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Date: 05th May 2020 (Set 14)

Current Affairs

Question 1:

Consider the following statements about Fishing Cat:

1. It is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
2. Fishing cat is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

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 fishing cat is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) lists the fishing cat on Appendix II part of Article IV of CITES. In India, the fishing cat is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and thereby protected from hunting.

In India, fishing cats are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, on the foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.

Question 2:

Consider the following statements about the Hubballi-Ankola railway line project:

1. The railway line project lies in the state of Karnataka.
2. The proposed railway line passes through Amrabad Tiger Reserve.

Which of these statements is / are correct?

Options:



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

Answer: A

Explanation:

Karnataka chief Minister has approved the Hubballi-Ankola railway line project

The proposed 164.44-km railway line passes through forests between two major protected areas — Kali Tiger Reserve and Bedthi Conservation Reserve.

Kali Tiger Reserve comprises two important protected areas of the region namely Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary and Anshi National Park.

Question 3:

Which of the following statements are correct about Mini Moon:

1. It is an asteroid which has entered into an orbit around the Earth.
2. The 'Mini Moon' is a permanently captured object.
3. It is also called 2020 CD3.

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: B

Explanation:

'Mini Moon' is an asteroid which has entered into an orbit around the Earth- acting as the 'Second Moon'.

The asteroid is called 2020 CD3 and has a diameter of about 1.9 m to 3.5m. It is about the size of a car and was discovered in February, 2020.

The 'Mini Moon' is a temporarily captured object or TCO. This means that it will escape the Earth's orbit in a few years. Its orbit is unstable and it has to contend with the gravitational influence of the



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Sun and the permanent Moon.

Question 4:

Shillong Declaration, recently in the news, is associated with which of the following?

Options:

- A. Cyber-Security
- B. e-Governance
- C. Smart City Project
- D. North-East Tourism

Answer: B

Explanation:

22nd National Conference on e-Governance adopts 'Shillong Declaration' with focus on Northeast. The declaration has outlined the future trajectory that would be taken in terms of e-governance with a focus on improving connectivity in Northeast.

The Conference on e-Governance was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology in collaboration with the Meghalaya Government.

The conference was an attempt to streamline e-governance services for effective policy implementation while helping to bridge the technological divide.

Question 5:

With reference to the MESSENGER Mission, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by NASA.
2. It was launched to probe the planet Mars.

Which of these statements is / are correct?

Options:



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

Answer: A

Explanation:

MESSENGER is a NASA's robotic spacecraft that orbited the planet Mercury between 2011 and 2015. It was launched in August 2004 to study Mercury's chemical composition, geology, and magnetic field. It entered orbit around Mercury on March 18, 2011, becoming the first spacecraft to do so.

Science & Technology

1. consider the following the statement which is true

1. Union minister, Jitendra Singh inauguratds global Mega Science Exhibition“Vigyan Samagam” in New Delhi
2. This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata
3. Projects are being showcased by CERN, FAIR, INO, ITER, LIGO, MACE, SKA and TMT, under the aegis of Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Science and Technology and the National Council of Science Museums

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

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

Answer-D

The Union Minister of State (I/C) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space,



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Dr Jitendra Singh said that three-tier teams should be set up for scientific research involving older and younger generations, so that continuity can be maintained in research work. He said that exhibitions should be organized with focus on educating the young students, so that they can choose science as a career in future. He was addressing at the inauguration of India's first global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam" at National Science Centre. Dr Jitendra Singh congratulated the organisers for organising this exhibition, which is first of its kind initiative. He informed that this is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata. Projects are being showcased by CERN, FAIR, INO, ITER, LIGO, MACE, SKA and TMT, under the aegis of Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Science and Technology and the National Council of Science Museum

2. consider the following statement which is true-

1. The first premium Tejas train is ready to run between Ahmedabad and Mumbai.
2. Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express was the second semi high-speed train that runs by IRCTC.
3. it is regulated by ministry of civil aviation.
4. The Thiruvananthapuram–Kasargode Semi High Speed Rail Corridor is a proposed high-speed rail corridor in India that would connect the capital of Kerala .

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

(a) Only (1) & (3)

(b) Only 2,3 and 4

(c) 4 only

(d) All of the above

Answer-c

After the successful run of semi-high speed and fully air-conditioned Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express, the second premium Tejas train is ready to run between Ahmedabad and Mumbai. The inaugural run of this second Tejas Train was flagged off today by Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Vijay Rupani from Ahmedabad. Shri V.K. Tripathi, AGM Western Railway, Shri Mahendra Pratap Mall, CMD IRCTC, senior railway officers, staff and people in large numbers were present on this occasion. The commercial run of the train, to be operated by IRCTC like the first Tejas train, will



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start with effect from 19th January, 2020 from Ahmedabad. This will be yet another step of the Ministry of Railways in its endeavour to improve the overall traveling experience of rail passengers by providing state of the art amenities to them on trains. The train shall be equipped with all modern on board facilities for ensuring a high level of comfort to the passengers. The Thiruvananthapuram–Kasargode Semi High Speed Rail Corridor is a proposed high-speed rail corridor in India that would connect the capital city of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram with Kasaragod in Kerala.

3. Which of the following organisation/ ministry recently hosted a 3 day Youth Co: Lab National Innovation Challenge in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)?

- (a) FICCI
- (b) Ministry of Science & Technology
- (c) NITI Aayog
- (d) Ministry of Human Resource & Development

Answer-c

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sunday hosted a three day long Youth Co:Lab -national innovation challenge here in Delhi after a series of successful challenges held in past two phases across the country. With efforts of AIM and UNDP to support young people by catalysing youth-led innovation, empowering them through Youth Co:Lab, four winning teams made it the list to represent India at the Youth Co:Lab Regional Innovation Challenge in Malaysia slated to be held in April this year.

Youth Co: Lab launched in collaboration by AIM and UNDP earlier, aims at fostering technology, promoting youth leadership and social entrepreneurship in India.

As a part of the first phase of Youth Co: Lab's national innovation challenge, a series of innovation challenges were held in four cities– Jyothy Foundation (Bengaluru), AIC - Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini Foundation (Mumbai), AIC - Prestige Inspire Foundation (Indore) and AIC - Mahamana Foundation For Innovation and Entrepreneurship - IM-BHU (Varanasi).

4. Consider the following statement which is true-

1. Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial in a solemn ceremonial function on February 25, 2019 near India Gate
2. The memorial has been erected in the memory of those soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation after India became Independent in 1947.



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3. Rajnath Singh became the first Raksha Mantri to fly the Light Combat Aircraft(LCA) 'Tejas' at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Airport in Bengaluru, in September 2019.

4. The Government has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the rank of a four-star General with salary and perquisites equivalent to a Service Chief

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

(a) Only (1) & (3)

(b) Only 2,3and 4

(c)4 only

(d)All of the above

ANSWER-D

2019 was a year full of remarkable events for Ministry of Defence. In a landmark decision with tremendous reform in higher defence management in the country, the Government has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the rank of a four-star General with salary and perquisites equivalent to a Service Chief. The CDS will also head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), to be created within the Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.

Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial in a solemn ceremonial function on February 25 near India Gate. The memorial has been erected in the memory of those soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation after India became Independent in 1947. In an intelligence led operation in the early hours of February 26, India struck the biggest training camp of Jaish e Mohammad (JeM) in Balakot, Pakistan. In this operation, a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis who were being trained for fidayeen action were eliminated. This facility at Balakot was headed by Maulana Yousuf Azhar, the brother-in-law of Masood Azhar, Chief of JeM. This was in response to February 14, 2019 suicide terror attack, conducted by a Pakistan based terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammad that led to the martyrdom of 40 brave jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

It was a red-letter day in the history of Indian Air Force when Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh participated in the Rafale fighter aircraft handing over ceremony at Merignac in France in October. The Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft will make India stronger and give a boost to its air dominance to ensure peace and security in the region. Raksha Mantri also flew a sortie in the fighter aircraft. Shri Rajnath Singh became the first Raksha Mantri to fly the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 'Tejas' at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Airport in Bengaluru, on September 2019.

5. With respect to space science, the 'redshift' phenomenon provides evidence for?

(a) expansion of the Universe

(b) presence of dark energy



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- (c) presence of gravitational waves
- (d) formation of black holes

Answer-a

Redshift and blueshift describe how light shifts toward shorter or longer wavelengths as objects in space (such as stars or galaxies) move closer or farther away from us. The concept is key to charting the universe's expansion. His sound effect was first described by Christian Andreas Doppler in the 1800s and is called the Doppler effect. Since light also emanates in wavelengths, this means that the wavelengths can stretch or crunch together depending on the relative position of objects. American astronomer Edwin Hubble (who the Hubble Space Telescope is named after) was the first to describe the redshift phenomenon and tie it to an expanding universe. His observations, revealed in 1929, showed that nearly all galaxies he observed are moving away

Economy

Question 1.

Which among the following categories of banks can avail deposit insurance provided by the Depositor Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)?

1. Scheduled Commercial Banks
2. Regional Rural Banks
3. Cooperative Banks.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:"

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

Answer D:

Explanation:

1. DICGC insures all bank deposits, such as savings, fixed, current and recurring deposit for up to the limit of Rs 5 lakh per bank.
2. If the total of all the deposits held by an individual in a single bank exceeds Rs 5 lakh, then he will be able to get only Rs 5 lakh inclusive of principal and interest amount if the bank goes bankrupt.
3. DICGC covers depositors of all commercial banks and foreign banks operating in India, state, central and urban co-operative banks, local area banks and regional rural banks provided the bank has bought the cover from DICGC.

Question 2.

Consider the following statements about the Long-term Repo Operations (LTRO) of RBI:

1. Interest Rate for LTRO is being decided based on auctioning.



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2. The maturity period of LTRO is 1 year and 3 year.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer A:

Explanation:

Under LTRO, RBI will conduct term repos of one-year and three-year tenors of appropriate sizes for up to a total amount of Rs 1 lakh crore at the policy repo rate.

RBI introduced LTRO with a view to assuring banks about the availability of durable liquidity at reasonable cost relative to prevailing market conditions, and to further encourage banks to undertake maturity transformation smoothly and seamlessly so as to augment credit flows to productive sectors

Question 3.

Consider the following statements with respect to GST Compensation Mechanism:

1. The GST Compensation cess is used to compensate the states for any loss they incur within the first five years of GST implementation.
2. According to the GST Act, States are guaranteed compensation if the GST revenue growth is less than 14 per cent.

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 B:

Explanation:

The introduction of the GST was a major tax reform aimed at simplifying and rationalizing the indirect tax regime in India. It subsumed a number of central and state indirect taxes such as Excise Duty, Service tax, Central Sales Tax, VAT/ Sales Tax, Octroi duty etc. Some of the states had apprehension that introduction of the GST would lead to fall in their revenue. Hence, in order to allay the fears of the states, the Central Government promised for compensating the states for the losses in their revenue through the imposition of GST Compensation cess.

- Compensation cess is levied on luxury and sin goods, and the proceeds are used to compensate states for any loss they incur within the first five years of GST implementation.
- According to the GST Act, States and UTs with Assemblies are guaranteed compensation if the GST revenue growth is less than 14 per cent. The amount is paid bi-monthly.

Question 4.

Which among the following Indicators are being tracked by the RBI under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework?

1. Capital Adequacy ratio (CAR)
2. Gross NPA
3. Leverage ratio
4. Return on Assets

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only



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

Answer C:

Explanation:

Prompt Corrective Action or PCA is a framework under which banks with weak financial metrics are put under watch by the RBI. The PCA framework deems banks as risky if they slip below certain norms on three parameters — capital ratios, asset quality and profitability.

It has three risk threshold levels (1 being the lowest and 3 the highest) based on where a bank stands on these ratios. Banks with a capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of less than 10.25 per cent but more than 7.75 per cent fall under threshold 1.

Those with CRAR of more than 6.25 per cent but less than 7.75 per cent fall in the second threshold.

In case a bank's common equity Tier 1 (the bare minimum capital under CRAR) falls below 3.625 per cent, it gets categorised under the third threshold level.

Banks that have a net NPA of 6 per cent or more but less than 9 per cent fall under threshold 1, and those with 12 per cent or more fall under the third threshold level.

On profitability, banks with negative return on assets for two, three and four consecutive years fall under threshold 1, threshold 2 and threshold 3, respectively.

Question 5.

Consider the following statements related to Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme:

1. Under this scheme, the farmers can avail loans only for meeting their short- term credit requirements.
2. The scheme covers only the land owning farmers and excludes the tenants and sharecroppers.

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:



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The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in 1998 for issue of Kisan Credit Cards to farmers so that farmers may use them to readily purchase agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and draw cash for their production needs. The scheme was further extended for the investment credit requirement of farmers viz. allied and non-farm activities in the year 2004. • The Kisan Credit Card Scheme is implemented by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives. The farmers eligible under the KCC scheme include small farmers, marginal farmers, share croppers, oral lessee and tenant farmers. The Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) are also eligible for availing benefits under the scheme.

Polity

Question 1:

Article 131, recently in the news multiple times, talks about which of the following?

Options:

- A. original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court
- B. original jurisdiction of the High Court
- C. Executive powers of the President
- D. Executive powers of the Governor

Answer: A

Explanation:

Recently Kerala and Chhattisgarh have filed a suit in the Supreme court challenging the constitutional validity of various central laws such as Citizenship Amendment Act (Kerala) and the National Investigation Agency Act (Chhattisgarh), under Article 131 of the Indian Constitution.

Why the states have challenged the Centre under article 131?

Kerala: Kerala has filed a suit to challenge the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, stating that it is violative of Articles 14 (equality before the law), 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) and 25 (freedom of religion) as well as against the secular fabric of the nation. o It also challenges the Passport (Entry to India) Amendment Rules 2015, and Foreigners (Amendment) Order 2015, which had regularised the stay of non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, who had entered India before December 31, 2014, on the condition that they had fled religious persecution from their home countries.

Chhattisgarh It has sought a declaration that the NIA Act, 2008, is unconstitutional on the ground that it is “beyond the legislative competence of Parliament”.

As ‘Police’ is a subject reserved for the States, having a central police agency, which has overriding powers over the State police, with no provision for consent from the State government for its operations, is against the division of legislative powers between the Centre and the States. o And thus NIA, is against the federal spirit of the Constitution.

Article 131

- Article 131 of the Constitution talks about the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, where the apex court deals with any dispute between the Centre and a state; the Centre and a state on the one side and another state on the other side; and two or more states.
- This means no other court can entertain such a dispute.
- A dispute to qualify under Article 131, it has to necessarily be between states and the Centre, and must involve a question of law or fact on which the existence of a legal right of the state or the Centre depends.



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Question 2:

Consider the following statements with reference to internet shutdowns by the government.

1. In 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council released a non-binding resolution condemning intentional disruption of internet access by governments.
2. India tops the list of Internet shutdowns globally.
3. The recent internet shutdown in Kashmir is the longest ever in any democratic country. •

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

India tops the list of Internet shutdowns globally. According to Software Freedom Law Center's tracker, there have been 381 shutdowns since 2012, 106 of which were in 2019. The recent shutdown in Kashmir is the longest ever in any democratic country. India lost over \$1.3 billion in internet shutdowns across the country in 2019 — making it the third-most economically affected country after Iraq and Sudan.

UN Resolution on Internet shutdown

In 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council released a non-binding resolution condemning intentional disruption of internet access by governments. The resolution reaffirmed that "the same rights people have offline must also be protected online".

Question 3:

Consider the following statements about Aadhaar.

1. Aadhaar is a verifiable 12-digit identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to the citizens of India.
2. Aadhaar collects only four pieces of personal information – name, age, gender and address – along with biometric data.
3. In the states of Assam and Meghalaya, Aadhaar enrolment levels are under 50%.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:



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

Answer: B

Explanation:

With Aadhaar entering its tenth year of existence a recent study covering 1,67,000 Indians by development consulting firm Dalberg, - 'State of Aadhaar- A People's Perspective' report, provide valuable lessons for countries on improving public services for the vulnerable.

Aadhaar is a verifiable 12-digit identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to the resident (and not citizens only) of India. UIDAI, is a statutory authority established under the provisions of Aadhaar Act 2016, under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology. Aadhaar collects only four pieces of personal information – name, age, gender and address – along with biometric data. In addition, Aadhaar has created new features such as virtual IDs that help protect an individual's privacy. An important objective of Aadhaar has been to improve the ability of the state to provide efficient, transparent and targeted delivery of welfare services to a large number of residents who depend on it.

Key findings of the report

- Aadhaar is India's most ubiquitous form of ID today, which provided the first identity document for an estimated 65-70 million individuals. Some states have achieved enrolment levels higher than 99%. Assam and Meghalaya are exceptions with enrolment levels under 50%.
- A sizable minority of adults and children still do not have Aadhaar. Some of those enrolled in Aadhaar have errors in their ID, fingerprint authentication fails for a significant share of transactions.

Question 4:

Consider the following statements regarding Fast Track Special Courts in India.

1. In 2000, 11th Finance Commission recommended a scheme for creation of 1734 Fast Track Courts (FTCs) for disposal of long pending cases in lower courts, particularly cases of under trials.
2. Ministry of Law and Justice has recently started a scheme for setting up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for rape and POSCO act cases, as a part of National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
3. Financing of the Scheme will be on the pattern of Centrally Sponsored Schemes: 60% of the share is contributed by Central Government and 40% by State & UT governments.

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:



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- Ministry of Law and Justice has recently started a scheme for setting up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for rape and POSCO act cases, as a part of National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
- There are 389 districts in the country where the number of pending cases under POCSO Act exceeds 100. Under the recent scheme, each of these districts will have one exclusive POCSO court (FTSC) which will be set up for one year.
- Financing of the Scheme will be on the pattern of Centrally Sponsored Schemes: 60% of the share is contributed by Central Government and 40% by State & UT governments.
- To bring out more stringent provisions and expeditious trial and disposal of Rape and POSCO Act cases, India enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- Hence, to assist the implementation of the 2018 act, a key intervention is setting up specific courts for time bound disposal of Rape and POCSO Act cases.
- These 1023 FTSCs will dispose off 1,66,882 cases of Rape and POCSO Act, that are pending trial in various courts.

Evolution of Fast track special courts

- In 2000, 11th Finance Commission recommended a scheme for creation of 1734 Fast Track Courts (FTCs) for disposal of long pending cases in lower courts, particularly cases of under trials.
- An average of 5 FTCs were to be established for five years (2000-05), in each district by the state governments in consultation with the respective High Courts.

Question 5:

Consider the following statements regarding Open Acreage Licensing Policy.

1. Provides uniform licences for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbons, enabling contractors to explore conventional as well as unconventional oil and gas resources.
2. Under the OALP, once an explorer selects areas after evaluating the National Data Repository (NDR) and submits the EoI, it is to be put up for competitive bidding and the entity offering the maximum share of oil and gas to the government is awarded the block.
3. Fields are offered under a revenue-sharing model and throw up marketing and pricing freedom for crude oil and natural gas produced.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:



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Government has launched the bidding process offering 11 areas in oil and gas blocks under Open Acreage Licensing Policy Round-V (OALP-V).

What is Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)?

A critical part of the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy.

Provides uniform licences for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbons, enabling contractors to explore conventional as well as unconventional oil and gas resources.

Revenue-sharing model:

Fields are offered under a revenue-sharing model and throw up marketing and pricing freedom for crude oil and natural gas produced.

How it works?

Under the OALP, once an explorer selects areas after evaluating the National Data Repository (NDR) and submits the EoI, it is to be put up for competitive bidding and the entity offering the maximum share of oil and gas to the government is awarded the block.

What is NDR?

NDR has been created to provide explorers' data on the country's repositories, allowing them to choose fields according to their capabilities. Data received through the National Seismic Programme, an in-depth study of 26 sedimentary basins, are continuously being added to the NDR.

What is HELP?

The Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) replacing the erstwhile New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) was approved in March 2016.

The main features of HELP are Revenue Sharing Contract, single Licence for exploration and production of conventional as well as unconventional Hydrocarbon resources, marketing & pricing freedom, etc.

International Relations

Question 1:

Which of the following nations do not share a maritime border with the South China Sea?

Options:

- A. Brunei
- B. Thailand
- C. Laos
- D. Vietnam

Answer: C

Explanation:



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China has reportedly deployed an airship near South China Sea (SCS) to monitor and control military activity in the area by other countries, especially the United States.

Importance of South China Sea

- It is a key commercial thoroughfare connecting Asia with Europe and Africa.
- One third of global shipping, or a total of US\$3.37 trillion of international trade, passes through the South China Sea.
- It is estimated that around 80 percent of Beijing's imports of oil reach the country through the South China Sea after passing the Strait of Malacca.
- Up to 97% of India's total International trade volume is sea borne, half of which passes through the strait of Malacca. In addition, ASEAN constitutes one of India's largest trade partners. Any instability in the SCS would adversely affect the shipping lanes and have a knock-on effect on India's economy.
- Natural Resource: The sea is believed to contain major reserves of natural resources, such as natural gas and oil.
- Fisheries: It accounts for 10% of the world's fisheries, making it a key source of food for hundreds of millions of people.

Issues with South China Sea

- Territorial conflict: Philippines, Vietnam, China, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia hold different, sometimes overlapping, territorial claims over the sea, based on various accounts of history and geography.

Question 2:

The famous 'Balfour Declaration' is related to which of the following?

Options:

- A. Surrender of Turkey in World War I
- B. Surrender of Japan after World War II
- C. Establishment of Israel as a country for Jews
- D. It ended the war between Israel & Jordan

Answer: C

Explanation:

US President Donald Trump unveiled his Middle East peace plan, Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People aimed at solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

About Israel-Palestine conflict

- In 1917, during World War I, the British captured Palestine from the Ottoman Empire after the Sykes-Picot Agreement with France.
- Later in the Balfour Declaration, Britain pledged establishment of Israel as national home for Jews.
- During World War II, over 3 lakh Jews migrated & resettled in Palestine and demanded a new country. This led to fight to fight between Arabs and Jews i.e. Israel Palestine conflict.
- In 1947 the United Nations voted to split the Palestine between Arabs and Jews.
- The Jewish residents accepted the agreement and declared independence of Israel in 1948 while Arabs rejected the agreement.



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- Consequently, the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria declared war on Israel.
- Israel won the war and expanded its territory reducing Palestine to just Gaza strip and West bank & forcing lakhs of Palestinians to flee from Israel.

Question 3:

Consider the following statements about Jerusalem.

1. It is an Important pilgrimage for Christians as well whose holiest Church of Sepulcher is located here
2. It also hosts the third holiest site of Islam, the dome of the rock, which is one of the oldest extant works of Islamic architecture.
3. Israeli Jews weren't allowed to pray in the temple mount area while Jordan controlled it.

Which of these statements is correct?

Options:

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

Answer: D

Explanation:

What makes Jerusalem so important?

- Jerusalem is situated on the border between Israel and the West Bank. It is home to some of the holiest sites in both Judaism and Islam, and so both Israel and Palestine want to make it their capital.
- It is an Important pilgrimage for Christians as well whose holiest Church of Sepulcher is located here.
- The Church contains two important sites, one where Jesus was crucified and the other being Jesus' empty tomb where he said to have been buried and resurrected.
- It also hosts the third holiest site of Islam, the dome of the rock, which is one of the oldest extant works of Islamic architecture.
- It is believed that Prophet Mohamad's night journey to the heaven started from the rock at the center of the structure.
- The western wall or the Buraq wall is the ancient limestone wall in this city. It is considered holy due to its connection to the temple mount.
- Israeli Jews weren't allowed to pray in the temple mount area while Jordan controlled it. Because of the temple mount entry restrictions, the wall is the holiest place where the Jews are permitted to pray.

Question 4:

The 'Quds Force', recently in the news, belongs to which of the following nations?



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Options:

- A. Iraq
- B. Iran
- C. Syria
- D. Saudi Arabia

Answer: B

Explanation:

Recently, there was a major escalation in tensions between the US and Iran after the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani by US military force. In an air raid at Iraq's airport in Baghdad, the US recently struck and killed Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force. US alleged that General Soleimani was actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region.

Killing has been seen as direct attack against Iran. Iran vowed harsh retaliation and launched a series of missile attacks on two Iraqi bases housing US troops. Iran also recently abandoned nuclear deal limits prescribed under Joint Comprehensive plan of Action (JCPOA).

Question 5:

'Taal volcano', recently in the news, is in

Options:

- A. Japan
- B. Philippines
- C. Vietnam
- D. Malaysia

Answer: B

Explanation:

It is a volcano on the island of Luzon in Philippines. It erupted recently. It is classified as a "complex" volcano. A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks.

History

Question 1. Who proposed firstly the concept of Permanent Settlement or 'assessment for ever' as a land revenue model in British India?

- a. Lord Cornwallis.
- b. Reed and Munro.
- c. John Shore.
- d. Alexander Dow.

Ans. D.



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Source-

- The Permanent Settlement was originally proposed by Alexander Dow in 1770.
- He was a Scottish mercantilist, who proposed firstly the 'assessment for ever' as a policy recommendation for Bengal in 1770.
- The Permanent Settlement of Bengal was brought into effect by the East India Company headed by the Governor-General Lord Cornwallis in 1793.
- This was basically an agreement between the company and the Zamindars to fix the land revenue i.e., 10/11th of the rental they derived from the peasantry to the state.
- First enacted in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha, this was later followed in northern Madras Presidency and the district of Varanasi.
- Cornwallis thought of this system inspired by the prevailing system of land revenue in England where the landlords were the permanent masters of their holdings and they collected revenue from the peasants and looked after their interests. He envisaged the creation of a hereditary class of landlords in India. This system was also called the Zamindari System.

Question 2. Consider the following statements:

1. Mangal Pandey revolted in Barrackpore and began the Revolt of 1857.
2. The revolt of 1857 began on 10 May and soon engulfed pan-India, from North to South and East to West.

Select the correct code:

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

Ans. d.

Source- NCERT-XII PG NO. 110

EXPLANATION:

- Mangal Pandey was hanged on 29 March, 1857 at Barrackpore.
- This along with many were examples of rising sepoy's discontentment but Mangal Pandey's revolt was not the beginning of the 1857 revolt.
- The revolt of 1857 began at Meerut on 10 May, 1857 and soon embraced a vast area from Punjab in the North and The Narmada in the South to Bihar in the east and the Rajputana in the west.
- Hence, it did not spread to South India and North-East India. Thus, the revolt was not pan- India.

Question 3 . Who coined the famous slogan " One religion, one caste and one God for mankind"?

- a. Mahatma Gandhi.
- b. Sri Narayan Guru
- c. Sahadaran Ayyapan.
- d. Rabindra Nath Tagore.

ANS. B. (Source- NCERT XII- Pg. No. 186.)

Explanation:



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- Sri Narayan Guru was a spiritual leader and social reformer in India.
- Born into a family of the Ezhava caste in an era when people from such communities were regarded as Avarna.
- He led a reform movement in Kerala, against the injustice in the caste-ridden society of Kerala in order to promote spiritual enlightenment and social equality.
- He propagated the motto, *One Caste, One Religion, One God for All*.

Question 4. Who founded All India Harijan Sangh in 1932?

- B. R. Ambedkar.
- Jyotiba Phule.
- Mahatma Gandhi.
- D.K. Karve .

Ans. C. (Source- pg no. 186.NCERT)

Explanation:

- **All India Harijan Sevak Sangh** is a non-profit organisation founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1932 to eradicate untouchability in India, working for Harijan or Dalit people and upliftment of scheduled castes of India.
- It is headquartered at Kingsway Camp in Delhi, with branches in 26 states across India.

Question 5 . Consider the following statements:

- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee composed the national song, 'Amar Sonar Bangla'.
- This song was adopted as its national anthem by Bangladesh in 1971.

Select the correct code:

- 1 only.
- 2 only.
- Both 1 and 2.
- Neither 1 nor 2.

Ans. b. (Source pg. no. 194-95 NCERT)

Explanation :

- Rabindranath Tagore is popularly known as the '*Banglar Kobi*' which means Poet of Bengal
- He wrote the two anthems '*Amar Sonar Bangla*' in 1905 against the Partition of Bengal and '*Jana Gana Mana*' for India.
- .Hence, it's not surprising that his poetic song "*Amar Sonar Bangla*" was later adopted by Bangladesh as their National Anthem after liberation in 1971.

Geography

- 1) **Chrysomallon squamiferum** is a scaly- foot snail found at only three spots in the Indian Ocean. Consider the following statements on that :-



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- (i) It is endangered due to mining activities.
- (ii) It is included in IUCN's Red List.

Choose the correct alternative :-

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

Answer c

Explanation :-

Chrysomallon squamiferum: It is a scaly-foot snail found at only three spots in the Indian Ocean. It has become the first species to be officially declared threatened due to deep-sea mining. Chrysomallon squamiferum is found at three hydrothermal vents in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar. It was added by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to its updated Red List of Endangered Species on July 18, 2019.

2) Consider the following statements on Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) :-

- (i) **It is the brain child of Subhash Palekar**, the Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient.
- (ii) Use of jaggery and deep ploughing is must under this.

Choose the correct alternative :-

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

Answer a

Explanation :-

Subhash Palekar: The Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient is credited for promoting Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) which is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman thrust upon zero budget farming in the first Budget speech of the 17th Lok Sabha, calling for a "back to the basics" approach. Instead of



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commercially produced chemical inputs, the ZBNF promotes the application of jeevamrutha—a mixture of fresh desi cow dung and aged desi cow urine, jaggery, pulse flour, water and soil — on farmland. This is a fermented microbial culture that adds nutrients to the soil, and acts as a catalytic agent to promote the activity of microorganisms and earthworms in the soil. The ZBNF method promotes soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching and discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing.

- 3) Which state has recently bagged the geographical indication (GI) tag for its local version of “Rasagola” :-
- (a) West Bengal
 - (b) Odisha
 - (c) Gujarat
 - (d) Haryana

Answer b

Explanation :-

Odisha: This state has bagged the geographical indication (GI) tag for its local version of “Rasagola”. This GI tag, numbered 612, is the second for Odisha. It got its first GI tag for Kandhamal Haldi. This tag comes amid a years-long debate between West Bengal and Odisha over where the sweet had originated. West Bengal and Odisha had staked their claim on GI tag for Rasagola. In 2017, West Bengal secured the GI tag for its “Banglar Rasogolla”.

- 4) **India** by virtue of being a member of the International Charter ‘Space and Major Disasters’ has received a satellite data related to the Assam floods from other member nations including France, Russia and China. Consider the following statements on that :-
- (i) International Charter ‘Space and Major Disasters’ is a binding charter and makes it compulsory for the member country to abide by the data.
 - (ii) Any country can become a member of this charter and take benefit as it is for the good of humanity.

Choose the correct alternative :-

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



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Answer d

Explanation :-

India by virtue of being a member of the International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters' has received a satellite data related to the Assam floods from other member nations including France, Russia and China. International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters' is a non-binding charter. It provides for the charitable and humanitarian related acquisition of and transmission of space satellite data to relief organizations in the event of major disasters. It officially came into operation on November 1, 2000 after the Canadian Space Agency signed onto the charter on October 20, 2000. Only agencies that possess and are able to provide satellite-based Earth Observation data can be members of the International Charter. The members cooperate on a voluntary basis.

- 5) With an aim to ensure safe and wholesome food for School children FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) has proposed a draft regulation titled Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and healthy diets for School Children) Regulations, 2019. Consider the following statements on that :-
- (iii) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
 - (iv) A ban on the sale of soft drinks, potato wafers and other junk foods within 50 meters of school campus shall be enforced under this.

Choose the correct alternative :-

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

Answer c

Explanation :-

FSSAI: It refers to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. It is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India. It was founded in August 2011.

With an aim to ensure safe and wholesome food for School children FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) has proposed a draft regulation titled Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and healthy diets for School Children) Regulations, 2019. The draft is a 10 pointer chart that imposes a ban on the sale of soft drinks, potato wafers and other junk foods within 50 meters of school campus. Even the advertisements of these junk foods are banned. As per the draft, the foods that are referred to HFSS



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(High in Fat, Salt and Sugar) cannot be sold in school canteens, mess premises or hostel kitchens or locations within a 50-meter radius of the school, school authorities have to adopt a comprehensive programme, as per the guidelines issued by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), for promoting safe food and healthy diets among school children, the school campus should be converted into 'Eat Right School' ensuring safe and healthy food, local and seasonal food and no food waste as per the specified benchmarks and help nutritionists and dieticians must be taken by the school administration to assist in the preparation of menu for the children.