

ForumIAS

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Prelims Marathon

February, 2022

HISTORY
ECONOMICS
POLITY
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Polity

Q.1) Which of the following state/UT is/are not covered under schedule 6 of the Indian Constitution?

1. Assam
2. Ladakh
3. Nagaland

Which of the following state/UT is/are not covered under schedule 6 of the Indian Constitution?

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Leh had made demand for 6th schedule for Ladakh, while Kargil had asked for the reinstatement of special status under Article 35 and 370.

- Political parties and religious organizations in Leh, have called for an independent hill council to be established under the Sixth Schedule, similar to the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam.
- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (Article 244 (2) and 275 (1)) safeguard tribal populations and offer considerable autonomy to vulnerable communities through the creation of Autonomous Development Councils (ADCs). It covers parts of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

Source: EPIC July, 2021.

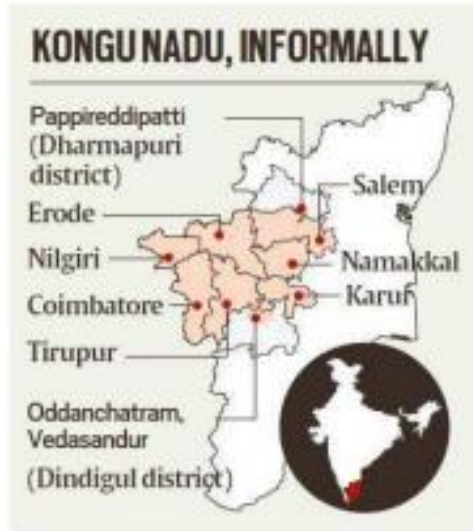
Q.2) Recently, the term '**Kongu Nadu**' has been in news. The term is used for which of the following region?

- a) Western part of Tamil Nadu
- b) Southern part of Kerala
- c) Southern part of Karnataka
- d) Eastern part of Andhra Pradesh

ANS: A

Explanation: A list of new Union Cabinet ministers issued in Tamil Nadu has triggered a debate in political circles, by referring to 'Kongu Nadu', the informal name for a region in the western part of the state.

- 'Kongu Nadu' is neither a place with a PIN code nor a name given formally to any region. It is a commonly used name for part of western Tamil Nadu.
- In Tamil literature, it was referred to as one of the five regions of ancient Tamil Nadu. There were mentions of 'Kongu Nadu' in Sangam literature as a separate territory.



- In the present state of Tamil Nadu, the term is informally used to refer to a region that includes the districts of Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Karur, Namakkal and Salem, as well as Oddanchatram and Vedsandur in Dindigul district, and Pappireddipatti in Dharmapuri district.

- The name derives from Kongu Vellala Gounder, an OBC community with a significant presence in these districts.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Article 311 of the Constitution deals with 'Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State'
2. The government employee dismissed under Article 311 of Constitution cannot approach either tribunal or courts.

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: Article 311 of the Constitution deals with 'Dismissal, removal or reduction in rank of persons employed in civil capacities under the Union or a State'.

Subsections under Article 311:

- Article 311(1): It says that no government employee either of an all-India service or a state government shall be dismissed or removed by an authority subordinate to the own that appointed him/her.
- Article 311(2): It says that no civil servant shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an inquiry in which s/he has been informed of the charges and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges.
- Can the dismissal under section 311(2) be challenged by the government employee? Yes, the government employee dismissed under these provisions can approach either tribunal or courts.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

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Q.4) Consider the following statements about “dying declaration”:

1. Dying declaration can only be recorded in presence of a judicial or executive magistrate.
2. A dying declaration can form the sole basis of conviction.

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:

Dying Declaration: The Dying Declaration is the statement of a person who had died explaining the circumstances of his death.

- A dying declaration is considered credible and trustworthy evidence, based upon the general belief that most people who know that they are about to die, do not lie.
- Section 32 of the Indian Evidence Act deals with the cases related to that person who is dead or who cannot be found.

Who can record dying declarations?

Anyone can record the dying declaration of the deceased as per law. The law does not compulsorily require the presence of a Judicial or Executive Magistrate to record a dying declaration

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.5) Consider the following statements about National Curriculum Framework (NCF):

1. Ministry of Education would be responsible for framing National Curriculum Framework.
2. NCF would be designed to take on board suggestions from CBSE and ICSE only.

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: About the National Curriculum Framework: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has tasked the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) to develop four State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs). They pertain to School Education, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Teacher Education (TE) and Adult Education (AE). This is as in the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- At the first level, the NCERT will provide templates to the States to develop four draft SCFs, the drafts will feed into formulating the National Curriculum Frameworks, or NCFs, and the final version of the NCFs will be used as guiding documents to finalize the SCFs.
- The cycle seems to be designed to take on board suggestions from all States, thereby making the NCFs representative and inclusive documents. The NCERT will also provide e-templates for each of these tasks, survey questionnaires/multiple-choice questions to conduct surveys, etc. Thus, massive data collection seems to be in progress.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.6) Consider the following statements:

1. A bye-election for filling any vacancy shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy.
2. The process of the by-polls has been mentioned in the Indian Constitution.
3. A by-poll need not be held, if the remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year.

Which of the following statement is/are correct?

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Section 151-A of the Representation of the People Act 1951 states that a “a bye-election for filling any vacancy...shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy”. However, there are two exceptions in this section.

- Exception 1: A by-poll need not be held, if the remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year;
- Exception 2: A by-poll need not be held the Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government certifies that it is difficult to hold the by-election within the said period.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.7) Which of the following nation is not a member of Quad?

- a) South Korea
- b) India
- c) Japan
- d) USA

ANS: A

Explanation: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.

The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.8) Durand line separates which of the following countries?

- a) India and Pakistan
- b) China and Pakistan
- c) Afghanistan and Pakistan
- d) India and Bangladesh

ANS: C

Explanation: Durand Line: Established in the Hindu Kush in 1893, it runs through the tribal lands between Afghanistan and British India. In modern times it has marked the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- It is a legacy of the 19th century Great Game between the Russian and British empires in which Afghanistan was used as a buffer by the British against a feared Russian expansionism to its east.
- The agreement demarcating what became known as the Durand Line was signed between the British civil servant Sir Henry Mortimer Durand and Amir Abdur Rahman, and the Afghan ruler in 1893.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.9) 'FASTER Scheme' is related to which of the following?

- a) Timely release of prisoners
- b) Promotion to research in AI
- c) Developing COVID-19 Vaccination
- d) Software for Online examination

ANS: A

Explanation: FASTER Scheme: The Chief Justice of India (CJI) announced the rollout of a new scheme called FASTER. It will ensure the timely release of prisoners from jail and uphold their dignity. It stands for 'Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records'. It would enable the Supreme Court (SC) to instantly, directly, securely, and electronically transmit bail and other orders to jail authorities, district courts, and High Courts.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.10) Which of the following is/are recommendations of "Sarkaria Commission"?

1. Permanent Inter-state council should be established under article 263.
2. Article 356 should be used very sparingly.
3. Residuary powers of taxation should be given to states.

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: 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.

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- 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

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Economy

Q.1) Consider the following statements about BharatNet Project:

1. BharatNet Project has been launched in 2015.
2. The Project will be implemented in all states through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

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: BharatNet Project was originally launched in 2011 as the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) and renamed as Bharat-Net in 2015.

- Recently, Union Cabinet has accorded approval for the revised implementation strategy of BharatNet through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode in 16 States of the country.
- The 16 States covered under the project are: Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Moreover, the project will be divided into nine packages, each corresponding to one or more telecom circles, and no private investor will be awarded more than four packages to avoid monopoly.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.2) Which of the following term is used for a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable?

- a) Viability Gap Fund
- b) Hedge funding
- c) Crowd funding
- d) Angel Funding

ANS: A

Explanation: Viability Gap Finance means a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable.

- The scheme is designed as a Plan Scheme to be administered by the Ministry of Finance and amount in the budget are made on a year-to-year basis.
- Such a grant under VGF is provided as a capital subsidy to attract the private sector players to participate in PPP projects that are otherwise financially unviable.
- Projects may not be commercially viable because of the long gestation period and small revenue flows in future.
- The VGF scheme was launched in 2004 to support projects that come under Public-Private Partnerships.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.3) Consider the following statements about RBI Retail Direct Scheme:

1. RBI Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by individual investors.
2. Under the scheme, retail investors will have the facility to open and maintain the 'Retail Direct Gilt Account' (RDG Account) with the RBI.

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: RBI Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by individual investors.

- Under the scheme, retail investors (individuals) will have the facility to open and maintain the 'Retail Direct Gilt Account' (RDG Account) with the RBI.
- Gilt Account means an account opened and maintained for holding Government securities.
- This RDG account can be opened through an online portal provided for the purpose of the scheme.
- The online portal will then allow the registered users access to primary issuance of G-secs and access to NDS-OM (Negotiated Dealing System — Order Matching (NDS-OM)).

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.4) Which among the following states will have the single largest solar park, which is being setup by NTPC?

- a) Rajasthan
- b) Andhra Pradesh
- c) Gujarat
- d) Telangana

ANS: C

Explanation: NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL), a 100% subsidiary of NTPC, will set up the country's single largest solar park at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

About the Solar Park in Gujarat:

- The 4,750-megawatt (MW) Solar Park at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat will be set up by NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd.
- The project has been approved under Mode 8 (Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Park) of Solar Park Scheme.
- This will be India's largest solar park to be built by the largest power producer of the country.

Other Projects of NTPC:

- NTPC has commissioned India's largest Floating Solar of 10 MW on the reservoir of Simhadri Thermal Power Plant, Andhra Pradesh.
- Further, a 100 MW Floating Solar Project on the reservoir of Ramagundam Thermal Power Plant, Telangana is in the advanced stage of implementation.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.5) Which of the following institution released a report on “Renewable Integration in India 2021”?

- a) Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
- b) NITI Aayog and IEA
- c) International Solar Alliance
- d) Solar Energy Corporation of India

ANS: B

Explanation: The International Energy Agency (IEA) in association with NITI Aayog has released a report titled “Renewables Integration in India 2021”.

About Renewables Integration in India 2021 Report:

India’s Demand for Energy:

- India is the third largest energy-consuming country in the world.
- Also, India has made significant progress towards its universal electrification target for residential users. 100 million people gained electricity access in 2018 alone.
- Per capita electricity consumption across the 28 Indian states and eight union territories is still around a third of the world average and is expected to continue increasing.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.6) Consider the following statements about Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE) Initiative:

1. SEBI in collaboration with Intel India has launched the Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE) Program.
2. The FIRE program aims to promote innovative technology solutions and strengthen academic research through collaboration with key research and development (R&D) organizations in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) in collaboration with Intel India has launched the Fund for Industrial Research Engagement (FIRE) Program.

The FIRE program is a joint government and industry initiative with an aim to promote innovative technology solutions and strengthen academic research through collaboration with key research and development (R&D) organizations in India.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.7) Consider the following statements about Electricity Bill, 2021:

1. The bill has allowed two or more discoms to register and distribute electricity in the same areas.
2. The Bill has replaced the term 'distribution licensee', and replaced it with 'Distribution Company'.

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: About Electricity Bill, 2021:

- Section 24 (A) states that any company may supply electricity to consumers in its area of supply. It can do so using its own distribution system or using the distribution system of another distribution company.
- However, the company should fulfil the prescribed qualifications and must register itself with the Appropriate Commission.
- The Bill has replaced the term 'distribution licensee', and replaced it with 'Distribution Company'.
- It has also allowed two or more discoms to register and distribute electricity in the same areas.
- Existing power purchase agreements would be shared by all discoms in an area. Companies could also sign additional power purchase agreements.
- Providing consumers the right to choose their preferred power supplier would be challenging even after the amendments to the Electricity Act.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.8) Consider the following statements about incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR):

1. ICOR for an economy refers to the units of capital needed to drive one unit of growth.
2. India's ICOR is about 3.5, which translates to a capital investment requirement of 30% of GDP.

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: India has set an ambitious target to grow GDP at 9% per annum and for this capital investment is needed to drive economic growth.

- The incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR) for an economy refers to the units of capital needed to drive one unit of growth.
- India's ICOR is about 4.5, which translates to a capital investment requirement of 40% of GDP. Further, India's domestic savings rate hovers at around 28% of GDP (World Bank).

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.9) Consider the following statements about Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):

1. A BIT is a reciprocal sovereign-to-sovereign guarantee that protects investments and investors of one country in the territory of the other.
2. It additionally provides for dispute resolution mechanisms, such as arbitration, and gives investors the right to private action.

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: A BIT is a reciprocal sovereign-to-sovereign guarantee that protects investments and investors of one country in the territory of the other. It additionally provides for dispute resolution mechanisms, such as arbitration, and gives investors the right to private action.

Model BIT:

- GoI recognised these issues emerging from its legacy BITs and issued a model BIT in 2016.
- The model BIT, which has since formed the basis of various renegotiated BITs, attempted to carve out an exception from liability against measures and laws regarding taxation.
- But it was also realised that carving out of such exceptions may not send the right signal to the investment community at large.
- Therefore, GoI has added a specific clarification that awards under the new BIT shall be treated as commercial, and will be enforceable under the existing legislative framework in India.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of July, 2021

Q.10) A graph showing the degree of inequality in income and wealth in a given population or an economy – describes which of the following?

- a) Laffer Curve
- b) Lorenz Curve
- c) Phillips Curve
- d) Kuznets Curve

ANS: B

Explanation: A graph showing the degree of inequality in income and wealth in a given population or an economy. It is a rigorous way to measure income inequality.

- In this method (for example), personal incomes in an economy are arranged in increasing order; the cumulative share of total income is then plotted against the cumulative share of the population.
- The curve's slope is thus proportional to per capita income at each point of the population distribution.
- In the case of complete equality of income, the Lorenz curve will be a straight line and with greater curvature the inequality rises proportionally—the Gini Coefficient measures this inequality.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Environment

Q.1) Consider the following statements about black carbon:

1. Black carbon is long lived climate pollutant.
2. It is formed after incomplete combustion of fossil fuels.
3. Southern India has a high burden of black carbon emission.

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

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

ANS: C

Explanation: According to a study, Black Carbon has a significant adverse effect on human health and leads to premature mortality.

Key Findings of the Study:

- The Indo-Gangetic plain has a high burden of black carbon with serious implications for regional climate and human health.
- A 10-point increase in air pollution from black carbon led to an average 5% increase in mortality.
- On the other hand, a similar rise in PM 2.5 led to an average 1% increase in mortality. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) were both associated with a 2.3% and 1.3% increase in mortality.

About Black Carbon (BC):

- Black carbon (BC) is a short-lived climate pollutant. It is the second-largest contributor to warming the planet after carbon dioxide (CO₂).
- Black carbon is formed through the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, biofuel, and biomass.
- Primary sources include emissions from diesel engines, cookstoves, wood burning and forest fires.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.2) Which among the following is light-absorbing particle in the Earth's atmosphere that has the unique characteristics of both cooling the planet's surface and warming its atmosphere?

- a) Black carbon
- b) Blue carbon
- c) Brown carbon
- d) Green carbon

ANS: C

Explanation:

Black carbon (BC) is a short-lived climate pollutant. It is the second-largest contributor to warming the planet after carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Blue Carbon: It refers to coastal, aquatic and marine carbon sinks held by vegetation, marine organisms, and sediments.

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Green Carbon: It is the carbon that is stored in terrestrial ecosystems such as forests, pastures, and soils.

Brown Carbon: It is a light-absorbing particle in the Earth's atmosphere that has the unique characteristics of both cooling the planet's surface and warming its atmosphere.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.3) Which among the following is last ice area?

- a) Antarctica
- b) Siberia
- c) Iceland
- d) Ellesmere Island

ANS: D

Explanation: About Last Ice Area:

- The Last Ice Area is located north of Greenland and in Ellesmere Island in the Canadian territory of Nunavut.
- Scientists had believed this area was strong enough to withstand global warming.
- In 2015, National Geographic had forecasted the total disappearance of summer ice in the Arctic by the year 2040. The only place that would be able to withstand a warming climate would be the "Last Ice Area".

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.4) Consider the following statements about a new report titled "A future for all - the need for human-wildlife coexistence":

1. It has been released by WWF AND UNEP.
2. Conflict between humans and animals is one of the main threats to the long-term survival of some of the world's most iconic species.
3. India will not be affected by such human-animal conflicts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), have released a new report titled - A future for all - the need for human-wildlife coexistence.

Key findings

- Conflict between humans and animals is one of the main threats to the long-term survival of some of the world's most iconic species.
- Human-wildlife conflict, in combination with other threats, has driven the significant decline of species that were once abundant and species that are naturally less abundant, have been pushed to the brink of extinction. Global wildlife populations have fallen an average of 68% since 1970
- India will be most-affected by human-wildlife conflict, the report said. This was because it had the world's second-largest human population as well as large

populations of tigers, Asian elephants, one-horned rhinos, Asiatic lions and other species.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.5) Which of the following mangrove species is most salt tolerant?

- a) Grey mangrove
- b) Red mangrove
- c) Black mangrove
- d) White mangrove

ANS: A

Explanation: Scientists have completed the genome sequencing of one of the highly salt-tolerant mangrove species, named *Avicennia marina* (Grey Mangrove).

About *Avicennia marina*:

- It is also called Banhi in Odia. It is one of the most prominent mangroves species found in all mangrove formations in India.
- Features: It is a salt-secreting and extraordinarily salt-tolerant mangrove species that grows optimally in 75% seawater and tolerates >250% seawater.
- Significance: It is among the rare plant species which can excrete 40% of the salt through the salt glands in the leaves, besides its extraordinary capacity to exclude salt entry to the roots.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.6) Consider the following statements:

1. India's First Green Hydrogen Mobility Project will be set up in Andhra Pradesh.
2. It will be set up by NTPC.
3. Green Hydrogen is clean hydrogen generated by using renewable energy such as solar power and wind energy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd has signed a MoU with the Union Territory of Ladakh to set up India's First Green Hydrogen Mobility Project in Ladakh Region.

Green Hydrogen is clean hydrogen generated by using renewable energy such as solar power and wind energy. The by-products are water and water vapor.

About India's First Green Hydrogen Mobility Project:

- The Green Hydrogen Mobility Project will enable NTPC to help Ladakh in developing a carbon-free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen.
- Features: As part of the project, NTPC has planned to ply 5 hydrogen buses in the Ladakh region. The company will also be setting up a solar plant and a green hydrogen generation unit in Leh.
- Significance: This project will put Leh as the first city in the country to implement a green hydrogen-based mobility project.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.7) Consider the following statements:

1. India's first cryptogamic garden opens in Dehradun.
2. A cryptogam is a plant or a plant-like organism that reproduces by spores without flowers or seeds.

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: India's first cryptogamic garden housing nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns, and fungi was inaugurated in the Chakran Town of Uttarakhand's Dehradun district.

Why was this Chakran Town chosen?

- The Cryptogamic Garden is located at Deoban in Chakrata at a height of 9,000 ft.
- This site was chosen because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species.
- Further, Deoban has pristine majestic forests of Deodar and Oak which create a natural habitat for cryptogamic species.

What is Cryptogam?

- A cryptogam is a plant or a plant-like organism that reproduces by spores without flowers or seeds.
- The term Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction", referring to the fact that no seed is produced. Thus, cryptogams represent the non-seed-bearing plants.
- Cryptogamic plants include Algae, mosses, liverworts, lichens, ferns, and fungi

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.8) Which among the following tiger reserves is not located in Rajasthan?

- a) Mukundra hill Tiger Reserve
- b) Ranthambore Tiger Reserve
- c) Ramgarh Tiger Reserve
- d) Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

ANS: D

Explanation: The Rajasthan government will develop a tiger corridor connecting the newly proposed 'Ramgarh Tiger Reserve', Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve.

- Ramgarh Vishdhari wildlife sanctuary has recently received a nod from the National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA) technical committee to become the 4th Tiger reserve of Rajasthan.
- Mukundra Tiger Reserve (TR) is located near Kota, Rajasthan. The Mukundra Hills was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1955 and a National Park (Mukundra Hills (Darah) National Park) in 2004.
- Ranthambore National Park and Tiger Reserve is located in Rajasthan. It is located at the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.9) Consider the following statements:

1. Article 48A directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife of the country.
2. Animals too have the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

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 India, humans' right to privacy was famously recognised in the case of Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India in 2018.

But in the case of Animal Welfare Board of India vs A Nagaraja & Ors, the court held that animals too have the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution. The issue is whether by recognising the existence of a right to life for animals under Article 21, it implicitly held that this includes the right to privacy as well.

Constitutional provisions that might lead to right to privacy for animals:

- Article 48A directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife of the country.
- Article 51(g) casts a fundamental duty on every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures.
- Similarly, Article 51-A(h) says that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.
- These articles read with the principles developed in Animal Welfare Board of India vs A Nagaraja & Ors, lead to the inference that animal species too have the right to privacy.

Source: 9 PM compilation of July, 2021.

Q.10) In which of the following states/UTs, Ganjam Slender Gecko has been discovered?

- a) Odisha
- b) Andaman and Nicobar
- c) Andhra Pradesh
- d) Telanagana

ANS: A

Explanation: Odisha's forest officials have announced measures to preserve the newly discovered tiny gecko species named Ganjam Slender Gecko.

About Ganjam Slender Gecko

- Ganjam Slender Gecko is a tiny gecko species of the genus Hemiphyllodactylus.
- The species was first spotted within the premises of a temple at Humma in Ganjam district in 2014.
- Features: They grow 6 cm in length. They feed on ants, termites, small roaches, spiders, and beetles.
- Habitat: The only habitat of the species is Jhadeshawar sacred grove. Moreover, they are only found in mango trees surrounding the temple. They were never found on concrete walls or below rock boulders, unlike other members of the genus.

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- Significance: This new species is the 7th Indian species of the genus, the second from the northern Eastern Ghats and 41st globally. It is also the first non-island species of the genus which is distributed in lowland habitats.

Source: EPIC July, 2021.

ForumIAS

History

Q.1) “Swadesh Sevak Home” related to which of the freedom initiative?

- a) Home rule movement
- b) Swadeshi movement
- c) Ghadr movement
- d) Non-cooperation movement

ANS: C

Explanation: The Ghadr Party was a revolutionary group organised around a weekly newspaper The Ghadr with its headquarters at San Francisco and branches along the US coast and in the Far East. These revolutionaries included mainly ex-soldiers and peasants who had migrated from the Punjab to the USA and Canada in search of better employment opportunities.

They were based in the US and Canadian cities along the western (Pacific) coast. Pre-Ghadr revolutionary activity had been carried on by Ramdas Puri, G.D. Kumar, Taraknath Das, Sohan Singh Bhakna and Lala Hardayal who reached there in 1911.

To carry out revolutionary activities, the earlier activists had set up a ‘Swadesh Sevak Home’ at Vancouver and ‘United India House’ at Seattle. Finally in 1913, the Ghadr was established.

Source: Spectrum’s A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.2) Consider the following statements with respect to All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC):

1. It was originally formed to give Indian representation at the League of Nations’ International Labor Organization (ILO).
2. Lala Lajpat Rai was first general secretary of AITUC.

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 trade union movement was led by All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) founded in 1920. Lala Lajpat Rai was its first president and Dewan Chaman Lal its general secretary. Tilak was also one of the moving spirits. In 1923, the first May Day was celebrated in India in Madras. Although the organization was originally formed to give Indian representation at the League of Nations’ International Labor Organization (ILO), it also met an increasing need for such a body for the rapidly expanding labor movement in India. There had been an increasing number of protests and organized lobbying in the late 1800s. This was during British rule and was a reaction against many of the conditions imposed at that time. In the wake of the upheaval caused by World War One, working people all over the world began to view their situations with new eyes. There was a huge amount of activity and protest involving working class people during these early years of the twentieth century.

Source: Spectrum’s A Brief History of Modern India.

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Q.3) Match the following folk dances with the states they are associated with:

State	Folk Dance
1. Gujarat	a. Chhau
2. Assam	b. Gidda
3. Punjab	c. Garba
4. Odisha	d. Bhortal

Select the correct code:

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

ANS: C

Explanation:

- Bhortal Dance - It is a folk dance of Assam. Performers wield cymbals and dance in groups, with each group consisting of six or seven dancers. Dancers come up with a unique beat known as 'Thiya Nom' and engage in rapid feet movements
- Chhau - This dance form traces its roots to Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal but it is popular in other parts as well. As masks form an important feature of this dance it is called 'Chhau', which literally translates to 'mask'. The performers wield weapons such as swords and shields while dancing.
- Giddha - This dance form is performed in the state of Punjab. Giddha is the female version of 'Bhangra'. The dance aims at expressing the feminine grace. The women wear colorful clothes while performing. Giddha is usually accompanied by 'Boliyan', a collection of couplets.
- Garba - This dance form originated in the state of Gujarat. Garba is traditionally performed during the nine-day Hindu festival 'Navaratri'. The dance is performed around a lamp. Often the lamp is replaced with a picture or statue of Goddess 'Shakti'.

Source: Spectrum's Facets of Indian Culture

Q.4) Consider the following statements with respect to "Delhi Manifesto":

1. The purpose of the Round Table Conference should be to determine whether or when dominion status was to be reached.
2. Congress and Muslim League should have equal representation.
3. General Amnesty for political prisoners.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: On November 2, 1929, a conference of prominent national leaders issued a 'Delhi Manifesto' which put forward certain conditions for attending the Round Table Conference:

that the purpose of the Round Table Conference should be not to determine whether or when dominion status was to be reached but to formulate a constitution for implementation

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of the dominion status (thus acting as a constituent assembly) and the basic principle of dominion status should be immediately accepted;

That the Congress should have majority representation at the conference; and

There should be a general amnesty for political prisoners and a policy of conciliation; Gandhi along with Motilal Nehru and other political leaders met Lord Irwin in December 1929 (after the viceroy had narrowly escaped after a bomb was detonated meaning to hit the train he was travelling in). They asked the viceroy for assurance that the purpose of the round table conference was to draft a constitutional scheme for dominion status. That was not the purpose of the conference, said Irwin. Viceroy Irwin rejected the demands put forward in the Delhi Manifesto.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.5) Consider the following statements with respect to Indian councils Act, 1892:

1. Members in Imperial Legislative Council and State Legislative Councils are increased
2. No discussion on budget
3. Principal representation were introduced

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation:

Indian councils Act, 1892:

- Number of additional members in Imperial Legislative Councils and the Provincial Legislative Councils was raised. In Imperial Legislative Council, now the governor-general could have ten to sixteen non-officials (instead of six to ten previously).
- The non-official members of the Indian legislative council were to be nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and provincial legislative councils. The members could be recommended by universities, municipalities, zamindars and chambers of commerce. So the principle of representation was introduced.
- Budget could be discussed.
- Questions could be asked.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.6) The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at:

- a) Ajanta
- b) Badami
- c) Bagh
- d) Ellora

ANS: A

Explanation: The famous paintings of Padmapani and Vajrapani Bodhisattvas under Buddhism are found in Ajanta Caves near Aurangabad. All 29 caves in Ajanta are Buddhist caves.

Source: Spectrum's Facets of Indian Culture

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Q.7) The Sarda Act which pushed up the marriage age to 18 and 14 for boys and girls, came into force in which year?

- a) 1929
- b) 1930
- c) 1931
- d) 1932

ANS: B

Explanation: The Native Marriage Act (or Civil Marriage Act), 1872 signified legislative action in prohibiting child marriage. It had a limited impact as the Act was not applicable to Hindus, Muslims and other recognised faiths. The relentless efforts of a Parsi reformer, B.M. Malabari, were rewarded by the enactment of the Age of Consent Act (1891) which forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12. The Sarda Act (1930) further pushed up the marriage age to 18 and 14 for boys and girls, respectively. In free India, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978 raised the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys from 18 to 21.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.8) Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples?

- 1. Arasavalli
- 2. Amarakantak
- 3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Arasavalli in Andhra Pradesh has one of the prominent Sun temple or suryanarayan temple. Temple at Amarkantak is dedicated to Goddess Narmada and Lord Shiva. Moreover, Omkareshwar temple on the banks of Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh is one of the 12 jyotirlingas dedicated to lord shiva.

Source: Nitin Singhania

Q.9) Treaty of Salbai is between Maratha Empire and which of the following Governor General?

- a) Lord Cornwallis
- b) Lord Hastings
- c) Lord Bentick
- d) Lord Eisenhower

ANS: B

Explanation: Treaty of Salbai (1782): End of the First Phase of the Struggle Warren Hastings, the Governor-General in Bengal, rejected the Treaty of Wadgaon and sent a large force of soldiers under Colonel Goddard who captured Ahmedabad in February 1779 and Bassein in December 1780. Another Bengal detachment led by Captain Popham captured Gwalior in August 1780. In February 1781 the English, under General Camac, finally

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defeated Sindhia at Sipri. Sindhia proposed a new treaty between the Peshwa and the English, and the Treaty of Salbai was signed in May 1782; it was ratified by Hastings in June 1782 and by Phadnavis in February 1783.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.10) Consider the following statements with respect to Khyal Music:

1. Khyal derived from Persian and it means idea or imagination.
2. The origin of this style was attributed to Amir Khusrau.

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 word 'Khyal' is derived from Persian and means "idea or imagination". The origin of this style was attributed to Amir Khusrau. This form is popular amongst the artists as this provides greater scope for improvisation. Khyal is based on the repertoire of short songs ranging from two to eight lines. Generally, a Khyal composition is also referred to as a 'Bandish'.

Source: Spectrum's Facets of Indian Culture.

Schemes/ Programs/ Institutions

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. Freight Smart Cities Initiative has been launched by ministry of railways.
2. Freight Smart Cities Initiative aims to improve the efficiency of urban freight and create an opportunity for a reduction in logistics costs.

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 Logistics Division under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry has released the roadmap for the 'Freight Smart Cities Initiative'.

About Freight Smart Cities Initiative:

- Freight Smart Cities Initiative aims to improve the efficiency of urban freight and create an opportunity for a reduction in logistics costs.
- Under the initiative, State Governments will identify ten cities, initially, to be developed as Freight Smart Cities.
- In these ten cities, city-level logistics committees would be formed. These committees would have members from the government as well as from the private sector.
- These committees would co-create City Logistics Plans like developing peri-urban freight centres, night-time deliveries, developing truck routes, Promoting electrification of urban freight among others.
- Further, the initiative will be expanded to 75 cities in the next phase before scaling up throughout the country. It will include all state capitals and cities that have more than one million populations.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

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Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) Mission has been launched by ministry of education.
2. It aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy of children in the age group of 3 to 14 years.

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 Ministry of Education has launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) Mission. It aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy of children in the age group of three to nine years.

Key Features of the Mission:

- **Implementation:** The mission will be implemented by the Union Education Ministry in collaboration with states through the flagship school education program Samagra Shiksha.
- **Target:** The mission has set a target that by 2026-27, every Class 3 child should be able to read with understanding at the rate of at least 60 words per minute. Further, the child should be able to read and write numbers up to 9,999 and solve simple multiplication problems.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

Q.3) Consider the following statements about “SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise”:

1. It has been launched by ministry of MSME.
2. It is a Central Sector 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: B

Explanation: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated a scheme “SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise”.

About SMILE

- Two Central Sector Schemes namely Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the Act of begging and Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons have been merged in a single scheme named SMILE.
- Focus areas: Rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, basic documentation, education, skill development, economic linkages and so on.
- The scheme would be implemented with the support of State/UT Governments/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), institutions and others.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Adopt a Heritage scheme:

1. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
2. Under this scheme, the government invites only private sector firms and individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites.

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: About Adopt a Heritage scheme:

- An initiative of the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)
- Under this scheme, the government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms and individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites.
- Basic amenities like drinking water, ease of access for the differently-abled and senior citizens, standardised signage, cleanliness, public convenience, surveillance system and night-viewing facilities are provided and maintained under the scheme.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

Q.5) Consider the following statements about SPARSH:

1. It is an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defense pension.
2. The portal is available for pensioners to access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances.

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: SPARSH is an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension. The portal processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary. The portal is also available for pensioners to view their pension related information, access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

Q.6) Consider the following statements:

1. Matsya Setu app was developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar.
2. The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) is headquartered at Chennai.

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: Matsya Setu is an online course app. It aims to provide the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country. It is developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar. The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad is providing the funding support.

Source: EPIC july, 2021.

Q.7) Consider the following statements about PMKSY:

1. PMKSY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. The central grants to the State Governments for specific activities will be 90:10 for all states.

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: About PMKSY:

- It was launched in 2015 and is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, providing central grants to the State Governments for specific activities (90:10 for NE states & 75:25 for rest).
- **The major objective of PMKSY is:**
 - to achieve convergence of investments in irrigation at the field level
 - expand cultivable area under assured irrigation
 - improve on-farm water use efficiency to reduce wastage of water
 - enhance the adoption of precision-irrigation and other water-saving technologies
 - In 2020, the Ministry of Jal Shakti launched a mobile application for Geo-Tagging of the components of projects under PMKSY.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) Consider the following statements about POSHAN Abhiyan:

1. The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
2. National Council on Nutrition is headed by the Vice-Chairman of the NITI Aayog.

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: POSHAN Abhiyaan:

- POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched by the government on March 8, 2018.
- The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters.

The National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges

- Set up under the Poshan Abhiyaan, the Council is also known as National Council on Nutrition (NCN).
- The NCN is headed by the Vice-Chairman of the NITI Aayog.
- It provides policy directions to address nutritional challenges in the country and review programmes.

Source: The Hindu

Q.9) Consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is launched by Ministry of health and family welfare.
2. Cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.

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: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana:

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a maternity benefit programme being implemented in all districts of the country with effect from 1st January, 2017.

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- It is a centrally sponsored scheme being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme: Cash benefits are provided to pregnant women in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) Which of the following scheme envisages selection of one girl per family where family income is less than 6 lakhs / annum on merit at the qualifying examination to pursue technical education?

- a) PRAGATI
- b) SAKSHAM
- c) UDAAN
- d) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

ANS: A

Explanation: PRAGATI: Providing Assistance for Girls' Advancement in Technical Education Initiative.

- The AICTE scheme envisages selection of one girl per family where family income is less than 6 lakhs / annum on merit at the qualifying examination to pursue technical education.
- The scheme is to be implemented by the authorised admission centre of respective State Governments.
- 4000 girls are expected to benefit of scholarships available per annum.
- The scholarship amount is Rs. 30,000 or tuition fees or actual whichever is less and Rs. 2000/ month for ten months as contingency allowance

Source: The Hindu

Science and Technology

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. A fungible asset is something that can be readily interchanged.
2. A non-fungible asset means it has unique properties which cannot be interchanged with something else.

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:

A fungible asset is something that can be readily interchanged like money. With money, you can swap Rs.10 note for two Rs.5 notes, and it will have the same value.

On the other hand, a non-fungible asset means it has unique properties which cannot be interchanged with something else. Example: It could be a painting that is one of a kind. You can take a photo of the painting or buy a print, but there will only ever be one original painting.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.2) Consider the following statements about African Swine Fever (ASF):

1. African Swine Fever (ASF) impacted livestock in Kerala.
2. It can be transmitted to humans.

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 African Swine Fever (ASF) continues to impact livestock in Mizoram, affecting all 11 districts and killing 10,621 pigs since March 2021.

About African Swine Fever:

- African swine fever (ASF) is a highly contagious hemorrhagic viral disease of domestic and wild pigs which is responsible for serious economic and production losses.
- Caused by: It is caused by a large DNA virus of the Asfarviridae family, which also infects ticks of the genus Ornithodoros.

Human Transmission:

- ASF is not a threat to human beings, since it only spreads from animals to other animals.
- ASF is a disease listed in the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code and must be reported to the OIE.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Planetary conjunction takes place when two planets appear to have come closer, while in reality, they remain far away.
2. The planetary conjunction of Mars and Venus is called as Great conjunction.

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: Earth's two immediate neighbors Mars and Venus will come closest to each other. This event is called planetary conjunction.

Conjunction: The conjunction is the name given to any event where planets or asteroids appear to be very close together in the sky when viewed from the Earth.

Planetary Conjunction: Planetary conjunction takes place when two planets appear to have come closer, while in reality, they remain far away.

What is Great Conjunction?

- Astronomers use the term great conjunction to describe meetings of the two biggest planets in the solar system, Jupiter and Saturn.
- The Great Conjunction happens once in about 20 years, because of the time each of the planets takes to orbit around the Sun.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.4) Consider the following statements about NEA Scout:

1. NEA Scout is a mission of ISRO.
2. NEA Scout is one of several payloads that will launch on Artemis I.

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: NEA Scout:

- NASA has announced that its new spacecraft named NEA Scout has completed all required tests and has been safely tucked inside the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket.
- NEA Scout is one of several payloads that will launch on Artemis I which is expected to be launched in November 2021.
- **Artemis I:** It is a planned uncrewed test flight for NASA's Artemis program. Under the Artemis program, NASA has aimed to land the first woman on the Moon in 2024 and also establish sustainable lunar exploration programs by 2030.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.5) Which of the following is related to the terms 'AMLEX'?

- a) Oxygen Rationing Device
- b) Crypto currency
- c) Drones
- d) Missile system

ANS: A

Explanation: AMLEX:

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar has developed a first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device called AMLEX.
- AMLEX is an Oxygen Rationing Device that increases the life of medical oxygen cylinders threefold.
- The device can be easily connected between the oxygen supply line and the mask worn by the patient.
- It uses a sensor that senses and successfully supplies a required volume of oxygen to the patients (while inhaling) and trips when the patient is exhaling Carbon dioxide (CO₂).
- This process would help save oxygen, which gets unnecessarily wasted otherwise.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.6) Consider the following statements about UV-C radiation:

1. It has been used for decades to disinfect the air in hospitals, laboratories, and also in water treatment.
2. UV-C radiation can destroy the outer protein coating of the SARS-Coronavirus.
3. UV-C light does not harm human skin.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: UV-C radiation:

- UV-C radiation (wavelength around 254 nm) has been used for decades to disinfect the air in hospitals, laboratories, and also in water treatment.
- A paper published in June 2020 in Scientific Reports noted that UV-C radiation can destroy the outer protein coating of the SARS-Coronavirus.
- Moreover, few studies have shown that far-UVC light does not harm human skin. This is because UV-C light has a very limited range and cannot penetrate through the outer dead-cell layer of human skin or the tear layer in the eye, so it's not a human health hazard. But because viruses and bacteria are much smaller than human cells, far-UVC light can reach their DNA and kill them.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.7) Consider the following statements about Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (VIPER) Mission:

1. It is a mobile robot launched by NASA.
2. It will be resource mapping mission to arctic region.

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: NASA's VIPER Mission:

- NASA has announced the launch of the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (VIPER) Mission in 2023.
- VIPER Mission is a mobile robot to be launched by NASA in the year 2023.
- It will be the first resource mapping mission on any other celestial body.
- Celestial Body is any natural body outside the Earth's atmosphere. Easy examples are the Moon, Sun, and the other planets of our solar system.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.8) 'dbGENVOC' is a browsable online database of which of the following?

- a) SARS-Coronavirus
- b) Oral Cancer
- c) Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- d) Cataract

ANS: B

Explanation: dbGENVOC is a browsable online database of GENomic Variants of Oral Cancer. The database is publicly available and is a free resource. The database will contain somatic and germline variants derived from oral cancer patients and also peer-reviewed published publications. The database also has a built-in search engine. This allows researchers to carry out analysis of identifying variants in associated altered pathways in oral cancer.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.9) Consider the following statements about Akash-NG Missile:

1. Akash-NG is a New Generation Air-to-Air Missile.
2. Akash-NG detects enemy fighters at ranges out to 80 km and initiates the launch sequence.

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: About Akash-NG:

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- Akash-NG is a New Generation Surface-to-Air Missile. It is developed by Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.
- Purpose: The Missile is capable of intercepting high manoeuvring low radar cross-section aerial targets.

Key Features of Akash NG Missile:

- **Rocket Motor:** Akash-NG uses a two-pulse solid rocket motor that replaces the old ramjet on the legacy Akash missile. The new motor not just reaches out to 30 kilometres (km), but also generates a high terminal velocity to strike even the fastest and most agile enemy fighters.
- **Lighter Weight:** The weight of the rocket has been brought down from 700 kg to 350 kg. This not just increases range, but also lets the vehicle carry more missiles.
- **New Seeker Head:** Akash-NG has a new seeker head. The seeker locks onto the enemy aircraft and continuously guides the missile to impact the target.
 - Akash-NG detects enemy fighters at ranges out to 80 km and initiates the launch sequence.
 - By the time the enemy aircraft is 50 km away, the Akash-NG's computers have calculated the launch trajectory and impact point and launched the missile.
 - In just over a minute, the missile blazes its way to the impact point 30 km away and destroys the target.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.10) Consider the following statements about Deep Fakes:

1. They are a subfield of AI that allows realistic forgeries of both video and audio.
2. Deep Fakes cannot be created by freely available software and computer processing power that can be rented.

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: About Deep Fakes:

- They are a subfield of AI that allows realistic forgeries of both video and audio.
- The speed of advances in AI have made it possible to create Deep Fakes using freely available software and computer processing power that can be rented.
- AI is perhaps the most transformative technology under development. Consequently, it also brings about entirely new risks.

Source: 9PM Compilation of July 2021.

Location/IR/Geography

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. USA
2. Australia
3. Germany
4. France

Which of the above country/countries have Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) obtained Trademark Registration?

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC): Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has recently secured trademark registrations in three countries – Bhutan, UAE and Mexico.

How many countries has KVIC obtained Trademark Registration?

- So far, KVIC has Trademark registrations for the word mark “KHADI” in 6 countries namely Germany, UK, Australia, Russia, China and EU.
- However, with trademark registrations in Bhutan, UAE and Mexico, the number of such countries has gone up to nine.
- In these countries, KVIC has got registrations in various classes such as Khadi fabric, Khadi readymade garments and village industry products like Khadi soaps, Khadi cosmetics, Khadi incense sticks among others.

Source: EPIC July 2021.

Q.2) Consider the following statements with respect to black soils:

1. Black soils also called as regur soils.
2. It covers the areas of Punjab, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.
3. The black soils are made up of Clayey material.

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

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Black Soils:

- Black soils are black in colour and are also known as regur soils.
- Black soil is ideal for growing cotton and is also known as black cotton soil.
- It is believed that climatic conditions along with the parent rock material are the important factors for the formation of black soil.

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- This type of soil is typical of the Deccan trap (Basalt) region spread over northwest Deccan plateau and is made up of lava flows.
- They cover the plateaus of Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Malwa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and extend in the south east direction along the Godavari and the Krishna valleys.
- The black soils are made up of extremely fine i.e. clayey material.
- They are well-known for their capacity to hold moisture. In addition, they are rich in soil nutrients, such as calcium carbonate, magnesium, potash and lime. These soils are generally poor in phosphoric contents.
- They develop deep cracks during hot weather, which helps in the proper aeration of the soil. These soils are sticky when wet and difficult to work on unless tilled immediately after the first shower or during the pre-monsoon period.

Source: NCERT

Q.3) The primitive form of cultivation is called 'Podu' or 'Penda' in which of the following state?

- a) Andhra Pradesh
- b) Kerala
- c) Haryana
- d) Madhya Pradesh

ANS: A

Explanation: The 'slash and burn' agriculture is known as 'Milpa' in Mexico and Central America, 'Conuco' in Venezuela, 'Roca' in Brazil, 'Masole' in Central Africa, 'Ladang' in Indonesia, 'Ray' in Vietnam. In India, this primitive form of cultivation is called 'Bewar' or 'Dahiya' in Madhya Pradesh, 'Podu' or 'Penda' in Andhra Pradesh, 'Pama Dabi' or 'Koman' or 'Bringa' in Odisha, 'Kumari' in Western Ghats, 'Valre' or 'Waltre' in South-eastern Rajasthan, 'Khil' in the Himalayan belt, 'Kuruwa' in Jharkhand, and 'Jhumming' in the North-eastern region.

Source: NCERT

Q.4) The deflection of planetary wind is caused by which of the following?

1. Revolution of earth
2. Rotation of earth
3. Difference in atmospheric pressure
4. Latitudinal variation in temperature

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

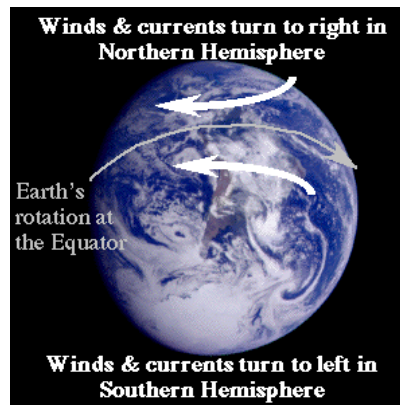
- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: B

Explanation: Our planet's rotation produces a force on all bodies moving relative to the Earth. Due to Earth's approximately spherical shape, this force is greatest at the poles and least at the Equator. The force, called the "Coriolis effect," causes the direction of winds and ocean currents to be deflected.

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In the Northern Hemisphere, wind and currents are deflected toward the right, in the Southern Hemisphere they are deflected to the left.



Source: NCERT

Q.5) In which of the following states are the famous 'Living Root Bridges' found?

- a) Arunachal Pradesh
- b) Himachal Pradesh
- c) Meghalaya
- d) Kerala

ANS: C

Explanation: During monsoon season in northeast India, rainwater gushes through the emerald valleys and deep gorges of Meghalaya, the "abode of the clouds." The mountainous plateau between Assam and Bangladesh is one of the wettest places on Earth, and the Khasi tribes who inhabit these hills have developed an intimate relationship with the forest. Long before the availability of modern construction materials, the Khasi devised an ingenious way to traverse the turbulent waterways and link isolated villages: living root bridges, locally known as jing kieng jri.

Source: UPSC's PYQ.

Q.6) "Marrakesh Treaty" is related to which of the following Organization?

- a) IMF
- b) World Bank
- c) WTO
- d) UNCTAD

ANS: C

Explanation: WTO i.e. World Trade Organization was set up under Marrakesh Treaty (1994) as a result of Uruguay Round (1986-1994). WTO as an organization was expected to play larger role for improved living standards, employment generation, trade expansion with increasing share for developing countries and overall sustainable development. Trade liberalization was seen as means for achieving the above-mentioned objectives.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) “Lisbon Treaty” is recently in news related to which of the following?

- a) European Union
- b) African Union
- c) Islamic Union
- d) None of the above

ANS: A

Explanation: The Lisbon Treaty started as a constitutional project at the end of 2001 (European Council declaration on the future of the European Union, or Laeken declaration), and was followed up in 2002 and 2003 by the European Convention which drafted the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Constitutional Treaty). The process leading to the Lisbon Treaty is a result of the negative outcome of two referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in May and June 2005, in response to which the European Council decided to have a two-year ‘period of reflection’. Finally, on the basis of the Berlin declaration of March 2007, the European Council of 21 to 23 June 2007 adopted a detailed mandate for a subsequent Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), under the Portuguese presidency. The IGC concluded its work in October 2007. The Treaty was signed at the European Council of Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and has been ratified by all Member States.

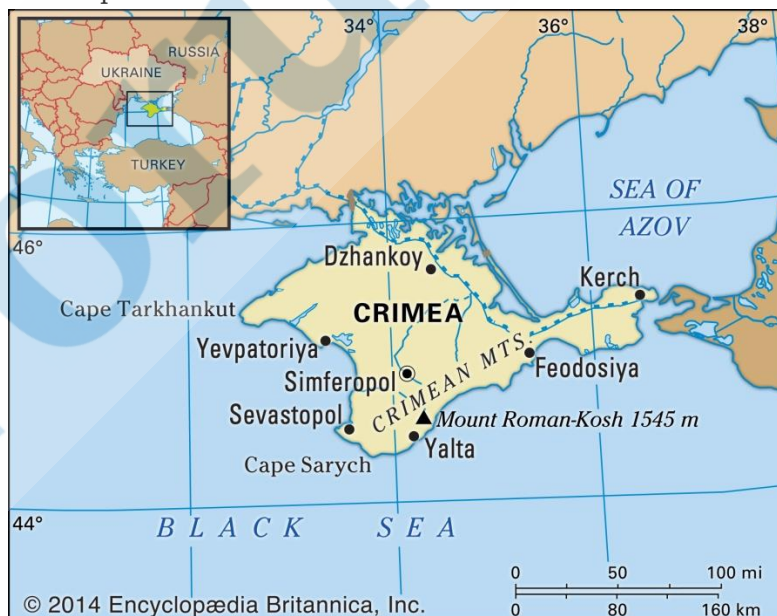
Source: The Hindu

Q.8) Crimean Peninsula thrusts into which of the following?

- a) Black Sea
- b) Mediterranean sea
- c) Caspian Sea
- d) White sea

ANS: A

Explanation: Crimean peninsula thrusts into black sea.



Source: The Hindu

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Q.9) Match the following valley in India with the states:

Valley	State
1. Araku	a. Himachal Pradesh
2. Kangra	b. Arunachal Pradesh
3. Kamban Valley	c. Andhra Pradesh
4. Dibang Valley	d. Tamil Nadu

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Valleys start as small and narrow rills. These rills will progressively develop into long and wide gullies. The gullies will again deepen, widen and lengthen to give rise to valleys. The valley types depend upon the type and structure of rocks in which they form. Depending upon sizes and shapes, several types of valleys like V-shaped valley, gorge, canyon, etc. can be recognized. Some of the major valleys are:

- Araku Valley, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
- Barak Valley, Assam
- Betaab Valley, Jammu and Kashmir
- Bhakra Nangal Valley, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh
- Chamba Valley, Himachal Pradesh
- Chambal Valley, Madhya Pradesh
- Damodar Valley, West Bengal
- Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh
- Imphal Valley, Manipur
- Indus Valley, Jammu and Kashmir
- Kambam Valley, Tamil Nadu
- Kangra Valley, Himachal Pradesh
- Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Kashmir
- Kaveri Valley, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
- Kullu Valley, Himachal Pradesh
- Lidder Valley, Jammu and Kashmir
- Mahanadi Valley, Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- Mandakini Valley, Kedarnath, Uttarakhand
- Narmada Valley, Madhya Pradesh
- Pin Valley, Himachal Pradesh
- Silent Valley, Palakkad District, Kerala
- Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh (India) and Tibet (China)
- Tlawng Valley, Mizoram
- Yumthang Valley, Sikkim
- Zaskar Valley, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir
- Zoji La Valley, Jammu and Kashmir

Source: NCERT

Q.10) Consider the following statements about the shape of moon:

1. The phase from New moon to Full moon is called as Waxing.
2. The phase from Full moon to New moon is called as Waning.

Which of the above given statement is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: The moon revolves around the Earth, and as it does, we see different angles of the moon's illuminated surface. The moon doesn't create its own light, but rather shines when it reflects the sun's light. As the moon transitions from new to full and back to new again, it goes through several phases, marked by its recognizable crescent and gibbous ("bulging") shapes, which are created by the moon's own shadow. The moon phases are:

- New moon
- Waxing crescent
- First quarter/Half-moon
- Waxing gibbous
- Full moon
- Waning Gibbous
- Third quarter/Half-moon
- Waning crescent
- New moon



Source: NCERT

Previous year question

Q.1) Consider the following:

1. Foreign currency convertible bonds
2. Foreign institutional investment with certain conditions
3. Global depository receipts
4. Non-resident external deposits

Which of the above can be included in Foreign Direct Investments?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: In Capital Account of Balance of Payment, we can classify into Investment, Borrowings and External Assistance. Investment includes Equity flow in the economy. Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds (FCCB), Foreign Institutional Investment with certain conditions (subject to the overall limit of 24%), and Global Depository Receipts (GDR) are the instruments for the foreign investment in India.

Non-Resident external deposits are a 'debt creating' flow in balance of payments accounts and therefore, not part of Foreign Direct investments.

Source: CSP 2021

Q.2) Which one of the following is used in preparing a natural mosquito repellent?

- a) Congress grass
- b) Elephant grass
- c) Lemongrass
- d) Nut grass

ANS: C

Explanation: Citronella the essential oil found in Lemongrass is registered with the FDA. It is the most widely used natural mosquito repellent found in candles, sprays, and lotions. To help deter mosquitoes with its strong fragrance, plant lemongrass along walkways and in locations close to seating areas.

Source: CSP 2021

Q.3) Consider the following animals:

1. Hedgehog
2. Marmot
3. Pangolin

to reduce the chance of being captured by predators, which of the above organisms rolls up/roll up and protects/protect its/their vulnerable parts?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Hedgehogs are a small mammal with short limbs and a body low to the ground. When they are frightened, or annoyed, hedgehogs will roll into a ball so that a predator will feel the full brunt of its sharp spines and will then leave the hedgehog alone.

Marmots are relatively large ground squirrels in the genus *Marmota*, with 15 species living in Asia, Europe, and North America. These herbivores are active during the summer when often found in groups, but are not seen during the winter when they hibernate underground. They are the heaviest members of the squirrel family. They do not roll up when threatened.

Pangolins are uniquely covered in tough, overlapping scales. These mammals eat ants and termites using an extraordinarily long, sticky tongue, and are able to quickly roll themselves up into a tight ball when they feel threatened.

Source: CSP 2021

Q.4) With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
2. Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

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: Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the the sects of Buddhism. Sarvastivadins (They who say "All is"), had the view that the constituents of phenomena (dharmas) were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

Source: CSP 2017

Q.5) Mediterranean Sea is a border of which of the following countries?

1. Jordan
2. Iraq
3. Lebanon
4. Syria

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The countries with coastlines on the Mediterranean Sea are Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. In addition, the Gaza Strip and the British Overseas Territories of Gibraltar and Akrotiri and Dhekelia have coastlines on the sea. On the Eastern shore, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel have their coastline on the Mediterranean Sea.

Source: CSP 2017

Q.6) For election to the Lok Sabha, a nomination paper can be filed by

- a) anyone residing in India.
- b) a resident of the constituency from which the election is to be contested.
- c) any citizen of India whose name appears in the electoral roll of a constituency.
- d) any citizen of India.

ANS: C

Explanation: Qualifications for election to Lok Sabha:

- must be a citizen of India
- not less than 25 years of age
- must be registered as an elector for a parliamentary constituency

Source: CSP 2017

Q.7) In the context of Indian history, the principle of 'Dyarchy (diarchy)' refers to

- a) Division of the central legislature into two houses.
- b) Introductions of double government i.e., Central and State governments.
- c) Having two sets of rulers; one in London and another in Delhi.
- d) Division of the subjects delegated to the provinces into two categories.

ANS: D

Explanation: The Government of India Act of 1919 was enacted to satisfy the people of India to some extent. The salient features of the Act were as follows: (a) Preamble: The Act provided for a Preamble that laid down the basic principles and policies upon which it was based. According to it the policy of the British Parliament was – (i) to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, (ii) to develop self governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the empire; (iii) accordingly, the Preamble suggested for a decentralised unitary form of government. The Act divided the functions of

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government in two categories: central and provincial. The provincial subjects were further subdivided into transferred and reserved. Thus, in the provinces a new form of government, dyarchy, was introduced. Dyarchy means dual set of governments, e.g. accountable and non-accountable. In the transferred subjects the Governors were to be assisted by the ministers responsible to the legislature while in the reserved subjects the Governors were to be advised by the councillors who were not accountable to the legislature.

Source: CSP 2017

Q.8) Consider the following Bhakti Saints:

1. Dadu Dayal
2. Guru Nanak
3. Tyagaraja

Who among the above was/were preaching when the Lodi dynasty fell and Babur took over?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Lodi dynasty fell and Babur took over in 1526.

- Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539)
- Dadu Dayal (1544–1603)
- Kakarla Tyagabrahmam (1767 – 1847)

Source: CSP 2013

Q.9) Which of the following is/are the characteristic/characteristics of Indian coal?

1. High ash content
2. Low sulphur content
3. Low ash fusion temperature

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: The most significant characteristic of Indian coal is its high ash content, which varies from 35 to 45 per cent, compared with that of coal in other parts of the world, which is around 15 per cent. Besides high ash content, another reason for entrained gasifiers (that operate at higher temperatures than fluidised bed gasifiers), commonly used in IGCC plants abroad, being not suitable for Indian coal is its high ash fusion temperature of about 1,500 However, Indian coal's sulphur content is low, about 0.5 per cent.

Source: CSP 2013

Q.10) Disguised unemployment generally means

- a) Large number of people remain unemployed
- b) Alternative employment is not available
- c) Marginal productivity of labour is zero
- d) Productivity of workers is low

ANS: C

Explanation: Disguised unemployment, means that more people are engaged in a job which can be done with less people, normally seen in agriculture where whole family is involved. It means extra people can be removed without affecting the productivity, i.e. their marginal productivity is zero.

Source: CSP 2013

Polity

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Pardoning Power of Governor:

1. Pardoning powers of governor are mentioned in Article 161 of Indian constitution.
2. Governor also has the power to pardon death sentences.

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: Pardoning Power of Governor: Under Article 161, the Governor shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person. But the person should be convicted of any offence against any law which is under the executive power of the State.

Exceptions:

- The Governor cannot pardon the death sentence (the President has the power to do so). But the Governor can suspend, remit or commute the death sentence.
- The Governor cannot grant pardon, reprieve, respite, suspension, remission, or commutation in respect to punishment or sentence by a court-martial. However, the President can do so.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.2) Consider the following statements about BH Number Series:

1. BH number series is a newly introduced number series for vehicle registration across India.
2. It is specifically meant for those vehicle owners who shift from one state to another on a regular basis due to their transferable nature of jobs.
3. The BH signifies Bharat and will replace the state letters in the number plate denoting the state of vehicle registration

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: BH number series:

- BH number series is a newly introduced number series for vehicle registration across India.
- It is specifically meant for those vehicle owners who shift from one state to another on a regular basis due to their transferable nature of jobs.
- The BH signifies Bharat and will replace the state letters in the number plate denoting the state of vehicle registration, like UP or DL.

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- Under this, vehicles will not require any transfer of registration and will be valid across the country. This will allow free movement of personal vehicles across States/Union Territories.

Source: EPIC, July 2021.

Q.3) Which of the following committee recommended for PESA Act?

- a) Bhuria Committee
- b) L M Singhvi Committee
- c) Gadgil Committee
- d) Ashok Mehta Committee

ANS: A

Explanation: About the PESA Act, 1996:

- The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA Act is a law enacted by the Government of India for ensuring self-governance through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India.
- It was enacted by Parliament in 1996 and came into force on 24th December 1996.
- After the Bhuria Committee recommendations in 1995, Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996 came into existence for ensuring tribal self-rule for people living in scheduled areas of India.
- The PESA is considered to be the backbone of tribal legislation in India.
- PESA recognises the traditional system of the decision-making process and stands for the peoples' self-governance.

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021.

Q.4) Consider the following statements about 102 Constitution Amendment Act 2018:

1. It inserted Article 338 B which deals with structure of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)
2. It inserted Article 342A that gives Governor, the power to notify any particular caste as socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) for grant of quota in jobs and admissions.

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: 102 Constitution Amendment Act 2018:

- The 102nd Amendment Act received the presidential assent and came into effect in August 2018.
- The amendment inserted Articles 338B and 342A into the Indian Constitution.
- Article 338B deals with the structure, duties and powers of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).
- Article 342A deals with the power of the President of India to notify a particular caste as a Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) and the power of the Parliament to change the list.
- The amendment also brings about changes in Article 366.

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- This amendment gave the NCBC a constitutional status. The Commission was originally set up in 1993.

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021.

Q.5) Consider the following statements about Ordnance Factory Board:

1. It functioned under DRDO.
2. It has been dissolved and the functions have been transferred to seven Defence Public Sector Units (DPSUs).

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:

Ordnance Factory Board (“OFB”), functioning under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), the first of whose industrial establishments was set up in 1801, will cease to exist from October 1, 2021 and the assets, staff, and operations of its 41 ordnance factories will be transferred to seven defence public sector units (DPSUs).

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021

Q.6) Consider the following statements about tribunals in India:

1. Tribunal is a quasi-judicial institution.
2. These have been part of original constitution of India.
3. The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalization and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2021 has dissolved all the tribunals.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Tribunals

- It is a quasi-judicial institution that is set up to deal with problems such as resolving administrative or tax-related disputes.
- It performs a number of functions like adjudicating disputes, determining rights between contesting parties, making an administrative decision, reviewing an existing administrative decision and so forth.

Constitutional Provisions:

- Tribunals were not originally a part of the Constitution.
- The 42nd Amendment Act 1976 introduced provision for tribunals in accordance with the recommendations of the Swaran Singh Committee.

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The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2021 dissolves certain existing appellate bodies and transfers their functions to other existing judicial bodies.

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021

Q.7) Which of the following feature of Indian constitution is called as –Instrument of Instructions?

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

ANS: C

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

Source: Laxmikant

Q.8) Consider the following statements about Cantonment Board:

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

Which the above given statement is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: A cantonment board is established for municipal administration for civilian population in the cantonment area. It is set up under the provisions of the Cantonments Act of 2006-a legislation enacted by the Central government. It works under the administrative control of the defense ministry of the Central government. Thus, unlike the above four types of urban local bodies, which are created and administered by the state government, a cantonment board is created as well as administered by the Central government.

A cantonment board consists of partly elected and partly nominated members. The elected members hold office for a term of five years while the nominated members (i.e., ex-officio members) continue so long as they hold the office in that station. The military officer commanding the station is the ex-officio president of the board and presides over its meetings. The vice president of the board is elected by the elected members from amongst themselves for a term of five years.

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The functions performed by a cantonment board are similar to those of a municipality. These are statutorily categorised into obligatory functions and discretionary functions. The sources of income include both, tax revenue and non-tax revenue. The executive officer of the cantonment board is appointed by the president of India. He implements all the resolutions and decisions of the board and its committees. He belongs to the central cadre established for the purpose.

Source: Laxmikant

Q.9) 'Kedar Nath Singh v Union of India' case is related to which of the following issues?

- a) Sedition
- b) Section 66A of IT Act
- c) Right to privacy
- d) Fundamental duties

ANS: A

Explanation:

In the landmark 1962 Kedar Nath Singh case, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the sedition law, it attempted to restrict its scope for misuse. The court held that unless accompanied by an incitement or call for violence, criticism of the government cannot be labelled sedition.

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021

Q.10) 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

Previous year questions

Q.10) Consider the following statements:

1. The Parliament of India can place a particular law in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
2. The validity of a law placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be examined by any court and no judgement can be made on it.

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 Ninth Schedule was added to the Constitution by the first amendment in 1951 along with Article 31-B with a view to provide a “protective umbrella” to land reforms laws to save them from being challenged in courts on the ground of violation of fundamental rights. The SC upheld the validity of Article 31-B and Parliament’s power to place a particular law in the Ninth Schedule.

The Supreme Court has said that laws placed in the Ninth Schedule are open to judicial scrutiny and that such laws do not enjoy a blanket protection. Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule after the Keshwanand Bharti Judgment on April 24, 1973, when it propounded the “basic structure” doctrine, were open to challenge.

Source: CSP, 2018

Q.2) Consider the following pairs:

Tradition	State
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1. Chapchar Kut festival - Mizoram
2. Khongjom Parba ballad - Manipur
3. Thang -Ta dance - Sikkim

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation:

Chapchar Kut is the biggest festival of the Mizos and is celebrated in March after completion of jhum operation. It is a spring festival.

Khongjom Parba is a style of ballad singing from Manipur using Dholak (drum) which depicts stories of heroic battle fought by Manipuris against the mighty British Empire in 1891. It is one of the most popular musical art forms of Manipur inciting the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among the people at one time.

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Manipur dance has a large repertoire; however, the most popular forms are the Ras, the Sankirtana and the Thang-Ta. Thang-ta dance of Manipur was an evolved from the martial arts drills promoted by the kings of Manipur.

Source: CSP, 2018

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. The Reserve Bank of India manages and services Government of India Securities but not any State Government Securities.
2. Treasury bills are issued by the Government of India and there are no treasury bills issued by the state Governments.
3. Treasury bills offer are issued at a discount from the par value.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation:

The Reserve Bank of India manages public debt and issues Indian currency denominated loans on behalf of the central and the state governments under the powers derived from the Reserve Bank of India Act. The RBI is the debt manager for both the Central Government and the State Governments. RBI manages the debt of state governments on the basis of separate agreements.

Treasury bills or T-bills, which are money market instruments, are short term debt instruments issued by the Government of India and are presently issued in three tenors, namely, 91 day, 182 day and 364 day. Treasury bills are zero coupon securities and pay no interest. They are issued at a discount and redeemed at the face value at maturity. For example, a 91 day Treasury bill of 100/- (face value) may be issued at say 98.20, that is, at a discount of say, 1.80 and would be redeemed at the face value of 100/-. The return to the investors is the difference between the maturity value or the face value (that is 100).

Source: CSP, 2018

Q.4) With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space.
2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth.

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

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Explanation: ASTROSAT is India's first dedicated multi wavelength space observatory. ASTROSAT will observe universe in the optical, Ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum. India's observatory will be the fourth in space, after the Hubble(USA), Russia's Spektr R and Suzaku of Japan.

ASTROSAT with a lift-off mass of about 1513 kg was launched into a 650 km orbit inclined at an angle of 6 deg to the equator by PSLV-C30. ASTROSAT will observe universe in the optical, Ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum, whereas most other scientific satellites are capable of observing a narrow range of wavelength band.

Source: CSP, 2016

Q.5) With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and epic tales was the profession of who of the following?

- a) Shramana
- b) Parivraajaka
- c) Agrahaarika
- d) Maagadha

ANS: D

Explanation: During Gupta period, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories or epic tales was the work of a different group of people, the sutas and magadhas.

Source: CSP, 2016

Q.6) Consider the following statements:

1. The Sustainable Development Goals were first proposed in 1972 by a global think tank called the 'Club of Rome'.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals have to be achieved by 2030.

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 'Club of Rome' is a global think tank which in its 1972 book "Limits to Growth" talked about sustainability; however they didn't propose Sustainable Development Goals. As per the resolution of UN General Assembly in September, 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been adopted by 193 member nations.

These developmental schemes are mostly addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are targeted to be achieved by 2030.

Source: CSP, 2016

Q.7) What explains the eastward flow of the equatorial countercurrent?

- a) The Earth's rotation on its axis
- b) Convergence of the two equatorial currents
- c) Difference in salinity of water
- d) Occurrence of the belt of calm near the equator

ANS: B

Explanation:

The easterly Equatorial Counter-Current between about 40 and 100 N may be explained as follows, the overall effect of the Trade Winds is to drive water towards the west, but the flow is blocked by the land masses along the western boundaries. As a result, in equatorial regions the sea-surface slopes up towards the west, causing an eastward horizontal pressure gradient force. Because winds are light in the Doldrums, water is able to flow down the horizontal pressure gradient in a current that is contrary (i.e. 'counter') to the prevailing wind direction. The zone of calm is the necessary and dominant factor here, though other factors play their role as well.

Source: CSP, 2015

Q.8) The substitution of steel for wooden ploughs in agricultural production is an example of:

- a) labour-augmenting technological progress
- b) capital-augmenting technological progress
- c) capital-reducing technological progress
- d) None of the above

ANS: B

Explanation: Labor augmenting is technology that increases skills and productivity of existing labor force (example - teaching people how to use the computer). Capital augmenting technology increases productivity of existing capital goods. In this case, replacement of wooden by steel, increases the productivity of plough.

Source: CSP, 2015

Q.9) Kalamkari painting refers to

- a) A hand-painted cotton textile in South India
- b) A handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in North- East India
- c) A block-painted woolen cloth in Western Himalayan region of India
- d) A hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India

ANS: A

Explanation:

Kalamkari painting is a painting done by Kalam (Pen) in Andhra Pradesh it is done on cotton garments, bad covers etc.

Source: CSP, 2015

Q.10) Who/Which of the following is the custodian of the Constitution of India?

- a) The President of India
- b) The Prime Minister of India
- c) The Lok Sabha Secretariat
- d) The Supreme Court of India

ANS: D

Explanation: Parliamentary democracy as envisaged in the Constitution of India works, at Union and State level. Especially in the making of law, there is direct participation of the legislature and the executive. It is the judiciary that safeguards the interest of citizens by not allowing the other organs to go beyond their role assigned in the Constitution. In brief, the Supreme Court of India is the logical and primary custodian of the Indian Constitution, while also being its interpreter and guardian.

Parliament enjoys the authority to amend the Constitution; the Supreme Court has the authority to examine the validity of constitutional amendments. The Supreme Court ensures that the other branches of government perform their responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution.

Source: CSP, 2015

Economy

Q.1) Consider the following statements about e-RUPI:

1. e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment.
2. It has been developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Union Health Ministry and the National Health Authority (NHA).

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: About e-RUPI: e-RUPI is a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment. It is founded on the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) platform.

Purpose: It is designed to be a person and purpose-specific digital payment solution. It seeks to ensure that government schemes reach intended beneficiaries in a targeted and leak-proof manner, with limited touch points between the government and the beneficiary.

Developed by: National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Union Health Ministry, and the National Health Authority (NHA).

Features of e-RUPI:

- Firstly, e-RUPI connects the sponsors of the services with the beneficiaries and service providers in a digital manner without any physical interface.
- Secondly, it ensures that the payment to the service provider is made only after the transaction is completed.
- Thirdly, being pre-paid in nature, it assures timely payment to the service provider without the involvement of any intermediary.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) Scheme:

1. PAT is a market-based compliance mechanism that aims to accelerate improvements in energy efficiency in energy-intensive industries.
2. It is launched by Ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE).

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: About Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) Scheme:

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Power

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- **Aim:** PAT is a market-based compliance mechanism that aims to accelerate improvements in energy efficiency in energy-intensive industries.
- **Nodal Agency:** It is a flagship programme of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE).
- **Key Features of the Scheme:** The scheme incentivises industrial units that improve their energy use efficiency. The govt. issues tradable certificates to industrial units which perform and save energy. The certificates can be traded units that are unable to meet the target.
- **Significance of the Scheme:** The scheme has resulted in mitigation of million tons of CO2 emission.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) Consider the following statements about Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR):

1. They are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries to handle the risk of supply disruption from natural disasters, war, or other calamities.
2. India's strategic crude oil storages are located only at Vishakapatnam and Mangaluru.

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: What are SPRs?

They are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries to handle the risk of supply disruption from natural disasters, war, or other calamities. The petroleum reserves are strategic in nature and the crude oil stored in these reserves will be used during an oil shortage event, as and when declared so by the Government.

Who manages Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)?

The construction of the SPR facilities in India is being managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL). It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

Phase I of SPR Programme:

Under Phase 1, three storage facilities were built in underground locations at Mangalore, Visakhapatnam, and Padur. A total of 5.33 million metric tons of storage capacity was created in this phase.

Phase II of SPR Programme:

Under Phase II, the government has approved two additional storage facilities at Chandikhol (Odisha) and Padur (TN) with a total capacity of 6.5 MMT.

Source: EPIC August 2021

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Q.4) The “Draft Scheme of Reconstruction” is recently in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Banking
- b) Railways
- c) Roadways
- d) Port rejuvenation

ANS: A

Explanation: RBI has placed the financially troubled Yes Bank under a moratorium (temporary suspension).

- After placing this bank under a moratorium, the RBI announced a draft Scheme of Reconstruction.
- This scheme entails the State Bank of India (SBI) investing capital to acquire a 49% stake in the restructured private lender.

Source: The Hindu

Q.5) With reference to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a statutory body.
2. The chairman and its members are appointed by government.

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: The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) was set up in 2000 (the Act was passed in 1999) with one chairman and five members (two as full time and three as part-time members) appointed and nominated by the government. The authority is responsible for the regulation, development and supervision of the Indian insurance industry.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.6) Which of the following is/are correctly matched?

Committee/Panel : Significance

1. Ranga Rajan Committee : Balance of Payments
2. Vijay Kelkar Committee : Goods & Service Tax
3. Tarapore Committee : Committee on Trade policy

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: C

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Explanation: Besides, economic reforms in various sectors, various Committees were setup from time to time (by the Government of India and by RBI) to discuss policy issues related to international trade and balance of payments.

Some of the important Committees were –

- Committee on Export – Import Policies & Procedures (Alexander Committee, 1978),
- Committee on Trade policy (Abid Hussain Committee, 1984),
- High – level Committee on Balance of Payments (Rangarajan Committee 1993), and
- Committee on Capital Account Convertibility (Tarapore Committee I 1997 & Tarapore Committee II 2006).

In 2003, the Vajpayee government forms a task force under Vijay Kelkar to recommend tax reforms. In 2004, Vijay Kelkar, then advisor to the Finance Ministry, recommends GST to replace the existing tax regime.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.7) Consider the following statements with respect to “National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)”:

1. It is an initiative of RBI and Indian Banks’ Association (IBA).
2. It has launched RuPay, a card payment 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: C

Explanation: National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India, is an initiative of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks’ Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India.

- NPCI launched RuPay is an indigenously developed Payment System – designed to meet the expectation and needs of the Indian consumer, banks and merchant ecosystem.
- RuPay supports the issuance of debit, credit and prepaid cards by banks in India and thereby supporting the growth of retail electronic payments in India.

Source: NPCI

Q.8) The Utkarsh 2022, sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Regulation and functions of Central Bank
- b) Foreign Trade
- c) Skill development
- d) Doubling farmer’s income

ANS: A

Explanation: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) board finalized a three- year roadmap to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank.

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This medium term strategy — named Utkarsh 2022 — is in line with the global centralbanks' plan to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism.

Source: The Hindu

Q.9) Consider the following statements regarding “Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT)”:

1. DRTs were created to facilitate the speedy recovery of debt payable to banks and other financial institutions by their customers.
2. DRTs were set up after the passing of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDBBFI), 1993.

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: Debt Recovery Tribunals also known as DRTs were created to facilitate the speedy recovery of debt payable to banks and other financial institutions by their customers.

- The banks and financial institutions had been facing problems in recovery of loans advanced by them to individual people or business entities.
- Due to this, the banks and financial institutions started restraining themselves from advancing out loans.
- There was a need to have an effective system to recover the money from the borrower.

DRTs were set up after the passing of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDBBFI), 1993.

Source: Sriram's Economy

Q.10) Consider the following statements about the recently launched DESH STACK e-portal:

1. The e-portal will facilitate citizens to skill, upskill or re-skill through online training.
2. It will provide API-based trusted skill credentials, discovery layers and payment to find entrepreneurial opportunities and relevant jobs.

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

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

ANS: C

Explanation:

DESH STACK e-portal

- DESH stands for “Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood”.
- This portal will be launched for empowering citizens to skill, upskill or re-skill through online training.
- It will also provide API-based trusted skill credentials, discovery layers and payment to find entrepreneurial opportunities and relevant jobs.
- The portal will be aligned with industry requirements and help in improving and strengthening education and skill ecosystem in India.
- This portal will act as a central database of learners signing up for vocational skills and certifications. It will help in creating a continuous learning path for each learner.

Source: The Hindu

Environment

Q.1) Kigali agreement is an amendment to which of the following protocol?

- a) Kyoto Protocol
- b) Montreal Protocol
- c) Nagoya Protocol
- d) Cartagena Protocol

ANS: B

Explanation: The Kigali agreement is an amendment to the Montreal Protocol. It aims to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by curbing both their production and consumption. Target: To achieve over 80% reduction in HFC consumption by 2047, this will curb global increase of temperature by up to 0.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs):

1. HFCs are both synthetic and natural.
2. India will complete its phase-down of HFCs by 2032.

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: About HFCs

HFCs are entirely man-made. They are primarily produced for use in refrigeration, air-conditioning, insulating foams and aerosol propellants, with minor uses as solvents and for fire protection.

HFCs were developed to replace stratospheric ozone-depleting substances (ODS) that are currently being phased out under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Though HFCs do not impact the ozone layer, many HFCs are very powerful greenhouse gases, and a substantial number are short-lived climate pollutants with a lifetime of between 15 and 29 years in the atmosphere.

Implementation strategy of India to phase out HFCs: Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Rules will be amended to allow appropriate control of the production and consumption of Hydrofluorocarbons to ensure compliance with the Kigali Amendment will be done by mid-2024.

India will complete its phase-down of HFCs in four steps from 2032 onwards with a cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 80% in 2047.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) In which of the following states/UTs, Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is located?

- a) Ladakh
- b) Rajasthan
- c) Gujarat
- d) Manipur

ANS: C

Explanation:

Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in Gujarat. The sanctuary lies on the Central Asian Flyway. In 1988, it was declared as a wildlife sanctuary by the state government to protect the birdlife found in this open-water wetland site.

It is one of the latest Ramsar site.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Deepor Beel wetlands:

1. Deepor Beel is a perennial freshwater lake.
2. It is the only Ramsar site in Assam.

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:

About Deepor Beel:

- Deepor Beel is a perennial freshwater lake located 10 km south-west of Guwahati city, Assam.
- It was designated a Ramsar site in 2002.
- It is the only Ramsar site in Assam.
- It is also an important bird sanctuary (IBA) habituating many migrant species.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) Consider the following statements about Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021:

1. The bill has been introduced by Delhi government in wake of increasing air pollution in Delhi-NCR.
2. The bill dissolves the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority established in the NCR in 1998.

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:

About Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021:

- The Bill provides for the constitution of a Commission for better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems related to air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.
- Adjoining areas have been defined as areas in states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh adjoining the NCR where any source of pollution may cause an adverse impact on air quality in the NCR.
- The bill also dissolves the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority established in the NCR in 1998.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.6) Consider the following statements about bio-ethanol:

1. First Generation bio-ethanol uses corn seeds and sugarcane as raw material.
2. Second Generation bio-ethanol uses algae grown in wastewater, sewage or salt water to produce bio-ethanol.

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:

Bioethanol is an alternative to fossil transportation fuel. It is categorized as first (1G), second (2G) and third generation (3G), based on the source of raw material used for bioethanol production.

- First generation (1G) bioethanol uses corn seeds and sugarcane as raw material. There is not enough food for everyone; so, the use of 1G is a major concern.
- Second generation (2G) bioethanol uses inedible farm waste left over after harvest. Corn cobs, rice husks, wheat straw and sugarcane bagasse can all be transformed into cellulose and fermented into ethanol.
- Third generation (3G) bioethanol uses algae grown in wastewater, sewage or salt water to produce bioethanol.

India has been promoting 2G bioethanol to achieve its E20 target.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.7) Which of the following pair (s) is/are not correctly matched?

Lake/wet land	Associated State
1. Lonar Lake :	Madhya Pradesh
2. Keetham Lake :	Uttarakhand
3. Kabartal :	Bihar

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: India has 49 wetlands, the highest in South Asia, with two more added to the list of recognized sites of international importance under the treaty of Ramsar Convention.

- The Lonar lake in Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar, also known as Keetham lake, in Agra, have been added to the list of recognized Ramsar sites.
- Lonar lake in Maharashtra, the only crater lake of country, and Sur Sarovar, also known as Keetham lake, in Agra.
- "Wetlands are the world's natural water filters and one of the most productive ecosystem on the planet".
- Recently, Kabartal in Bihar's Begusarai district was recognized as a wetland of international importance, the first such wetland in the state, under the Ramsar Convention, according to the Union Environment Ministry.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) The "Project Tiger" – was launched in which year to protect the tigers?

- a) 1968
- b) 1972
- c) 1973
- d) 1993

ANS: C

Explanation: Project Tiger has been implemented since 1973. The main objective of the scheme is to ensure maintenance of viable population of tigers in India for scientific, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values, and to preserve areas of biological importance as natural heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people.

Source: NCERT XI – India Physical Environment

Q.9) The terms "Milpa and Ladang" is related to which of the following?

- a) Nomadic herding
- b) Hunting and gathering
- c) Shifting cultivation
- d) Water Conservation

ANS: C

Explanation: The vegetation is usually cleared by fire, and the ashes add to the fertility of the soil. Shifting cultivation is thus, also called slash and burn agriculture. It is prevalent in

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tropical region in different names, e.g. Jhuming in North eastern states of India, Milpa in Central America and Mexico and Ladang in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Source: NCERT – XII Fundamental of Human Geography

Q.10) Which of the following national park is eastern most one?

- a) Kaziranga national park
- b) Nampdhapa national park
- c) Orang national park
- d) Keibul – Lamjao national park

ANS: B

Explanation:



Source: Oxford atlas

History/ Art and Culture

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Dholavira, a Harappan city:

1. It is one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.
2. It is located in Kathiawar peninsula.

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:

Recently the UNESCO added Dholavira, a Harappan City, to its list of World Heritage Sites. One of the unique characteristics of Dholavira is that the city lies on the island of Khadir Bet in Great Rann of Kutch.

Few salient features of Dholavira:

- Trade: It was a flourishing manufacturing centre for various Harappan items like beads, bangles, copper objects. These items were traded with other Harappan cities & as well as other civilizations like Mesopotamia
- Water Management: Dholavira had only two seasonal streams which would swell and then dry up quickly. So, administrators paid extreme attention to water management.
 - ✓ Almost 10% of the city was reserved for reservoirs that could store up to 10 million litres of water.
 - ✓ Rivulets were dammed and water was diverted to large reservoirs.
 - ✓ There was a large underground stormwater drain in the city. This collected surface run-off and channeled it to the reservoir.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) Which among the following chronological order of empires is correct?

- a) Shishunaga, Nanda, Mauryas, Haryanka
- b) Haryanka, Shishunaga, Nanda, Mauryas
- c) Haryanka, Nanda, Shishunaga, Mauryas
- d) Shishunaga, Nanda, Haryanka, Mauryas

ANS: B

Explanation: Among the 16 mahajanapadas, Kasi was initially powerful. However, Kosala became dominant later.

- A power struggle broke out between Magadha, Kosala, Vrijji and Avanti. Eventually Magadha emerged as the dominant mahajanapada and established the first Indian empire.
- The first known ruler of Magadha was Bimbisara of the Haryanka dynasty. The Haryanka dynasty was succeeded by the Shishunaga dynasty.
- The Shishunagas ruled for fifty years before the throne was usurped by Mahapadma Nanda.

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- Chandragupta Maurya Founded the Mauryan Empire after winning over Nanda Dynasty.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board class.

Q.3) Consider the following pairs:

Book	Author
1. Gaha Sattasai	King Hala
2. Sariputrprakarana	Asvaghosha
3. Kamasutra	Bhasa

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: King Hala is credited with the writing of Gatha Sattasai, a collection of 700 love poems. Written in Maharshtri Prakrit dialect, it has themes similar to those found in the Tamil Sangam poetry.

- Asvaghosha is known for his Buddhacharita and is celebrated as the author of the first Sanskrit play, Sariputrprakarana, in nine acts.
- Among the Hindu treatises, we find the Manusmriti, Vatsyayana's Kamasutra and Kautilya's Arthashastra taking final shape by the second century CE.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board.

Q.4) Who among the following issued gold coins stamped with image of goddess Lakshmi?

- a) Muhammad Ghori
- b) Balban
- c) Muhammad bin Tughlaq
- d) Iltutmish

ANS: A

Explanation: An important aspect of Islam in India was its early acceptance of a long-term coexistence with Hinduism, despite all the violence that occurred in military campaigns, conquests and depredations.

- The conqueror Mu'izzuddin of Ghor had, on some of his gold coins, stamped the image of the goddess Lakshmi.
- Muhammad Tughlaq in 1325 issued a farman enjoining that protection be extended by all officers to Jain priests; he himself played holi and consorted with yogis.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board.

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Q.5) The Manicktolla bomb conspiracy or Muraripukur conspiracy is related to which of the following?

- a) Indian Home Rule Society
- b) Bharat Naujawan Sabha
- c) Anushilan Samiti
- d) Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)

ANS: C

Explanation: The whole Anushilan group was arrested including the Ghosh brothers, Aurobindo and Barindra, who were tried in the Alipore conspiracy case, variously called Manicktolla bomb conspiracy or Muraripukur conspiracy.

Source: Spectrum Modern India.

Q.6) 'Tilka Manjhi', a revolutionary freedom fighter and tribal leader is associated with which among the following tribal uprising?

- a) Santhal Hool
- b) Bhil Revolt
- c) Khasi Uprising
- d) Chuar Uprising

ANS: A

Explanation: About Tilka Manjhi:

- Tilka Manjhi organized Adivasis into an army and led the famous Santhal Hool in 1784 against the exploitative British.
- In 1770, there was a severe famine in the Santhal region and people were dying of hunger.
- Tilka Manjhi looted the treasury of the Company and distributed it among the poor and needy.
- Inspired by this noble act of Tilka, many other tribals also joined the rebellion.
- With this began his Santhal Hool, the revolt of the Santhals. He continued to attack the British and their sycophantic allies. From 1771 to 1784, Tilka Manjhi never surrendered.

Source: newsonair.gov.in

Q.7) "Commonweal" news paper was started by which of the following?

- a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- b) Gopala Krishna Goakhle
- c) Annie Besant
- d) M K Gandhi

ANS: C

Explanation:

Annie Besant first came to India on 16 November 1893. When World War I broke out in 1914, she helped launch the Home Rule League to campaign for democracy in India and dominion status within the Empire. She published New India and Commonweal. The Commonweal was a weekly dealing with issues of national reform and New India was a daily newspaper which for fifteen years was a powerful instrument promoting Home Rule and revolutionizing Indian journalism.

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Source: Spectrum Modern India

Q.8) Consider the following statements regarding the “Servants of India Society”:

1. It was founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale.
2. The aim of the society was to prepare a cadre of selfless workers who were to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit.

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: Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), a liberal leader of the Indian National Congress, founded the Servants of India Society in 1905 with the help of M.G. Ranade.

- The aim of the society was to train national missionaries for the service of India;
- to promote, by all constitutional means, the true interests of the Indian people;
- to prepare a cadre of selfless workers who were to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit.

Source: Spectrum Modern India.

Q.9) Consider the following statements:

1. A British Committee of the Indian National Congress (INC) was established in 1885.
2. INC was successfully conducted its 1892 session in London.

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: A British committee of the Indian National Congress was established in London in 1889 which had India as its organ.

- Dadabhai Naoroji spent a substantial portion of his life and income campaigning for India's case abroad.
- In 1890, it was decided to hold a session of the Indian National Congress in London in 1892, but owing to the British elections of 1891 the proposal was postponed and never revived later.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India

Q.10) Which among the following organization opposed the abolition of sati?

- a) Arya Samaj
- b) Christian Missionaries
- c) Dharma Sabha
- d) Adi-brahmo Samaj

ANS: C

Explanation: Dharma Sabha: Radhakant Deb founded this sabha in 1830. An orthodox society, it stood for the preservation of the status quo in socio-religious matters, opposing even the abolition of sati. However, it favored the promotion of Western education, even for girls.

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Schemes/Programs/Institutions

Q.1) Which of the following state/UTs has 100% tap water connections?

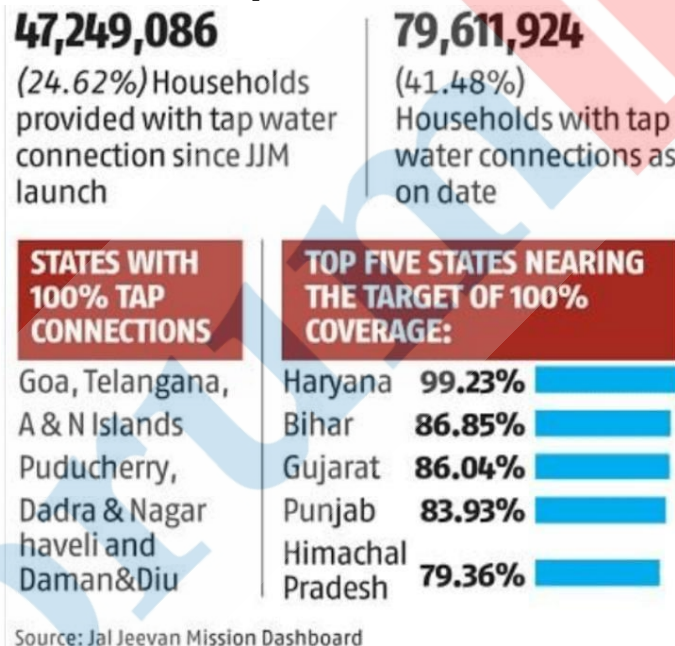
- a) Bihar
- b) Goa
- c) Delhi
- d) Chandigarh

ANS: B

Explanation: Jal Jeevan Mission has moved into its next phase of measuring and monitoring water supply.

Achievements of 1st Phase:

- In 2019, 7% of the rural households had tap water connections, which is increased to 41% in the last two years.
- Goa, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry are among states that claim to have achieved 100% tap connections in rural areas.



Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) The term 'SonChiraiya', recently seen in news, is related to which of the following?

- a) Bird conservation Programme
- b) Program to promote heritage culture of India
- c) Brand for marketing of urban Self-Help Group (SHG) products.
- d) Scheme for Self-defense training to girls.

ANS: C

Explanation:

SonChiraiya: is a brand and logo for the marketing of urban Self-Help Group (SHG) products. This will help in improving visibility and global access for the products made by urban SHG women.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) Consider the following statements about Jan ShikshanSansthan (JSS) Scheme:

1. The nodal agency for implementation is Ministry of Education.
2. It aims to provide vocational skills in non-formal mode to non-literate, neo-literates, persons with a rudimentary level of education up to 8th and school dropouts up to 12th standard in the age group of 15-45 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: A

Explanation:

Jan ShikshanSansthan (JSS) Scheme:

- The Scheme of Jan ShikshanSansthan (JSS) was formerly known as the ShramikVidyapeeth scheme.
- The scheme was launched in 1967 and was renamed as Jan ShikshanSansthan in 2000.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The scheme was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in 2018.
- **Mandate:** To provide vocational skills in non-formal mode to non-literate, neo-literates, persons with a rudimentary level of education up to 8th and school dropouts up to 12th standard in the age group of 15-45 years.
- **Target Group:** The priority groups are women, SC, ST, minorities and other backward sections of the society. Implementation: The scheme is implemented through NGOs with 100% grants from the Government of India.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Pradhan MantriShram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Scheme:

- 1 It is launched by Ministry of Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- 2 It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme that aims to ensure old age protection for Unorganized Workers.
- 3 The beneficiary should also belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Pradhan MantriShram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Scheme:

- **Launched by:** Ministry of Labour and Employment
- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme

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- **Aim:** It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme that aims to ensure old age protection for Unorganised Workers
- **Coverage:** The scheme covers unorganised workers (home-based workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, landless labourers and similar other occupations) whose monthly income is Rs 15,000/ per month or less. The beneficiary should also belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years. Moreover, they should also not be covered under New Pension Scheme (NPS), the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme or the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- Further, he/she should not be an income taxpayer.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding International Development Agency (IDA):

1. It provides long term lending for the development of economic services.
2. India is the biggest beneficiary of the IDA support.

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 International Development Agency (IDA) which is also known as the soft window of the WB was set up in 1960 with the basic aim of developing infrastructural support among the member nations, long-term lending for the development of economic services.

Its loans, known as credits are extended mainly to economies with less than \$895 per capita income.

The credits are for a period of 35–40 years, interest-free, except for a small charge to cover administrative costs.

Repayment begins after a 10-year grace period. There was no human angle to its lending. But now there remain no hard and fast differences between the purposes for the IBRD and IDA lending.

Every year developing nations make enough diplomatic attempts to carve out maximum loan disbursement for them.

India had been the biggest beneficiary of the IDA support. The total support (IBRD + IDA) for India had been \$ 91.81 billion till date.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.6) Which of the following parameters are consists of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Quota Formula?

1. Weighted average of GDP
2. Openness
3. Contribution to IMF
4. Green lending
5. International reserves

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: When a country joins the IMF, it is assigned an initial quota in the same range as the quotas of existing members of broadly comparable economic size and characteristics. The IMF uses a quota formula to help assess a member's relative position.

- The current quota formula is a weighted average of GDP (weight of 50 percent), openness (30 percent), economic variability (15 percent), and international reserves (5 percent).
- For this purpose, GDP is measured through a blend of GDP—based on market exchange rates (weight of 60 percent) and on PPP exchange rates (40 percent).
- The formula also includes a “compression factor” that reduces the dispersion in calculated quota shares across members.

Source: IMF

Q.7) “BASEL ACCORDS” is frequently in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Health Infrastructure
- b) Environmental Conservation
- c) Global Commons
- d) Banking Provisions

ANS: D

Explanation: The Basel Accords (i.e., Basel I, II and now III) are a set of agreements set by the Basel Committee on Bank Supervision (BCBS), which provides recommendations on banking regulations in regards to capital risk, market risk and operational risk. The purpose of the accords is to ensure that financial institutions have enough capital on account to meet obligations and absorb unexpected losses. They are of paramount importance to the banking World and are presently implemented by over 100 countries across the world.

Source: The Hindu

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Q8. Consider the following statements regarding Yuva Vaigyanik Karyakram (YUVIKA):

1. It was launched by NITI Aayog.
2. It was launched for XI standard students to imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications.

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: Indian Space Research Organisation has launched a special programme for School Children called “Young Scientist Programme” “YUva Vigyani KARYakram” from the year 2019.

The second session of the programme is scheduled to be held during the month of May 2020.

- The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.
- The program is thus aimed at creating awareness amongst the youngsters who are the future building blocks of our Nation. ISRO has chalked out this programme to “Catch them young”.
- The programme will be of two weeks duration during summer holidays (May 11-22, 2020) and the schedule will include invited talks, experience sharing by the eminent scientists, facility and lab visits, exclusive sessions for discussions with experts, practical and feedback sessions.
- 3 students each from each State/ Union Territory will be selected to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.
- 5 additional seats are reserved for OCI candidates across the country. Those who have finished 8th standard and currently studying in 9th standard (in the academic year 2019-20) will be eligible for the programme.
- Students who are studying in India including OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) are eligible for the programme. The selection is based on the 8th Standard academic performance and extracurricular activities.

Source: ForumIAS factly

Q.9) The “Global Social Mobility Index” is released by which of the following International Institution?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: India has been ranked very low at 76th place out of 82 countries on a new Social Mobility Index compiled by the World Economic Forum, while Denmark has topped the charts. The report, released ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of the WEF, also lists India among the five countries that stand to gain the most from a better social mobility score that seeks to measure parameters necessary for creating societies where every person

has the same opportunity to fulfill his potential in life irrespective of socioeconomic background.

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) Consider the following statements regarding the Dr. Ambedkar scheme for Social integration through Inter Caste Marriages:

1. It is applicable to 1000 couples annually.
2. Each couple gets 5 lakh rupees.
3. To avail the scheme, one of the couple should belong to either schedule caste or schedule tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Under the Dr. Ambedkar scheme for Social integration through Inter Caste Marriages scheme, 500 couples can apply annually. Each couple gets Rs 2.5 lakh, of which Rs 1.5 lakh is paid up-front. The balance amount is kept as a fixed deposit and released to the couple after three years:

- The number of couples who can avail the scheme in a state depends on its Scheduled Caste population as per the 2011 census.
- Among the beneficiary couple, one of the spouses should belong to Scheduled Caste and the other to a Non-Scheduled Caste.
- It shall be the discretion of the Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment and Chairman of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation to sanction the incentive to the Couple.

Source: The Hindu

Science and Technology

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP):

1. It is a type of DNA microarray which is used to detect polymorphisms within a population.
2. SNP chips are DNA microarrays that test genetic variation at many hundreds of thousands of specific locations across the genome.

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: Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP):

- It is a type of DNA microarray which is used to detect polymorphisms within a population.
- SNP chips are DNA microarrays that test genetic variation at many hundreds of thousands of specific locations across the genome.
- SNP chips have proven to be excellent for studying common genetic variation, which can be used to assess ancestry as well as predisposition to many complex multifactorial diseases.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) Which of the following theory argues that light is made of photons and when light shines on a metal, each photon's energy is correlated to the electron's speed on the metal's surface?

- a) Quantum theory
- b) Wave theory
- c) Electro-magnetic wave theory
- d) Law of photoelectric effect

ANS: D

Explanation: Law of photoelectric effect:

- It argues that light is made of photons and when light shines on a metal, each photon's energy is correlated to the electron's speed on the metal's surface.
- This theory redefined the composition of light, and it is held as a revolutionary theory, for which Einstein received the Nobel Prize in 1921.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) Consider the following statements about National Gene Bank:

1. National Gene Bank was established in 2006.
2. It aims to preserve the seeds of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) for future generations in the form of seeds, genomic resources, pollen etc

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: National Gene Bank:

- National Gene Bank was established in 1996.
- It aims to preserve the seeds of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) for future generations in the form of seeds, genomic resources, pollen etc.
- **Hosted By:** National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi.
- Germplasm is a live information source for all the genes present in the respective plant. It can be conserved for long periods and regenerated whenever it is required in the future.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about kala-azar:

1. It is caused by Fungi.
2. The only drug available against leishmaniasis is miltefosine.

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: A

Explanation: Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL):

- Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) is also known as kala-azar.
- Leishmaniasis is a group of diseases caused by protozoan parasites.
- The disease is characterized by irregular bouts of fever, substantial weight loss, swelling of the spleen and liver, and anemia.
- It is a neglected tropical disease that affects millions annually, making it the second most common parasitic killer after malaria.
- If the disease is not treated, the fatality rate in developing countries can be as high as 100% within 2 years.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) “Exercise Konkan”, recently seen in news, is a bilateral exercise between which of the following pair?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Exercise Konkan-2021 is a bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of the UK. It was held in English Channel in 2021.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.6) “Tianhe-2, Titan, Mira and Piz Daint” are the examples of which of the following?

- a) Supercomputers
- b) Stars in Milky Way Galaxy
- c) Nearby Galaxies
- d) Comets

ANS: A

Explanation: A supercomputer is a computer with a high level of performance as compared to a general-purpose computer. The performance of a supercomputer is commonly measured in floating-point operations per second (FLOPS) instead of million instructions per second (MIPS). Since 2017, there are supercomputers which can perform over a hundred quadrillion FLOPS (petaFLOPS). Since November 2017, all of the world's fastest 500 supercomputers run Linux-based operating systems.

Tianhe-2, a supercomputer developed by China's National University of Defense Technology, retains its position as the world's No. 1 system with a performance of 33.86 petaflop/s (quadrillions of calculations per second) on the Linpack benchmark. It was built by China's National University of Defense Technology (NUDT) in collaboration with the Chinese IT firm Inspur.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) The government of India launched Conference, Travel, Exhibition and Popular lectures (CTEP) to promote which of the following field?

- a) Biotechnology
- b) Nuclear technology
- c) Nanotechnology
- d) Space technology

ANS: A

Explanation: To popularize Biotechnology activities in India, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India provides financial assistance towards organizing Conference/ Seminar/ Symposium/ Workshop and Travel support to the researchers for presenting their papers in the conferences which are being organized outside the country. It also extends support for organizing DBT stalls in Exhibitions held within the country as well as outside the country. Financial supports are also provided for organising Popular Lectures. The collective term for these four activities is CTEP (Conference, Travel, Exhibition and Popular Lectures).

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) Consider the following statements with respect to Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC):

1. SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota, the Spaceport of India, is responsible for providing Launch Base Infrastructure for the Indian Space Programme.
2. The Centre has two launch pads from where the rocket launching operations of PSLV, GSLV and Sounding rockets are carried out.

Which of the following below given codes are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota, the Spaceport of India, is responsible for providing Launch Base Infrastructure for the Indian Space Programme. This Centre has the facilities for solid propellant processing, static testing of solid motors, launch vehicle integration and launch operations, range operations comprising telemetry, tracking and command network and mission control centre.

The Centre has two launch pads from where the rocket launching operations of PSLV and GSLV are carried out. The mandate for the centre is (i) to produce solid propellant boosters for the launch vehicle programmes of ISRO (ii) to provide the infrastructure for qualifying various subsystems and solid rocket motors and carrying out the necessary tests (iii) to provide launch base infrastructure for satellites and launch vehicles.

SDSC SHAR has a separate launch pad for launching sounding rockets. The centre also provides the necessary launch base infrastructure for sounding rockets of ISRO and for assembly, integration and launch of sounding rockets and payloads.

Source: ISRO website

Q.9) Consider the following statements with respect to Department of Space (DOS):

1. The Government of India established the Department of Space (DOS) in June 1972
2. The Department of Space (DOS) has the primary objective of promoting development and application of space science and technology to assist in all-round development of the nation

Which of the following below given codes are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The Department of Space (DOS) has the primary objective of promoting development and application of space science and technology to assist in all-round development of the nation. Towards this, DOS has evolved the following programmes:

1. Launch Vehicle programme having indigenous capability for launching spacecrafts.
2. INSAT Programme for telecommunications, broadcasting, meteorology, development of education etc.

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3. Remote Sensing Programme for application of satellite imagery for various developmental purposes.
4. Research and Development in Space Sciences and Technology for serving the end of applying them for national development.

Organization: With the setting up of Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) in 1962, the space activities in the country were initiated. In the same year, the work on Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) near Thiruvananthapuram was also started. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) was established in August 1969. The Government of India constituted the Space Commission and established the Department of Space (DOS) in June 1972 and brought ISRO under DOS in September 1972.

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) Consider the following statements with respect to DRDO:

1. DRDO, is an agency of GOI, charged with military's research and development.
2. It is head quartered in Mumbai.
3. It is under administrative control of Ministry of Science and technology.
4. It also works in the field of life science engineering.

Which of the following given below codes are correct?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is an agency of the Government of India, charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India. It was formed in 1958 by the merger of the Technical Development Establishment and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production with the Defense Science Organization. It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defense, Government of India.

Source: DRDO website

Location/IR/ Geography

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Oceanic waves:

1. Waves are movement of energy rather than movement of water particles.
2. Water particles in a wave travel in small circles.

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: Oceanic Waves

- Waves are actually the energy, not the water as such, which moves across the ocean surface.
- Water particles only travel in a small circle as a wave passes.
- Wind provides energy to the waves.
- Wind causes waves to travel in the ocean and the energy is released on shorelines.
- The motion of the surface water seldom affects the stagnant deep bottom water of the oceans.
- As a wave approaches the beach, it slows down. This is due to the friction occurring between the dynamic water and the sea floor. And, when the depth of water is less than half the wavelength of the wave, the wave breaks.
- The largest waves are found in the open oceans. Waves continue to grow larger as they move and absorb energy from the wind.

Source: NCERT

Q.2) Consider the following statements about coral reefs:

1. Coral Reefs are the rainforests of the sea.
2. Corals thrive in temperate waters.
3. Fresh water is most suitable for growth of corals.

Which of the statement given above is/are Not correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Coral Reefs

- Coral reefs are important ocean habitats and offer a compelling case of the risks of climate change.
- Reefs provide a large fraction of Earth's biodiversity—they have been called "the rain forests of the seas."
- Scientists estimate that 25 percent of all marine species live in and around coral reefs, making them one of the most diverse habitats in the world.

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- Coral characteristics:
 - Shallow water, reef-building corals have a symbiotic relationship with photosynthetic algae called zooxanthellae, which live in their tissues.
 - Stable climatic conditions: Corals are highly susceptible to quick changes. They grow in regions where climate is significantly stable for a long period of time.
 - Perpetually warm waters: Corals thrive in tropical waters [30°N and 30°S latitudes, the temperature of water is around 20°C] where diurnal and annual temperature ranges are very narrow.
 - Clear salt water: Clear salt water is suitable for coral growth, while both fresh water and highly saline water are harmful.
 - Abundant Plankton: Adequate supply of oxygen and microscopic marine food called plankton [phytoplankton], is essential for growth. As the plankton is more abundant on the seaward side, corals grow rapidly on the seaward side.
 - Little or no pollution: Corals are highly fragile and are vulnerable to climate change and pollution and even a minute increase in marine pollution can be catastrophic.

Source: NCERT

Q.3) Consider the following statements about UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA):

1. UNAMA was established in 2021.
2. Its mandate is to work on humanitarian grounds for people during Taliban conquest.

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: About UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA):

- UNAMA is a UN Special Political Mission established to assist the state and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
- **Established in:** UNAMA was established in 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401.
- **Mandate:** Its original mandate was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. Reviewed annually, this mandate has been altered over time to reflect the needs of Afghanistan.
- Bonn Agreement was the initial series of agreements passed in 2001 and intended to recreate the State of Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
- **Headquarters:** Kabul, Afghanistan.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Sinamalé Bridge which connects Malé with the islands of Hulhulé and Hulhumalé in Maldives has been built by which of the following countries?

- a) India
- b) China
- c) Japan
- d) USA

ANS: B

Explanation: Sinamalé Bridge is a 1.39 km long bridge built by the Chinese Government. The bridge connects Malé with the islands of Hulhulé and Hulhumalé.

About Greater Male Connectivity Project:

- Greater Male Connectivity Project is the largest ever infrastructure project in the Maldives.
- The project involves the construction of a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link that will connect the Maldives capital Malé with the neighbouring islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) Who among the following geographers is related to 'primate city' concept?

- a) August Losch
- b) Mark Jefferson
- c) Griffith Taylor
- d) W. Christaller

ANS: B

Explanation: A primate city is the largest city in its country or region, disproportionately larger than any others in the urban hierarchy. A 'primate city distribution' is a rank-size distribution that has one very large city with many much smaller cities and towns, and no intermediate-sized urban centres – a King effect, visible as an outlier on an otherwise linear graph, when the rest of the data fit a power law or stretched exponential function. The 'law of the primate city' was first proposed by the geographer Mark Jefferson in 1939. He defines a primate city as being "at least twice as large as the next largest city and more than twice as significant. A primate city is number one in its country in most aspects, like politics, economy, media, culture and universities.

Source: NCERT

Q.6) Which is the warmest layer of the atmosphere?

- a) Thermosphere
- b) Troposphere
- c) Stratosphere
- d) Mesosphere

ANS: A

Explanation: The thermosphere is the layer of the Earth's atmosphere directly above the mesosphere. It extends from about 90 km to 1,000 km above our planet. In thermosphere temperature can reach up to 4,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Thus, making it warmest layer of the atmosphere.

Source: NCERT

Q.7) Consider the following statement about saline soils of India:

1. Saline soils contain a larger proportion of sodium, potassium and magnesium.
2. Saline soils are also known as Urvara.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: India has varied relief features, landforms, climatic realms and vegetation types. These have contributed in the development of various types of soils in India. In ancient times, soils used to be classified into two main groups – Urvara and Usara, which were fertile and sterile, respectively.

Saline Soils

- They are also known as Usara soils.
- Saline soils contain a larger proportion of sodium, potassium and magnesium, and thus, they are infertile, and do not support any vegetative growth.
- They have more salts, largely because of dry climate and poor drainage.
- They occur in arid and semi-arid regions, and in waterlogged and swampy areas.
- Their structure ranges from sandy to loamy.
- They lack in nitrogen and calcium.
- Saline soils are more widespread in western Gujarat, deltas of the eastern coast and in Sunderban areas of West Bengal. In the Rann of Kuchchh, the Southwest Monsoon brings salt particles and deposits there as a crust.
- Seawater intrusions in the deltas promote the occurrence of saline soils. In the areas of intensive cultivation with excessive use of irrigation, especially in areas of green revolution, the fertile alluvial soils are becoming saline.
- Excessive irrigation with dry climatic conditions promotes capillary action, which results in the deposition of salt on the top layer of the soil. In such areas, especially in Punjab and Haryana, farmers are advised to add gypsum to solve the problem of salinity in the soil.

Source: NCERT

Q.8) Consider the following pairs of crops grown and type of soil:

Crop	Type of soil
1. Wheat	Clayey
2. Cotton	Sandy-loam
3. Lentils	Loamy

Which of the pair given above is/are correctly matched?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Different types of soils are found in different parts of India. In some parts there is clayey soil, in some parts there is loamy soil while in some other parts there is

sandy soil. Soil is affected by wind, rainfall, temperature, light and humidity. These are some important climatic factors which affect the soil profile and bring changes in the soil structure.

The climatic factors, as well as the components of soil, determine the various types of vegetation and crops that might grow in any region. Clayey and loamy soils are both suitable for growing cereals like wheat, and gram. Such soils are good at retaining water.

For paddy, soils rich in clay and organic matter and having a good capacity to retain water are ideal. For lentils (masoor) and other pulses, loamy soils, which drain water easily, are required.

For cotton, sandy-loam or loam, which drain water easily and can hold plenty of air, are more suitable. Crops such as wheat are grown in the fine clayey soils, because they are rich in humus and are very fertile. So, all the pairs are correctly matched. Hence, option D is the correct answer.

Source: NCERT

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

Disaster	Type of Natural Disaster
1. Blizzards	Atmospheric
2. Drought	Territorial
3. Storm Surge	Aquatic

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Human beings the world over have experienced disasters and have faced and lived with them. Now people are becoming aware and various steps have been initiated at different levels for mitigating the effects of disasters. Identification and classification of disasters is being considered as an effective and scientific step to deal promptly and efficiently with the disasters. Broadly, natural disasters can be classified under four categories. The table below summarizes classification of natural disaster.

Classification of Natural Disasters			
Atmospheric	Terrestrial	Aquatic	Biological
Blizzards Thunderstorms Lightning Tornadoes Storm Surge Drought Hailstorm Frost, Heat Wave or Loo.Cold Waves, etc.	Earthquakes Volcanic Eruptions Landslides Avalanches Subsidence Soil Erosion	Floods Tidal Waves Ocean Currents Tropical Cyclone Tsunami	Plants and Animals as colonisers (Locusts, etc.). Insects infestation— fungal, bacterial and viral diseases such as bird flu, dengue, etc.

Source: NCERT

Q.10) Consider the following statements about 'Chinook':

1. It is the local wind on the eastern slopes of the Rockies.
2. Chinook is cold wind.
3. The wind blows in a south westerly direction to the prairies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Chinook winds – also known as Foehn winds in other parts of the world – are a type of warm, dry wind that occur on the downward slope of a mountain when warm air has lost its moisture.

In Canada, the winds originate from the Pacific Coast. Cool as they blow up the Canadian Rockies, they warm significantly as they drop down the eastern slopes, freeing Calgarians for a few blissful moments from winter's icy grasp. It comes in a south-westerly direction to the prairies and has a considerable effect on the local pastures.

Source: G C Leong

Polity

Q.1) Consider the following statements with respect to Finance Commission:

1. Article 248 of Indian constitution provides Finance Commission.
2. Finance commission constituted by Parliament for every five years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

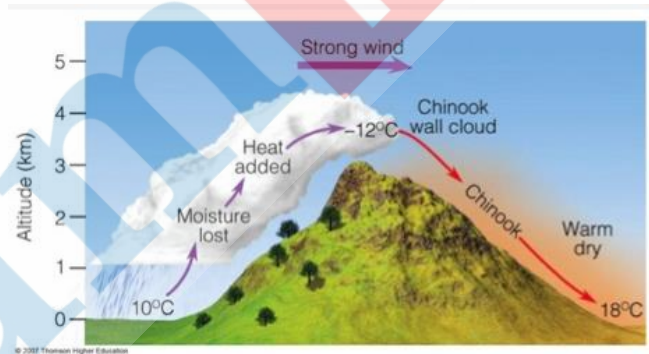
- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANS: D

Explanation: Article 280 provides for a Finance Commission as a quasi-judicial body. It is constituted by the President every fifth year or even earlier. It is required to make recommendations to the President on the following matters:

- The distribution of the net proceeds of taxes to be shared between the Centre and the states, and the allocation between the states, the respective shares of such proceeds.
- The principles which should govern the grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre (i.e., out of the Consolidated Fund of India).
- The measures needed to augment the consolidated fund of a state to supplement the resources of the panchayats and the municipalities in the state on the basis of the recommendations made by the State Finance Commission.
- Any other matter referred to it by the President in the interests of sound finance.

Source: Laxmikant



Q.2) Which State Appointed Rajamannar Committee to give recommendations on Inter-State Relation?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: In 1969, the Tamil Nadu Government (DMK) appointed a three-member committee under the chairmanship of Dr P V Rajamannar to examine the entire question of Centre–state relations and to suggest amendments to the Constitution so as to secure utmost autonomy to the states. The committee submitted its report to the Tamil Nadu Government in 1971.

Source: The Hindu

Q.3) Consider the following statements with respect to Inter-State Council:

1. It is established by Parliament.
2. Article 263 contemplates the establishment of an Inter-State Council to effect coordination between the states and between Centre and states.

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: Article 263 contemplates the establishment of an Inter-State Council to effect coordination between the states and between Centre and states. Thus, the President can establish such a council if at any time it appears to him that the public interest would be served by its establishment. He can define the nature of duties to be performed by such a council and its organization and procedure.

Source: Laxmikant

Q.4) Consider the following statements with respect to “Chief Minister”:

1. The Constitution contains specific procedure for the selection and appointment of the Chief Minister.
2. Article 164 only says that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the governor.

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 Constitution does not contain any specific procedure for the selection and appointment of the Chief Minister. Article 164 only says that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the governor. However, this does not imply that the governor is free to appoint any one as the Chief Minister. In accordance with the conventions of the parliamentary system of government, the governor has to appoint the leader of the majority party in the state legislative assembly as the Chief Minister.

Source: Laxmikant

Q.5) Consider the following statements with respect to “High Court”:

1. The Constitution of India provides for a high court for each state.
2. 5th Amendment Act authorized the Parliament to establish a common high court for two or more states or for two or more states and a union territory.

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 Constitution of India provides for a high court for each state, but the Seventh Amendment Act of 1956 authorized the Parliament to establish a common high court for two or more states or for two or more states and a union territory. The territorial jurisdiction of a high court is co-terminus with the territory of a state. Similarly, the territorial jurisdiction of a common high court is co-terminus with the territories of the concerned states and union territory.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of August 2021

Q.6) Part XXI of the constitution related to which of the following?

- a) Emergency Provisions
- b) Inter-State Relations
- c) Special Provisions related to States
- d) Special Category Status

ANS: C

Explanation: Articles 371 to 371-J in Part XXI of the constitution contain special provisions for twelve states viz., Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka. The intention behind them is to meet the aspirations of the people of backward regions of the states or to protect the cultural and economic interests of the tribal people of the states or to deal with the disturbed law and order condition in some parts of the states or to protect the interests of the local people of the states.

Source: Laxmikant

Q.7) Which of the following rights and privileges are conferred on the citizens of India and not to the aliens?

1. Right under Article 15
2. Right under Article 20
3. Right under Article 21

Select the correct code from given below options:

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

ANS: A

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Explanation: The Constitution confers the following rights and privileges on the citizens of India (and denies the same to aliens):

1. Right against discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15).
2. Right to equality of opportunity in the matter of public employment (Article 16).
3. Right to freedom of speech and expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession (Article 19).
4. Cultural and educational rights (Articles 29 and 30).
5. Right to vote in elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly.
6. Right to contest for the membership of the Parliament and the state legislature.
7. Eligibility to hold certain public offices, that is, President of India, Vice-President of India, judges of the Supreme Court and the high courts, governor of states, attorney general of India and advocate general of states.

Source: 9 PM compilation of August 2021

Q.8) Consider the following statements about Fundamental Duties:

1. The Fundamental Duties in the Indian Constitution are inspired by the Constitution of USA.
2. Sardar Swaran Singh Committee made recommendations about Fundamental duties.
3. All the recommendations of the committee were accepted.

Select the correct code from given below options:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The Fundamental Duties in the Indian Constitution are inspired by the Constitution of erstwhile USSR. Notably, none of the Constitutions of major democratic countries like USA, Canada, France, Germany, Australia and so on specifically contain a list of duties of citizens. Japanese Constitution is, perhaps, the only democratic Constitution in world which contains a list of duties of citizens.

In 1976, the Congress Party set up the Sardar Swaran Singh Committee to make recommendations about fundamental duties, the need and necessity of which was felt during the operation of the internal emergency (1975–1977). The committee recommended the inclusion of a separate chapter on fundamental duties in the Constitution. It stressed that the citizens should become conscious that in addition to the enjoyment of rights, they also have certain duties to perform as well. The Congress Government at Centre accepted these recommendations and enacted the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1976. This amendment added a new part, namely, Part IVA to the Constitution. This new part consists of only one Article, that is, Article 51A which for the first time specified a code of ten fundamental duties of the citizens.

Interestingly, certain recommendations of the Committee were not accepted by the Congress Party and hence, not incorporated in the Constitution. These include:

- The Parliament may provide for the imposition of such penalty or punishment as may be considered appropriate for any non-compliance with or refusal to observe any of the duties.

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- No law imposing such penalty or punishment shall be called in question in any court on the ground of infringement of any of Fundamental Rights or on the ground of repugnancy to any other provision of the Constitution.
- Duty to pay taxes should also be a Fundamental Duty of the citizens.

Source: 9 PM Compilation of August 2021

Q.9) What is the difference between “vote-on-account” and “interim budget”?

1. The provision of a “vote-on-account” is used by a regular Government, while an “interim budget” is a provision used by a caretaker Government.
2. A “vote-on-account” only deals with the expenditure in Government’s budget, while an “interim budget” includes both expenditure and receipts.

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: A vote-on-account only deals with the expenditure side of the government's budget while an Interim Budget is a complete set of accounts, including both expenditure and receipts, akin to a full budget. For instance, P. Chidambaram had presented the last interim budget of the UPA Government on February 17, 2014, while Arun Jaitley presented the full budget - and the Modi government's first one - five months later.

From a moral standpoint, government ought to avoid introducing radical changes in an Interim Budget since it may not have the mandate for the next five years and, if there is a regime change at the Centre, the new government will have its own policy game plan.

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) Which of the following is/are among the Fundamental Duties of citizens laid down in the Indian Constitution?

1. To preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture
2. To protect the weaker sections from social injustice
3. To develop the scientific temper and spirit of inquiry

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Following are the Fundamental Duties under the Constitution of India which is given in Part IV-A of the Constitution of India which was inserted by the (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976.

It shall be the duty of every citizens of India-

1. to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem

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2. to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
3. to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
4. to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
5. to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
6. to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
7. to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures;
8. to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
9. to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
10. to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.
11. who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

Source: Laxmikant

Economy

Q.1) The Silver line project is sometimes seen in news is related to which of the following state?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: The Kerala Rail Development Corporation (KRDCL) is confident that the Rs.66,405 crore Thiruvananthapuram-Kasaragod semi-high-speed rail corridor project (named Silver Line) for which year 2024 has been set as the deadline, will be economically feasible and attain operational break-even within 10 years of being commissioned.

- Of the total cost of the 532-km project, around 50% will be loan at less than 1% interest from multilateral lending agencies such as KfW, AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) or ADB (Asian Development Bank).
- Repayment is assured since there will be a rate of return of 8.1% on the investment. The balance amount will be raised from equity and (subordinate) debt from from the State and Central governments.

Source: EPIC August 2021.

Q.2) The “Draft Scheme of Reconstruction” is recently in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Banking
- b) Railways
- c) Roadways
- d) Port rejuvenation

ANS: A

Explanation: RBI has placed the financially troubled Yes Bank under a moratorium (temporary suspension).

- After placing this bank under a moratorium, the RBI announced a draft Scheme of Reconstruction.
- This scheme entails the State Bank of India (SBI) investing capital to acquire a 49% stake in the restructured private lender.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) Which of the following statements is/are correct about “India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL)”?

1. It is jointly owned by Public sector and Private sector.
2. It provides long-term financial assistance to viable infrastructure projects.

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: B

Explanation: IIFCL is a wholly-owned Government of India Company set up in 2006 to provide long-term financial assistance to viable infrastructure projects through the Scheme for Financing Viable Infrastructure Projects through a Special Purpose Vehicle called India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL), broadly referred to as SIFTI.

- The sectors eligible for financial assistance from IIFCL are as per the Harmonized list of Infrastructure Sub-Sectors as approved by the Government and as amended from time to time.
- These broadly include transportation, energy, water, and sanitation, and communication, social and commercial infrastructure.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.4) The validity time period of a patent in India is how many years?

- a) 5 years
- b) 10 years
- c) 20 years
- d) 30 years

ANS: C

Explanation: The term of every patent in India is twenty years from the date of filing the patent application, irrespective of whether it is filled with provisional or complete specification. However, in case of applications filed under the Patent Cooperative Treaty (PCT), the term of twenty years begins from the priority date.

Source: Factly

Q.5) With reference to the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is collaboration between private industry and CSIR.
2. It manages a database of knowledge that exists in various local languages.

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: B

Explanation: Traditional Knowledge Digital Library is a collaboration – between the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (Dept. of AYUSH), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

- It manages a database of knowledge that exists in various local languages such as Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Tamil.
- TKDL has also converted the database into five international languages in patent application formats.
- So far, over 2lakh medicinal formulations have been transcribed and the database is present in 30 million A4-size pages.

Source: TKDL

Q.6) Which of the following report/reports is/are not released by World Bank?

1. Global Economic Prospect Report.
2. Global Financial Development Report.
3. Global Financial Stability Report.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Both Global Economic Prospect Report and Global Financial Development Report are released by World Bank.

NOTE: Global Financial Stability Report is released by International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Source: World Bank

Q.7) In money market trading is done on a rate known as discount rate which is determined by?

- a) Repo rate
- b) Reverse repo rate
- c) Cash reserve ratio
- d) Statutory liquidity ratio

ANS: A

Explanation: Money market is the short-term financial market of an economy.

- In this market, money is traded between individuals or groups (i.e., financial institutions, banks, government, companies, etc.), who are either cash-surplus or cash-scarce.
- Trading is done on a rate known as discount rate which is determined by the market and guided by the availability of and demand for the cash in the day-to-day trading.
- The 'repo rate' of the time (announced by the RBI) works as the guiding rate for the current 'discount rate'.

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.8) “A graphic curve which advocates a relationship between inflation and unemployment in an economy”- describes which of the following?

- a) Phillips curve
- b) Laffer Curve
- c) Lorenz curve
- d) Gini coefficient

ANS: A

Explanation: Phillips curve is a graphic curve which advocates a relationship between inflation and unemployment in an economy.

- As per the curve there is a ‘trade off’ between inflation and unemployment, i.e., an inverse relationship between them.
- The curve suggests that lower the inflation, higher the unemployment and higher the inflation, lower the unemployment.
- During the 1960s, this idea was among the most important theories of the modern economists.
- This concept is known after the economists who developed it—Alban William Housego Phillips (1914–75).

Source: TMH Ramesh Singh

Q.9) Which of the following is/are not recommendations of “N K Singh committee”?

1. The combined debt-to-GDP ratio of the centre and states should be brought down to 60 per cent by 2023.
2. The Committee advocated Primary Deficit as the operating target to bring down public debt.
3. The Committee also recommends that centre reduce its revenue deficit steadily by 0.5% GDP points each year.

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 FRBM Review Committee headed by former Revenue Secretary, NK Singh was appointed by the government to review the implementation of FRBM. In its report submitted in January 2017, titled, ‘The Committee in its Responsible Growth: A Debt and Fiscal Framework for 21st Century India’, the Committee suggested that a rule based fiscal policy by limiting government debt, fiscal deficit and revenue deficits to certain targets is good for fiscal consolidation in India. Following are the main recommendations of the NK Singh Committee.

- Public debt to GDP ratio should be considered as a medium-term anchor for fiscal policy in India. The combined debt-to-GDP ratio of the centre and states should be brought down to 60 per cent by 2023 (comprising of 40 per cent for the Centre and 20% for states) as against the existing 49.4 per cent, and 21per cent respectively.
- Fiscal deficit as the operating target: The Committee advocated fiscal deficit as the operating target to bring down public debt. For fiscal consolidation, the centre should reduce its fiscal deficit from the current 3.5% (2017) to 2.5% by 2023.

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- Revenue deficit target: The Committee also recommends that the central government should reduce its revenue deficit steadily by 0.25 percentage (of GDP) points each year, to reach 0.8% by 2023, from a projected value of 2.3% in 2017.
- Formation of Fiscal Council to advise the government: The Committee advocated formation of institutions to ensure fiscal prudence in accordance with the FRBM spirit. It recommended setting up an independent Fiscal Council. The Council will provide several advisory functions.
- Escape Clause to accommodate counter cyclical issues.

Source: Sriram's IAS

Q.10) In economics "Dutch disease" is related to which of the following?

- a) Exports
- b) Animal rearing
- c) Financial Markets
- d) Environmental conservation

ANS: A

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: TMH Ramesh Singh

Environment

Q.1) Consider the following statements with respect to “Keystone Species”:

1. It can be any organism, from animals and plants to bacteria and fungi.
2. Keystone species maintain the local biodiversity of an ecosystem, influencing the abundance and type of other species in a habitat.

Which of the following below given codes are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: A keystone species—which can be any organism, from animals and plants to bacteria and fungi—is the glue that holds a habitat together. It may not be the largest or most plentiful species in an ecological community, but if a keystone is removed, it sets off a chain of events that turns the structure and biodiversity of its habitat into something very different.

Although all an ecosystem’s many components are intricately linked, these are the living things that play a pivotal role in how their ecosystem functions. Keystone species maintain the local biodiversity of an ecosystem, influencing the abundance and type of other species in a habitat. They are nearly always a critical component of the local food web.

One of the defining characteristics of a keystone species is that it fills a critical ecological role that no other species can. Without its keystone species, an entire ecosystem would radically change—or cease to exist altogether. It’s important to note that a species’ role can change from one ecosystem to the next, and a species that is considered a keystone in one environment may not be considered the same in another.

Source: Shankar IAS

Q.2) World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. The campaign organized by which of the following?

- a) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of wild animals.
- b) Agreement on the Conservation of African – Eurasian Migratory water birds.
- c) UNEP
- d) Both A and B

ANS: D

Explanation: **World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)** is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. It has a global outreach and is an effective tool to help raise global awareness of the threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

Every year people around the world take action and organize public events such as bird festivals, education programmes, exhibitions and bird-watching excursions to celebrate WMBD.

World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water birds (AEWA) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

This year the **theme of World Migratory Bird Day** is **“Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!”** and will put the spotlight on the impact of plastic pollution on migratory birds and their habitats.

Source: Factly

Q.3) Which of the following Convention has been adopted on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal?

- a) Basel Convention
- b) Stockholm Convention
- c) Rotterdam Convention
- d) Vienna Convention

ANS: A

Explanation: The Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted in 1989 and it came into force in 1992. It is the most comprehensive global environmental agreement on hazardous wastes and other wastes. With 175 Parties (as at 31 March 2011), it has nearly universal membership. The Convention aims to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from the generation, trans-boundary movements and management of hazardous wastes and other wastes. The Basel Convention regulates the trans-boundary movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes and obliges its Parties to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. The Convention covers toxic, poisonous, explosive, corrosive, flammable, eco-toxic and infectious wastes. Parties also have an obligation to minimize the quantities that are transported, to treat and dispose of wastes as close as possible to their place of generation and to prevent or minimize the generation of wastes at source.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about vulture protection in India:

1. Asia's first vulture conservation breeding centre is located in Haryana.
2. The only vulture sanctuary in India is located in Andhra Pradesh.

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 Vulture Conservation Breeding Centre (VCBC) is a joint project of the Haryana Forest Department and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). It is a collaborative initiative to save the three species of vultures, the White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed, from looming extinction.

- Subsequent to the release of the South Asia Vulture Recovery Plan in February 2004, the Vulture Care Centre was adapted and upgraded to being the first JCBC,

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in line with a key recommendation of the Recovery Plan to set up a conservation breeding programme for the three critically endangered Gyps species of vultures.

- Diclofenac implicated as the main cause of vulture decline
- The centre played an important role in confirming that diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, given to cattle to treat pain and inflammation, was the main cause of vulture mortality and population crash in vultures.

The following are the important steps taken by Government for protection of Vultures in the country:

- Protection status of White backed, Long Billed and Slender Billed Vultures has been upgraded from Schedule IV to Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Bombay Natural History Society in collaboration with the Haryana State Forest Department has taken up a project on conservation breeding of vultures. A Vulture Captive Care facility has been established at Panchkula.
- Government of India has formulated a National Action Plan (2006) on Vulture Conservation. The Action Plan provides for strategies, actions for containing the decline of vulture population through ex-situ, in-situ vulture conservation.
- Captive breeding centres at Zoos at Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Junagarh and Hyderabad have also been set up through Central Zoo Authority.
- Ramadevarabetta vulture sanctuary is the only vulture sanctuary in India, located in Karnataka.

Source: The Hindu

Q.5) Consider the following pollutants:

1. Ozone
2. Nitrogen oxides
3. Volatile organic compounds
4. Mercury

Which of the following above has given pollutants NOT primary pollutant?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- d) None

ANS: A

Explanation: Primary pollutants are any type of pollutant directly into the environment. They differ from secondary pollutants because secondary pollutants must form in the atmosphere, whereas primary pollutants do not. Primary pollutants can be emitted from many sources including cars, coal-fired power plants, natural gas power plants, biomass burning, natural forest fires, volcanoes, and many more. The effects of primary pollutants are of concern as they can be harmful to humans, animals and plants. Their contribution to the formation of secondary pollutants is also concerning, as this is what causes harmful ground level ozone to form, along with different smog's, especially in densely populated cities such as Los Angeles. The emission of primary pollutants has decreased considerably in the past years, due to improved regulations, technology and economic changes.

Types of primary pollutants include:

- Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- Carbon monoxide(CO)
- Volatile organic compounds(VOCs)
- Sulfur oxides (SO_x)

- Particulate matter(PM)
- Mercury

Source: Factly

Q.6) Consider the following statements with respect to Kyoto Protocol:

1. It is a binding agreement on parties.
2. Kyoto protocol entered into force on 2001.

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

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

ANS: A

Explanation: The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.

Recognizing that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity, the Protocol places a heavier burden on developed nations under the principle of –common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005. The detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001, and are referred to as the –Marrakesh Accords Its first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) Consider the following with respect to nutrients:

1. Copper
2. Manganese
3. Zinc
4. Sulphur

Which of the following above is NOT a micro nutrient?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: The essential elements can be divided into macronutrients and micronutrients. Nutrients that plants require in larger amounts are called macronutrients. About half of the essential elements are considered macronutrients: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and sulfur. The first of these macronutrients, carbon (C), is required to form carbohydrates, proteins, nucleic acids, and many other compounds; it is, therefore, present in all macromolecules. On average, the dry weight (excluding water) of a cell is 50 percent carbon, making it a key part of plant bio-molecules. Micronutrients: are needed in very small amounts. Their adequate

concentrations in plants are generally below the 100 parts per million (ppm) level. The essential micronutrients are zinc (Zn), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), boron (B), chlorine (Cl), copper (Cu), molybdenum (Mo), cobalt (Co), vanadium (V), sodium (Na), and silicon (Si). Deficiencies of the last four minerals are very rare. Sodium is probably essential for only a few plants indigenous to saline soils. Silicon may be considered more of a secondary or macronutrient but it is –quasi-essential in that it has been shown to enhance growth in certain laboratory experiments but plants grown in its absence still thrived. Silicon is second only to oxygen in its abundance in soil because most soil mineral are silicates or aluminosilicates.

Source: Shankar IAS

Q.8) Which of the following is a Flagship Species?

- a) A species that plays an essential role in the structure, functioning or productivity of a habitat or ecosystem at a defined level.
- b) A species or group of species chosen as an indicator of, or proxy for, the state of an ecosystem or of a certain process within that ecosystem.
- c) A species to colonize bare earth after a disturbance or when the environment is too harsh to allow for colonization by other species.
- d) A species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause.

ANS: D

Explanation: Flagship species:

A flagship species is a species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause. By focusing on, and achieving conservation of that species, the status of many other species which share its habitat – or are vulnerable to the same threats - may also be improved. Flagship species are usually relatively large, and considered to be 'charismatic' in western cultures. Flagship species may or may not be keystone species and may or may not be good indicators of biological process.

Source: Shankar IAS

Q.9) Consider the following organisms:

- 1. Algae
- 2. Lichens
- 3. Fungi

Which of the above given organisms will colonize a bare rock?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: The Pioneer species are hardy species which are the first to colonize barren environments or previously biodiverse steady-state ecosystems that have been disrupted, such as by fire. Some lichens grow on rocks without soil, so may be among the first of life forms, and break down the rocks into soil for plants.

Examples of the plants and organisms that colonize such areas are pioneer species:

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- Barren sand - lyme grass, sea couch grass, Marram grass
- Salt water - green algae, marine eel grass
- Clear water - algae, mosses, freshwater eel grass
- Solidified lava flows - in Hawaii: swordfern, 'ōhi'a lehua, 'ohelo and 'āma'u
- Disturbed areas such as construction sites, road cuttings and verges, cultivated lands –
- Bare clay - Orchids
- Mountains - Lichens

Source: Shankar IAS

Q.10) Consider the following statements with respect to Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary:

1. Sanctuary located in Jharkhand State
2. Recently Wildlife researchers documented the presence of an Indian gaur in the Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary (PWS)

Which of the following below given codes are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Wildlife researchers recently documented the presence of an Indian gaur in the Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary (PWS) in Roha and Murud talukas of Raigad district. According to the Maharashtra forest department, this is the first time a sighting of this species of bison has been reported or documented at the sanctuary. The Indian Gaur is listed as Schedule I species under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and is tagged as 'vulnerable' on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List. Gaurs are the world's largest and tallest wild bovines, with 85% of their current population found in India. Male gaurs weigh 1,000-1,500kg, while females weigh 700-1,000kg. Their height ranges from 165-220cm (5 to 7ft).

Source: The Hindu

History

Q.1) Which of the following text mentions about agricultural activities during later vedic period?

- a) Satapatha Brahamana
- b) Panchvimsa Brahamana
- c) Aiteraya Brahmana
- d) Jaiminiya Brahmana

ANS: A

Explanation: Agricultural activities increased during the Late Vedic period. The Satapatha Brahmana mentions rituals related to ploughing undertaken by the kings.

- This suggests the importance given to cultivation by the rulers, and the shift to agriculture to support the increasing population.
- The god Balarama is depicted with a plough, which suggests the importance of cultivation. The Vedic people cultivated barley and rice, and wheat.
- Wheat was the staple food of Punjab region. The Vedic people began to use rice in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The use of rice, rather than wheat, is noticed in the Vedic rituals.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board class.

Q.2) In which of the following states, Indian Institute of Heritage would be established?

- a) Uttar Pradesh
- b) Gujarat
- c) Tamil Nadu
- d) West Bengal

ANS: A

Explanation: About Indian Institute of Heritage:

The government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.

- It will be a world-class university that would focus on the conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage, while offering research, development and dissemination of knowledge associated with heritage.
- It would also offer Masters and Ph. D courses in History of Arts, Conservation, Museology, Archival Studies, Archaeology, Preventives Conservation, Epigraphy and Numismatics, Manuscriptology etc. as well as conservation training facilities to in-service employees and the students of the Indian Institute of Heritage.
- This would be a standalone Institution of its type in the country and will have positive impact on higher education and research in the fields related to rich Indian heritage and its conservation.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) The term 'Masland', recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) A fine quality mat
- b) Hand painted pottery of north eastern India
- c) Traditional ship building process
- d) Metal craft of Jharkhand

ANS: A

Explanation: About Masland:

- Madurkathi mats, or madur, are mats woven in West Bengal from a reed called madurkottir, or madurkathi, a sedge of the family Cyperaceae.
- Madur mat-making is a long-standing tradition, centred on the Medinipur district, and is an important part of the rural economy.
- Madur mats are made of natural fibres.
- The mats are woven mainly by weavers of the Mahishya caste, and predominantly by women.
- This cottage industry contributes significantly to village household income.
- The mats are non-conductive and sweat- absorbing, making them an essential household item in West Bengal's hot and humid climate.
- These mats are also used for religious purposes.
- On March 28, 2018, Indian Patent Office granted the Government of West Bengal a Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for madurkathi, under registration no. 567 in respect of handicrafts.
- 'Masland' a fine quality madur mat, which takes weeks to weave.
- During the 18th century, Masland mats flourished under royal patronage.
- In 1744, Nawab Alibardi Khan issued a charter to land-owning jagirdar in this regard, and as a result, it was obligatory to supply Masland mats for use in the Collectorate.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Which of the following temples has nine planetary temples in a group that are a "symbol of nine planets"?

- a) Rudreswara Temple
- b) Narayankoti Temple
- c) Tara Tarini Temple
- d) Brihadisvara Temple

ANS: B

Explanation: About Narayankoti Temple:

- The temple is a group of ancient temples, about 2 km from Guptkashi on the Rudraprayag-Gaurikund highway.
- This is the only place in the country which has nine planetary temples in a group that are a "symbol of nine planets".
- It is devoted to Lakshmi Narayana who is associated with Pandavas.
- It is believed that these temples were constructed in the 9th century.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) Consider the following statements about Sree Narayana Guru:

1. He was a catalyst and leader from Tamil Nadu.
2. He is founder of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) organization.

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: A

Explanation: **About Sree Narayana Guru**

- Sree Narayana Guru was a catalyst and leader from Kerala who reformed the oppressive caste system that prevailed in society at the time whose philosophy always advocated social equality, education for all, and spiritual enlightenment.
- Born in the Ezhava caste, Narayan Guru had experienced discrimination from the upper caste of society.
- One of his famous sayings in Malayalam was 'One caste, one religion, one god for all.'
- Narayana Guru consecrated the first temple of Lord Shiva in 1888 where an idol was ordained by a non-brahmin in Aruvippuram village of Kerala sparking off the anti-caste revolution against the upper-caste Brahmin communities.
- Later, in 1903, he established the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) organization as the founder and president that continues to mark its strong presence to this day.
- The famous 'Vaikom Satyagraha' protest movement against caste discrimination and untouchability abolished untouchability and inequality.
- Hence, this day is quite important in Kerala and is observed as a public holiday.
- The Sivagiri pilgrimage was established in 1924 to promote the virtues of cleanliness, education, devotion, agriculture, handicrafts, and trade.
- His philosophy and teachings are a way of life for the people of Kerala.
- He passed away on September 20, 1928.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.6) The third Buddhist Council convened at the time of Ashoka was held at which of the following places?

- a) Gandhara
- b) Ujjain
- c) Amaravati
- d) Patliputra

ANS: D

Explanation: One of the major events of Ashoka's reign was the convening of the Third Buddhist sangha (council) in 250 BCE in the capital Pataliputra.

- Ashoka's deepening commitment to Buddhism meant that royal patronage was extended to the Buddhist establishment.

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- An important outcome of this sangha was the decision to expand the reach of Buddhism to other parts of the region and to send missions to convert people to the religion.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board class 11.

Q.7) Which of the following is the philosophy propounded by Adi Sankara?

- Advaita
- Dvaita
- Shudh dvaita
- Visistavaita

ANS: A

Explanation: Fundamentally, Sankara's Advaita or non-dualism had its roots in Vedanta or Upanishadic philosophy.

- His attempts to root out Buddhism and to establish smarta (traditionalist) mathas resulted in the establishment of monasteries in different places viz., Sringeri, Dvaraka, Badrinath, and Puri, which were headed by Brahmin pontiffs.
- Sankara looked upon Saiva and Vaishnava worship as two equally important aspects of the Vedic religion.
- Monastic organization and preservation of Sanskrit scriptures were the two major thrusts of Sankara School.

Source: The Hindu

Q.8) Which of the following Indo-Greek King erected a pillar or garuda-dhvaja with its capital adorned by a figure of Garuda, in honour of God Krishna (Vaasudeva)?

- Heliodorus
- Menander
- Demetrius II
- Euthydemus

ANS: A

Explanation: Another Indo-Greek king whose name is remembered is Antialcidas (or Antialkidas), c. 110.

- He is known to us primarily because his emissary, Heliodorus, who was sent to the court of King Bhagabhadra erected a pillar or garudadhvaja with its capital adorned by a figure of Garuda, in honour of God Krishna (Vasudeva).
- Heliodorus had evidently become a follower of Vishnu. (The pillar stands in isolation in the middle of an open ground in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh.)

Source: Tamil Nadu state board.

Q.9) Consider the following pairs of terms related to Bahmani Kingdom:

Term	Meaning
1. Vakil-us-saltana	lieutenant of the kingdom
2. Kotwal	Minister of Finance
3. Wasir-i-ashraf	Chief of Police

Which of the above given pair is/are correctly matched?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: In order to facilitate smooth administration, as followed in the Delhi Sultanate, Bahman Shah divided the kingdom into four territorial divisions called tarafs, each under a governor.

Each governor commanded the army of his province (Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Bidar, and Berar) and was solely responsible for both its administration and the collection of revenue.

Mohammed I appointed a council of eight ministers of state:

1. Vakil-us-saltana or lieutenant of the kingdom, the immediate subordinate of the sovereign.
2. Waziri-kull, who supervised the work of all other ministers;
3. Amir-i-jumla, minister of finance;
4. Wasir-i-ashraf, minister of foreign affairs and master of ceremonies;
5. Nazir, assistant minister for finance;
6. Peshwa who was associated with the lieutenant of the kingdom;
7. Kotwal or chief of police and city magistrate in the capital, and
8. Sadr-i-jahan or chief justice and minister of religious affairs and endowments.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board.

Q.10) Arrange the following battles fought by Babur in chronological order:

1. Battle of Chanderi
2. Battle of Panipat
3. Battle of Khanwa

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: B

Explanation: First Battle of Panipat, 21 April 1526: Babur then turned towards the Lodi governed Punjab. After several invasions, he defeated the formidable forces of Ibrahim Lodi with a numerically inferior army at Panipat. Babur won this battle with the help of strategic positioning of his forces and the effective use of artillery.

- Battle of Khanwa, 1527: Babur decided to take on Rana Sanga of Chittor, who as ruler of Mewar, had a strong influence over Rajasthan and Malwa. Babur selected Khanwa, near Agra, as a favourable site for this inevitable encounter.

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- Battle of Chanderi, 1528: The next significant battle that ensured Babur's supremacy over the Malwa region was fought against Medini Rai at Chanderi. Following this victory Babur turned towards the growing rebellious activities of Afghans. Source: Tamil Nadu state board.

ForumIAS

Schemes/Programs/Institutions

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing/fitting of

aids/appliances (ADIP) scheme:

1. The scheme would be implemented solely by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
2. There is no monthly income cap for an eligible person.

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: About Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing/fitting of aids/appliances (ADIP) scheme:

- **Objective:** To assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhancing their economic potential.
- **Implementation:** Through implementing agencies such as NGOs, National Institutes under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and ALIMCO (a PSU that manufactures artificial limbs).
- **Eligibility:** A person satisfying all the following conditions are eligible:
 - Indian citizen of any age
 - Has 40% disability or more (must have the requisite certificate)
 - Monthly income, not more than Rs.20000.
 - In the case of dependents, income of parents/guardians should not exceed Rs.20000.
 - Must not have received assistance during the last 3 years for the same purpose from any source. However, for children below 12years of age, this limit would be one year.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.2) Which of the following portal/APP has been launched to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis?

- a) 'PM-DAKSH' Portal
- b) 'Adi-Prashikshan' Portal
- c) AVRODH APP
- d) UMANG APP

ANS: A

Explanation: About the Portal and App:

- **Developed by:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, in collaboration with NeGD (National E-Governance Division).

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- **Objective:** To make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis.
- The youth of the target groups will now be able to avail the benefits of skill development training programmes more easily.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.3) Consider the following statements about MPLADS:

1. It is a Central sponsored scheme.
2. It was launched in 2014.

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: About MPLADS

- Launched in 1993, it is a central sector scheme for MPs to recommend works of developmental nature in their constituencies
- **Objective:** Creating durable community assets based on locally felt needs.
- **Parent Body:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)
 - The funds – Rs. 5 crore/annum/MP – under the scheme are non-lapsable.
 - Funds are released in the form of grants in-aid directly to the district authorities.
 - MPs have only recommendatory role and the district authority is empowered to examine the eligibility of works, select the implementing agencies & monitor it.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about “Seekho Aur Kamao” Scheme:

1. It is a skill development Central sector scheme for minorities.
2. It ensures 75% placement, out of which 50% should be in organized sector.

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: About Seekho aur Kamao Scheme:

- It is a skill development Central sector scheme for minorities (youth of 14 – 35 years) and aimed at providing employment and employment opportunities, improving the employability of existing workers, school dropouts etc.
- In the last 7 years appx. 3.92 lakh persons have been benefitted under this employment-oriented scheme.
- It ensures 75% placement, out of which 50% should be in organized sector.
- Post placement support of Rs. 2000/- per month is provided to placed trainees for two months as placement assistance.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.5) Consider the following statements about PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana:

1. This will replace National Health Mission.
2. It aims to strengthen of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: In the Budget speech of FY 21-22, 'Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana' (PMASBY) scheme has been announced on 1st February, 2021, for an outlay of about Rs. 64,180 Cr over six years (till FY 25-26).

This will be in addition to the National Health Mission.

The main interventions under the scheme, to be achieved by FY 2025-26, are:

- Support for 17,788 rural Health and Wellness Centres in in 10 High Focus States
- Establishing 11,024 urban Health and Wellness Centres in all the States.
- Setting up of Integrated Public Health Labs in all districts and 3382 Block Public Health Units in 11 High Focus states;
- Establishing Critical Care Hospital Blocks in 602 districts and 12 Central Institutions;
- Strengthening of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), its 5 regional branches and 20 metropolitan health surveillance units;
- Expansion of the Integrated Health Information Portal to all States/UTs to connect all public health labs;
- Operationalisation of 17 new Public Health Units and strengthening of 33 existing Public Health Units at Points of Entry, that is at 32 Airports, 11 Seaports and 7 land crossings;
- Setting up of 15 Health Emergency Operation Centres and 2 mobile hospitals;
- Setting up of a National Institution for One Health, a Regional Research Platform for WHO South East Asia Region, 9 Bio-Safety Level III laboratories and 4 regional National Institutes for Virology.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.6) Consider the following statements about online portal TAPAS (Training for Augmenting Productivity and Services):

1. It is launched by MSME.
2. It aims to impart training and enhance the knowledge and skills for the capacity building of the participants.

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: A

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Explanation: Recently, the Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment has launched an online portal TAPAS (Training for Augmenting Productivity and Services).

• The idea of TAPAS was conceptualised at a time when exploring the online medium for work and education had become imperative due to the outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic.

About the initiative

- It is an initiative of National Institute of Social Defense (NISD) whereby various courses in the field of social defence for the capacity building of stakeholders are offered.
- **Objective:** To impart training and enhance the knowledge and skills for the capacity building of the participants.
- It is a standard MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) platform with course material such as filmed lectures and e-study material.
- MOOC is a free Web-based distance learning program that is designed for the participation of large numbers of geographically dispersed students.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.7) Consider the following statements about E-Shram Portal:

1. It is launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. It aims at building a national database for Unorganised Workers to ensure targeted delivery and social security.

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: E-Shram Portal launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment aims at building a national database for Unorganised Workers to ensure targeted delivery and social security.

About the Portal:

- 38 Crore unorganised workers will be registered.
- Coverage includes Construction Workers, Migrant Workers, Street Vendors, Domestic Workers, Milkmen, Truck drivers, Fishermen, Agriculture Workers and similar others.
- Database will be authenticated by Aadhar.
- E-Shram Card to be accepted across the country and accidental insurance coverage for a year is given.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.8) "RoDTEP Scheme", recently seen in news is related to which of the following sector?

- a) Exports
- b) Health
- c) Education
- d) Poverty alleviation

ANS: A

Explanation: The RoDTEP scheme was announced by Union Government in 2019 to boost exports by allowing reimbursement of taxes and duties, which are not exempted or refunded under any other scheme.

- At present, embedded duties and taxes, which are not refunded under any other scheme, range from 1-3%.
- Under the scheme, rebate of these taxes will be given in the form of duty credit/electronic script.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.9) 'Yuktdhara Portal', recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- Geospatial Planning
- Inter-linking of river project
- Dairy produce
- Petroleum

ANS: A

Explanation: The "Yuktdhara" is a new Geospatial Planning Portal that will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes, i.e., MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Per Drop More Crop and Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana etc., along with field photographs using remote sensing and geographic information system-based data.

The name given is very apt as word 'Yukt' is derived from Yojanam, the planning and 'Dhara' indicates the flow.

It is a culmination of untiring joint efforts of ISRO and Ministry of Rural development made towards realizing a G2G service for rural planning in support of decentralized decision making.

Source: EPIC August 2021

Q.10) 'Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP)', recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- Petroleum
- Alcohol
- Real estate
- Arms and Ammunition

ANS: A

Explanation: In an attempt to boost domestic hydrocarbon production, the petroleum and natural ministry launched the sixth bid round under the liberal Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP).

Earlier, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the Policy framework on reforms in the exploration and licensing sector for enhancing domestic exploration and production of oil and gas.

About Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)

- The Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) replacing the erstwhile New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) were approved in 2016.
- The Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) along with the National Data Repository (NDR) was launched in June 2017 as the key drivers to accelerate the Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in India.

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- Under OALP, companies are allowed to carve out areas they want to explore oil and gas in.
- Companies can put in an expression of interest (EOI) for any area throughout the year but such interests are accumulated thrice in a year.
- The areas sought are then offered for bidding.
- This policy is different from the past where the government identified areas and offered them for bidding.

Source: EPIC August 2021

ForumIAS

Science and Technology

Q.1) India' ISRO has been collaborating on 'LUPEX, a robotic lunar mission' with which of the following organization?

- a) NASA
- b) ROSCOSMOS
- c) JAXA
- d) EUSPA

ANS: C

Explanation: LUPEX is a robotic lunar mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The mission aims to send a lunar rover and lander to explore the South Pole region of the Moon in 2024.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Fragile X syndrome (FXS):

1. Fragile X syndrome (FXS) is a genetic disorder.
2. The syndrome is the leading inherited cause of autism.

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: Fragile X syndrome (FXS) is a genetic disorder. It is also known as Martin-Bell syndrome or Marker X syndrome. The syndrome is the leading inherited cause of autism in 4% of the population worldwide. The syndrome is caused by changes in a gene called FMR1, which makes an important protein (FMRP). This protein is required for brain development. Children with Fragile X syndrome make too little or none of it. The symptoms are learning difficulty, speech delay, aggressive behaviour, hyperactivity, attention deficit, problems in motor skills, etc.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.3) PRANA Portal, recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Air Pollution
- b) Life Insurance
- c) Polymetallic Nodules exploration
- d) Artificial intelligence

ANS: A

Explanation: PRANA Portal for air pollution: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has launched 'PRANA' (prana.cpcb.gov.in) Portal. It has been developed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in partnership with Knowledge Lens (a B2B product company). PRANA stands for Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in non-Attainment cities. It is a portal for monitoring the implementation of the National Clean Air

Program (NCAP). It will support tracking of physical as well as financial status of city air action plan implementation and disseminate information on air quality management efforts under NCAP to the public.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.4) Xenon1T Experiment, recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Nuclear fission experiment
- b) Dark matter Experiment
- c) Robotics
- d) Artificial intelligence

ANS: B

Explanation: Xenon1T Experiment: The XENON1T experiment is the world's most sensitive dark matter experiment and was operated deep underground at the INFN Laboratori Nazionali del Gran Sasso in Italy.

Dark Energy and Dark Matter:

- The visible matter makes up less than 5% of the universe.
- The rest of the Universe is made of dark matter (27%) and dark energy (68%).
- Dark energy is the mysterious form of energy that makes up about 68% of the universe.
- Dark energy has been noted as "the most profound mystery in all of science". While dark matter attracts and holds galaxies together, dark energy repels and causes the expansion of our universe. Both components are invisible.
- More is known about dark matter, since its existence was suggested as early as the 1920s, while dark energy wasn't discovered until 1998.
- Large-scale experiments like XENON1T have been designed to directly detect dark matter, by searching for signs of dark matter 'hitting' ordinary matter while dark energy is more elusive.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.5) With reference to Nipah virus, consider the following statements:

1. It is a zoonotic virus.
2. The only available vaccine is the antiviral drug Ribavirin.

Which of the above statements is/are Not correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation:

About Nipah Virus:

- Nipah Virus(NiV) is a zoonotic virus. The first outbreaks of the Nipah virus among humans was reported from Malaysia (1998) and Singapore (1999).
- **Host Reservoir of Nipah Virus:** The animal host reservoir for this virus is known to be the fruit bat, commonly known as flying fox. Fruit bats are known to transmit this virus to other animals like pigs, and also dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

How does it spread?

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- It is a zoonotic virus, meaning it has been transmitted from animals to human beings.
- The transmission happens mainly through direct contact with these animals or through the consumption of food contaminated by the saliva or urine of these infected animals.
- Person-to-person transmission is not fully established yet.

Symptoms of Nipah Virus infection: Fever, respiratory symptoms including cough, sore throat, aches, fatigue and encephalitis. The death rate for Nipah virus is 70%.

Treatment for Nipah Virus infection: There is no vaccine against Nipah virus. The only available treatment is supportive cough care. Ribavirin, an antiviral drug, was used to treat encephalitis in 2018.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.6) Consider the following statements about Inspiration4 Mission:

1. Inspiration4 is the world's first all-civilian mission to orbit.
2. The mission involves circling the Earth for three days, and then splashing down into the Indian Ocean.
3. The flight will be privately operated by SpaceX.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: About Inspiration4:

- Inspiration4 is the world's first all-civilian mission to orbit.
- The flight will be privately operated by SpaceX (US Private Space Company) using a previously-flown Crew Dragon capsule launched to low Earth orbit.
- Inspiration4 will blast off from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on September 15.
- The mission involves circling the Earth for three days, and then splashing down into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Inspiration4 will orbit the Earth at 575km, higher than the International Space Station (408km) and the Hubble space telescope (547km).
- This will be the farthest distance travelled by a crewed mission since 2009, when astronauts last went to repair the Hubble.
- The mission will raise awareness and funds for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in US.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.7) "REX MKII", recently seen in news is related to which of the following?

- a) Space Launch Vehicle
- b) Indian Super-computer
- c) Army Robot
- d) Humanoid Robot

ANS: C

Explanation: About REX MKII

- The army robot is capable of patrolling battle zones, tracking infiltrators, and opening fire on enemy targets.
- It is operated by an electronic tablet and can be equipped with two machine guns, cameras and sensors.
- It shall provide logistical assistance to troops by carrying ammunition supplies, critical medical equipment, water, and food, as well as evacuating injured personnel on stretchers.
- The system can also gather intelligence through a situation-awareness system
- The unmanned vehicle is the latest addition to the world of drone technology, which is rapidly reshaping the modern battlefield.
- These semi-autonomous machines allow armies to protect their soldiers, while critics fear this marks another dangerous step toward robots making life-or-death decisions.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.8) Consider the following statements about hypersonic missile:

1. These are able to travel at velocities of at least five times the speed of sound -- Mach 5.
2. India recently became 4th nation to possess a hypersonic missile.

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:

What is a hypersonic missile?

- Hypersonics are defined as being able to travel at velocities of at least five times the speed of sound -- Mach 5, or more than 6,100 kilometres (3,800 miles) per hour.
- They can also manoeuvre in mid-flight, making them much harder to track and intercept than traditional projectiles.
- By cutting flight times, they also reduce the opportunity to respond.
- Depending on the design, they can be capable of carrying nuclear warheads or conventional only, and have the potential to alter the strategic balance.

Which countries possess them?

Russia, USA and China

- Russia is generally seen as the world leader in technology so far, developing a range of new hypersonic weapons that
- In July it successfully tested the Zircon, a ship-launched hypersonic missile travelling at seven times the speed of sound.

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- It already has Avangard hypersonic glide vehicles and the air-launched Kinzhal (Dagger) missiles in its arsenal.

Source: The Hindu

Q.9) “Artemis Accords”, recently seen in news, is related to which of the following?

- Political commitment to return humans to the Moon.
- Exploration mission in Arctic Region
- Mineral exploration in South China Sea
- De-weaponisation of world

ANS: A

Explanation: Artemis Accords:

The Artemis Accords are a political commitment between governments participating in the Artemis Program, an American-led effort to return humans to the Moon by 2024, and to ultimately expand and deepen space exploration.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.10) Consider the following statements about Waste Management Technology Program:

1. It has been launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST).
2. It was launched in 2015 in alignment with Swachh Bharath Abhiyan.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: About Waste Management Technology Program:

- It has been launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) in 2015 in alignment with Swachh Bharath Abhiyan.
- The aim of the program is to promote the development of suitable technologies with the potential to clean the environment from the huge number of residuals generated by industrial development and consumption lifestyles.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Location/IR/Geography

Q.1) From which state among the following, 'Judima, a local rice wine' has received GI tag?

- a) Assam
- b) Goa
- c) West Bengal
- d) Bihar

ANS: A

Explanation: About Judima:

- Judima has been awarded the geographical indication (GI) tag.
- Judima is a rice wine made from sticky rice (glutinous rice called Bora) which is steamed and mixed with traditional herbs called Thembra (*Acacia pennata*).
- The wine is a specialty of the Dimasa tribe of the state of Assam.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Khavda Renewable Energy Park:

1. It will be the world's largest renewable energy park built in state of Rajasthan.
2. It will be a hybrid renewable energy park, as it will produce power using both solar energy and wind energy.

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: About Khavda Renewable Energy Park:

- Khavda Renewable Energy Park is the world's largest renewable energy park in Gujarat's Kutch. The Park will be built along the Indo-Pak border at Khavda.
- The Park will generate 30GW of clean energy. It will be a hybrid renewable energy park, as it will produce power using both solar energy and wind energy.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.3) Consider the following countries:

1. Australia
2. China
3. Japan

India holds 2+2 dialogue with which of the above countries?

Select the correct answer using codes given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: '2+2 Dialogue' is a term adopted in foreign diplomacy that implies a dialogue between two countries' Defence and External Affairs ministries. The goal of the 2+2 dialogue is to facilitate the highest-level dialogue on the bilateral, regional, and global issues between the countries. India holds such talks with the US, Japan and Australia.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.4) Consider the following countries:

1. UK
2. USA
3. India
4. Japan

Which among the above is not a part of diamond democracies?

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: What is Quad? Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) is a forum of India, US, Japan, and Australia. It is called as "diamond democracies". It is founded with the objective of free and open Indo – Pacific and to ensure prosperity in the region.

What is the background of Quad? Quad as an idea was first formulated during Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief in Tsunami of 2004.

Later, Japan proposed it as an "arc of democracy". However, it was only in November 2017 Quad was formally established.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.5) Brahmani is a major seasonal river in which of the following states?

- a) Karnataka
- b) Madhya Pradesh
- c) Chhattisgarh
- d) Odisha

ANS: D

Explanation: About Brahmani River:

- The Brahmani is a major seasonal river in the Odisha state of eastern India.
- The Brahmani is formed by the confluence of the Sankh and South Koel rivers.
- Together with the river Baitarani, it forms a large delta before emptying into the Bay of Bengal at Dhamra.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.6) "Qeqertaq Avannarleq", a tiny island, recently seen in news is located off the coast of which of the following?

- a) Iceland
- b) New Zealand
- c) Greenland
- d) Alaska

ANS: C

Explanation: About Qeqertaq Avannarleq:

- It is a tiny, uninhabited and previously unknown island discovered recently off the coast of Greenland.
- Measuring 60×30 metres and with a peak of three metres above sea level, it has now become the new northernmost piece of land on Earth.
- Before this, Oodaaq was marked as the Earth's northernmost terrain.
- The discovery comes as a battle is looming among Arctic nations, the US, Russia, Canada, Denmark and Norway for the control of the North Pole and of the surrounding seabed, fishing rights and shipping routes exposed by melting ice due to climate change.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.7) Consider the following pairs:

Sea bordering	country
1. Adriatic Sea	Albania
2. Black Sea	Croatia
3. Caspian Sea	Kazakhstan
4. Mediterranean Sea	Morocco
5. Red Sea	Syria

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Countries bordering Adriatic sea: The Adriatic Sea is a part of the Mediterranean Sea positioned between the eastern coastline of Italy, and countries of the Balkan Peninsula, from Slovenia, south through Croatia, Montenegro, and to Albania. The southern boundary of the sea ends in the Strait of Otranto between Albania and Italy's Salento Peninsula. Immediately south of that strait the Ionian Sea begins.

Countries bordering Black sea: The Black Sea lies between southeastern Europe and Asia Minor. Excluding its northern arm, the Sea of Azov, the Black Sea occupies about 168,500 square miles (436,400 square kilometers). It is connected to the Aegean Sea through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles, and has been of critical importance to regional commerce throughout the ages. This major inland sea is bordered by six countries — Romania and Bulgaria to the west; Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia to the north and east; and Turkey to the south. Additionally, it is impacted by another 10 nations through the five major rivers that empty into the Black Sea, the largest of which is the Danube River.

Countries bordering Caspian sea: The five countries Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Iran share their boundary with the Caspian Sea

Countries bordering Mediterranean Sea: The countries surrounding the Mediterranean in clockwise order are Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; Malta and Cyprus are island countries in the sea.

Countries bordering Red sea: There are six countries (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti) bordering the Red Sea.

Source: Atlas

Q.8) “Pichavaram mangrove” forest is located in which of the following state?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Pichavaram mangrove is one of the largest mangrove in India, situated at Pichavaram near Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. Pichavaram ranks among the one of the most exquisite scenic spot in Tamil Nadu and home of many species of Aquatic birds.

Source: ICSE – Total Geography and ‘The Hindu’

Q.9) 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.

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- The resolution seeks to set up new cyber norms considered as counter alternative to the US backed Budapest Accord.

Source: The Hindu

Q.10) 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

Polity

Q.1) Consider the following statements about 7th schedule of Indian Constitution:

1. It distributes the legislative subjects between the Union and States.
2. Social Security, Education and Electricity are some of subjects of state list.

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 Seventh Schedule distributes the legislative subjects between the Union and States. Both the Union and the State Legislatures are empowered to enact laws on the Concurrent List.

At present, Concurrent List has 47 subjects, including subjects like Criminal Law and Procedure, Contracts, Bankruptcy, and Insolvency, Economic and Social Planning, Social Security, Education, Shipping in Inland Waterways, Forests, Electricity, Price Control, Acquisition of Property, Marriage and Divorce etc. Education and Forests were transferred to the Concurrent List in 1976 through the 42nd Amendment Act.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.2) Consider the following statements about National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET):

- 1 The NEET is a qualifying test for only graduate medical course in India.
- 2 The exam is conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA).

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: About National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET):

- The Medical Council of India (MCI) and Dental Council of India (DCI) in 2012 had introduced the common medical entrance examination or NEET. Later, it has been statutorily incorporated under Section 10D of the Indian Medical Council (IMC) Act. The Supreme Court also upheld the validity of the law.
- The NEET is a qualifying test for any graduate and postgraduate medical course in India. The NEET is mandatory for all Indian institutions except certain institutions including AIIMS, PGIMER, and JIPMER.
- The exam is conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA).
- The NEET exam is conducted online and in 11 languages. These include English, Hindi, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Marathi, Urdu, Bengali, Telugu, Kannada, and Assamese.

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- Medical colleges in a particular state have 85% seats reserved for the native students and 15% (All India Quota) seats for the students from other states.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.3) Which among the following publishes World Happiness Report?

- a) World Bank
- b) UNDP
- c) UN
- d) Global Happiness Organization

ANS: C

Explanation: About World Happiness Report:

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations released the World Happiness Report 2021, a day before the International Happiness Day. This year it focuses on the effects of Covid-19 and how people all over the world have fared. The World Happiness Report ranks 149 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.

The rankings are based on polling (Gallup World Poll) which looks at six variables:

- Gross Domestic Product per Capita (Purchasing Power Parity).
- Social Support.
- Healthy life expectancy at birth.
- Freedom to make life choices.
- Generosity.
- Perceptions of corruption.
- Respondents are asked to rate their own current lives on a 0-10 scale.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.4) Which of the following states/UTs tabled a bill to ensure 'Right to Sit'?

- a) Kerala
- b) Tamil Nadu
- c) Delhi
- d) Gujarat

ANS: B

Explanation:

The Tamil Nadu Government has tabled a bill in the State Assembly that recognizes workers 'right to sit'. Kerala is the only other State to have legislated on the 'right to sit' in 2018. The bill seeks to amend the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act, 1947. The amendment makes it mandatory for business establishments to provide seating arrangements for their employees who stand for long hours. The bill, if passed, will ensure a chair to each worker and a whole lot of dignity besides helping the employees avoid the discomfort and health issues that arise from standing throughout the day.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.5) Which of the following is/are example/examples of direct democracy?

1. Referendum
2. Recall
3. Initiative

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: Democracy is of two types: direct and indirect. In direct democracy, the people exercise their supreme power directly as is the case in Switzerland.

- There are four devices of direct democracy, namely, Referendum, Initiative, Recall and Plebiscite.
- In indirect democracy, on the other hand, the representatives elected by the people exercise the supreme power and thus carry on the government and make the laws.
- This type of democracy, also known as representative democracy, is of two kinds: parliamentary and presidential.
- The Indian Constitution provides for representative parliamentary democracy under which the executive is responsible to the legislature for all its policies and actions.
- Universal adult franchise, periodic elections, rule of law, independence of judiciary, and absence of discrimination on certain grounds are the manifestations of the democratic character of the Indian polity.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.6) Consider the following statements regarding right to property:

1. It was deleted from the list of Fundamental Rights by the 1st Amendment Act, 1951.
2. It is made a legal right under Article 276-A in Part XII of the Constitution.

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 right to property was deleted from the list of Fundamental Rights by the 44th Amendment Act, 1978.

- It is made a legal right under Article 300-A in Part XII of the Constitution.
- So at present, there are only six Fundamental Rights.

Source: Laxmikanth.

Q.7) Which of the following Article of Indian Constitution says that directive principles are fundamental in the governance of the country?

- a) Article 37
- b) Article 42
- c) Article 48
- d) Article 51

ANS: A

Explanation: The Constitution (Article 37) itself says that these principles are fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.

Source: Laxmikanth.

Q.8) Which of the following amendment/amendments is/are NOT comes under Article 368?

- 1. Simple Majority
- 2. Special Majority
- 3. Special Majority with half of the states ratification

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Article 368 provides for two types of amendments, that is, by a special majority of Parliament and also through the ratification of half of the states by a simple majority.

- But, some other articles provide for the amendment of certain provisions of the Constitution by a simple majority of Parliament, that is, a majority of the members of each House present and voting (similar to the ordinary legislative process).
- Notably, these amendments are not deemed to be amendments of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 368.

Source: Indian Polity by Laxmikanth

Q.9) The funds under Statutory Grants to the states are charged upon which of the following?

- a) Consolidated Fund of India
- b) Contingency Fund of India
- c) Public Accounts of India
- d) Both A & B

ANS: A

Explanation: Article 275 empowers the Parliament to make grants to the states which are in need of financial assistance and not to every state.

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- Also, different sums may be fixed for different states. These sums are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India every year.
- Apart from this general provision, the Constitution also provides for specific grants for promoting the welfare of the scheduled tribes in a state or for raising the level of administration of the scheduled areas in a state including the State of Assam.
- The statutory grants under Article 275 (both general and specific) are given to the states on the recommendation of the Finance Commission.

Source: Laxmikanth

Q.10) With reference to the qualifications of the Vice President, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. He should be a citizen of India.
2. He should have completed 30 years of age.
3. He should be qualified for election as a member of the Lok Sabha.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: To be eligible for election as Vice-President, a person should fulfill the following qualifications:

- He should be a citizen of India.
- He should have completed 35 years of age.
- He should be qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.
- He should not hold any office of profit under the Union government or any state government or any local authority or any other public authority.

Source: Laxmikanth

Economy

Q.1) Consider the following statements about Account Aggregator (AA):

1. Account Aggregator is a non-banking financial company that facilitates sharing of financial information in a real-time manner between regulated entities.
2. The licence for Account Aggregators (AAs) is issued by SEBI.

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: Account Aggregator: is a non-banking financial company that facilitates sharing of financial information in a real-time manner between regulated entities.

- The Account Aggregator is engaged in the business of providing the service of retrieving or collecting financial information pertaining to its customer.
- It is also engaged in consolidating, organizing and presenting such information to the customer or any other financial information as may be specified by the bank.
- The licence for Account Aggregators (AAs) is issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Account aggregator systems will act as an intermediary to collect data from Financial Information Providers (FIP) like Bank, NBFC, mutual funds that hold the consumer's personal financial data. The data will be shared with the Financial Information Users (FIU) like the lending bank that wants access to the borrower's data to determine if the borrower qualifies for a loan. Banks can play a dual role – as a FIP and as an FIU. However, for sharing customer data, the bank or financial institution will have to take the customer's consent.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.2) Which of the following describes Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)?

- a) It is a precursor to an FTA.
- b) It is a scheme for Horticulture produce.
- c) It is a scheme to ensure MSP for farmers.
- d) It deals with crop failure due to hail storm.

ANS: A

Explanation: An early harvest deal is a precursor to an FTA, in which the trading partners reduce tariff barriers on limited goods to promote trade.

What are the reasons for India's poor success in converting EHS into full-fledged FTAs?

1. Higher domestic tariffs: India has higher domestic tariffs in some of the most trade dynamic sectors, relative to other developing countries,
2. India hesitates to offer "more" preferential tariff lines in its FTAs,
3. Industrial lobby from domestic sectors limits the potential of trade liberalization,

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4. Persisting Issues in the negotiations of trade: For example, liberalization of the dairy sector was among the major contributory factors for India's withdrawal from the RCEP.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.3) NIRF Rankings is related to which of the following?

- a) Education
- b) Health
- c) Financial services
- d) Automobile

ANS: A

Explanation: NIRF Rankings: The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Education. The objective of the Framework is to rank higher educational institutions in the country based on objective criteria to promote competitive excellence.

The institutions are assessed and ranked based on five parameters

- 1. Teaching, Learning and Resources (TLR),
- 2. Research and Professional Practice (RP),
- 3. Graduation Outcomes (GO),
- 4. Outreach and Inclusivity (OI),
- 5. Peer Perception.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Shoonya Initiative:

- 1. Shoonya is an initiative to promote zero-pollution delivery vehicles by working with consumers and the industry.
- 2. It is an initiative by Ministry of Heavy Industries.

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: Shoonya Initiative: NITI Aayog along with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), an independent non-profit organization has launched Shoonya Initiative. Shoonya is an initiative to promote zero-pollution delivery vehicles by working with consumers and the industry. It aims to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the urban deliveries segment and creates consumer awareness about the benefits of zero-pollution delivery.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.5) Which of the following has issues first-ever Euro denominated green bond issuance from India?

- a) Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC)
- b) Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd
- c) L & T Finance Limited
- d) Aditya Birla Finance Limited

ANS: A

Explanation: Euro Green Bond: Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) has issued its maiden Euro Green Bond. It is the first-ever Euro denominated green bond issuance from India. It is the first-ever Euro issuance by an Indian NBFC and the first Euro bond issuance from India since 2017.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.6) Which among the following economic recoveries, the recession period is longest?

- a) W Shaped Recovery
- b) K shaped recovery
- c) L shaped recovery
- d) U shaped recovery

ANS: C

Explanation: Types of Economic Recoveries:

- **V shaped:** The economy experiences a sharp decline but then bounces back almost immediately to its pre-recession level.
- **U shaped:** The economy declines and then spends a significant period of time at the trough before improving.
- **W shaped:** This is also known as a double-dip recession. There is a brief economic comeback but then the economy falls a second time.
- **L shaped:** L-shaped recovery has the lengthiest recession period of all. The long period of recession is dubbed as depression. After a sharp decline, GDP begins to increase, but recovery is very gradual and lengthy. It can take years for the economy to get back to where it was pre-downturn.
- **K shaped:** One segments of the economy recovers rather quickly (more like V or U-shaped recovery) while the other segment recovers much slowly (like L shaped). The divergence between the two segments is similar to two lines of the letter K. Many economists predict that economic recovery post COVID pandemic will Be K shaped.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.7) A report titled, “Global Risks Report” has been released by which of the following organization/institution?

- a) World Bank
- b) IMF
- c) World Economic Forum
- d) UNCTAD

ANS: C

Explanation: Global Risks Report:

- The World Economic Forum recently released the Global Risks Report 2022.
- Cybersecurity, pandemic, climate change and space advancements are the emerging risks to global economy.
- The global economy is to shrink by 2.3% by 2024. However, in developing countries this is to be 5.5%. In rich countries, it will be 0.9%.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.8) Consider the following statements about UNCTAD's Investment Trends Monitor:

1. The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India were 26 per cent higher as compared to 2020.
2. FDI flows to South Asia decreased by 24 per cent.

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

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Investment Trends Monitor:

- According to the recent Investment Trends Monitor Report issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows increased by 77 per cent to an estimated USD 1.65 trillion in 2021, from USD 929 billion in 2020.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India fell by 26 per cent in 2021, compared to 2020. In 2020, FDI to India was recorded at USD 64 billion. This was 27 per cent more compared to USD 51 billion in FDI in 2019.
- FDI flows to South Asia decreased 24 per cent to \$54 billion in 2021 from \$71 billion in 2020.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD):

- **Establishment:** UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body established in 1964.
- **Headquarter:** It is a permanent intergovernmental body headquartered at Geneva in Switzerland.
- **Objective:** It promotes development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.9) "Lorenz curve" is associated to which of the following?

- a) Unemployment
- b) Inflation
- c) Inequality
- d) Climate Change

ANS: C

Explanation: A graph showing the degree of inequality in income and wealth in a given population or an economy. It is a rigorous way to measure income inequality. In this method (for example), personal incomes in an economy are arranged in increasing order; the cumulative share of total income is then plotted against the cumulative share of the population. The curve's slope is thus proportional to per capita income at each point of the population distribution. In the case of complete equality of income, the Lorenz curve will be a straight line and with greater curvature the inequality rises proportionally—the Gini Coefficient measures this inequality.

Source: Ramesh Singh

Q.10) “Tarapore committee” recommendations related to which of the following area?

- a) Currency Convertibility
- b) Administrative Price Mechanism
- c) Insurance sector
- d) Trade sector

ANS: A

Explanation: India’s foreign exchange earning capacity was always poor and hence it had all possible provisions to check the foreign exchange outflow, be it for current purposes or capital purposes (remember the draconian FERA). But the process of economic reforms has changed the situation to unidentifiable levels.

- Current Account: Current account is today fully convertible (operationalized on 19 August, 1994). It means that the full amount of the foreign exchange required by someone for current purposes will be made available to him at official exchange rate and there could be an un prohibited outflow of foreign exchange (earlier it was partially convertible).
- Capital Account: After the recommendations of the S.S. Tarapore Committee (1997) on Capital Account Convertibility, India has been moving in the direction of allowing full convertibility in this account, but with required precautions.

Source: ForumIAS

Environment

Q.1) Which of the following state/UT have adopted black-necked crane, an endangered species as the State bird?

- a) Maharashtra
- b) Ladakh
- c) Jammu and Kashmir
- d) Odisha

ANS: B

Explanation: Ladakh recently adopted two endangered species, snow leopard and black-necked crane, as the State animal and the State bird. Black-necked crane, only found in the Ladakh region, was the State bird of J&K before August 5, 2019.

About Black-necked crane

- It has a conspicuous red crown that adorns the head.
- The juveniles have a brownish head and neck and plumage is slightly paler than that of an adult.
- The bird is revered by the community of Monpas (Major Buddhist ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh) as an embodiment of the sixth Dalai Lama (Tsangyang Gyatso).
- **Habitat and Breeding Grounds:** The high altitude wetlands of the Tibetan plateau, Sichuan (China), and eastern Ladakh (India).
- In Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, it only comes during the winters.
- **Threats:** Damage to the eggs and chicks; Loss of habitat due to humans Development Projects; Increased grazing pressure on the limited pastures near the wetlands.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.2) “Neelakurinji”, a flower recently in news, blooms in which of the following state/UT?

- a) Karnataka
- b) Manipur
- c) Leh
- d) Andaman and Nicobar

ANS: A

Explanation: Neelakurinji flowers have bloomed in Kodagu district of Karnataka after 12 years. This kind of mass flowering is known as gregarious flowering.

About the flower

- It is a shrub that is found in the shola forests of the Western Ghats in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- Locally known as Kurinji, the flowers grow at an altitude of 1,300 to 2,400 metres.
- Nilgiri Hills, which literally means the blue mountains, got their name from the purplish blue flowers of Neelakurinji that bloom only once in 12 years.
- Kurinjimala Sanctuary of Kerala protects the kurinji in approximately 32 km² core habitat in Kottakamboor and Vattavada villages in Idukki district.
- Kurinji Andavar temple located in Kodaikanal of Tamil Nadu dedicated to Tamil God Murugan also preserves these plants.

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- The Paliyan tribal people living in Tamil Nadu used it as a reference to calculate their age.
- Karnataka has around 45 species of Neelakurinji and each species blooms at intervals of six, nine, 11 or 12 years.
- Besides the Western Ghats, Neelakurinji is also seen in the Shevroy in the Eastern Ghats, Sanduru hills of Bellary district in Karnataka.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.3) Which of the following states will set up India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve?

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

ANS: D

Explanation: The Government of Tamil Nadu will set up India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in the Palk Bay Dugong.

About the Conservation Reserve

- The Conservation Reserve will cover an area of 500 kms.
- The proposed conservation area has the highest concentration of dugongs in the country. The reserve will span the northern part of the Palk Bay from Adirampattinam to Amapattinam.
- AS part of the CAMPA-Dugong Recovery Project, various surveys were conducted in the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar, from November 2016 to March 2019.
- Gulf of Mannar is a shallow bay area between the south eastern end of Tamil Nadu and western Sri Lanka.

About Dugongs

- The dugong, also called the sea cow, is a herbivorous mammal.
- It is the only living representative of the once-diverse family Dugongidae.
- The dugong is strictly a marine mammal.
- They graze on seagrass and come to the surface to breathe.
- They are found in over 30 countries and in India are seen in the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Bay, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Pollen calendar:

1. Pollen calendars represent the time dynamics of airborne pollen present in a particular geographical area.
2. Chandigarh became first Indian city to get its pollen calendar.

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: Recently, Chandigarh got its first Pollen calendar, arguably the first for any city in India.

What is a Pollen Calendar?

- Pollen calendars represent the time dynamics of airborne pollen present in a particular geographical area.
- They yield readily accessible visual details about various airborne pollen present throughout the year in a single picture.
- Pollen calendars are location-specific, with concentrations closely related to locally distributed flora.
- Europe, UK and the US are using regional pollen calendars in a big way to prevent and diagnose allergic rhinitis/hay fever and predict the timing and severity of the pollen season.

Significance of a pollen calendar:

- A pollen calendar provides a clear understanding for clinicians, as well as people with allergies to identify the potential allergy triggers and help to limit their exposure during high pollen load season.
- The early advisories can be prepared and disseminated through media channels to the citizens

About Chandigarh's Pollen calendar

- The pollen calendar for Chandigarh was prepared by studying airborne pollen and its seasonal variations for about two years.
- The study highlights the variability of crucial pollen types in different seasons. Spring and autumn are two seasons when airborne pollen dominates.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.5) Consider the following protected areas:

1. Orang National Park
2. Dudhwa Tiger Reserve
3. Gorumara National Park

Which of the site given above is/are known to have rhinos in India?

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: A

Explanation: There are three species of rhino in Asia: Greater one-horned, Javan and Sumatran.

- India is home to the largest number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros in the world
- Two greatest threats: Poaching for the horns and habitat loss
- The five rhino range nations: India, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia.
- These Nations have signed a declaration 'The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019' for the conservation and protection of the species.

Protection Status

- IUCN Red List
- Javan and Sumatran Rhino: Critically endangered
- Greater one-horned rhino: vulnerable
- All three are listed under Appendix I (CITES).

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- Greater one-horned rhino: Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

In India, rhinos are mainly found in:

- Assam: Kaziranga National Park (NP), Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS), Orang NP and Manas NP
- West Bengal: Jaldapara NP and Gorumara NP
- Uttar Pradesh: Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.6) Consider the following countries:

1. Hungary
2. Slovenia
3. Albania
4. Romania
5. Croatia

Which of the above countries is/are part of the world's first 'five-country biosphere reserve'?

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: D

Explanation: Recently, Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD) was declared as the world's first 'five-country biosphere reserve' by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

About MDD:

- The biosphere reserve covers 700 kilometres of the Mura, Drava and Danube rivers and stretches across Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. The total area of the reserve is a million hectares - in the so-called 'Amazon of Europe', which is now the largest riverine protected area in Europe.
- The biosphere "represented an important contribution to the European Green Deal (climate action plan) and contributed to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy in the Mura-Drava-Danube region."
- The strategy's aim is to revitalise 25,000 km of rivers and protect 30% of the European Union's land area by 2030.

Source: The Hindu

Q.7) Consider the following statements about OSOWOG initiative:

1. The idea was first mooted by India at ISA.
2. The project has been taken up under the technical assistance programme of the World Bank.

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

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

ANS: C

Explanation: OSOWOG initiative:

Recently, the One Sun One World One Grid Declaration (OSOWOG) was jointly released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson at the COP26 Climate Meet in Glasgow.

About the project:

- The concept of OSOWOG, which the British have called a green grid, pitches the idea of a transnational solar grid, from which different countries can draw power.
- The OSOWOG idea was first floated by the Indian Prime Minister in 2018 during the first assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- The vision behind the OSOWOG mantra is “the Sun never sets” and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
- The project has been taken up under the technical assistance programme of the World Bank.

Aim: By 2050, a single power grid of renewable energy is accessible across continents with production in one continent and distribution of power in another.

The 3 Phases of the Plan:

- First Phase: It will entail inter-connectivity within the Asian continent.
- Second Phase: It will add Africa.
- Third Phase: It is about global interconnection.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.8) Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, recently designated as Wetlands of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention is located in which state?

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

ANS: A

Explanation: Wetlands

- Wetlands are areas intermediate in character between deepwater and terrestrial habitats, also transitional in nature, and often located between them.
- Recently Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary near Jamnagar in Gujarat and Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh have been listed as Wetlands of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.
- Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary is a freshwater wetland near the coast of the Gulf of Kutch, was formed following the creation of a bund (dike) in 1920 by the then ruler of the erstwhile princely state of Nawanagar to protect farmlands from saltwater ingress.
- The sanctuary is now part of Marine National Park, Jamnagar, and the first marine national park in the country.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.9) Consider the following statements regarding Sendai Framework Agreement:

1. It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).
2. The timeline for agreement is 2015 to 2030.

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 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (Sendai Framework) was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster.

- The Sendai Framework works hand in hand with the other 2030 Agenda agreements, including The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the New Urban Agenda, and ultimately the Sustainable Development Goals.
- It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the 2015 Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR).

Source: ForumIAS

Q.10) With reference to the moist deciduous forests, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. These are more pronounced in the regions which record rainfall of 100 - 200 cm.
2. White cedar, hollock and kail are the main species found in these forests.

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: The Moist deciduous forests are more pronounced in the regions which record rainfall of 100-200 cm.

- These forests are found in the northeastern states along the foothills of Himalayas, eastern slopes of the Western Ghats and Odisha.
- Teak, sal, shisham, hurra, mahua, amla, semul, kusum, and sandalwood etc. are the main species of these forests.

Source: NCERT XI – India Physical Environment

History/ Art and Culture

Q.1) Which of the following is/are the Delhi proposals of Muslim League?

1. Joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims.
2. One third representation of Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Earlier, in December 1927, a large number of Muslim leaders had met at Delhi at the Muslim League session and evolved four proposals for their demands to be incorporated into the draft constitution. These proposals, which were accepted by the Madras session of the Congress (December 1927), came to be known as the 'Delhi Proposals'.

These were:

- joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims;
- one-third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly;
- representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population;
- Formation of three new Muslim majority provinces— Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province.

Source: Spectrum Modern India.

Q.2) "The Indian Socialist", journal was written by whom among the following?

- Bhagat Singh
- Batukeshwar Dutt
- Chandrashekhar Azad
- Shyamji Krishna Verma

ANS: D

Explanation: The Indian Sociologist was published by Shyamji Krishna Verma, who was an Indian, lawyer, revolutionary fighter and a journalist who led the formation of the "The Indian Sociologist" in London and Indian home rule society which promoted the cause of self rule in British India. He was also the founder of India House, a nationalist organization which promoted nationalist views among Indian students in Britain. He used this monthly journal to express his views on British and Indian politics, therefore the Government of London barred Krishna Verma and he fled from London to Paris, after the printers of the newspaper were persecuted. When Krishna Verma moved to Paris, from 1907 to 1914 the journal was edited by him in Paris.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.3) Which of the following is/are the objectives of Arya Samaj?

1. It fixed the minimum marriageable age at twenty-one years for boys and fifteen years for girls.
2. To promote social services like helping the people in crises like floods, famines and earthquakes.

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: Dayananda subscribed to the Vedic notion of chaturvarna system in which a person was not born in any caste but was identified as a brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya or shudra according to the occupation the person followed.

- The Arya Samaj fixed the minimum marriageable age at twenty-five years for boys and sixteen years for girls.
- Swami Dayananda once lamented the Hindu race as “the children of children”.
- Inter-caste marriages and widow remarriages were also encouraged.
- Equal status for women was the demand of the Samaj, both in letter and in spirit.
- The Samaj also helped the people in crises like floods, famines and earthquakes.

Source: Spectrum Modern India.

Q.4) The Parliament of Religions at Chicago, is attended by Swami Vivekananda was held in which of the following year?

- a) 1885
- b) 1893
- c) 1778
- d) 1867

ANS: B

Explanation: At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda made a great impression on people by his learned interpretations.

- The keynote of his opening address was the need for a healthy balance between spiritualism and materialism.
- Envisaging a new culture for the whole world, he called for a blend of the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of the East into a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind.

Source: ForumIAS

Q.5) “No religion, no caste, no God for mankind” was coined by?

- a) E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker
- b) Sri Narayana Guru
- c) Sahadaran Ayyapan
- d) Swami Vivekananda

ANS: C

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Explanation: During the 1920s in South India, the non-brahmins organised the Self-Respect Movement led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. There were numerous other movements demanding that the ban on the entry of lower castes into temples be lifted.

- Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala led a lifelong struggle against upper caste domination.
- He coined the slogan “one religion, one caste, one God for mankind”, which his disciple Sahadaran Ayyapan changed into “no religion, no caste, no God for mankind”.

Source: EPIC September 2021

Q.6) Arrange the above political organizations in chronological order of their formation.

1. Poona Sarvajanik Sabha
2. Madras Mahajan Sabha
3. Indian National Association

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

ANS: B

Explanation: Political Associations before Indian National Congress:

- 1836—Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha and Zamindari Association or Landholders’ Society
- 1843—Bengal British India Society
- 1851—British Indian Association
- 1866—East India Association
- 1870—Poona Sarvajanik Sabha
- 1875—Indian League
- 1876—Indian Association of Calcutta or Indian National Association
- 1885—Bombay Presidency Association
- 1884—Madras Mahajan Sabha

Source: Spectrum’s A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.7) Consider the following pairs:

Author	Book
1. Dayanand Saraswati	Satyarth Prakash
2. Henry Vivian Derozio	Precepts of Jesus
3. Raja Ram Mohan Roy	Gift to Monotheists

Which of the above given pair is/are correctly matched?

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

ANS: D

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Explanation: Rammohan Roy believed in the modern scientific approach and principles of human dignity and social equality.

- He put his faith in monotheism. He wrote Gift to Monotheists (1809) and translated into Bengali the Vedas and the five Upanishads to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism.
- In his Precepts of Jesus (1820), he tried to separate the moral and philosophical message of the New Testament, which he praised, from its miracle stories.
- He earned the wrath of missionaries over his advocacy to incorporate the message of Christ into Hinduism.
- Dayananda's views were published in his famous work, Satyarth Prakash (The True Exposition).
- His vision of India included a classless and casteless society, a united India (religiously, socially and nationally), and an India free from foreign rule, with Aryan religion being the common religion of all.
- He took inspiration from the Vedas and considered them to be 'India's Rock of Ages', the infallible and the true original seed of Hinduism. He gave the slogan "Back to the Vedas".

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.8) Consider the following pairs about revolt of 1857:

Centre of revolt	Leader
1. Bareilly	Khan Bahadur
2. Delhi	Maulvi Ahmadullah
3. Baghpat	General Bakht Khan

Which of the above given pair is/are not correctly matched?

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

ANS: C

Explanation: Centres of Revolt and Leaders

- Delhi - General Bakht Khan
- Kanpur - Nana Saheb
- Lucknow - Begum Hazrat Mahal
- Bareilly - Khan Bahadur
- Bihar - Kunwar Singh
- Faizabad - Maulvi Ahmadullah
- Jhansi - Rani Laxmibai
- Baghpat - Shah Mal

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.9) Which among the following treaty was signed the earliest?

- a) Treaty of Sagauli
- b) Treaty of Lhasa
- c) Treaty of Gandamak
- d) Durand Agreement

ANS: A

Explanation: Relations of British India with Neighboring Countries:

- Anglo-Nepal Relations (Treaty of Sagauli, 1816)
- Anglo-Burma Relations
 - a. First Anglo-Burma War, 1824-26
 - b. Second Anglo-Burma War, 1852
 - c. Third Anglo-Burma War, 1885
- Anglo-Tibetan Relations
 - a. Treaty of Lhasa (1904)
- Anglo-Afghan Relations
 - a. Forward Policy of Auckland
 - b. First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842)
 - c. John Lawrence's Policy of Masterly Inactivity
 - d. Lytton and the Policy of Proud Reserve
- Second Anglo-Afghan War (1870-80)
 - a. Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879)
- North-West Frontier
 - b. Durand Agreement (1893)

Source: Spectrum's A Brief History of Modern India.

Q.10) Who among the following founded Vikramasila University?

- a) Dharmapala
- b) Mahapala
- c) Gopala I
- d) Vikramapala

ANS: A

Explanation: Dharmapala proved to be a great patron of Buddhism.

- He founded the Vikramasila monastery in Bhagalpur district in Bihar, which developed into a great centre of Buddhist learning and culture.
- He built a grand vihara at Somapura in modern Paharapura (presentday Bangladesh).
- Dharmapala also built a monastery at Odantapuri in Bihar.
- He patronised Harisbhadra, a Buddhist writer.

Source: Tamil Nadu state board.