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Current Affairs

Question 1:

Consider the following statements about the Kyasanur Forest disease Virus (KFDV):

1. It is endemic to the Indian state of Kerala.
2. Bats are common hosts for KFDV.

Which of these statements is/are correct?

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: D

Explanation:

Kyasanur Forest disease Virus (KFDV) is a member of the virus family Flaviviridae. It was first identified in 1957 in a sick monkey from the Kyasanur Forest in Karnataka. Since then, between 400-500 human cases per year have been reported.

KFD is endemic to the Indian state of Karnataka. It is also referred to as monkey fever by locals. Rodents, shrews, and monkeys are common hosts for KFDV after being bitten by infected Hard ticks (*Haemaphysalis Spinigera*). KFDV can cause epizootics (outbreak of disease in animals) with high fatality in primates.

To humans, it may occur after a tick bite or contact with an infected animal.

Question 2:



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Consider the following statements about the Hydroxy-chloroquine:

1. It is an oral drug.
2. It is used in the treatment of malaria.

Which of these statements is / are correct?

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Explanation:

The National Task force for COVID-19, constituted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has suggested the use of hydroxy-chloroquine to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (Coronavirus) for restricted populations.

Hydroxy-chloroquine (not to be confused with anti-malaria drug chloroquine) is an oral drug used in the treatment of autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Autoimmune diseases are in which the body's immune system attacks healthy cells.

Question 3:

Consider the following statements about the Huntington Disease:

1. It is a progressive genetic disorder which affects the brain.
2. There is no cure for Huntington Disease.
3. Mutations in the HTT gene (also called Huntington or HD gene) cause Huntington Disease (HD)

Which of these statements is / are correct?

Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



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Answer: B

Explanation:

Mutations in the HTT gene (also called Huntington or HD gene) cause Huntington Disease (HD).

Huntington Disease (HD) is a progressive genetic disorder which affects the brain.

It causes uncontrolled movements, impaired coordination of balance and movement, a decline in cognitive abilities, difficulty in concentrating and memory lapses, mood swings and personality changes.

The HTT genes are involved in the production of a protein called huntingtin.

They provide the instruction for making the protein.

Mutated genes provide faulty instructions leading to production of abnormal huntingtin proteins and formation of clumps.

These clumps disrupt the normal functioning of the brain cells, which eventually leads to death of neurons in the brain, resulting in Huntington disease.

No cure exists, but drugs, physiotherapy and talk therapy can help manage some symptoms.

Question 4:

Scitech Airon, recently in news, is associated with which of the following

Options:

- A. It is an air purifying technology
- B. It is a humanoid robot used for delivering medicines and food to the COVID-19 patients
- C. It is an asteroid orbiting Mars
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:

An air purifying technology named Scitech Airon developed by Pune based startup could offer an effective solution to the country's fight against the coronavirus COVID-19 contagion by reducing the viral load of the infected areas.

The technology has been developed under the 'Nidhi Prayas' programme initiated by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).



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The negative ion generator titled 'Scitech Airon' helps to control the virus, bacteria, and other fungal infections in a closed environment.

The ionizer machine generates negatively charged ions at approximately hundred million per 8 seconds.

The negative ions generated by the ionizer form clusters around microparticles such as airborne mould, corona or influenza viruses, bacteria among other pollutants and render them inactive through a complex chemical reaction by creating highly reactive hydroxyl radicals.

The detergent property of hydroxyl groups thus generated by the ion generator aids the breakdown of the outer protein of the allergens, viruses and bacteria.

Question 5:

With reference to the Genome India Project, consider the following statements:

1. The project has been cleared by the Department of Biotechnology (under the Ministry of Science and Technology).
2. It involves 20 leading institutions including the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru and a few IITs.

Which of these statements is / are correct?

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C



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Explanation:

Union government has given clearance to an ambitious gene mapping project known as the Genome India Project with an estimated worth of Rs 238 crores.

The project has been cleared by the Department of Biotechnology (under the Ministry of Science and Technology).

It involves 20 leading institutions including the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru and a few IITs.

Science & Technology

QUESTION

1. Consider the following statement which is true-

- 1.The 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) will be held in china.
- 2.The theme of the 2020 conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for Sustainable Development'.
3. India is the only Asian country to host the event twice.
4. The event is being funded by the Ministry of Mines (MoM) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with the support of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA).

Of the above, correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only (1) & (3)
- (b) Only 2,3.&4
- (c) Only 1 & 2
- (d) All the above

Answer-b

India is gearing up to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in the capital during the first week of March next year. The theme of the forthcoming conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development'. Popularly described as the Olympics of Geosciences, the IGCs are a prestigious global geo scientific events held once in four years and participated by around 5000-6000 geoscientists from all across the world.



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In a bid to gear up for the same, a half-day interactive workshop was held in the capital yesterday which was inaugurated by the Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences Dr. M. Rajeevan, and Secretary Coal & Mines, Shri Anil Kumar Jain, Secretary, Coal & Mines. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Jain said that the 36th IGC is expected to provide a platform for international cooperation in all major field of geosciences including launching of collaborative programs, provision of investment opportunities in mining, mineral exploration and environmental management and related enterprises. Dr. M. Rajeevan said that the forthcoming IGC would help us in dealing with the problems of sustainability, energy crisis, water crisis, climate change, environmental issues and resource management.

It may be noted that India is the only Asian country to host the event twice. In 1964, India had hosted it for the first time, which was the 22nd IGC. The event was inaugurated by the then President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The IGC is making a comeback to the Indian soil after 56 long years much to the enthusiasm of the entire geo scientific community. The event is being funded by the Ministry of Mines (MoM) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with the support of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the national Science Academies of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Geological Survey of India is the nodal agency for organizing the event

2. Which country became the first to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia recently?

- (a) China
- (b) Japan
- (c) UAE
- (d) Afghanistan

ANSWER-d

The Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) has been recognised formally by the National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It will also be used based on the requirement as reputable pharmacopoeia in the laboratory of medicines and health products quality. With this, a new beginning has been made and Afghanistan has become the first country to recognize IP pursuant to the efforts of Department of Commerce and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

IP is an officially recognized book of standards as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 thereunder. The IP specifies the standards of drugs manufactured and marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.

3. Consider the following statement which is not true-



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1. EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for crossdisciplinary leadership in India .
2. it is the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment
3. it was launched on 2018 in New Delhi.
4. . EChO Network establishes a new platform to change how science is embedded in our modern society.

Of the above, correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only (1) & (3)
- (b) Only 2,3.&4
- (c) Only 1 ,2 &4
- (d) All the above

Answer-c

EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment was launched dec 19, 2019 in New Delhi by Prof. K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

India faces unprecedented threats to its human environmental and ecosystems, solving which requires a confluence of India's strong technological expertise and knowledge of the natural world itself. EChO Network would develop a national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology. With no precedent for such a network anywhere in the world, EChO Network establishes a new platform to change how science is embedded in our modern society.

Through interactive sessions with citizens, industry, academia, and the government, the Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems. The program will then train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on these topics, while also incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network. It would then go on to establishing nation-wide awareness in these issues through public discourse and education for citizens, industry, and government with information exchange at all educational levels. Over time EChO Network intends to create an international distributed institute comprising individuals housed within industry, government, private, and academic sectors, combining their expertise and resources collectively to tackle large scale problems



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4. Consider the following statement-

1. Narendra modi launched the National Broadband Mission on December 17, 2019.
2. The vision of the NBM is to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.
3. the Mission which is structured with strong emphasis on the three principles of universality, affordability and quality.
4. Broadband access to all villages by 2022.

Of the above, correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only (1) & (3)
- (b) Only 2,3.&4
- (c) Only 1 ,2 &4
- (d) All the above

Answer-b

The Minister for Communications, Law & Justice and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that the National Broadband Mission is to fulfill all aspirations of the people and enables fast track growth of digital communication infrastructure. He was addressing the gathering after launching the National Broadband Mission (NBM).

The vision of the NBM is to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all. Some of the objectives of the Mission which is structured with strong emphasis on the three principles of universality, affordability and quality are:

1. Broadband access to all villages by 2022.
2. Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services for across the country and especially in rural and remote areas.
3. Laying of incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024 Significantly improve quality of services for mobile and internet.
4. Develop innovative implementation models for Right of Way (RoW) and to work with States/UTs for having consistent policies pertaining to expansion of digital infrastructure including for RoW approvals required for laying of OFC.



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5. Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.
6. Creation of a digital fiber map of the Digital Communications network and infrastructure, including Optical Fiber Cables and Towers, across the country.
7. Investment from stakeholders of USD 100 billion (Rs 7 Lakh Crore) including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
8. Address policy and regulatory changes required to accelerate the expansion and creation of digital infrastructure and services Work with all stakeholders including the concerned Ministries / Departments/ Agencies, and Ministry of Finance, for enabling investments for the Mission.

5. Odisha launched mobile app 'Madhu' it has been developed for-

- (a) Providing e-Learning facility to students
- (b) Providing apiculture information to the farmers
- (c) Girl Education
- (d) None of the above

ANSWER-A

A On 03 December, 2019; Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'Madhu' app, an e-learning mobile phone application for school students. It can be used by the students to understand their subjects in a better and efficient Way. The app is named after Madhusudan Das well known as Utkal Gourab in the state. □ This app is developed by Ganjam district administration, Odisha for school students .

It is aimed at helping school students in learning their lessons taught in school classrooms through videos and practicing them. Through the app, the students will have access to video explanation of the topics they are taught in their classroom. The courses have been prepared to make the videos interesting using quality teaching-learning material. It also features interactive question answering sessions.

Economy

Question 1.

Consider the following statements related to VIX Index:

1. It measures the degree of volatility or fluctuations in the NIFTY Index.
2. A Higher value of NIFTY Index corresponds to higher value of VIX Index and vice-versa.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only



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- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer A:

Explanation:

Volatility Index is a measure of market's expectation of volatility over the near term. Volatility is often described as the "rate and magnitude of changes in prices" and in finance often referred to as risk. Volatility Index is a measure, of the amount by which an underlying Index is expected to fluctuate, in the near term, (calculated as annualised volatility, denoted in percentage e.g. 20%) based on the order book of the underlying index options.

India VIX is a volatility index based on the NIFTY Index Option prices. From the best bid-ask prices of NIFTY Options contracts, a volatility figure (%) is calculated which indicates the expected market volatility over the next 30 calendar days.

Question 2.

Which among the following international organizations publishes Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI)?

- A. World Bank
- B. IMF
- C. OECD
- D. World Trade Organisation

Answer C:

Explanation:

Launched in 2014, and updated annually, the OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) is a unique, evidence-based tool that provides information on regulations affecting trade in services in 22 sectors across all OECD member countries and Brazil, the People's Republic of China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, South Africa, and Thailand

Question 3.

Which of the following are included in Payment & Settlement System?

1. Cheques & Drafts
2. Real time Gross Settlement
3. Immediate Payment Services

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2
- B. 2 and 3
- C 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer D:

Explanation:

The payment and settlement system in India is governed by the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007. According to definition of PSS Act 2007, Payment System means a system that enables payment to be effected between a payer and a beneficiary, involving clearing, payment or settlement service or all of them. This includes the systems enabling credit card operations, debit card operations, smart card operations, money transfer operations or similar operations, Cheques & Drafts, Real time Gross Settlement, Immediate Payment Services.

Question 4.



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Which of the statement correctly describes 'Currency in Circulation'?

- A. It includes notes in circulation, rupee coins and small coins with public and with banks
- B. It only includes notes in circulation with public
- C. It includes notes and coins released from vaults of banks
- D. It means the Indian notes and coins and foreign notes currently held by public

Answer A:

Explanation:

Currency in circulation refers to the amount of cash—in the form of paper notes or coins—within a country that is physically used to conduct transactions between consumers and businesses. Currency in circulation is all of the money that has been issued by a country's monetary authority, minus cash that has been removed from the system.

Question 5.

Consider the following statements about Claw back provision:

1. Company can take back bonus from its employees in case of any gross negligence or misconduct.
2. The Clawback Provision has been defined under Indian Companies Act, 2013.

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

Answer A:

Explanation:

A clawback clause is a contract provision that requires a party who has received a benefit to return that benefit due to specially arising conditions. In other words, a clawback provision in a business contract is a provision that requires something to be given back, depending on the circumstances. Let's say a business has a chief executive officer (CEO) whom it wants to reward for keeping the company profitable. Maybe the CEO has a golden parachute contract.

Polity

Question 1:

Which of the following is true about Bharati script?

Options:

- A. It is an alternative script for the languages of India developed by a team at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Madras.
- B. Bharati has, in general, 7 vowels and 22 consonants.
- C. The Bharati characters are made up of five tiers stacked vertically.
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:



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Researchers from IIT Madras have already developed a unified script for nine Indian languages, named the Bharati Script. Now, going a step further, developed a method for reading documents in Bharati script using a multi-lingual optical character recognition (OCR) scheme.

What is Optical Character Recognition (OCR) scheme?

- It involves first separating (or segmenting) the document into text and non-text.
- The text is then segmented into paragraphs, sentences words and letters.
- Each letter has to be recognised as a character in some recognisable format such as ASCII or Unicode.
- The letter has various components such as the basic consonant, consonant modifiers, vowels etc.

What is Bharati Script?

- It is an alternative script for the languages of India developed by a team at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Madras lead by Dr. Srinivasa Chakravarthy.
- The scripts that have been integrated include Devnagari, Bengali, Gurmukhi, Gujarati, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil.
- The Bharati characters are made up of three tiers stacked vertically. The consonant at the root of the letter is placed in the centre and the modifiers are in the top and bottom tiers.
- Bharati has, in general, 17 vowels and 22 consonants.

Question 2:

'Juice jacking', recently in the news, refers to which of the following?

Options:

- A. It is an attack carried out by hackers through a USB charging cable.
- B. Wilful defaulters misusing the funds
- C. Selling of private information on the dark web
- D. Food poisoning on a large scale

Answer: A

Explanation:

SBI has publicly issued a warning of 'Juice Jacking' through its twitter handle. The bank has advised its customers and general public to "think twice before plugging-in their phone at (public) charging stations, as hackers can maliciously infect their smartphone with a malware."

What is Juice Jacking?

It is an attack carried out by hackers through a USB charging cable. When a user plugs in the charging cable in his mobile's charging port, and connects it to any of the rigged charging stations installed at public spaces such as airports, train stations, hotels, cafes etc – it gives a back-door entry to hackers into the compromised device. The charging port which is also used for data transfer over the USB, is pointed as the main cause of concern over here.

In order to guard your phone against Juice Jacking, take these precautionary measures:

- Avoid using public charging stations. These are soft targets for hackers as they are often kept unguarded and without any surveillance.
- Always use your own AC charging adapter and cable for charging the device. And be sure to plug it into the AC wall socket, and not the USB socket on the wall.



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- Stay guarded against a stranger's device and laptop. Do not connect with an unknown person's laptop or PC for charging your electronic devices and vice-versa.
- For emergency situations, buy and carry a certified power bank with enough capacity to take care of your device's emergency power backup needs.
- Try to use a cable that can be used only as a charging cable and not a data cable.
- Frequent travelers should use a USB blocker.

Question 3:

Consider the following statements about the Commissionerate system.

1. In the commissionerate system, the Commissioner of Police (CP) is the head of a unified police command structure, is responsible for the force in the city, and is accountable to the state government.
2. The office also has magisterial powers, including those related to regulation, control, and licensing.
3. The CP is drawn from the Deputy Inspector General rank or above, and is assisted by Special/Joint/Additional/Deputy Commissioners.
4. The sixth National Police Commission report, which was released in 1983, recommended the introduction of a police commissionerate system in cities with a population of 5 lakh and above, as well as in places having special conditions.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

- A. 1, 3 & 4 only
- B. 1 & 4 only
- C. 2 & 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

The Uttar Pradesh has approved the commissionerate system of policing for state capital Lucknow, and Noida. In the commissionerate system, the Commissioner of Police (CP) is the head of a unified police command structure, is responsible for the force in the city, and is accountable to the state government. The office also has magisterial powers, including those related to regulation, control, and licensing.

The CP is drawn from the Deputy Inspector General rank or above, and is assisted by Special/Joint/Additional/Deputy Commissioners.

It is supposed to allow for faster decision-making to solve complex urban-centric issues.

How and who can implement this?

Under the 7th Schedule of the Constitution, 'Police' is under the State list, meaning individual states typically legislate and exercise control over this subject.

Where is the system in force?

Previously, only four cities had the system: Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai. However, with rapid urbanisation, states felt an increasing need to replicate the system in more places. The sixth National Police Commission report, which was released in 1983, recommended the introduction of a police commissionerate system in cities with a population of 5 lakh and above, as well as in places having special conditions. Over the years, it has been extended to numerous cities, including Delhi, Pune, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. By January 2016, 53 cities had this system.



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Question 4:

The Social Justice Ministry recently notified the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. In this context, a person will be recognized as transgender on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by the _____.

Options:

- A. Chief Minister
- B. Governor
- C. High Court
- D. District Magistrate

Answer: D

Explanation:

The Social Justice Ministry notified the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. The Bill was passed by Parliament in November 2019. This will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society. This will lead to inclusiveness and will make the transgender persons productive members of the society.

New definition:

According to the new definition, a transgender person is somebody “whose gender does not match the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-men or trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons having socio-cultural identities such as kinnar, hijras, aravani, and jogta”.

Highlights of the Bill:

The Act aims to stop discrimination against a transgender person in various sectors such as education, employment, and healthcare. It also directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes for them. It states that a person will be recognized as transgender on the basis of a certificate of identity issued by the District Magistrate. This certificate will be a proof of identity as transgender and confer rights under this Bill. Going by the Act, a person would have the right to choose to be identified as a man, woman or transgender, irrespective of sex reassignment surgery and hormonal therapy. It also requires transgender persons to go through a district magistrate and “district screening committee” to get certified as a transperson.

Composition: The committee would comprise a medical officer, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a district welfare officer, a government official, and a transgender person.

Criticisms:

- The Act is silent on granting reservations to transgender persons.
- It has prescribed punishments for organised begging. However, the
- Act doesn't provide anything to better to condition in those areas, it doesn't provide for reservation.
- It also does not mention any punishments for rape or sexual assault of transgender persons as according to Sections 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code, rape is only when a man forcefully enters a woman.

Question 5:



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'Mission Purvodaya', recently in the news, aims to

Options:

- A. Develop eastern region into an integrated steel hub
- B. Establish 10 world class central universities in Eastern part of India
- C. Encourage girls' education in Eastern states
- D. Boost agricultural production in Eastern states

Answer: A

Explanation:

The Centre unveils Mission Purvodaya to develop eastern region into an integrated steel hub. The eastern belt has the potential to add over 75 percent of the country's incremental steel capacity envisioned by the National Steel Policy. Through this programme, the government aims to transform logistics and utilities infrastructure which would change the socio-economic landscape in the eastern India. The steps, under mission, also include growth of steel industry along with employment opportunities across the entire value chain.

International Relations

Question 1:

Which of the following was recently included in the list of 'Eight Wonders of SCO'?

Options:

- A. The Palace of Nowruz
- B. the Statue of Unity
- C. Taj Mahal
- D. The Great Mughals' heritage at Lahore

Answer: B

Explanation:

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has included the Statue of Unity among the 'Eight Wonders of the SCO'. At 182 metre, the statue is 23 metre taller than China's Spring Temple Buddha statue and almost double the height of the Statue of Liberty (93 metre tall) in US. Located on the Sadhu Bet island, near Rajpipla on the Narmada river, the Statue of Unity is located between the Satpura and the Vindhya mountain ranges.



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The Eight Wonders of the SCO are:

- India — the Statue of Unity.
- Kazakhstan — the Archaeological Landscape of Tamgaly.
- China — The Daming imperial palace complex.
- Kyrgyzstan — Lake Issyk-Kul.
- Pakistan — The Great Mughals' heritage at Lahore.
- Russia — The Golden Ring cities.
- Tajikistan — The Palace of Nowruz.
- Uzbekistan — the Poi Kalon complex.

About the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.

Its creation was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. It was preceded by the Shanghai Five mechanism.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed during the St.Petersburg SCO Heads of State meeting in June 2002, and entered into force on 19 September 2003.

Question 2:

The Strait of Hormuz separates which of the following two nations?

Options:

- A. Iran & Oman
- B. Iraq & Oman
- C. Qatar & Saudi Arabia
- D. Qatar & Oman

Answer: A

Explanation:

The meeting of Hormuz Peace Initiative was recently held in Iran.

The meeting saw participation from key regional players including Oman and India besides Afghanistan and China. The initiative is led by Iran.

It aims to stabilise the Strait of Hormuz, the gateway for a significant amount of global oil supplies.

What is the Strait of Hormuz?

It is the waterway separates Iran and Oman, linking the Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. On the north coast lies Iran, and on the south are the UAE and Musandam, an enclave of Oman. The Strait is 21 miles (33 km) wide at its narrowest point, but the shipping lane is just two miles (three km) wide in either direction.

Why does Strait of Hormuz matter?

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most strategically important choke points.



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Two-thirds of the oil and half the liquefied natural gas India imports come through the strait between Iran and Oman.

As much as 18 million barrels of oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz every day, accounting for one-third of the global oil trade. A third of the world's LNG trade also passes through the strait.

Question 3:

'Seke', recently in the news, refers to which of the following?

Options:

- A. A Nepalese language near extinction
- B. A trial language in Syria
- C. A newly found animal species in Mexico
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation:

Recently, The New York Times reported that the "near-extinct" Nepalese language Seke has just 700 speakers around the world. About Nepal's Seke language and threats to it:

According to the Endangered Language Alliance (ELA), Seke is one of the over 100 indigenous languages of Nepal. In recent years, Seke has been retreating in the face of Nepali, which is Nepal's official language and is considered to be crucial for getting educational and employment opportunities outside villages.

According to ELA, difficult conditions at home and job prospects elsewhere have brought speakers of Seke to places such as Pokhara, Kathmandu and even New York. Therefore, the vulnerability of the language is linked to the migration of people to places where Seke is not spoken, which has reduced the intergenerational transmission of the language. Furthermore, the younger generation does not find much use in learning the language, giving preference to Nepali and English.

Languages in danger?

UNESCO has six degrees of endangerment. These are:

- Safe, which are the languages spoken by all generations and their intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted.
- Vulnerable languages, which are spoken by most children but may be restricted to certain domains.
- Definitely endangered languages, which are no longer being learnt by children as their mother tongue.
- Severely endangered are languages spoken by grandparents and older generations, and while the parent generation may understand it, they may not speak it with the children or among themselves.



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- Critically endangered languages are those of which the youngest speakers are the grandparents or older family members who may speak the language partially or infrequently.
- Extinct languages, of which no speakers are left.

Considering these definitions, Seke may be considered to be a definitely endangered language.

Fact for Prelims:

- The last year, 2019, was the International Year of Indigenous Languages, mandated by the United Nations (UN).
- As per UNESCO, roughly 57 per cent of the world's estimated 6,000 languages are safe, about 10 per cent are vulnerable, 10.7 per cent are definitely endangered, about 9 per cent are severely endangered, 9.6 per cent are critically endangered and about 3.8 per cent of all languages are extinct since 1950.
- As per the Endangered Languages Project (ELP), there are roughly 201 endangered languages in India and about 70 in Nepal.

Question 4:

'West Bank', often in news, is given this name because

Options:

- A. It forms the western part of Palestine
- B. It is on the west bank of the Jordan river
- C. It is on the west bank of the Mediterranean river
- D. It forms the western part of Israel

Answer: B

Explanation:

President Donald Trump's Middle East plan, Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People, was recently released.

Jerusalem

During the 1967 war, Israel seized control of East Jerusalem, which has Temple Mount, home to the Western Wall, the al-Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock.

According to plan, Jerusalem will not be divided, and will remain the sovereign capital of the State of Israel.

The capital of Palestine can occupy far-flung eastern neighbourhoods lying beyond "the existing security barrier", which can be renamed Al Quds, the Arabic name for Jerusalem.

West Bank:

Israel would be allowed to annex the Jewish settlements on the West Bank as well as the Jordan Valley



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Question 5:

Consider the following statements about ASEAN.

1. It was formed in 1967, by Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
2. Membership has been extended to include Vietnam, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Brunei.
3. Apart from economic and political growth it also focuses on social progress, social-cultural evolution among member countries, and provision of mechanisms and strategies to resolve differences peacefully.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 & 3 only
- C. 2 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

Explanation:

- Acting on the ASEAN and the India-Malaysia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements, the Centre slashed import duty on refined palmolein from 50% to 45%, while that on crude palm oil (CPO) from 40% to 37.5%
- The action is said to have a serious impact on the domestic palm oil refining industry and oilseeds farmers Value Addition for Prelims
- ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It was formed in 1967, by Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
- Membership has been extended to include Vietnam, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Brunei.
- Apart from economic and political growth it also focuses on social progress, social-cultural evolution among member countries, and provision of mechanisms and strategies to resolve differences peacefully.

History

Question 1. Consider the following European trading companies and arrange them in chronological order of their penetration in India.

- a. Danish – Portuguese-Dutch-English.
- b. Portuguese – Dutch- English -French.
- c. Portuguese – Dutch- Danes- English.



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d. Portuguese- English- Dutch- French.

Ans. b.

Explanation:

- It was the Portuguese who first discovered a direct sea route to India. Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama arrived at Calicut an important sea port located on the South-West India on May 20, 1498 AD. King Zamorin, the local rule received him and bestowed on him certain privileges.
- The Dutch founded their first factory in Masaulipatam in Andhra Pradesh in 1605. Subsequently they also established trading centres in various parts of India. Dutch Suratte and Dutch Bengal were established in 1616 AD and 1627 AD respectively. The Dutch conquered Ceylon from the Portuguese in 1656 AD. They also took the Portuguese forts on the Malabar coast in 1671 AD.
- in 1608 AD, the East India Company sent Captain William Hawkins to the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir to secure royal patronage.
- The last European people to arrive in India were the French. The French East India Company was formed in 1664 AD during the reign of King Louis XIV to trade with India. In 1668 AD the French established their first factory at Surat and in 1669 AD established another French factory at Masaulipatam.

Question 2. Which Indian city witnessed the first ever experimentation of Railways?

- a. Bombay.
- b. Pune.
- c. Madras.
- d. Masulipatnam.

Ans. C.

Explanation:

- It was Madras in India in 1831 a wagon of railways drawn by horses was experimented.
- In 1834 steam engine was invented in Britain.
- Finally, the railways began in 1853 from Bombay to Thane.

Question 3. Consider the following statements:

1. The first round table session in 1930-31 had 73 representatives, from all Indian states and all parties except the [Indian National Congress](#) in London.
2. The second session in 1931 was attended by [Mahatma Gandhi](#) as the Congress representative; it failed to reach agreement, either constitutionally or on communal representation.
3. The third session in 1932 was shorter and less important, with neither the Congress nor the British [Labour Party](#) attended.

Select the correct code:

- a. 1 and 3 only.
- b. 2 and 3 only.
- c. 1 and 2 only.
- d. All the above.



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Ans. d.

Explanation:

- **Round Table Conference**, (1930–32), in Indian history, a series of meetings in three sessions called by the British government to consider the future [constitution of India](#). The conference resulted from a review of the [Government of India Act](#) of 1919, undertaken in 1927 by the [Simon Commission](#), whose report was published in 1930. The conference was held in [London](#).
- The first session (Nov. 12, 1930–Jan. 19, 1931) had 73 representatives, from all Indian states and all parties except the [Indian National Congress](#), which was waging a [civil disobedience](#) campaign against the government. Its principal achievement was an insistence on parliamentarianism—an acceptance by all, including the princes, of the federal principle—and on dominion status as the goal of [constitutional](#) development.
- The second session (September–December 1931) was attended by [Mahatma Gandhi](#) as the Congress representative; it failed to reach agreement, either constitutionally or on communal representation.
- The third session (Nov. 17–Dec. 24, 1932) was shorter and less important, with neither the Congress nor the British [Labour Party](#) attending. The result of these deliberations was the Government of India Act, 1935, establishing provincial [autonomy](#) and also a federal system that was never [implemented](#).

Question 4. Which among the following statement about Quit India Movement is not correct?

- Parallel governments were formed in many parts of the country.
- It saw women participation where they not only participated as equals but also led the movement.
- Sucheta Kripalani started a *Secret Congress Radio* in Mumbai.
- The movement saw rise of leaders like, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narayan and Aruna Asaf Ali.

Ans. C.

Explanation

- Demand of freedom fighters across the country was unanimous and it was for '*Poorna Swaraj*', total independence. Therefore, on the eve of 8th August, 1942 Gandhi ji gave a clarion call to the nation. He said, "*Here is a mantra, a short one that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is: 'Karo ya Maro', 'Do or Die'.*"
- The movement saw rise of leaders like, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narayan and Aruna Asaf Ali. Parallel governments were formed in many parts of the country. Chittu Pandey formed a government in Balia while YB Chavan and Nana Patil in Satara.
- Quit India movement was unique in the sense that it saw women participation where they not only participated as equals but also led the movement. There was Matangini Hazra, who lead a procession of 6,000 people, mostly women, to ransack a local police station. She lost her life to police bullets and died with the Tricolour in her hands. Then there was Sucheta Kripalani who later went on to become first women Chief Minister of India.
- Orissa had Nandini Devi and Sashibala Devi while Assam saw participation of young girls like Kanaklata Baruah and Kahuli Devi who died of police atrocities.
- Contribution of Usha Mehta was unique as she started a *Secret Congress Radio* in Mumbai.

Question 5. Consider the following about the recommendations of Butler Committee:

1. The relationship of the paramount power with the state was not merely a contractual relationship, but a living, growing relationship shaped by the circumstances and policy, resting on the mixture of history and theory.



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2. British paramountcy preserve the princely state.

3. State should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature.

Which among the above were correct?

- a. 1 only.
- b. 2 and 3 only.
- c. 1 and 2 only.
- d. All the above.

Ans. d.

Explanation:

- The Indian states committee appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler which was popularly known as 'the Butler Committee' to investigate and clarify the relationship between the paramount power and the Princely States in AD 1927.
- The Indian states committee appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler which was popularly known as 'the Butler Committee' to investigate and clarify the relationship between the paramount power and the Princes of Princely States in AD 1927. The committee visited 16 States and submitted its report in 1929.
- **Recommendation of Committee:**
- The relationship of the paramount power with the state was not merely a contractual relationship, but a living, growing relationship shaped by the circumstances and policy, resting on the mixture of history and theory.
- British paramountcy preserve the princely state.
- State should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature.
- The Committee was formed to inquire into the relationship between the Indian states and the paramount power and to suggest ways and means for more satisfactory adjustments of the existing relations between them and British India.