcome this social taboo & encourage usage of sanitary pads.

Rural and semi-urban women entrepreneurs are the beneficiaries.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) “Gyan Circle Ventures” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) ISRO
- b) MeitY
- c) ICAR
- d) CSIR

ANS: B

Explanation: It is a MeitY funded Technology Business Incubator of Indian Institute of Information Technology, Sri City (Chittoor), Andhra Pradesh.

It would function as a Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE 2.0) incubation center to promote deep-tech entrepreneurship through financial and technical support to incubators engaged in using emerging technologies such as IoT, AI, Block-chain, Robotics etc.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) Consider the following statements regarding tigers:

1. There are 70 tiger reserves in India which are governed by Project Tiger.
2. India is home to 70% of tigers in the world.

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: There are 50 tiger reserves in India which are governed by Project Tiger which is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

India is home to 70% of tigers in the world. In 2006, there were 1,411 tigers which increased to 1,706 in 2010 and 2,226 in 2014, according to the NTCA.

Source: The Hindu

Q.9) Which of the following pair (s) is/are correctly matched?

- | Archaeological Site | : | State |
|---------------------|---|---------------|
| 1. Daojali Hading | : | Meghalaya |
| 2. Chirand | : | Bihar |
| 3. Koldihwa | : | Uttar Pradesh |

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Chirand: Chirand is a place in Saran district of Bihar and has significant importance archaeological and historical study of Bihar as well as India.

- In Chapra-Sonpur road, Chirand Village is situated near Doriiganj has its unprecedented archaeological, historical and cultural heritage.
- This region was dominated by Charo Dynasty hence it was named Chirand.
- In 1871, Sir W. W Hunter brought light to the archaeological significance of this area.

Daojali Hading: The excavation site at Daojali Hading (Assam) occupies an important place in the archaeological history of India as the first evidence of an Eastern Asiatic Neolithic complex of double-shouldered Celts and cord-marked pottery in India was reported from there.

- The discovery had put Northeast India on the Neolithic map of the world for the first time.
- However, the precise age of the artifacts were not known.

Koldihwa: Belan Valley in Uttar Pradesh near Prayag in Uttar Pradesh is one site where evidences of Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic sites have been found in sequence.

- The prehistoric sites of Belan valley include Mahgara, Chopani Mando, and Koldihwa.
- Koldihwa in Belan valley has provided earliest evidence of rice cultivation.

Source: The Hindu

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Q.10) Consider the following statements regarding “writs”:

1. The Supreme Court and the high courts can issue the writs.
2. President can empower any other court to issue writs.

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 Supreme Court (under Article 32) and the high courts (under Article 226) can issue the writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, certiorari and quo-warranto.

- Further, the Parliament (under Article 32) can empower any other court to issue these writs.
- Since no such provision has been made so far, only the Supreme Court and the high courts can issue the writs and not any other court.

Source: Laxmikanth

Schemes & Miscellaneous

Q.1) Consider the following statements regarding Fund of Funds for Startups:

1. It was set up by government with a corpus of 10,000 cr.
2. It is managed by Ministry of Finance.

Which of the statements above given is/are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS) has been setup with a corpus of Rs. 10,000 crores managed by SIDBI.

Government participates in the capital of SEBI registered Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs), known as daughter funds, who in turn invest in Indian startups through equity/equity linked instruments.

Source: PIB

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding Champion Services Sector Scheme (CSSS):

1. It is a Central Sector scheme to boost services exports across broad range of services.
2. 12 Champion services sectors have been identified for the scheme.

Which of the statements above given is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: It is a Central Sector, umbrella scheme of Department of Commerce for the period 2019-20 to 2023-24.

- 12 Champion services sectors have been identified to give focused attention on their promotion. Example: IT & ITeS, tourism, legal services, financial services etc.
- Ministries/Departments concerned with these sectors have been directed to finalize and implement the Action Plans for the identified Champion Services Sectors which in effect would be their sectoral schemes operating under the umbrella scheme CSSS. Example: nodal ministry for CSSS: IT & ITeS is Ministry of electronics and technology.
- The respective line Ministries/Departments will also finalize a monitoring mechanism to monitor implementation under the overall guidance of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) under Cabinet Secretary.
- A dedicated fund of Rs. 5000 crores has been proposed to be established to support initiatives for sectoral Action Plans of the Champion Sectors.

Source: PIB

Q.3) Niryat Bandhu Scheme is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Entrepreneurship
- b) Agriculture

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- c) Space technology
- d) Public Sector Banks

ANS: A

Explanation: Announced as part of Foreign Trade Policy 2009-14 in 2011 to focus on mentoring the first generation entrepreneurs in the field of international trade.

Source: The Hindu

Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding Bharat Net Project:

1. It aims to provide a minimum bandwidth of 2gbps to each of the 2.5lakh Gram Panchayats.
 2. It is being implemented by a special purpose vehicle named Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. set up under Companies Act.
 3. It is being funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- 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: It aims to provide a minimum bandwidth of 100 Mbps to each of the 2.5 lakhs GPs.

- It will facilitate delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, public internet access, G2C, B2B, P2P, B2C etc., weather, agricultural and other services to rural India.
- It is the new brand name of NOFN (National Optic Fibre Network) which is being implemented in three phases.
- First phase – Envisaged to provide one lakh gram panchayats with broadband connectivity by laying underground optic fibre cable lines with deadline of 31st December 2017, which was achieved.
- Second Phase – It will provide connectivity to all 2,50,000 Panchayats using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over powerlines, radio and satellite media to be completed by March 2019.
- Third Phase – It will be implemented from 2019 to 2023 during which state-of-the-art, future proof network, including fiber between districts and blocks, with ring topology would be created.
- It is being implemented by a special purpose vehicle named Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. set up under Companies Act.
- It is being funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

Source: PIB

Q.5) Sampoorna Bima Gram Yojana is implemented by which of the following?

- a) Department of Agriculture
- b) Department of Cooperation
- c) Department of Finance
- d) Department of Posts

ANS: D

Explanation: Sampoorna Bima Gram Yojana aims to provide affordable life insurance services to people living in rural areas of the country through the postal network.

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- It will identify at least one village (having a minimum of 100 households) in each of the revenue districts of the country and cover all households with a minimum of one RPLI (Rural Postal Life Insurance) policy.
- All villages under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana would also be covered under the scheme to turn them into Sampurna Beema Gram.

Source: The Hindu

Q.6) Which of the following statements is/are correct about “Red soils” in India?

1. It is formed as a result of weathering of metamorphic and igneous rocks.
2. It is rich in nitrogen content but lacks potash, humus and phosphate content.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Red soil is formed as a result of weathering of metamorphic and igneous rocks.

- The red color of the soil comes from the high percentage of iron content.
- The soil's texture varies from being sandy to clayey, but it is mainly loamy.
- Red soil is rich in potash content but lacks phosphate, humus and nitrogen content.
- The red soil is found in regions such as Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, some parts of Karnataka and southeast Maharashtra.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) “Havana Syndrome” is often seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Microwave radiation
- b) Space debris
- c) Plastic waste
- d) Nuclear waste

ANS: A

Explanation: Recently, a report by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS), USA has found directed microwave radiation to be the plausible cause of the Havana syndrome.

- In late 2016, USA diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana (capital of Cuba) reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations.
- The symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as the Havana Syndrome.
- The more chronic problems suffered by Havana personnel included mainly vestibular processing and cognitive problems as well as insomnia and headache.
- While the symptoms have resolved for some of the affected employees, for others, the effects have lingered and posed a significant obstacle to their work and affected the normal functioning of lives.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) With reference to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The basic concept of NAM originated during Bandung conference.

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2. The First NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961.

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: C

Explanation: The Non-Aligned Movement was formed during the Cold War, largely on the initiative of then-Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.

- The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia.
- The First NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.9) With reference to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, arrange the following committee in chronological order of their formation:

1. Ashok Mehta Committee
2. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee
3. L.M. Singhvi Committee

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Committees related to Panchayati Raj Institutions:

- Balvantrai Mehta Committee, appointed in January 1957, submits its report on 24 November 1957.
- Ashok Mehta Committee on working of panchayats, appointed on 12 December 1977, submits its report on 21 August 1978.
- L.M. Singhvi Committee submits its report on 27 November 1986. It recommends constitutional status for panchayats.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.10) 'Polavaram irrigation project' is recently in news, it is being constructed on which of the following river?

- a) Godavari
- b) Krishna
- c) Pennar
- d) Cauvery

ANS: A

Explanation: The Polavaram Irrigation Project on River Godavari is a Multipurpose one conferring Irrigation benefits in the upland areas of Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna Districts.

Source: The Hindu

Revision

Q.1) Consider the following statements regarding “SAFE PLUS” scheme:

1. It is launched by SIDBI to provide interest free loans.
2. It has been especially introduced to provide emergency working capital against confirmed government orders.

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: To help support the efforts to address the COVID-19 emergency, SIDBI is supporting MSMEs manufacturing products or providing services related to fighting the Coronavirus with the launch of two schemes- the SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against coronavirus (SAFE scheme) and SAFE Plus.

- Under the schemes, loans are being extended at a low rate of interest of 5% within 48 hours.
- SAFE Plus has been especially introduced to provide emergency working capital against confirmed government orders, with the same rate of interest of 5%.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.2) Consider the following statements regarding “Index of Industrial Production (IIP)”:

1. IIP is a composite indicator that measures changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products.
2. The Base year of IIP is 2011 - 12.

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 Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is a composite indicator that measures changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products.

- The index is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme. It is implemented six weeks after the reference month ends, i.e a lag of six weeks.
- The Base Year of the Index of Eight Core Industries has been revised from the year 2004-05 to 2011-12 from April, 2017.

Source: The Hindu

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

- a) Kerala
- b) Karnataka
- c) Andhra Pradesh
- d) Telangana

ANS: B

Explanation: Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary comprises of Arabithittu State Forest located in Hunsur Taluk of Mysore district of Karnataka State.

- It lies between latitudinal range 12° 17' 16" to 12° 20' 41" North and longitudinal range 76° 22' 43" to 76° 28' 51" East. Formerly this area was in Hunsur Territorial range.
- All the sides of the sanctuary are surrounded by private agricultural land except in the North east portion which belongs to the Defence Research Development Organisation of Ministry of Defence.
- Since the area is very small zonation is not done. Zone of influence outside the boundary is agricultural fields.
- The boundary of the sanctuary is consolidated by erecting chain link mesh by Defence Research Development Organisation of Ministry of Defence.
 - Even then, the pressure for grazing land by the adjacent farmers is high. Nearby quarries in the private land have been banned from operation.

Source: The Hindu

Q.4) Which of the following is/are recommendations of "Sarkaria Commission"?

1. Permanent Inter-state council should be established under article 263.
2. Residuary powers of taxation should be continue with parliament.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: In 1983, the Central government appointed a three-member Commission on Centre–state relations under the chairmanship of R S Sarkaria, a retired judge of the Supreme Court. The Commission made 247 recommendations to improve Centre–state relations. The important recommendations are mentioned below:

- A permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council should be set up under Article 263.
- Article 356 (President's Rule) should be used very sparingly, in extreme cases as a last resort when all the available alternatives fail.
- The institution of All-India Services should be further strengthened and some more such services should be created.
- The residuary powers of taxation should continue to remain with the Parliament, while the other residuary powers should be placed in the Concurrent List.
- When the president withholds his assent to the state bills, the reasons should be communicated to the state government.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding "Zonal Councils":

1. They are established under States Reorganization Act, 1956.
2. Act divided the country into five zonal councils.
3. The Prime Minister is the chairman of the zonal councils.

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: B

Explanation: The Zonal Councils are the statutory (and not the constitutional) bodies. They are established by an Act of the Parliament, that is, States Reorganisation Act of 1956.

- The act divided the country into five zones (Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern) and provided a zonal council for each zone.
- Each zonal council consists of the following members: (a) home minister of Central government. (b) Chief Ministers of all the States in the zone. (c) Two other ministers from each state in the zone. (d) Administrator of each union territory in the zone.
- The home minister of Central government is the common chairman of the five zonal councils.
- Each chief minister acts as a vice-chairman of the council by rotation, holding office for a period of one year at a time.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.6) The famous “trial of Raja Nand Kumar” is related to which of the following Governor General?

- a) Robert Clive
- b) Lord Hastings
- c) Warren Hastings
- d) Lord Cornwallis

ANS: C

Explanation: The trial of Raja Nand Kumar is an example of how arbitrary and capricious the justice of administration was in British India.

- This trial is popularly known as the judicial murder of Raja Nand Kumar.
- This is a historically significant trial because later on this trial became a major ground for the impeachment of Governor General Warren Hastings and Chief Justice Impey of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, by the House of Commons, after they returned to England.

Source: Grover & Grover

Q.7) Consider the following statements regarding “Cornwallis Code”:

1. Permanent settlement is the main subject of the Cornwallis Code.
2. New code is based on the principle of separation of powers.
3. A gradation of civil courts setup.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Lord Cornwallis, the British Governor General of India, introduced 48 regulations in 1793 which are generally known as the Cornwallis Code.

- This Code originated from a number of earlier regulations, viz, the orders and regulations introduced between 1772 and 1790, Hindu and Muslim laws, traditional institutions, the regulations of permanent settlement, and the British laws.
- The aim of the Cornwallis Code was to introduce an institutional code of law and an administrative system suitable for British colonial state.

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- On 1 May 1793, Cornwallis announced his Code. Permanent settlement is the main subject of the Cornwallis Code.
- Earlier, the District Collector was at the same time the tax administrator, judge and magistrate.
- Now, a judge is appointed for every district and by separating the judiciary from the administration, judicial and magisterial power is vested with the judge.
- A gradation of civil courts was set up.

Source: Grover & Grover

Q.8) Consider the following statements regarding “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 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: 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: ForumIAS factly

Q.9) “It is the point at which a country’s economy is most efficiently producing its various goods and services and, therefore, allocating its resources in the best way possible”- defines which of the following?

- a) Production Possibility Frontier
- b) Indifference Curve
- c) Supply Curve
- d) Demand Curve

ANS: A

Explanation: An allocation of the scarce resource of the economy gives rise to a particular combination of different goods and services.

- Given the total amount of resources, it is possible to allocate the resources in many different ways and, thereby achieving different mixes of all possible goods and services.
- The collection of all possible combinations of the goods and services that can be produced from a given amount of resources and a given stock of technological knowledge is called the production possibility set/frontier of the economy.

Source: Ramesh Singh

Q.10) Which of the following subsidies is/are covered under “Green Box of WTO”?

1. Public storage for food security.
2. Pest and disease control.
3. Government policies of Minimum Support Prices.

Choose the correct code from below given options:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: The agricultural subsidies which cause minimal or no distortions to trade are put under the green box. They must not involve price support.

- This box basically includes all forms of government expenses, which are not targeted at a particular product, and all direct income support programmes to farmers, which are not related to current levels of production or prices.
- This is a very wide box and includes all government subsidies like—public storage for food security, pest and disease control, research and extension, and some direct payments to farmers that do not stimulate production like restructuring of agriculture, environmental protection, regional development, crop and income insurance, etc.

Source: Ramesh Singh