



# VAJIRAO & REDDY INSTITUTE

India's Top Potential Training Institute for IAS

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (Set 23)

## Current Affairs

### Question 1:

Consider the following statements about the Blue Dot Network (BDN):

1. It has been established by India and Japan.
2. The network will serve as a globally recognised evaluation and certification system for roads, ports and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

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:

The Blue Dot Network initiative was announced at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand in 2019.

It is a US led initiative jointly launched by the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The aim of this initiative is to bring governments, private sectors and civil societies for promoting high- quality global infrastructure development in an open and inclusive framework.

The network will serve as a globally recognised evaluation and certification system for roads, ports and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

### Question 2:



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Consider the following statements about the Global Refugee Forum:

1. The first ever Global Refugee Forum is being held in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. It is being jointly hosted by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) along with the Government of Switzerland.

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 first ever Global Refugee Forum is being held in Geneva, Switzerland.

It is being jointly hosted by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) along with Government of Switzerland.

At GRF the international community will showcase and exchange good practices at national, regional or global levels.

The forum is the practical implementation of the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

GRF will be convened at the ministerial level and participants will gather to address the current refugee situation.

It will be a high-level gathering of states and other stakeholders including UN member states, together with private businesses, non-profits and nongovernmental organisations.

**Question 3:**

Consider the following statements about the Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC):

1. It is an initiative by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, to make the construction of houses cost-effective and innovative.
2. It is under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U).
3. It aims to fast-track the construction of affordable housing and meet the target of constructing 1.2 crore houses by 2024.



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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: A**

**Explanation:**

The Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC) an initiative by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, to make the construction of houses cost-effective and innovative.

It is under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U).

It aims to fast-track the construction of affordable housing and meet the target of constructing 1.2 crore houses by 2022.

The challenge has three components:

- Conduct of Grand Expo-cum-Conference,
- Identifying Proven Demonstrable Technologies from across the world and
- Promoting Potential Technologies through setting up incubation centers at selected IITs and organizing accelerator workshops under the Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerators-India (ASHA-India) Program.

**Question 4:**

“2 Billion Kilometers to Safety” campaign has been launched by which of the following organisations:

**Options:**

- A. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- B. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- C. World Economic Forum (WEF)
- D. None of the above

**Answer: A**

**Explanation:**



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The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR has announced a new global campaign urging people worldwide to cover the total distance travelled by refugees each year – 2 billion kilometers – by running, jogging or walking.

The “2 Billion Kilometers to Safety” campaign vies to encourage people to support refugees by championing individual acts of solidarity.

The goal is to acknowledge the resilience and strength of refugees.

It calls on the public to show their solidarity with refugees by running, walking or cycling to collectively

cover two billion kilometers.

Participants can use their fitness apps or the campaign website to log the kilometers and contribute to the global total.

## Question 5:

With reference to the SAANS campaign, consider the following statements:

1. The campaign is aimed at reducing child mortality due to tuberculosis (TB).
2. The campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Which of these statements is / are incorrect?

### Options:

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

**Answer: A**

### Explanation:

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched SAANS, a campaign aimed at reducing child mortality due to pneumonia.

Under the campaign, a child suffering from pneumonia can be treated with a pre-referral dose of antibiotic amoxicillin by ASHA workers, and health and wellness centres can use pulse oximeter (device to monitor oxygen saturation).



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SAANS - 'Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully'.

## Science & Technology

### 1. Consider the following statement Elastocaloric Effect –

1. Elastocaloric effect is defined as the isothermal change of entropy or the adiabatic change in temperature of a material subjected to a uniaxial strain.
2. Elastocaloric effect can be perceived in rubber bands, when rubber bands are twisted and untwisted, it produces a cooling effect.
3. The elastocaloric effect, if harnessed, may be able to do away with the need of fluid refrigerants used in fridges and air-conditioners.

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 –d**

Recently researchers have shown that elastocaloric effect ultimately leads to cooling. This is an important research published in the Journal Science. The elastocaloric effect, if harnessed, may be able to do away with the need of fluid refrigerants used in fridges and air-conditioners. Nowadays everybody knows that the fluids like Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are susceptible to leakages, and can contribute to global warming. Caloric effects refer to the entropy changes when applied external fields, such as stress, electric or magnetic fields, change. It should be known that there is a strong demand in the world for efficient and environmentally friendly refrigeration technologies. Therefore the materials with giant caloric effects, including elastocaloric, have been widely investigated. Elastocaloric effect can be perceived in rubber bands, when rubber bands are twisted and untwisted, it produces a



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cooling effect. Elastocaloric effect is defined as the isothermal change of entropy or the adiabatic change in temperature of a material subjected to a uniaxial strain.

## 2. Consider the following statement Antibiotic Phazolicin-

1. This new antibiotic named as phazolicin produced by a soil bacterium found at a tropical forest in Brazil.
2. it may help develop new ways to tackle bacterial infections in both plants and humans.
3. phazolicin was produced by an unidentified species belonging to a class of microbes called Rhizobium, present in the roots of plants.

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

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

Answer –b

The soil bacterium could act as a “plant probiotic,” providing friendly support to plants against infectious microbes, and contribute to their health. An international team of scientists have discovered a new antibiotic produced by a soil bacterium found in a tropical forest in Mexico, a finding that may help develop new ways to tackle bacterial infections in both plants and humans.

That the soil bacterium could act as a “plant probiotic,” providing friendly support to plants against infectious microbes, and contribute to their health. The researchers, including those from Rutgers University in the US, said that the new antibiotic — phazolicin — prevented harmful bacteria from getting into the root systems of bean plants. That phazolicin was produced by an unidentified species belonging to a class of microbes called Rhizobium, present in the roots of plants. The study noted that the microbe was found in a tropical forest in Los Tuxtlas, Mexico, in the soil and roots of wild beans called *Phaseolus vulgaris*.

## 3. DANX-19 exercise held at which place?

- (a) Andaman and Nicobar
- (b) Odisha
- (c) Lakshadweep
- (d) Rajasthan



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## Answer-a

Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) has conducted the second edition of Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2019 (DANX-19), a large scale joint services exercise from 14 Oct to 18 Oct 19. Spanning over a period of five days, components of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard carried out mobilisation and field manoeuvres to validate defensive plans of Headquarters ANC towards pursuance of the Command's responsibility, namely ensuring territorial integrity of the A&N Islands. In addition to internal forces from ANC, accretional forces from Mainland comprising ships and aircraft, Special Forces from the newly formed Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), also participated in this edition.

## 4. Consider the following statement IndiGen-

1. The IndiGen initiative was undertaken by CSIR in April 2019.
2. IndiGen will be utilized towards understanding the genetic diversity on a population scale, make available genetic variant frequencies for clinical applications and enable genetic epidemiology of diseases.
3. CSIR contributed towards the first personal human genome in India and in understanding ancestral population in India.

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

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

## Answer –d

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has conducted Whole Genome Sequencing of 1,008 Indians from different populations across the country. Announcing details of the IndiGen Genome project, the Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan said that the whole genome data will be important for building the knowhow, baseline data and indigenous capacity in the emerging area of Precision Medicine. The outcomes of the IndiGen will have applications in a number of areas including predictive and preventive medicine with faster and efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases. The IndiGen initiative was undertaken by CSIR in April 2019, which was implemented by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad. This has enabled benchmarking the scalability of genome sequencing and computational analysis at population scale in a defined timeline. The ability to decode the genetic blueprint of





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humans through whole genome sequencing will be a major driver for biomedical science. IndiGen mobile application that enables participants and clinicians to access clinically actionable information in their genomes. He emphasized that it ensures privacy and data security, which is vital for personal genomics to be implemented at scale. Dr Harsh Vardhan elaborated that this is being pilot tested in individuals across India and has evinced interest from several Indian commercial organisations. CSIR has led human genomic sciences in India and has made major contributions in understanding the “Indian Genome Variation”. Pioneering collaborations in genomics has been fostered by CSIR both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, CSIR contributed towards the first personal human genome in India and in understanding ancestral population in India and early migrations that led to what we know today on distinct ethnic groups. CSIR also pioneered the application of genomics in clinical settings in the area of rare genetic diseases in India by means of DNA/Genome based diagnostics and interaction with large number of clinical collaborators.

## 5. Consider the following statement First Indigenous Fuel Cell System-

1. Narendra Modi unveiled the first Indigenous High Temperature Fuel Cell System developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
2. It was inaugurated on the occasion of CSIR Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. The Fuel Cells developed are based on High Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology.

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

**(a) Only (1) & (3)**

**(b) Only 2,&3.**

**(c) Only 1 & 2**

**(d) All the above**

**Answer –b**

The President of India, Shri Ram NathKovind, unveiled the first Indigenous High Temperature Fuel Cell System developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in partnership with Indian industries under India’s flagship program named “New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)” on the occasion of CSIR Foundation Day at VigyanBhawan, New Delhi. A unique example of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) among CSIR’s three Laboratories [CSIR-NCL, Pune; CSIR-NPL, New Delhi & CSIR-CECRI, Karaikudi (Chennai Center)] and two Indian industries; M/s Thermax Limited, Pune and M/s Reliance Industries Limited, Mumbai exemplified exploiting materials of science developments at CSIR laboratories into practice by Industry. The 5.0 kW fuel cell system generates power in a green manner using methanol / bio-methane, with heat and water as bi-products for further use; amounting to greater than 70% efficiency, which otherwise may not be possible by other energy sources.





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The Fuel Cells developed are based on High Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology. The development is most suitable for distributed stationary power applications like; for small offices, commercial units, data centers etc.; where highly reliable power is essential with simultaneous requirement for air-conditioning. This system will also meet the requirement of efficient, clean and reliable backup power generator for telecom towers, remote locations and strategic applications as well. This development would replace Diesel Generating (DG) sets and help reduce India's dependence on crude oil.

The developed technology is world class and the development has placed India in the league of developed nations which are in possession of such a knowledgebase. CSIR has an impressive portfolio of global patents on these developments. In the field of clean energy, Fuel Cell distributed power generation systems are emerging as promising alternative to grid power. The Fuel Cells fit well in India's mission of replacing diesel with green and alternate fuels. The development of fuel cell technology is indigenous and carries immense national importance in terms of non-grid energy security.

## Economy

### Question 1.

Which among the following can be considered as Assets of the RBI?

1. Loans to the Centre and States.
2. Government Securities in Custody of the RBI.
3. CRR Deposits of the Banks.
4. Currency in circulation.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Answer A:**

**Explanation:**

### Assets of Reserve Bank

**1. Foreign Currency Assets:** India's Foreign Exchange Reserves comprise Foreign Currency Assets, Gold, SDR's and Reserve Bank position with International Monetary Fund (IMF). Foreign currency assets include investments in US Treasury bonds, Bonds/Treasury Bills of other selected Governments, deposits with foreign central banks, foreign commercial banks *etc.* Foreign currency assets in WSS are sums the foreign currency assets of both Issue and Banking Departments. In Issue Department, these foreign assets back the issuance of notes along with rupee securities and gold. In Banking Department, it includes foreign currency assets and balances with foreign entities like Bank for International Settlements (BIS), foreign commercial banks *etc.*

**2. Gold Coin Bullion:** Gold coin bullion represents the gold coin bullion of Issue Department and Banking Department. The gold reserves of Issue Department and Banking Department are valued at value close to international market prices on monthly basis. The current total quantity of gold held is 557.75 tons.



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**3. Rupee Securities:** Rupee securities (including treasury bills) includes the government securities held by Issue and Banking departments. In Issue Department rupee securities along with rupee securities include government securities of that 'foreign country maturing within ten years of Issue Department plus investment in government securities of Banking Department.

**4. Loans and Advances:** The Reserve Bank gives loans and advances to the Central & State Governments, commercial and co-operative banks and others in terms of Section 17 and 18 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

**4.1 Central Government:** Reserve Bank provides loans and advances to the Central Government to meet the temporary gap between receipts and payments. These advances are termed as ways and means advances which are fixed from time to time in consultation with the Government.

**4.2 State Governments:** Loans and advances to the State Governments comprise ways and means advances granted under Section 17(5) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The minimum balances to be maintained by the State Governments with the Bank and this is revised from time to time.

**4.3 Loans and Advances to NABARD:** The Reserve Bank can extend loans to NABARD under section 17 (4E) of the RBI Act. Currently no loans and advances are given to NABARD.

**4.4 Loans and Advances to SCBs, State Co-operative Banks:** Loans and advances to Scheduled Commercial Banks, State Co-operative Banks made by the Reserve Bank under Sections 17 & 18 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The loans and advances to SCBs represent refinance facility made available to banks mainly on account of increase in export credit refinance. At present, ECR refinance limit is set at 50 per cent of eligible export credit outstanding. ECR is provided at the Repo rate. As per change in accounting practice with effect from July 11, 2014, transaction under Repo/Term Repo/MSF with banks is now treated as loans and advances to Banks. Earlier this amount was treated as investment in Government securities.

## Question 2.

The Bimal Jalan Committee, which was recently in news, deals with which among the following?

- A. Reforms in the Public Sector Banks
- B. Reducing the NPAs of Banks
- C. Economic Capital Framework of RBI
- D. Implementation of BASEL III Norms

**Answer C;**

**Explanation:**

RBI had constituted a panel on economic capital framework. It was headed by Ex-RBI governor **Bimal Jalan**.

The expert panel on RBI's economic capital framework was formed **to address the issue of RBI reserves**—one of the sticking points between the central bank and the government.

The government has been insisting that the central bank hand over its surplus reserves amid a shortfall in revenue collections. Access to the funds will allow the government to meet deficit targets, infuse capital into weak banks to boost lending and fund welfare programmes.

Economic capital framework refers to the **risk capital required by the central bank while taking into account different risks**. The economic capital framework reflects the capital that an institution requires or needs to hold as a counter against unforeseen risks or events or losses in the future.



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### Question 3.

Consider the following statements related to Employees State Insurance Scheme (ESIC)

1. The scheme is jointly financed by the Government and the Employers.
2. This scheme is applicable to all the factories employing more than 100 persons.

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 D:**

**Explanation:**

The [Employees' State Insurance Scheme](#) is an integrated measure of Social Insurance embodied in the Employees' State Insurance Act and it is designed to accomplish the task of protecting '**employees**' as defined in the **Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948** against the impact of incidences of sickness, maternity, disablement and death due to employment injury and to provide medical care to insured persons and their families. The ESI Scheme applies to factories and other establishment's viz. Road Transport, Hotels, Restaurants, Cinemas, Newspaper, Shops, and Educational/Medical Institutions wherein 10 or more persons are employed. However, in some States threshold limit for coverage of establishments is still 20. Employees of the aforesaid categories of factories and establishments, drawing wages upto Rs.15,000/- a month, are entitled to social security cover under the ESI Act. ESI Corporation has also decided to enhance wage ceiling for coverage of employees under the ESI Act from Rs.15,000/- to Rs.21,000/-.

ESI Corporation has extended the benefits of the ESI Scheme to the workers deployed on the construction sites located in the implemented areas under ESI Scheme w.e.f. 1st August, 2015.

The ESI Scheme is financed by contributions from employers and employees. The rate of contribution by employer is 4.75% of the wages payable to employees. The employees' contribution is at the rate of 1.75% of the wages payable to an employee. Employees, earning less than Rs. 137/- a day as daily wages, are exempted from payment of their share of contribution.

### Question 4.

With reference to Credit Rating Agencies, consider the following statements:

1. The rating by CRA is assigned to a security or an instrument
2. The Credit rating agencies are regulated by SEBI
3. It is a recommendation to buy, sell or hold a debt instrument

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Answer A:**

**Explanation:**

Credit Rating Agencies (CRA) assess creditworthiness of organisation and different entities. In simple words, these agencies analyse a debtor's ability to repay the debt and also rate their credit risk. All the credit rating agencies in India are regulated by SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999



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of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. There are a total of six credit agencies in India viz, CRISIL, CARE, ICRA, SMREA, Brickwork Rating, and India Rating and Research Pvt. Ltd.

**Credit rating** agencies assign ratings to an organization or an entity. The entities that are rated by credit rating agencies comprise companies, state governments, non-profit organisations, countries, securities, special purpose entities, and local governmental bodies. Credit rating agencies take into consideration several factors like the financial statements, level and type of debt, lending and borrowing history, ability to repay the debt, and the past debts of the entity before rating their credit. Once a credit rating agency rates the entities, it provides additional inputs to the investor following which the investor analyses and takes a sound investment decision. Poor credit rating indicates that the entity is at a high risk of defaulting. The credit ratings that are given to the entities serve as a benchmark for financial market regulations. Credit ratings are published by agencies like Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poor's (S&P) based on detailed analysis

### Question 5.

Which among the following are the likely implications of Off-Budget Financing of the Government?

1. Increase in the Fiscal Deficit
2. Increase in the Future Liabilities of Government
3. Decrease in the Parliament's Control over the Government's Finances.

Select the correct answer using the code given below

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

**Answer C:**

### Explanation:

Off-budget financing by its nature isn't taken into account when calculating fiscal indicators. But the cost is borne by the budget through some mechanism or the other. Such financing tends to hide the actual extent of government spending, borrowings and debt and increase the interest burden.

In the above example, the borrowing by the SPV should ideally be included in the government's debt. To the extent that this spending is backed by a government guarantee, it entails a fiscal risk. Parliamentary control on such spending is also reduced as it remains outside the budget.

## Polity

### Question 1:

Consider the following statements regarding 2019 SDG India Index released by the NITI aayog.

1. The index evaluates progress of States and Union Territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.
2. The SDG India Index, launched last year by Niti Aayog with the help of United Nations, took into account 16 out of 17 goals specified by the United Nations as SDGs .
3. The year 2020 will be the fifth anniversary of the adoption of SDGs by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly.

Which of these statements is correct?



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**Options:**

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

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

The index evaluates progress of States and Union Territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.

**Key facts:**

- The SDG India Index, launched last year by Niti Aayog with the help of United Nations, took into account 16 out of 17 goals specified by the United Nations as SDGs .
- The Index this year ranked states based on 54 targets spread over 100 indicators out of 306 outlined by the UN.
- The first report, which was launched in 2018 had 13 goals and 39 indicators.
- The year 2020 will be the fifth anniversary of the adoption of SDGs by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly.
- The SDGs, constituted through an unprecedented consultative process, have 17 goals and 169 related targets to be achieved by 2030.

**Performance of various states:**

- Kerala retained the top rank with a score of 70.
- Himachal Pradesh took the second spot while Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana shared the third spot.
- Chandigarh maintained its top spot among the UTs with a score of 70.
- Relative performance: Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim have shown maximum improvement, but states like Gujarat have not shown any progress vis-a-vis 2018 rankings.
- Bihar, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh are the worst performing states.
- Only three states were placed in the category of Front Runners (with a score in the range 65-99, including both) in 2018 – Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. In 2019, five more states joined this league – Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Sikkim and Goa, taking the total tally to eight.
- With regard to poverty reduction, states which have done well include Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim.
- On 'zero hunger' parameters, Goa, Mizoram, Kerala, Nagaland and Manipur were the front runners.

**Question 2:**

Which of the following is not one of the powers given to the armed forces in disturbed areas under the AFSPA act?

**Options:**

- A. They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.





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- B. If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
- C. Any person arrested or taken into custody may be handed over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station along with a report detailing the circumstances that led to the arrest.
- D. None of the above

**Answer: D**

**Explanation:**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has declared the entire State of Nagaland as a “disturbed area” for six more months, under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA).

**Powers given to armed forces:**

- They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
- Any person arrested or taken into custody may be handed over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station along with a report detailing the circumstances that led to the arrest.

**What is a “disturbed area” and who has the power to declare it?**

- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area. A suitable notification would have to be made in the Official Gazette. As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where “the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary”.

**Question 3:**

Which of the following is the upper age limit for the post of Chief of Defence Staff in India?

**Options:**

- A. 62 years
- B. 65 years
- C. 68 years
- D. 70 years

**Answer: B**

**Explanation:**

The outgoing Army chief, Gen. Bipin Rawat, has been appointed as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). As per the notification by the government, the upper age limit for the CDS has been fixed at 65 years. However, the tenure of CDS has not been fixed.

**About CDS:**

- He will be the single-point military adviser to the government as suggested by the Kargil Review Committee in 1999.  
CDS oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services.



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- Conditions:
- He will be a Four-star General.
- Not eligible to hold any Government office after demitting the office of CDS.
- No private employment without prior approval for a period of five years after demitting the office of CDS.

## Question 4:

Consider the following findings of the recently released India State of Forest Report 2019.

1. Total tree and forest cover in the country has increased in the last two years.
2. There is an increase in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2017.
3. There is a decrease of forest cover in northeast India region.
4. Karnataka tops the country in growing the maximum amount of forest in the last two years.

Which of these statements is correct?

### Options:

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

### Answer: D

### Explanation:

The India State of Forest Report 2019 has been released.

### Key findings:

- Total tree and forest cover in the country increased by 5,188 square kilometer in the last two years.
- There is an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2017.
- There is a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 765 sq km (0.45 per cent) in northeast India region. Except Assam and Tripura, all states in the region show decrease in forest cover.
- The loss in the North East is attributed primarily due to the traditional farming practice of Shifting Cultivation.
- The mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54 sq km (1.10 per cent) as compared to the previous assessment.
- Karnataka tops the country in growing the maximum amount of forest in the last two years.
- Karnataka is followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km).
- Total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,60,037 sq km. There is an increase of 3,229 sq km in bamboo bearing area as compared to the previous estimate.

## Question 5:





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Consider the following statements about the National Population Register.

1. The NPR is a database containing a list of all usual residents of the country.
2. It is generated through house-to-house enumeration during the “house-listing” phase of the census, which is held once in 10 years.
3. A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more, and intends to reside there for another six months or more

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:**

As protests spread all across the country against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 and the proposed National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC), West Bengal and Kerala suspended work related to the preparation and update of the National Population Register (NPR) in their respective States. The NPR, a register of residents of the country with demographic and biometric details, was supposed to be prepared between April 2020 and September 2020 ahead of the Census slated for 2021.

**What is the National Population Register (NPR)?**

- The NPR is a database containing a list of all usual residents of the country. Its objective is to have a comprehensive identity database of people residing in the country.
- It is generated through house-to-house enumeration during the “house-listing” phase of the census, which is held once in 10 years.
- The last census was in 2011, and the next will be done in 2021 (and will be conducted through a mobile phone application, according to the Home Ministry).
- A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more, and intends to reside there for another six months or more
- The census involves a detailed questionnaire — there were 29 items to be filled up in the 2011 census — aimed at eliciting the particulars of every person, including age, sex, marital status, children, occupation, birthplace, mother tongue, religion, disability and whether they belonged to any Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe.
- On the other hand, the NPR collects basic demographic data and biometric particulars.
- Once the basic details of the head of the family are taken by the enumerator, an acknowledgement slip will be issued. This slip may be required for enrolment in NPR, whenever that process begins.
- And, once the details are recorded in every local (village or ward), sub-district (tehsil or taluk), district and State level, there will be a population register at each of these levels. Together, they constitute the National Population Register.



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## International Relations

### Question 1:

The famous 'Yellow Vest' protests were seen which of the following nations?

#### Options:

- E. Hong Kong
- F. Germany
- G. Italy
- H. France

**Answer: D**

#### Explanation:

Since December 5, hundreds of thousands of protesters including railway workers, teachers, and hospital staff, have been staging one of the biggest strikes in France in decades against the government's pension reform project. The strike is expected to continue for at least the next few days, and it will affect intercity commutes as well.

#### Background:

The protesters argue that President Emmanuel Macron's proposed pension reforms will force them to make a choice between working for long hours and receiving lower payments. The protests are the second during Macron's presidency, after last year's "Yellow Vest" or "gilets jaunes" protests.

#### Yellow Vest Protests

Yellow vest protests were triggered by general discontent, especially high fuel prices and cost of living. The movement was a populist, grassroots political movement for economic justice that began in France in October 2018. The movement was initially motivated by rising fuel prices and a high cost of living; it claims that a disproportionate burden of the government's tax reforms were falling on the working and middle classes, especially in rural and peri-urban areas.

### Question 2:

Which of the following nations recently decided to launch the Space Force as part of their military?

#### Options:

- A. China
- B. Russia
- C. USA
- D. Japan

**Answer: C**

#### Explanation:

2020 National Defence Authorization Act was signed by U.S. President Donald Trump, which creates a new branch of the U.S. military – Space Force. The Space Force will be the sixth formal force of the U.S. military, after the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. The new branch will be stood up over the next 18 months. The Space Force would comprise around 16,000 Air Force and civilian personnel.



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It is not intended to put troops into orbit, but will protect US assets – such as the hundreds of satellites used for communication and surveillance. China has criticised US of turning the cosmos into a battlefield and pursuing the weaponisation of outer space

### Question 3:

'e-MASIHA' mobile application, recently launched by the government of India aims to

#### Options:

- A. Provide medical assistance for Indian Pilgrims Abroad
- B. Provide medical assistance for Indian Students Abroad
- C. Provide interest free loans to BPL students for foreign education
- D. Provide medical assistance for old age widows

**Answer: A**

#### Explanation:

India has signed the bilateral annual Haj 2020 agreement with Saudi Arabia. With this agreement India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital. An online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, 'e-MASIHA' health facility, "e-luggage pre-tagging" providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020. E-MASIHA (E-Medical Assistance System for Indian Pilgrims Abroad), an online system to maintain the health database of Indian pilgrims has been developed to deal with any emergency in Mecca and Madina. For the first time facilities were provided for digital pre-tagging of pilgrims' baggage.

A portal of Haj Group Organisers (HGOs) – <http://haj.nic.in/pto/> – has been developed which contains all the details of HGOs and their packages.

### Question 4:

The river Feni, recently in the news due to water dispute between India and Bangladesh, originates from

#### Options:

- A. West Bengal
- B. Sikkim
- C. Tripura
- D. Meghalaya

**Answer: C**

#### Explanation:

Bangladesh has not sent a delegation for the Joint River Commission (JRC) meeting with India which casts doubt over progress of Feni river water sharing agreement. Bangladesh had agreed to let India withdraw 1.82 cusecs from the Feni river to supply the border town of Sabroom in the northeastern State of Tripura for drinking water purposes. Feni River is a trans-boundary river that originates in Tripura and flows through Sabroom town and then enters Bangladesh.



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## Question 5:

Consider the following statements about the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces.

1. The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in May 1948, when the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.
2. The financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility of UN Member States.
3. Decisions about the establishment, maintenance or expansion of peacekeeping operations are taken by the United Nations Security Council.

Which of these statements is correct?

## Options:

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

**Answer: D**

## Explanation:

Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan received prestigious UN medal.

About 850 Indian peacekeepers serving in South Sudan have been awarded for their service and contribution to building peace in the strife-torn nation and supporting the local communities. Currently, 2,342 Indian troops and 25 police personnel are deployed with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

## About UN Peacekeeping Forces

UN Peacekeeping is an instrument developed by the UN as a way to help countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace. The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in May 1948, when the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Currently, more than 110,000 military, police and civilian personnel from 125 countries currently serve in 14 peacekeeping operations. The financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility of UN Member States. Decisions about the establishment, maintenance or expansion of peacekeeping operations are taken by the United Nations Security Council. India's contribution to UN peacekeeping. India's contribution to UN peacekeeping dates back to its inception in the 1950s, when the Indian Army contributed troops as well as medical corps during the Korean War from 1950 to 1954.

## History

Question 1. The extremist method of 'passive resistance' did not include-

1. Refusal to cooperate with the government.
2. Sending petitions to the government.



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3. Boycott of government services, courts, schools and colleges.
4. Refusal to pay the rent to the zamindars.

Select the correct code:

- a. 2 only.
- b. 1 and 2.
- c. 4 only.
- d. 2 and 4.

Ans. : d.

Explanation:

- **passive resistance** was a method of nonviolent protest against laws or policies in order to force a change or secure concessions; it is also known as nonviolent resistance and is the main tactic of [civil disobedience](#).
- Passive resistance typically involves such activities as mass demonstrations, refusal to obey or carry out a law or to pay taxes, the occupation of buildings or the blockade of roads, labor strikes, economic boycotts, and similar activities.

Question 2. What was the basic weakness of the Muslim League which came to be increasingly recognised by the patriotic Muslims?

- a. Its upper class leaders had little in common with the interests of the masses.
- b. Its strong religious bias was not good for the country.
- c. Its loyalty to the British rulers was a dangerous doctrine.
- d. Its support for the muslims and their cause was only superficial.

Ans. .a.

Explanation:

- The Muslim League, a party established by Muslim landlords and the educated middle class, claimed that it alone had the right to represent Muslims and their interests.
- Moreover, they represented the interests of either the lite class or the upper middle class muslims, not the poor farmers or the commoners.

Question 3. Which one of the following journals / newspaper was not from Bengal?

- a. Yugantar.
- b. Kal
- c. Bandi-jivan.
- d. Dhumketu.

Ans. b.

Explanation.



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- **Shivram Mahadev Paranjape** was an eminent Marathi writer, scholar, orator, journalist and freedom fighter from Maharashtra. He created unrest among the people of Maharashtra against British rule through his popular weekly *Kal* (meaning "Times" in Marathi) from 1898 to 1908.
- **Rest were published from Bengal.**

Question 4. What is the correct chronological sequence of the historical incidents:

1. August Declaration.
2. Lucknow pact.
3. Jallainwala bagh massacre.
4. Kheda satyagraha.

Code:

- a. 4-2-3-1.
- b. 3-1-2-4.
- c. 2-4-1-3.
- d. 2-1-4-3.

Ans. d.

Explanation:

- The **Lucknow Pact** was an agreement that reached between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at the following joint session of both the parties held in **Lucknow** in October 1916 during A.C.Mazumdar as President.
- Edwin Samuel Montagu served as Secretary of State for India between 1917 and 1922. **On 20 August 1917**, he made a historic declaration in the House of Commons defining the goal of British policies in India. In the previous month, he had made a scathing attack on the whole system by which India was being administered in a debate in British House of Commons. It is also known as **August Declaration of 1917**.
- The Kheda Satyagraha of 1918, in the Kheda district of Gujarat, India during the period of the British Raj, was a Satyagraha movement organised by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It was a major revolt in the Indian independence movement. It was the second Satyagraha movement after Champaran Satyagraha.
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on 13 April 1919, when Acting Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered troops of the British Indian Army to fire their rifles in to the unarmed civilians.

Question 5. Which one among the following novels was/were written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee?

1. Sitaram
2. Debi Chaudharani.
3. Anandmath.
4. Ghare Baire.

Select the correct code:

- a. Only 3.
- b. 1, 2 and 3 .



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- c. 3 and 4 .
- d. All the above.

Ans. b.

Explanation:

- One of the many novels of Chattopadhyay that are entitled to be termed as historical fiction is *Rajsimha* (1881, rewritten and enlarged 1893). *Anandamath* (The Abbey of Bliss, 1882) is a [political novel](#) which depicts a Sannyasi (Hindu ascetic) army fighting the British soldiers. The book calls for the rise of Indian nationalism.
- Chattopadhyay's next novel, *Devi Chaudhurani*, was published in 1884. His final novel, *Sitaram* (1886), tells the story of a local Hindu lord, torn between his wife and the woman he desires but unable to attain, makes a series of blunders and takes arrogant, self-destructive decisions.
- Ghare-Baire was written by Rabindra Nath Tagore.