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Date: 15th May 2020 (Set 18)

Current Affairs

Question 1:

Consider the following statements about the Epidemic Diseases Act:

1. It was enacted post independence.
2. It empowers state governments/UTs to take special measures and formulate regulations for containing the outbreak.

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: B

Explanation:

Recently a high level meeting to tackle COVID-19 has been decided that all States/Union Territories should be advised to invoke provisions of Section 2 of the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897.

It was introduced by the colonial government to tackle the epidemic of bubonic plague that had spread in the erstwhile Bombay Presidency in the 1890s.

It empowers state governments/UTs to take special measures and formulate regulations for containing the outbreak.

Question 2:

Consider the following statements about the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

1. It defines genocide in legal terms as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.
2. India has ratified the treaty.



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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

Explanation:

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the Convention entered into force in 1951.

152 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty, most recently Mauritius in 2019.

It defines genocide in legal terms as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group

India ratified the treaty in 1959.

Question 3:

Consider the following statements about the Yakshagana:

1. It is a traditional theatre form of Kerala.
2. It is a temple art form that depicts mythological stories and Puranas.
3. It is strongly influenced by the Vaishnava Bhakti movement.

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

Answer: C

Explanation:



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Yakshagana literally means the song (gana) of the yaksha (nature spirits).

Yakshagana is a traditional theatre form of Karnataka.

Yakshagana is a temple art form that depicts mythological stories and Puranas.

Performed with massive headgears, elaborate facial make-up and vibrant costumes and ornaments.

Usually recited in kannada,

It is also performed in malayalam as well as tulu (the dialect of south karnataka).

Yakshagana is strongly influenced by the Vaishnava Bhakti movement. Its stories are mainly drawn from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and other Hindu epics.

Question 4:

Justice Amitava Roy Committee, recently in news, is associated with which of the following

Options:

- A. to review the the CRZ Notification, 2011
- B. to make recommendations for checking incidents of mob lynching across the country
- C. to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC)
- D. to suggest prison reforms

Answer: D

Explanation:

Recently, a report by Justice Amitava Roy Committee for Prison Reforms, was taken up for hearing before the Supreme court (SC).

Shailesh Nayak Committee-to review the the CRZ Notification, 2011

Rajiv Gauba Committee-to make recommendations for checking incidents of mob lynching across the country

G. Rohini Committee-to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC)

Question 5:



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With reference to the Operation Turtshield, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Odisha Government program to protect endangered turtles.
2. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau will conduct the operation.

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: B

Explanation:

Recently, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau conducted Operation Turtshield along with West Bengal forest department personnel, seized 983 Indian flapshell turtles and two Indian peacock softshell turtles from West Bengal's market.

Operation Turtshield is a new Central programme to protect endangered turtles.

The flapshell turtle, which is smaller in size, is killed for its meat which is considered a delicacy in both Bengal and Bangladesh. It is listed as Least Concerned under IUCN Red list

Indian peacock softshell turtles are categorised as Vulnerable in IUCN Red list. It is also listed in schedule-I of the Wildlife Protection Act and Schedule – I of CITES.

Science & Technology

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



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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.

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



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(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-

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.



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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

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).



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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.
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



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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.

With respect to Cash Reserve Ratio, consider the following statements.

1. It is the ratio of deposits which the banks have to maintain with the RBI in form of liquid assets.
2. The banks receive interest on these reserves from the RBI.

Which of the statement given above is/are correct?

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

Answer D:

Explanation:

The Cash Reserve Ratio in India is decided by RBI's Monetary Policy Committee in the periodic Monetary and Credit Policy. The Reserve Bank of India takes stock of the CRR in every monetary policy review. CRR is one of the major weapons in the RBI's arsenal that allows it to maintain a desired level of inflation, control the money supply, and also liquidity in the economy. The lower the CRR, the higher liquidity with the banks, which in turn goes into investment and lending and vice-versa. Higher CRR can also negatively impact the economy as lesser availability of loanable funds, in turn, slows down investment. It thereby reduces the supply of money in the economy.

The Reserve Bank of India or RBI mandates that banks store a proportion of their deposits in the form of cash so that the same can be given to the bank's customers if the need arises. The percentage of cash required to be kept in reserves, vis-a-vis a bank's total deposits, is called the Cash Reserve Ratio. The cash reserve is either stored in the bank's vault or is sent to the RBI. Banks do not get any interest on the money that is with the RBI under the CRR requirements.

Question 2.

Consider the following statements with respect to Liquidity Coverage Ratio:

1. It was introduced as part of the BASEL III norms.
2. It is the amount of High-quality Liquid Assets which need to be maintained to last 30 days of liquidity stress



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Which of the statement given above is/are correct?

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

Answer C:

Explanation:

The liquidity coverage ratio is the requirement whereby banks must hold an amount of high-quality liquid assets that's enough to fund cash outflows for 30 days. Liquidity ratios are similar to the LCR in that they measure a company's ability to meet its short-term financial obligations. It was introduced as part of the BASEL III norms.

Question 3.

Which among the following is/are part of the RBI's Monetary policy?

- 1. Open market operations
- 2. Cash reserve ratio
- 3. Bank rate
- 4. Reverse Repo rate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1, 3 and 4 only
- C. 1, 2 and 4 only
- D. 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer D:

Explanation:

Following are the main tools, components or part of the RBI's Monetary policy- Open market operations, Cash reserve ratio, Bank rate, SLR, Repo rate and Reverse Repo rate.

Question 4.

Consider the following statements:

- 1. The imposition of safeguard duty on import of solar modules would lead to a decrease in cost of setting up solar power plants.
- 2. Grid connected power from Wind energy exceeds solar energy within India.

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

Answer B:

Explanation:

Considering the recent surge in government-issued tenders for inter-state transmission system – (ISTS) connected solar and wind projects, the need for a stronger grid is now becoming more important than ever. In 2017, there was a spate of ISTS-connected tenders in the solar and wind sectors.

Reverse auctions enabled the [wind energy sector](#) to procure new wind generation capacity at lower prices, and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) took advantage of this by tendering 4,100



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MW of ISTS-connected wind energy projects during 2017. According to Mercom, SECI tendered wind projects with a combined total capacity of 1,000 MW under Tranche-I, 1,000 MW under Tranche-II, and 2,000 MW under Tranche-III, as well as 100 MW of ISTS-connected wind projects for Central Public-Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)

Question 5.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Pulses are not part of Minimum Support Price regime.
2. Improvement in irrigation facilities led to a shift from pulses to water-intensive crops
3. India is major exporting country of pulses

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

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

Answer C:

Explanation:

The scenario has improved a little in the past few years. The production of pulses has risen, primarily due to the government's efforts to strengthen seed production and distribution, and the continuous increase of minimum support price. But this spurt in pulse production is not enough to meet the demand as the import of pulses has also seen a rise. The reason behind the decline in pulses production in the northern states is improved irrigation facilities, which allowed these states to grow water-intensive crops such as rice and wheat. These crops also give assured returns because they are procured by the government. Southern states, which were mostly rain-fed and where irrigation facilities are not good, started growing pulses. Development of heat-tolerant varieties such as JG11 (a chickpea variety) also helped.

Polity

Question 1:

Consider the following statements with regards to the Coal sector in the country.

1. Despite having the world's fourth largest coal reserves, India imported 235 million tonnes (mt) of coal last year, of which 135mt valued at Rs.171,000 crore could have been met from domestic reserves.
2. India's state-run coal giant has been unable to meet growing demand despite abundant resources.
3. India depends on Coal India for more than 80 per cent of its domestic production and the miner has consistently fallen short of production targets in the last few years.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:



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

Answer: D

Explanation:

The Union cabinet approved opening up of coal mining and further disinvestments. The Centre's decision to liberalise norms for entry into coal mining and relax regulations on mining and selling coal in the country is significant in many respects. Apart from deciding that the Centre will shoulder 60% of the expense for the North East Gas Grid project. It also extended the validity period of mining lease clearances ending in 2020 by two years.

Coal sector in India:

- Despite having the world's fourth largest coal reserves, India imported 235 million tonnes (mt) of coal last year, of which 135mt valued at Rs.171,000 crore could have been met from domestic reserves.
- India's state-run coal giant has been unable to meet growing demand despite abundant resources.
- The South Asian nation depends on Coal India for more than 80 per cent of its domestic production and the miner has consistently fallen short of production targets in the last few years.
- The government has been progressively liberalizing the coal sector over the last several months to attract new investments, and getting rid of this archaic end-use restriction was a key step.

100% Foreign Direct Investment under automatic route is allowed:

- This will open up the coal mining sector completely, enabling anyone with finances and expertise to bid for blocks and sell the coal freely to any buyer of their choice.
- It is expected that the government will also address other procedural issues that add to time delays and upfront cost of developing a mine.
- Under the ordinance, allocation of coal/lignite blocks for composite prospecting licence cum mining lease has been provided;
- Requirement of previous approval in cases where allocation of blocks was made by Central Govt has been dispensed with.
- This will speed up the process of implementation of projects, ease of doing business, simplification of procedure and benefit all the parties in areas where minerals are located.

Question 2:

Recently, the Supreme court declared that Right to internet is a fundamental right (subject to reasonable restrictions) included in _____ of the Indian Constitution.



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Options:

- A. Article 14
- B. Article 15
- C. Article 19
- D. Both A & C

Answer: C

Explanation:

Supreme Court has delivered the verdict on a clutch of petitions challenging the Union government's decision to impose restrictions on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir after the August 5 revocation of provisions of Article 370, giving special status to the state. The Court said that all restrictive orders under Section 144 of CrPC and suspension of internet services in Jammu and Kashmir have to be reviewed by the administration within a week.

What's the issue?

Many parts of Jammu and Kashmir have been under lockdown for five months now – with no internet and restrictions on movement. The internet shutdown in Kashmir is the longest in any democracy in the world.

The Union government decided to impose restrictions on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir after the August 5 revocation of provisions of Article 370, giving special status to the state.

Observations made by the Court:

- On internet restrictions:
- Right to internet is a fundamental right (subject to reasonable restrictions) included in the freedom of expression under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.
- Restrictions on fundamental rights could not be in exercise of arbitrary powers. These freedoms could only be restricted as a last resort if "relevant factors" have been considered and no other options are there.
- Any order passed to restrict or suspend judicial scrutiny will be subject to judicial scrutiny.
- Suspension of internet services indefinitely is also a violation of telecom rules.

On section 144:

- Sec 144 cannot be used to suppress the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance, or the exercise of democratic rights.
- When Sec 144 is imposed for reasons of apprehended danger, that danger must be an "emergency".
- The imposition of Sec 144 must strike a balance between the rights of the individual and the concerns of the state.
- Powers under Sec 144 should be exercised in a reasonable and bona fide manner, and the order must state material facts in order to enable judicial review.

Question 3:



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Consider the following statements with regards to the concept of Curative petition.

1. The concept of curative petition was first evolved by the Supreme Court of India in the matter of Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra and Anr. (2002)
2. The Supreme Court held that in order to prevent abuse of its process and to cure gross miscarriage of justice, it may reconsider its judgements in exercise of its inherent powers. For this purpose, the Court has devised what has been termed as a “curative” petition.
3. The petitioner will have to establish that there was a genuine violation of principles of natural justice and fear of the bias of the judge and judgement that adversely affected him.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

Curative petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court by two convicts in the Nirbhaya case. The petitions come just days after a Delhi sessions court scheduled the execution of the four convicts at Tihar Jail on January 22.

What is curative petition?

- It is the last judicial resort available for redressal of grievances in court which is normally decided by judges in-chamber. It is only in rare cases that such petitions are given an open-court hearing.
- The concept of curative petition was first evolved by the Supreme Court of India in the matter of Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra and Anr. (2002) where the question was whether an aggrieved person is entitled to any relief against the final judgement/order of the Supreme Court, after dismissal of a review petition.
- The Supreme Court in the said case held that in order to prevent abuse of its process and to cure gross miscarriage of justice, it may reconsider its judgements in exercise of its inherent powers. For this purpose, the Court has devised what has been termed as a “curative” petition.
- To entertain the curative petitions, the Supreme Court has laid down certain specific conditions:
- The petitioner will have to establish that there was a genuine violation of principles of natural justice and fear of the bias of the judge and judgement that adversely affected him.
- The petition shall state specifically that the grounds mentioned had been taken in the review petition and that it was dismissed by circulation.
- The petition is to be sent to the three senior most judges and judges of the bench who passed the judgement affecting the petition, if available.
- If the majority of the judges on the above bench agree that the matter needs hearing, then it would be sent to the same bench (as far as possible) and the court could impose “exemplary costs” to the petitioner if his plea lacks merit.

Question 4:



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Consider the following statements regarding CISF (Central Industrial Security Force).

1. CISF is an armed force of the Union established under an Act of Parliament, "Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968 (50 of 1968)".
2. CISF is also providing protection to some private sector units and important government buildings in Delhi.
3. CISF is the only force with a customized and dedicated fire wing.
4. CISF is a compensatory cost force.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

The Supreme Court has asked the Union government to explore possibility of creating a special wing of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for providing security to courts across the country, including the high courts and the SC.

About CISF:

- CISF is an armed force of the Union established under an Act of Parliament, "Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968 (50 of 1968)".
- According to the mandate, CISF provides security to the premises staff along with the security of property and establishments.
- CISF is also providing protection to some private sector units and important government buildings in Delhi.
- Presently, CISF is also providing security to the protected persons classified as Z Plus, Z, X, Y.
- CISF is the only force with a customized and dedicated fire wing.
- CISF is a compensatory cost force.

Question 5:

Consider the following statements about the National Pension System.

1. National Pension System (NPS) is a government-sponsored pension scheme launched in January 2004 for government employees. However, in 2009, it was opened to all sections.
2. NPS is being implemented and regulated by PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) – a statutory body established by PFRDA Act, 2013
3. Any Indian citizen (Both Resident and Non-Resident) between 18 and 60 years can join NPS.
4. However, OCI (Overseas Citizens of India) and PIO (Person of Indian Origin) card holders and Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs) are not eligible for opening of NPS account.

Which of these statements is correct?



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Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

7,000 corporates in the country are currently registered with PFRDA, but only 10 lakh employees from this corporate sector are covered under the NPS. NPS currently has a total subscriber base of 3.25 crore, (with ₹4 lakh crore under investment as on December 31)

About NPS

National Pension System (NPS) is a government-sponsored pension scheme launched in January 2004 for government employees. However, in 2009, it was opened to all sections.

Implementation Agency: NPS is being implemented and regulated by PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) – a statutory body established by PFRDA Act, 2013

Who can join NPS?

Any Indian citizen (Both Resident and Non-Resident) between 18 and 60 years can join NPS. The only condition is that the person must comply with know your customer (KYC) norms.

However, OCI (Overseas Citizens of India) and PIO (Person of Indian Origin) card holders and Hindu Undivided Family (HUFs) are not eligible for opening of NPS account.

International Relations

Question 1:

Which of the following nations did not recently join the INSTEX – Instrument in support of Trade Exchanges?

Options:

- E. Sweden
- F. Norway
- G. Denmark
- H. France

Answer: D

Explanation:

Six Countries – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have recently joined INSTEX.

What is it?

It is a payment mechanism being setup by the European Union to secure trade with Iran and skirt US sanctions after Washington pulled out of the landmark nuclear deal last May.

It is registered at Paris with an initial 3,000 Euros in the capital and a supervisory board with members from France and Germany and chaired by the UK.



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It is a project of the governments of France, Germany and Britain and will receive the formal endorsement of all 28 EU members.

Key features of INSTEX:

It will allow trade between the EU and Iran without relying on direct financial transactions. It will initially be used for non-sanctionable trade, including humanitarian goods such as medicine, food and medical devices.

Significance:

This mechanism is the first concrete step by the EU to counter Trump's unilateral decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal.

The launching of INSTEX is not only a matter of Iran-EU relations but also embodies a new approach by the bloc towards US policies. It "becomes an opportunity when it's understood as an experiment and as part of a bigger project to strengthen EU economic power.

Question 2:

The 'Blue flag' programme aims to give certification to

Options:

- A. Seafood of a nation
- B. Beaches
- C. Coast guard of a nation
- D. Water pollution levels in the country

Answer: B

Explanation:

The MoEFCC has embarked upon a programme for 'Blue Flag' Certification for select beaches in the country.

Beaches identified in India:

- 13 pilot beaches have been identified for the certification.
- These include Ghoghala Beach (Diu), Shivrajpur beach (Gujarat), Bhogave (Maharashtra), Padubidri and Kasarkod (Karnagaka), Kappad beach (Kerala) etc.
- Chandrabhaga beach of Odisha's Konark coast was the first to complete the tag certification process will be the first in Asia to get the Blue Flag certification.

Blue flag programme:

- The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education).
- It started in France in 1985 and has been implemented in Europe since 1987, and in areas outside Europe since 2001, when South Africa joined.
- Japan and South Korea are the only countries in South and southeastern Asia to have Blue Flag beaches.
- Spain tops the list with 566 such beaches; Greece and France follow with 515 and 395, respectively.

Criteria:

There are nearly 33 criteria that must be met to qualify for a Blue Flag certification, such as the water meeting certain quality standards, having waste disposal facilities, being disabled- friendly,



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have first aid equipment, and no access to pets in the main areas of the beach. Some criteria are voluntary and some compulsory.

Question 3:

Bougainville, recently in the news, refers to

Options:

- A. A species of plant found in the Himalayas
- B. An island holding referendum for freedom
- C. A new species of tortoise found in Odisha
- D. An artificial human created by NASA

Answer: B

Explanation:

It is an island in the Pacific.

Why in news? It is holding a referendum to decide if it wants to remain a part of Papua New Guinea or become an independent country.

How does a territory become a new country?

There is no straightforward rule. A region's quest for nationhood mainly depends on how many countries and international organisations it manages to convince to recognise it as a country.

The biggest sanction of nationhood is the United Nations recognising a territory as a country.

And as per 1933's **Montevideo Convention**, a region wanting to become independent should meet 4 criteria:

A country-hopeful must have a defined territory, people, government, and the ability to form relationships with other countries.

Question 4:

As per one of the Sustainable Development Goals, which of the following diseases is not targeted to be eradicated by 2030?

Options:

- A. AIDS
- B. Malaria
- C. Polio
- D. Tuberculosis

Answer: C

Explanation:



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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), adopted by member countries of the United Nations in 2015, set a target of ending the epidemics of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by 2030 (SDG 3.3). The key indicator chosen to track progress in achieving the target for HIV-AIDS is “the number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations”. Given the wide diversity of the HIV virus strains, development of a vaccine has been highly challenging but a couple of candidates are in early stage trials. However, mere technical innovations will not win the battle against HIV-AIDS.

Vulnerable sections who are affected by the epidemics:

In the terminology of HIV prevention and control, the phrase “key populations” refers to: men who have sex with men; people who use injected drugs; people in prisons and other closed settings; sex workers and their clients, and transgender persons.

Risk of acquiring HIV infection is 22 times higher in homosexual men and intravenous drug users, 21 times higher in sex workers, 12 times more in transgender persons.

Question 5:

The 90-90-90 targets are related to which of the following diseases?

Options:

- A. AIDS
- B. Ebola
- C. SARS
- D. Tuberculosis

Answer: A

Explanation:

UN 90-90-90 targets report:

India, China and Pakistan are among the 10 countries that accounted for more than 95 per cent of all new HIV infections in the Asia and the Pacific region in 2016, according to a UN report. The report by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, 'Ending AIDS: Progress towards the 90-90-90 targets', gives a comprehensive analysis of the 2014 targets to accelerate progress so that by 2020, 90 per cent of all HIV-infected people know their status, 90 per cent of all HIV-diagnosed people are accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 90 per cent of those taking ART are virally suppressed.

Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):

It consists of the combination of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to maximally suppress the HIV virus and stop the progression of HIV disease.

ART also prevents onward transmission of HIV. Huge reductions have been seen in rates of death and infections, when use is made of a potent ARV regimen, particularly in early stages of the disease.

Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) is now being given to people living with HIV, irrespective of the CD4 count.



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History

Question 1. Consider the following statements about the Karachi session of INC in 1931.

1. It was presided by Jawahar Lal Nehru.
2. It passed the resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme.
3. Gandhiji moved the resolution in open session of Karachi Congress.

Select the correct code:

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

Ans. b.

Explanation:

- In 1931 the Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic was adopted at the Karachi Congress of the INC.
- The Session was presided over by Sardar Patel.
- Resolution was drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- It was moved in the open session by Gandhiji.

Question 2. In which year Gandhiji made Jawaharlal Nehru as his heir?

- a. 1936.
- b. 1926.
- c. 1942.
- d. 1945.

Ans. c.

Explanation: In 1942 Gandhiji made Nehru his heir despite the latter's total commitment to the development of industry and agriculture on the basis of modern science and technology. On which Gandhiji was having a different view and approach.

Question 3. Which Indian capitalist provided funds for Gandhiji to set up Tolstoy Farm in South Africa?

- a. Ratan Tata.
- b. G. D. Birla.
- c. Jamna Lal Bajaj



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d. Purshottam Das Thakurdas.

Ans. a.

- Ratanji Jamshedji Tata had given Rs. 25,000 to the Satyagraha funds for setting Tolstoy Farm.
- Gandhi visited Jamshedpur in 1925 to resolve the labour problems at Tata Steel. Addressing an audience of 20,000 people at the TISCO Institute (now the United Club), he said, "Believe me, throughout my public service of 35 years, though I have been obliged to range myself seemingly against capital... I may say that I have come here also as a friend of the capitalists — a friend of the Tatas."

Question 4. Who called Jinnah as 'Ambassador of Hindu- Muslim Unity'?

- Mahatma Gandhi.
- Dadabhai Naoroji.
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
- Sarojini Naidu.

Ans. d.

Explanation:

- Jinnah began his political career showing the most ferocious will to forge unity between Hindu and Muslim Indians. At the end of the first ten years of his career from 1906 to 1919, this attitude earned him the nickname 'the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity' from Sarojini Naidu.
- Naidu, who compiled Jinnah's speeches and writings in 1918 gave the volume the sub-title 'An Ambassador of Unity' and wrote that he stood "as an embodied symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity."

Question 5. Who wrote the book 'India Divided'?

- Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- C. Rajagopalachari.
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Pael.

Ans. a.

Explanation:

- The book, 'India Divided' is written by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.
- Published in 1947, all book was written during his prison time only in 1946.
- Most of India Divided was written in prison and it was published in 1946, a year before India was divided. The book specifically examines the theory that the Hindus and Muslims of India were two nations and concludes that the solution for the Hindu-Muslim issue should be sought in the formation of a secular state, with cultural autonomy for the different groups that make up the nation.



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- It traces the origins and growth of the Hindu–Muslim conflict, gives the summary of the several schemes for the partition of India which were put forth and points out the essential ambiguity of the Lahore Resolution.
- Finally, it deals with the resources of the Muslim-majority states and shows how the suggested scheme of Partition was impracticable and proposes a new solution to the Hindu–Muslim question.

Geography

- 1) Recently, CAIT (Confederation of All India Traders) has announced that it will launch a national e-commerce marketplace 'bharatmarket'. Consider the following statements on that :-
 - (i) It is for retail traders.
 - (ii) It aims to bring at least 50% of retailers under it.

Choose the correct alternative :-

- (a) only i
- (b) only ii
- (c) both
- (d) none

Answer a

Explanation :-

CAIT: It refers to Confederation of All India Traders. CAIT is an apex body of trading community of India comprising of prominent Trade Bodies of different States and having an access to more than 20 thousands such Trade Federations, Associations, Chambers across the Country. It was founded in the year 1990 to consolidate the trading community of the Country which is though self-organized but yet is classified as unorganized and to protect their interest. The trading community consists of traders, small and medium enterprises, self-employed persons and Professionals which are more than 5 crores in unorganized sector providing employment to more than 22 crore people in India. The current CAIT National President is BC Bhartia.

Recently, CAIT has announced that it will launch a national e-commerce marketplace 'bharatmarket' soon for all retail traders. It will launch bharatmarket in collaboration with several technology partners. The initiative is to be guided and supported by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The main objective of this the initiative is that it will integrate capabilities of various technology companies to provide end-to-end services in the logistics and supply chains from manufacturers to end consumers, including deliveries at home. The 'Bharat market' e-commerce portal will include participation from retailers across the nation. It aims to bring at least 95 percent of the retail traders onboard, who would exclusively run the portal.

The traders body seeks to enroll about one crore retailers on this e-marketplace in 2020 and make it the world's largest and most-unique e-marketplace ever.



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2) Consider the following statements on National Agriculture Market or eNAM portal :-

- (i) Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM.
- (ii) It is for uniformity in agriculture marketing.

Choose the correct alternative :-

- (a) only i
- (b) only ii
- (c) both
- (d) none

Answer c

Explanation :-

e-NAM platform: National Agriculture Market or eNAM is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities. The e-NAM was launched on 14 April 2016 across India by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is the lead agency for implementing eNAM under the aegis of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India. The main objective of the portal is to promote uniformity in agriculture marketing by streamlining of procedures across the integrated markets, removing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers and promoting real time price discovery based on actual demand and supply.

Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar has added 200 new mandis to the e-National Agriculture Market(e-NAM) platform. With this addition now the total number of e-NAM mandis in the country will be 785 and by the end of May 2020 1000 more mandis are expected to join the e-NAMplatform.

The newly 200 mandis includes 94 Mandis of Rajasthan, 27 Mandis of Tamil Nadu, 25 Mandis each from Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, 16 Mandis of Odisha, 11 Mandis of Andhra Pradesh and two Mandis of Karnataka. Karnataka has been added to the list of e-NAM states for the first time.

The market aims to facilitate trade beyond mandi and state borders for farmers, traders and buyers with online trading in commodities. It is expected that the Indian Prime Minister Narender Modi's vision of using technology for the benefit of farmers will soon be realized.

3) Consider the following statements on Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and Copernicus Atmospheric Monitoring Services (CAMS) :-



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- (i) CAMS, recently, announced that the largest Ozone Hole recorded over North Pole has now closed.
- (ii) The development of the hole was confirmed by Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and Copernicus Atmospheric Monitoring Services (CAMS).

Choose the correct alternative :-

- (a) only i
- (b) only ii
- (c) both
- (d) none

Answer c

Explanation :-

CAMS: The abbreviation stands for Copernicus' Atmospheric Monitoring Service. CAMS, recently, announced that the largest Ozone Hole recorded over North Pole has now closed.

According to them, the hole in the Ozone layer which spread over 1 million square kilometres above the Arctic has healed itself due to unusual atmospheric conditions.

The hole in Ozone was first identified by scientists in March 2020 which was very unusual as such holes are quite common above the Antarctic at the South Pole especially during July to September. The development of the hole was confirmed by Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and Copernicus Atmospheric Monitoring Services (CAMS) by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF).

C3S: It is the abbreviation for Copernicus Climate Change Service. C3S is one of the six thematic services provided by the European Union's Copernicus Programme. The Copernicus Programme is managed by the European Commission and the C3S is implemented by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF). C3S are essential to study and monitor climate change adaptation. It provides climate and climate change services that support European climate policies and actions, contributing to building a European society with more resilience against human-induced changing climate. The goal of C3S is to provide reliable information about the past, current and future states of the climate in Europe and worldwide, the forecasts on a seasonal time scale, and the more likely projections in the coming decades for various scenarios of greenhouse gas emissions and other Climate Change contributors.

- 4) Recently, Amazon Sailfin Catfish also known as sucker mouth catfish was caught by a fisherman in Manipur's Bishnupur district. Consider the following statements on that :-
 - (i) It is considered as a threat to the aquatic diversity of the region.
 - (ii) It is also found in Philippines.



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Choose the correct alternative :-

- (a) only i
- (b) only ii
- (c) both
- (d) none

Answer c

Explanation :-

Manipur: Manipur is a state in northeastern India. Manipur literally means, "the jeweled land". The exquisite state is known for its traditions, dance forms, music and sumptuous cuisine. Most of the state is covered in forests, which houses some of the rarest species of plants and animals. It was formed on 21 January 1972. Its Capital is Imphal. The current Governor and the Chief Minister of Manipur are Najma Heptulla and Biren Singh respectively.

Recently, Amazon Sailfin Catfish also known as suckermouth catfish was caught by a fisherman in Manipur's Bishnupur district. As per the senior scientist of the Manipur centre's ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), Dr Ch Basudha Devi, the report of catching of such alien species from the water bodies of the state poses a threat to the aquatic diversity of the region. Bishnupur district has the largest freshwater lake in the northeast region.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had listed seven native fish of Manipur as endangered freshwater species. Even the state fish, Pengba, has vanished from wild and is only bred in farm ponds.

Amazon Sailfin Catfish: The Amazon sailfin catfish, is a freshwater tropical fish in the armored catfish family. It is one of a number of species commonly referred to as the common pleco or "leopard pleco" by aquarists. Its scientific name is *Pterygoplichthys pardalis*. This alga eating fish can grow up to 49 centimetres and weigh up to 310gm. The species is native to the Amazon River Basin of Brazil and Peru. It is recorded in the Marikina River in the Philippines and known as the "janitor fish". It has become a local pest to eliminate fish in a few countries.

- 5) Recently, IMD released a 169 new names list for the tropical cyclones that are likely to emerge over the north Indian Ocean, including the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Consider the following statements on that :-
- (i) The importance of the naming of Tropical Cyclones is that it helps the general masses to identify each individual cyclone.
 - (ii) Gati and Aag are 2 such names suggested by India.

Choose the correct alternative :-

- (a) only i



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- (b) only ii
- (c) both
- (d) none

Answer c

Explanation :-

IMD: It is an abbreviation for India Meteorological Department. The IMD is one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) set up across the globe, along with five regional Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres (TCWCs). It is their prime duty of issuing advisories and names of tropical cyclones.

Recently, IMD released a 169 new names list for the tropical cyclones that are likely to emerge over the north Indian Ocean, including the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

IMD had issued advisories regarding upcoming tropical cyclones to 13 member nations. The names contributed by these countries are India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Maldives, Oman, Thailand, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh.

The decision to create new list of cyclones was taken during the 45th session of Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) held by World Meteorological Organization which was held in Oman.

13 Cyclone names suggested by India are Gati, Tej, Neer, Vyom, Aag, Jhar, Probaho, Murasu, Prabhajan, Jaladhi, Ghurni, Ambud and Vega.

Importance: The importance of the naming of Tropical Cyclones is that it helps the scientific community, disaster managers, media and general masses to identify each individual cyclone. It creates awareness of its development and removes confusion in case of simultaneous occurrence of TCs over a region. It is not only to remember a TC easily but also rapidly and effectively disseminate warnings to much wider audience.