Insights QUIZ

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I. ECONOMY

(Q) Consider the following statements about Basel guidelines.

1. Basel guidelines refer to broad supervisory standards formulated by group of central banks, called the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS).
2. The purpose is to ensure that financial institutions have enough capital on account to meet obligations and absorb unexpected losses.
3. In the recent assessment of compliance with Basel Norms, it was observed that Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) norms on large exposures for banks are not compliant with the Basel requirements, which is leading to high NPAs in the banks.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

An assessment of compliance with Basel Norms was recently conducted by the Regulatory Consistency Assessment Programme (RCAP). RCAP is part of the Basel committee.

The assessment focused on the completeness and consistency of the domestic regulations in force on 7 June 2019, as applied to commercial banks in India, with the Basel large exposures framework.

Key findings:

- The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) norms on large exposures for banks are not only compliant with the Basel requirements, they are stricter in some areas as well.
- This is highest possible grade. In some other respects, the Indian regulations are stricter than the Basel large exposures framework. For example, banks’ exposures to global systemically important banks are subject to stricter limits, in line with the letter and spirit of the Basel Guidelines, and the scope of application of the Indian standards is wider than just the internationally active banks covered by the Basel framework.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM).

1. It is a new form of BOT Annuity model.
2. The government will contribute 60% of the project cost in the first five years through annual payments.
3. There is no right to collect toll for the developer.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: a)
In India, the new HAM is a mix of BOT Annuity and EPC models. As per the design, the government will contribute to 40% of the project cost in the first five years through annual payments (annuity). The remaining payment will be made on the basis of the assets created and the performance of the developer.

- Here, hybrid annuity means the first 40% payment is made as fixed amount in five equal instalments whereas the remaining 60% is paid as variable annuity amount after the completion of the project depending upon the value of assets created.
- As the government pays only 40%, during the construction stage, the developer should find money for the remaining amount.
- Here, he has to raise the remaining 60% in the form of equity or loans.
- There is no toll right for the developer. Under HAM, Revenue collection would be the responsibility of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Source: [http://arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Hybrid_Annuity_in_Infrastructure_Sector](http://arthapedia.in/index.php?title=Hybrid_Annuity_in_Infrastructure_Sector)

(Q) Finance Minister recently launched ‘taxalogue’ is a
a) Tax paying App
b) e-Filing portal in regional languages
c) e-journal
d) None of the above

Solution: c)
- Finance Minister launched **e-journal** named ‘taxalogue’, which will facilitate tax related discussions.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Repco Bank.
1. Repco Bank is a multi-state cooperative finance and development bank controlled by the Finance Ministry.
2. It was established by the central government for rehabilitation of repatriates from Myanmar and Sri Lanka.
3. It is operated only in the South Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 2 only

Solution: c)
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah received a dividend cheque of Rs 15.26 crore from the representatives of the Repco Bank, a multi-state cooperative finance and development bank **controlled by the Home Ministry**.
- The **Repco Bank** is a **multi-state cooperative society** established in 1969 by the central government for rehabilitation of repatriates from Myanmar and Sri Lanka.
- It is operated **only** in the South Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
As on March 31, 2019 the government of India held 49.15 per cent of the share capital, four southern state governments held 6.24 per cent and the remaining 45 per cent was held by individual repatriates.


(Q) Consider the following statements about E-commerce sector in India

1. Marketplace model is where goods sold on the portal is owned or controlled by the e-commerce company.
2. Inventory-based model is where the e-commerce firm simply acts as a platform that connects buyers and sellers.
3. FDI is allowed in e-commerce companies in marketplace model.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

E-commerce companies can operate under two different models in India.

1. The first is the marketplace model where the e-commerce firm simply acts as a platform that connects buyers and sellers. FDI is allowed in e-commerce companies in this model.
2. The second model is inventory-based where the inventory of goods sold on the portal is owned or controlled by the e-commerce company. FDI is not allowed under this model.

(Q) Consider the following statements about Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC).

1. Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) is a statutory body setup by the parliament.
2. The Commission is chaired by Justice B. N. Srikrishna.
3. The Commission would streamline regulatory architecture of financial markets.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) is a body set up by the Government of India, Ministry of Finance, on 24 March 2011, to review and rewrite the legal-institutional architecture of the Indian financial sector. This Commission is chaired by a former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice B. N. Srikrishna and has an eclectic mix of expert members drawn from the fields of finance, economics, public administration, law etc.
The Commission would examine financial sector legislations, including subordinate legislations. The Commission would also examine the case for greater convergence of regulations and streamline regulatory architecture of financial markets.


**Q** Consider the following statements regarding US Federal Reserves rate cut and its impact.

1. Recently the US Federal Reserve announced the cut in interest rates, which is first since the global financial crisis broke in 2008.
2. When the US Fed cuts its interest rates, the difference between the interest rates of US and India increases, thus making India more attractive for the currency carry trade.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

**Solution: c)**

The US Federal Reserve has announced a quarter-percentage-point cut in interest rates — the first rate cut by the US central bank in 11 years.

- A rate cut in the US is **good for emerging market economies** and is projected to catalyse a debt and equity market rally in countries such as India.
- Typically, emerging economies such as India tend to have higher inflation and thereby higher interest rates than those in developed countries such as the US and Europe.
- As a result, **FIIs would want to borrow money in the US** at low-interest rates in dollar terms and then **invest that money in bonds of emerging countries** such as India in Rupee terms to earn a higher rate of interest.
- When the US Fed cuts its interest rates, the difference between interest rates of the two countries increases, thus **making India more attractive** for the currency carry trade.

**Q** Consider the following statements regarding the latest edition of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).

1. PLFS was carried out by NITI Ayog in association with Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLe).
2. The unemployment rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas.
3. The highest unemployment rates is among Schedule Castes compared to General category.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: b)**

The latest edition of **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** has been released.
Among the primary agencies involved in this activity are Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Labour Bureau in Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Key findings:

- The unemployment rate (UR) in both rural and urban India is at its highest since 1972.
- The unemployment rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas. In rural areas, the UR is 5.3 per cent, whereas in urban areas, the UR is 7.8 per cent according to the usual status.
- Among social groups, the highest UR is among the ‘General’ or ‘Others’ category — 6.7 per cent. This group is followed by Schedule Castes (6.3 per cent), Other Backward Classes (6 per cent) and Scheduled Tribes (4.3 per cent).


(Q) Project Sashakt, recently in news is aimed to

a) Dispute Resolution in solar and wind energy projects.
b) Enhancing capacity on forest landscape restoration
c) Ocean Cleanup Project
d) Resolve the problem of stressed assets with public-sector banks

Solution: d)

With an aim to resolve the problem of stressed assets with public-sector banks, the government has come out with a new plan – Sashakt – that includes the creation of one or more widely held asset management companies for loans above Rs 500 crore.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Economic capital framework.

1. Economic capital framework refers to sources where RBI earns its income.
2. RBI had constituted a panel on economic capital framework headed by Sunil Mehta.
3. RBI earns income from investment in foreign currency assets.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: b)

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.

- 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.
Consider the following statements about prepaid payment instruments

1. Prepaid payment instruments are those which facilitate purchase of both goods and services against the value stored on such instruments.
2. Inter-personal remittance transactions is not possible.
3. These payment instruments are licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Finance.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

a) 1 only  

b) 1, 2  

c) 2, 3  

d) 1, 2, 3  

Solution: c)

Prepaid payment instruments are those which facilitate purchase of goods and services against the value stored on such instruments. Value stored on them is paid by the holder using a medium (cash, debit card, credit card etc).

1. These are generally issued in the form of smart cards, mobile wallets, paper vouchers, internet accounts/wallets.
2. Prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) come with a pre-loaded value and in some cases a pre-defined purpose of payment. They facilitate the purchase of goods and services as well as inter-personal remittance transactions such as sending money to a friend or a family member.
3. These payment instruments are licensed and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.

Source: [https://www.livemint.com/Money/Wq5AT6vx1JklC0lRSMbnSI/What-are-prepaid-payment-instruments.html](https://www.livemint.com/Money/Wq5AT6vx1JklC0lRSMbnSI/What-are-prepaid-payment-instruments.html)

Consider the following statements regarding reciprocal trade agreements (RTAs).

1. Under Reciprocal trade agreements (RTAs), members grant special advantages to each other.
2. Agreements such as preferential arrangements, free trade agreements, customs Unions and common markets constitute Reciprocal trade agreements.
3. In recent years reciprocal trade agreements have become an increasingly prominent feature of the multilateral trading system.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2  

b) 1 and 3  

c) 2 and 3  

d) 1, 2 and 3  

(Q)
Countries use bilateral/regional trade agreements to increase market access and expand trade in foreign markets. These agreements are called reciprocal trade agreements (RTAs) because members grant special advantages to each other.

1. RTAs include many types of agreements, such as preferential arrangements, free trade agreements, customs unions, and common markets, in which members agree to open their markets to each other's exports by lowering trade barriers.

2. They have become an increasingly prominent feature of the multilateral trading system in recent years, in part, because of stalled global negotiations taking place under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

(Q) Consider the following statements about SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) messaging system.

1. It is a messaging network that financial institutions use to securely transmit information and instructions through a standardized system of codes.

2. SWIFT facilitate funds transfer and sends payment orders.

3. SWIFT India is a consortium of all Indian public sector banks.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

It is a messaging network that financial institutions use to securely transmit information and instructions through a standardized system of codes. Under SWIFT, each financial organization has a unique code which is used to send and receive payments.

- SWIFT does not facilitate funds transfer: rather, it sends payment orders, which must be settled by correspondent accounts that the institutions have with each other.

- The SWIFT is a secure financial message carrier — in other words, it transports messages from one bank to its intended bank recipient.

SWIFT India is a joint venture of top Indian public and private sector banks and SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication). The company was created to deliver high quality domestic financial messaging services to the Indian financial community.

II. GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF).

1. Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices.
2. ZBNF method uses intensive irrigation and deep ploughing.
3. ZBNF method promotes soil aeration, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

Zero budget natural farming (ZBNF) is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices.

- It was originally promoted by Maharashtrian agriculturist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar, who developed it in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution’s methods driven by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and intensive irrigation.
- The ZBNF method also promotes soil aeration, minimal watering, intercropping, bunds and topsoil mulching and discourages intensive irrigation and deep ploughing.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/agriculture/what-is-zero-budget-natural-farming/article28733122.ece

(Q) Consider the following statements about Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA).

1. EPCA was constituted with the objective of ‘protecting and improving’ the quality of the environment and ‘controlling environmental pollution’ in the country.
2. It was notified by Environment Ministry under Environment Protection Act, 1986.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: b)

EPCA was constituted with the objective of ‘protecting and improving’ the quality of the environment and ‘controlling environmental pollution’ in the National Capital Region.

- The EPCA also assists the apex court in various environment-related matters in the region.
- EPCA is Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region. It was notified in 1998 by Environment Ministry under Environment Protection Act, 1986.
(Q) ‘Har Medh Par Ped’ campaign is related to
a) Increasing dense forest cover
b) Promoting export of agricultural products
c) Tree Planting with Agricultural Crops
d) Increasing bio-fuel production

Solution: c)

“Har Medh Par Pedh” – Tree Planting with Agricultural Crops
1. Tree plantation on farm land “Har Medh Par Ped”, along with crops/cropping system.
2. Multipurpose tree species with short, medium and long term returns be planted, so that farmers may get additional income at regular intervals. These can include fruits, fodder, medicinal, timber & aromatic tree species.
3. The scheme is being implemented in the States which exempted selected tree species from transit permit.

Source: [http://vikaspedia.in/agriculture/national-schemes-for-farmers/sustainable-agriculture?content=normal](http://vikaspedia.in/agriculture/national-schemes-for-farmers/sustainable-agriculture?content=normal)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Blue flag Certification programme.
1. Blue Flag certification is an international recognition conferred on beaches, marinas and sustainable boating tourism operators that meet certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety.
2. Japan is the only country in South and south-eastern Asia to have Blue Flag beaches.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: a)

The Union Environment Ministry has selected 12 beaches in India to vie for a ‘Blue Flag’ certification, an international recognition conferred on beaches that meet certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety.

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

Source: [https://www.blueflag.global/](https://www.blueflag.global/)

(Q) Consider the following statements about Indian Rhinoceros.
1. In India, rhinos are found in Jaldapara National Park and Garumara National Park.
2. Only female rhinos have horn.
3. The rhino is the second largest land animal after Elephant.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: b)**

The preferred habitat of an Indian rhinoceros is alluvial flood plains and areas containing tall grasslands along the foothills of the Himalayas. Formerly, extensively distributed in the Gangetic plains, today the species is restricted to small habitats in Indo-Nepal terai and northern West Bengal and Assam. In India, rhinos are mainly found in Kaziranga NP, Pobitara WLS, Orang NP, Manas NP in Assam, Jaldapara NP and Garumara NP in West Bengal and Dudhwa TR in Uttar Pradesh.

- The Indian rhino has a single horn, which is present in both sexes. It is the largest of all the Asian rhinos.
- The rhino is the fourth largest land animal.

Source: [https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/greater_one_horned_rhino/about_one_horned_rhino/](https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/greater_one_horned_rhino/about_one_horned_rhino/)

(Q) ‘Green Bonus’, recently seen in news is related to.

a) Money given to the states for planting trees across the National and State Highways.  
b) Rewarding States for their efforts in mitigating Climate Change.  
c) Demand made from the Himalayan States to the Centre for their contribution in environmental conservation.  
d) None of the Above

**Solution: c)**

Eleven States belonging to Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) sought ‘Green Bonus’ from the Centre considering their contribution in environmental conservation.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Green Climate Fund (GCF).

1. It is established within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol.  
2. It assists developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change.  
3. The GCF is based in Incheon, South Korea.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2  
b) 1, 3  
c) 2, 3  
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: c)
The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a fund established within the framework of the UNFCCC as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change. The GCF is based in Incheon, South Korea. It is governed by a Board of 24 members and supported by a Secretariat.

Source: [https://www.greenclimate.fund/who-we-are/about-the-fund](https://www.greenclimate.fund/who-we-are/about-the-fund)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding All India Tiger Estimation – 2018.

1. As per All India Tiger Estimation – 2018, there is 33% rise in tiger numbers from 2014 estimation.
2. Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number of tigers followed by Uttarakhand.
3. India has achieved its commitment to the St.Petersburg Declaration, of doubling Tiger population.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)
On the occasion of International Tiger Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the results of the fourth cycle of All India Tiger Estimation – 2018.

- The count of tigers in India has risen to 2967, in 2018, according to this census.
- The 33% rise in tiger numbers is the highest ever recorded between cycles which stood at 21% between 2006 to 2010 and 30% between 2010 and 2014.
- Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number of tigers at 526, closely followed by Karnataka at 524 with Uttarakhand at number 3 with 442 tigers. It was a moment of pride for the country as it achieved its commitment to the St.Petersburg Declaration, of doubling Tiger population, much in advance to the 2022 deadline.
- Chhatisgarh and Mizoram saw a decline in their tiger numbers while tiger's numbers in Odisha remained constant. All other States witnessed a positive trend.


(Q) Polygonum mole, recently seen in news is a

a) State butterfly of Tamil Nadu
b) Dragon tree species in West Karbi Anglong District in Assam.
c) A knotweed native to the Himalayas which has begun taking root in the upper slopes of the Nilgiris.
d) A new vine snake species.

Solution: c)
One of the most recent invaders of the landscape — a knotweed native to the Himalayas — has begun taking root in the upper slopes of the Nilgiris, potentially threatening biodiversity along streams and rivers.
The knotweed, known as *Polygonum molle* (Sikkim knotweed), which has been recently reclassified as *Koenigia mollis*, has begun spreading along many streams and rivulets in the upper Nilgiris, especially around Doddabetta, Kodappamund, Adasolai and the Ketti Valley.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas.

1. It is prepared by United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
2. India is among countries whose soil biodiversity faces the highest level of risk.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2  

b) 2, 3  

c) 1, 3  

d) 1, 2, 3  

Solution: b) 

India’s soil biodiversity is in grave peril, according to the Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas prepared by the World Wide Fund for Nature.

- The [WWF’s ‘risk index’](https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/wwf-sees-grave-danger-to-indias-soil-biodiversity/article25372875.ece) for the globe — indicating threats from loss of above-ground diversity, pollution and nutrient over-loading, over-grazing, intensive agriculture, fire, soil erosion, desertification and climate change — shows India among countries whose soil biodiversity faces the highest level of risk.

- Soil biodiversity encompasses the presence of micro-organisms, micro-fauna (nematodes and tardigrades for example), and macro-fauna (ants, termites and earthworms).


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Global coalition to protect pollinators.

1. The Global coalition to protect pollinators is formed by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
2. India is a member country to the Coalition.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  

b) 2 only  

c) Both  

d) None  

Solution: d) 

Global Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators was formed three years ago, to follow up on the findings of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, which found that many of the world’s pollinator species are on the decline.
• The initiative to form a coalition was taken by the Netherlands on December 12, 2016 at the Conference of the Parties–Convention of Biological Diversity held in Mexico.
• Members: The coalition now has 28 signatories including 17 European countries, five from Latin America and the Caribbean and four from Africa.


(Q) Consider the following statements.

1. Pollinator-dependent species include fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts and oil crops.
2. Globally nearly 90% of wild flowering plant species depend on animal pollination.
3. Protecting pollinators will be important for addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Pollinator-dependent species include several fruits, vegetables, seeds, nuts and oil crops, which are major sources of micronutrients, vitamins and minerals to humans.

What is the importance of pollinators?

1. Plants depend on pollination.
2. Globally nearly 90% of wild flowering plant species depend on animal pollination.
3. More than 75% of leading global crop types benefit from animal pollination in production, yield and quality.
4. Around 5-8% of current global crop production is directly ascribed to animal pollination, which equates to somewhere between 235 and 577 billion American dollars worldwide.

Protecting pollinators will be important for addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) too. The goals relevant to pollinators are SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 15 (life on land), SDG 3 (good health and well-being) through access to sufficient nutritious food (highly dependent on pollinators) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) too as 1.4 billion people work in agriculture.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Tarballs, recently seen in news

1. Tarballs are formed by weathering of crude oil in marine environments.
2. The presence of several tarballs indicate an oil spill.
3. There has never been a case of a beach closing down due to tarballs in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
**Solution: d)**

Tarballs are **dark-coloured, sticky balls of oil** that form when crude oil floats on the **ocean surface**. Tarballs are formed by weathering of crude oil in marine environments. They are transported from the open sea to the shores by sea currents and waves.

- Tarballs are usually coin-sized and are found strewn on the beaches. However, over the years, they have become as big as basketballs and can weigh as high as 6-7 kgs.
- Most of the times, the presence of several tarballs indicate an oil spill.
- Tarball pollution is a major concern to global marine ecosystem. Microbes such as bacteria and fungi are known to be associated with tarballs.
- Tarballs are difficult to break down, and can therefore travel for hundreds of miles in the sea. Noted cases of tarball occurrences have been witnessed at Goa beaches since 2010, in South Gujarat, Mangaluru and at Los Angeles beaches.
- There has never been a case of a beach closing down due to tarballs in India.

Source: [https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-are-tarballs-5871982/](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-are-tarballs-5871982/)

**(Q)** Consider the following statements regarding International Solar Alliance (ISA).

1. The Paris Declaration establishes ISA as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.
2. For becoming a member of International Solar Alliance (ISA), the country must lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
3. ISA’s major objectives include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity and mobilisation of investment of over US$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: d)**

The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is an alliance of **more than 122 countries** initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which **lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn**, now **extended to all** members of UN.

- The **Paris Declaration** establishes ISA as an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries. The ISA’s major objectives include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity and mobilisation of investment of over US$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.
- As an action-oriented organisation, the ISA brings together countries with rich solar potential to aggregate global demand, thereby reducing prices through bulk purchase, facilitating the deployment of existing solar technologies at scale, and promoting collaborative solar R&D and capacity building.

**(Q)** Consider the following statements regarding **Spodoptera frugiperda**, recently seen in news

1. It is known as fall armyworm, which is an invasive and polyphagous pest.
2. In India, it has suitable environmental conditions and appropriate host plants to accelerate its spread.
3. It only feeds on maize.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

FAW (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is an invasive and polyphagous (feeding on many foods) pest. It can attack cereals and forage grasses.

- Fall Army Worms (FAWs) primarily feeds on maize, but can consume rice, cotton, sugarcane and some vegetables.
- In India, FAW found suitable environmental conditions and appropriate host plants which accelerated its spread.

Union Minster of State for Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare launched a dedicated website (http://www.fallarmyworm.org.in) to help farmers fight against the dreaded Fall Armyworm (FAW).


(Q) Consider the following statements about Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES).

1. It is India’s only facility for conservation of endangered species.
2. It is a facility of CSIR’s Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).
3. It has helped to increase the population of mouse deer in Telangana forests.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The **Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES)**, a dedicated facility of CSIR’s Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad uses **modern biotechnologies for conservation of endangered wildlife**.

- **India’s only facility** for conservation of endangered species.
- Achievements of Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES):
  - LaCONES has helped the **Mouse Deer Conservation** Breeding Centre at Nehru Zoological Park to increase the population of mouse deer in Telangana forests. Amrabad forest, for instance, ran out of mouse deer and through the efforts of LaCONES, the animal is now reintroduced in Amrabad Tiger Reserve.
  - Earlier, LaCONES has developed universal **DNA based marker for identification of wild animals** from parts and remains. It has a **DNA banking** of more than 250 species of mammals, birds and reptiles.
Consider the following statements.

1. India is one of the world’s largest producers of mica, with Jharkhand and Bihar being the main producing states.
2. Mica is used in various sectors including buildings and electronics.
3. Mica is also used in the production of cosmetics and paint.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

- Over 5,000 children abandon education in mica mining districts of Jharkhand, Bihar: survey


Consider the following statements regarding IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

1. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is the world’s most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.
2. The rate of population decline and geographic range are considered to assess the extinction risk of a given species.
3. The latest update to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species shows that more and more species assessed are being threatened with extinction.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) 3 only
d) None of the above

Solution: d)

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.

- It uses a set of quantitative criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of thousands of species. These criteria are relevant to most species and all regions of the world. With its strong scientific base, The IUCN Red List is recognized as the most authoritative guide to the status of biological diversity.
- The latest update to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species shows that more and more species assessed are being threatened with extinction.

‘Momentum for Change’ is an initiative of

a) UN Climate Change secretariat  b) UNEP
  c) World Bank  d) UNICEF
Solution: a)

*Momentum for Change* is an initiative spearheaded by the **UN Climate Change secretariat** to shine a light on the enormous groundswell of activities underway across the globe that are moving the world toward a **highly resilient, low-carbon future**. Momentum for Change recognizes innovative and transformative solutions that address both climate change and wider economic, social and environmental challenges.

Source: [https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change](https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Gharial.

1. Gharial is always found in deep fast flowing rivers and not in still water.
2. Today they survive only in the waters of India and Nepal.
3. Odisha is the only State in India having all three species — gharial, mugger and saltwater crocodile.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

Gharial prefers **deep fast flowing rivers**, however adult gharial have also been observed in still water branches (**jheel**) of rivers.

- Historically, gharial was found in the river system of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and southern part of Bhutan and Nepal. Today they survive only in the waters of India and Nepal. The surviving population can be found within the tributaries of the Ganges river system: Girwa (Uttar Pradesh), Son (Madhya Pradesh), Ramganga (Uttarakhand), Gandak (Bihar), Chambal (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) and Mahanadi (Orissa).

- Listed in **Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and as **Critically Endangered** on IUCN Red List.

- **Odisha** is the only State in India having **all three species** — gharial, mugger and saltwater crocodile.


[https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/threatened_species/gharial/](https://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/priority_species/threatened_species/gharial/)
(Q) Consider the following statements regarding ‘Transformation of Aspirational Districts’ programme.

1. It aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas.
2. NITI Aayog is steering the initiative in all 112 identified districts.
3. Delta ranking is provided for the Aspirational Districts which measures the incremental progress made by them in areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The Aspirational District Programme was launched by the Prime Minister on January 5, 2018. It aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development, thereby posing a challenge to ensure balanced regional development.

- The 112 districts were identified from 27 states, at least one from each state.
- NITI Aayog anchors the programme with support from Central Ministries and the State Governments. While NITI Aayog is steering the initiative in 30 districts, various central ministries oversee 50 districts besides the Ministry of Home Affairs, which focuses on 35 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts.
- To enable optimum utilization of their potential, this program focuses closely on improving people’s ability to participate fully in the vibrant economy. Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure are this programme’s core areas of focus.
- The NITI Aayog in December 2018 released the Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts which measures the incremental progress made by them between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018, across six developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.


(Q) e-AUSHADHI portal recently seen in news is related to

a) Monitoring of fixed dose drug combinations (FDCs)
b) Online sale of Generic Drugs by the Jan Aushadhi Kendras
c) Portal on educating citizens on ill effects of Antibiotics
d) Online Licensing System of AYUSH Medicine
Solution: d)

**e-AUSHADHI portal for Online Licensing System of AYUSH Medicine:** Portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Paramarsh Scheme.

1. The scheme is for Mentoring Medical colleges, to promote Quality Assurance in Medical Education.
2. The Scheme will be operationalized through a “Hub & Spoke” model.
3. The scheme is launched by Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched ‘**Paramarsh**’ – a University Grants Commission (UGC) scheme.

- The scheme is for Mentoring National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) Accreditation Aspirant Institutions to promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- The scheme will be a paradigm shift in the concept of mentoring of institution by another well performing institution to upgrade their academic performance and enable them to get accredited by focusing in the area of curricular aspects, teaching-learning & evaluation, research, innovation, institutional values & practices etc.
- The Scheme will be operationalized through a “Hub & Spoke” model wherein the Mentor Institution, called the "Hub" is centralized and will have the responsibility of guiding the Mentee institution through the secondary branches the “Spoke” through the services provided to the mentee for self improvement.

Source: [http://www.pib.nic.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1579415](http://www.pib.nic.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1579415)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding AYUSH GRID Project.

1. The project aims to digitize the entire AYUSH leading to transformation in field of health care delivery at all levels.
2. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is collaborating with Ministry of AYUSH (MOA) for digitization of AYUSH Sector.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None
Solution: c)
The Ministries of AYUSH and Electronics and Information Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the digitization of the AYUSH sector. The Ministry aims to digitize the entire AYUSH, leading to transformation in the field of health care delivery at all levels, along with greater research, education, delivery of various health care programmes and better drug regulations.

The Electronics and Information Technology Ministry has agreed to give technical support to the AYUSH Ministry for planning and development of AYUSH GRID Project.


(Q) Which of the following statements is correct about SWAYAM PRABHA?

a) A tool for comprehensive self-review and analysis for CBSE affiliated schools.

b) Provide interactive digital boards to nearly 15 lakh classrooms across the country.

c) Utilization of satellite communication technologies for transmission of educational e-contents.

d) Imparting ICT Skills in all the Kendriya Vidyalayas to the students of classes III to XII.

Solution: c)

SWAYAM Prabha- a project for operationalising 32 Direct to Home (DTH) Television Channels for providing high quality educational content to all teachers, students and citizens across the country interested in lifelong learning.


(Q) Deeksharambh, recently seen in news is related to

a) PM Modi’s first ‘PRAGATI’ meeting in his second term.

b) Lunching of Atal Community Innovation Centre.

c) Launching of electric buses for inter-city operations.

d) UGC Guide to Student Induction Programme

Solution: d)
The Union Minister of Human Resource Development released UGC Guide to Student Induction Programme – "Deeksharambh".

Deeksharambh, a guide to Student Induction Programme is to help new students adjust and feel comfortable in the new environment, inculcate in them the ethos and culture of the institution, help them build bonds with other students and faculty members, and expose them to a sense of larger purpose and self-exploration.

Source: [http://www.pib.nic.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1579414](http://www.pib.nic.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1579414)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Operation Milap.

1. It is to rescue the trafficked or kidnapped children and arrest the kidnappers.

2. It is the exercise of Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

3. The rescued children are provided free education and cash incentive.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only 

b) 1, 2 

c) 1, 3 

d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: a)
The operation Milap under which children are rescued was launched in December 2014.
- Under this project, the Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Delhi Police develops information, rescues the trafficked or kidnapped person and arrests the kidnappers.
- The rescued children are counselled and also given requisite medical attention.
- Operation Smile is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs to rescue/rehabilitate missing children. Under the initiative, a dedicated campaign for a month where several activities are taken up by the State Police personnel to trace and rescue the missing children and reunite them with their families.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/operation-milap-over-300-children-rescued-in-7-months/article28325255.ece

(Q) Consider the following statements.
1. National Dairy Plan is the World Bank assisted programme, implemented by Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying to support milk cooperatives and milk producer companies.
2. India ranks first in global milk production.
3. More than 50% of India’s milk business is handled by the organised sector.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: a)
Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying is implementing World Bank assisted National Dairy Plan – I in 18 States to support milk cooperatives and milk producer companies along with breeding improvement initiative.
- National Dairy Plan Phase I (NDP I) is a Central Sector Scheme.
- Funding will be through a line of credit from the International Development Association (IDA), which along with the share of the Government of India will flow from DADF to NDDB and in turn to eligible End Implementing Agencies (EIAs).

Though India maintains its position as world’s top milk producer, with production of 176.3 million tonne milk production in 2017-18, more than 50% of the marketable surplus is still handled by the unorganised sector, the 2018-19 Economic Survey highlighted.

Milk production in India has been increasing steadily over the years from 55.6 million tonnes in 1991-92 to 176.3 million tonnes in 2017-18, at an average annual growth rate of 4.5 percent.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP).
1. It strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.
2. The program is being implemented by DAY-NRLM in partnership with State Rural Livelihood Missions.
3. It aims reach out to the poorest of poor households and expand the portfolio of activities currently handled by the Mahila Kisan.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP), a sub component of the Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-NRLM (DAY-NRLM) seeks to improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities available to empower her.

- MKSP recognizes the identity of “Mahila” as “Kisan” and strives to build the capacity of women in the domain of agro-ecologically sustainable practices.
- It has a clear vision to reach out to the poorest of poor households and expand the portfolio of activities currently handled by the Mahila Kisan.
- The program is being implemented by DAY-NRLM in partnership with State Rural Livelihood Missions/ Community Based Organizations (CBOs)/NGOs, as implementing partners (PIAs) across the country.


(Q) Consider the following statements about North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP).

1. It is a livelihood and rural development project aimed to transform the lives of the poor and marginalized tribal families in North East (NE) India.
2. NERCORMP is a joint developmental initiative of the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of DoNER and World Bank.
3. It involves providing awareness to the communities about different social sector schemes of the Government and its importance.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP) is a livelihood and rural development project aimed to transform the lives of the poor and marginalized tribal families in North East (NE) India. NERCORMP is a joint developmental initiative of the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of DoNER, Govt. of India and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Major project activities:

- Institutional strengthening of community institutions (CBOs) and strengthening the capacity of participating agencies viz. NGOs, Line Depts etc.
• Promote viable income generation activities (IGAs) for poor households through production of field crops, horticulture, forestry, livestock, fisheries, and non-farm activities using sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

• Promote the establishment of a network of village volunteers at the village or cluster level through training, who in turn will extend services at the community level.

• The project provides revolving fund for credit support to the communities through SHGs, NaRM-Gs or district level Micro Credit Institutes that is developed in the project areas.

• Improving access of communities to safe drinking water and better health care and sanitation; providing awareness to the communities about different social sector schemes of the Govt. and its importance.

• Assist communities to upgrade and construct village roads for better access to their villages.

• Assisting communities to conserve their unique and natural resources and biological diversity, strengthen indigenous institutions and institutionalising new conservation practices; strengthen the information sharing system and documentation of good practices of the project.

• The project gives emphasis on convergence with government and non-government agencies and also facilitate to meet the shortfall of financial and technical support available in the project vis-a-vis community demands.

• The project also facilitates value addition of the marketable surplus and establishing value chain to match the demand and supply.

Source: https://www.necorps.org/

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act).

1. The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age.
2. It is the legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offence.
3. The POCSO Act is only applicable to child survivors and adult offenders.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012 was formulated in order to effectively address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

1. The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age. It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.

2. The Act also provides for mandatory reporting of sexual offences. This casts a legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offence; if he fails to do so, he may be punished with six months’ imprisonment and/or a fine.

3. The POCSO Act is only applicable to child survivors and adult offenders. In case two children have sexual relations with each other, or in case a child perpetrates a sexual offence on an adult, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, will apply.
(Q) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

1. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is a nationwide plan to provide good all-weather road connectivity to all unconnected villages.
2. PMGSY also involves Road Connectivity for Left Wing Extremism affected Areas.
3. PMGSY phase three involves consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for the launch of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana-III (PMGSY-III).

- Under the PMGSY-III Scheme, it is proposed to consolidate 1,25,000 Km road length in the States.
- It involves consolidation of Through Routes and Major Rural Links connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), Higher Secondary Schools and Hospitals.
- The funds would be shared in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and State for all States except for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand) for which it is 90:10.
- PMGSY was launched in December, 2000 with an objective to provide single all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitation of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in North-East, hill, tribal and desert areas as per Census, 2001) for overall socio-economic development of the areas.

(Q) Which of the following comes under the Champion Services Sectors as identified by the Government.

1. Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT& ITeS)
2. Transport and Logistics Services
3. Audio Visual Services
4. Environmental Services
5. Entertainment and media services
6. Legal Services

Select the correct code:

a) All except 3
b) All except 3 and 5
c) All except 5
d) All of the above
Solution: c)

**Champion Services Sectors** refers to the 12 identified sectors where the Government wants to give focused attention for promoting their development, and realizing their potential. These include:

1. Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT& ITeS),
2. Tourism and Hospitality Services,
3. Medical Value Travel,
4. Transport and Logistics Services,
5. Accounting and Finance Services,
6. Audio Visual Services,
7. Legal Services,
8. Communication Services,
9. Construction and Related Engineering Services,
10. Environmental Services,
11. Financial Services and
12. Education Services.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project.

1. Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project is a pan-India project which aims to provide piped cooking gas.
2. The project is implemented as a sub-component of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

Solution: d)

The **gas pipeline project** aims to provide piped cooking gas to residents of Varanasi and later to millions of people in states like Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Geographical indication (GI) tag.

1. A GI tag conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.
2. Once the GI protection is granted, no other producer can misuse the name to market similar products.
3. Kerala has the highest number of GI tagged products.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 3  
b) 2, 3  
c) 1, 2  
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: c)

A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

- Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.
- Once the GI protection is granted, no other producer can misuse the name to market similar products. It also provides comfort to customers about the authenticity of that product.
- Karnataka has the highest number of GI tagged products.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding ‘Fair and Remunerative Price’ of sugarcane.

1. The Fair and Remunerative Price is the minimum price that sugarcane farmers are legally guaranteed to get from sugar mills.
2. Fair and Remunerative Price is based on the recommendation of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).
3. The Fair and Remunerative Price of sugarcane is determined under Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal in respect of Determination of ‘Fair and Remunerative Price’ of sugarcane payable by sugar mills for 2019-20 sugar season.

- The FRP is based on the recommendation of the Commission of Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) as per its report of August 2018 on the price policy for sugarcane for the 2019-20 season. The CACP has recommended the same price for the 2019-20 sugar season as it was for the sugar season 2018-19.
- The ‘FRP’ of sugarcane is determined under Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966. The FRP is the minimum price that sugarcane farmers are legally guaranteed to get from sugar mills.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme.

1. Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme aims to ensure speedy development of infrastructure in the Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts.
2. Both physical and social infrastructure sectors are considered for providing support under the Central Pool.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  

b) 2 only  

c) Both  

d) None

Solution: b)

The broad objective of the **Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme** is to ensure speedy development of infrastructure in the **North Eastern Region** by increasing the flow of budgetary financing for new infrastructure projects/schemes in the Region.

- Both physical and social infrastructure sectors such as Irrigation and Flood Control, Power, Roads and Bridges, Education, Health, Water Supply and Sanitation – are considered for providing support under the Central Pool, with projects in physical infrastructure sector receiving priority.
- The **Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)** allocates funds from NLCPR to various Northeast states for infrastructure projects.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding ‘LaQshya’ Programme.

1. Government of India launched “LaQshya” to improve quality of care in labour room and maternity operation theatres in all health facilities.
2. It aims to reduce preventable maternal and newborn mortality, morbidity and stillbirths.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  

b) 2 only  

c) Both  

d) None

Solution: b)

Government of India has launched “LaQshya” (**Labour room Quality improvement Initiative**) to improve quality of care in labour room and maternity operation theatres in public health facilities.

- It’s a multipronged approach **focused at Intrapartum and immediate postpartum period**.
- **Aim**: To reduce preventable maternal and newborn mortality, morbidity and stillbirths associated with the care around delivery in Labour room and Maternity Operation Theatre and ensure respectful maternity care.

**Objectives:**

1. To reduce maternal and newborn mortality & morbidity due to hemorrhage, retained placenta, preterm, preeclampsia and eclampsia, obstructed labour, puerperal sepsis, newborn asphyxia, and newborn sepsis, etc.
2. To improve Quality of care during the delivery and immediate post-partum care, stabilization of complications and ensure timely referrals, and enable an effective two-way follow-up system.
3. To enhance satisfaction of beneficiaries visiting the health facilities and provide Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) to all pregnant women attending the public health facilities.

Following types of healthcare facilities have been identified for implementation of LaQshya program:

2. District Hospitals & equivalent health facilities.
3. Designated FRUs and high case load CHCs with over 100 deliveries/month (60 in hills and desert areas)


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation).

1. The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances.
2. It is a three-tier system involving Union Home Ministry, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States.
3. It uniquely bundles Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation), as the name suggests, is aimed at starting a culture of Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation. It is also a robust system for bringing e-transparency and e-accountability with real-time presence and exchange among the key stakeholders. The platform was launched on March 25, 2015.

1. It is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform that is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
2. It is a three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).
3. The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies: Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.

Source: [http://vikaspedia.in/e-governance/digital-india/pragati-platform](http://vikaspedia.in/e-governance/digital-india/pragati-platform)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC).

1. ACIC is a new initiative of Atal Innovation Mission to support community innovation drive in the country.
2. It will focus on entire Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities of the country which has a vibrant start-up and innovation ecosystem.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None
Solution: a)
The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, flagship initiative of **NITI Aayog**, has launched the **Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC)** to spur community Innovation in underserved and unserved areas of the country.

1. The new initiative aims to encourage the spirit of innovation in the country's specific areas that lack the required infrastructure and facilitating innovation ecosystem. The purpose of ACIC is to enable establishment of socially inclusive innovation ecosystem as well as to encourage equitable distribution of necessary infrastructure for stimulating innovation across the country.

2. The new initiative offers opportunity to talented youth and researchers in Tier 2, Tier 3 cities, Smart cities, Aspirational Districts, North East, J&K, Rural and Tribal regions of India, unserved and underserved regions of Tier 1 / Metro cities. The ACIC programme would focus in over 484 districts located in unserved/underserved regions of India.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram.

1. Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is an initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest.
2. The programme aims to tap into the traditional knowledge and skill sets of tribal people by adding technology and Information Technology.
3. Implementation of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is through Van Dhan Kendras.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

**Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram** is an initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal population by harnessing the wealth of forest i.e. Van Dhan. The programme aims to tap into the traditional knowledge and skill sets of tribal people by adding technology and Information Technology for upgradation of output at each stage and to convert the tribal wisdom into a remunerative economic activity. Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram seeks to promote and leverage the collective strength of tribal people to achieve a viable scale.

Implementation of Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram is through Van Dhan Kendras. Selection of a place for setting up of a Van Dhan Kendra is dependent upon the area’s potential and availability of land to be provided by the State Government. The number of Van Dhan Kendras developed depends on the above factors.


(Q) Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) programme is

a) Sub component under FAME-2 Scheme
b) Providing better connectivity in the North-Eastern States
c) Compressed Bio-Gas production from agricultural residue, municipal solid waste and cattle dung
d) None of the above

Solution: c)
The initiative is aimed at providing a Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) as a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.

- Compressed Bio-Gas plants are proposed to be set up mainly through independent entrepreneurs.
- CBG produced at these plants will be transported through cascades of cylinders to the fuel station networks of OMCs for marketing as a green transport fuel alternative.
- The entrepreneurs would be able to separately market the other by-products from these plants, including bio-manure, carbon-dioxide, etc., to enhance returns on investment.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Maternity Benefit Act, 2017.
1. Maternity benefit in India applies to all shops and establishments with 10 or more women employees.
2. It extended the period of maternity benefit from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for commissioning mothers.
3. It is mandatory for employers to educate women about the maternity benefits available to them at the time of their appointment.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The Maternity Benefit Act originally provided maternity benefit of 12 weeks. In 2017, the law was amended to extend the period to 26 weeks.

- Women who legally adopt a child below the age of three months or a “commissioning mother” will be entitled to maternity benefit for 12 weeks from the date on which the child is handed over to her. A commissioning mother is defined as a biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo implanted in another woman.
- It introduces a provision which requires every establishment to intimate a woman at the time of her appointment of the maternity benefits available to her.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana.
1. The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan scheme is a mandatory and contributory pension scheme meant for old-age protection and social security of unorganised workers.
2. It is a Central Sector Scheme administered by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and implemented through LIC.
3. The unorganised sector workers, with income of less than Rs 15,000 per month and who belong to the age group of 18-40 years, will be eligible for the scheme.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 2, 3
c) 1, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: b)
The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan scheme is meant for old-age protection and social security of unorganised workers.

- **PM-SYM** is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme that will engage as many as 42 crore workers in the unorganised sector.
- The unorganised sector workers, with income of less than Rs 15,000 per month and who belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years, will be eligible for the scheme.
- Those workers should not be covered under New Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme or Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
- He or she should not be an income tax payer.


(Q) FSSAI has been mandated by the FSS Act, 2006 for performing which of the following functions?

1. To provide scientific advice to both Central and State Governments in the matters of framing the policy and rules in areas which have a direct bearing of food safety and nutrition.
2. Provide training programmes for persons who are involved in food businesses.
3. Contribute to the development of international technical standards for food, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments. FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

FSSAI has been mandated by the FSS Act, 2006 for performing the following functions:

1. Framing of Regulations to lay down the Standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food and specifying appropriate system of enforcing various standards thus notified.
2. Laying down mechanisms and guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies engaged in certification of food safety management system for food businesses.
3. Laying down procedure and guidelines for accreditation of laboratories and notification of the accredited laboratories.
4. To provide scientific advice and technical support to Central Government and State Governments in the matters of framing the policy and rules in areas which have a direct or indirect bearing of food safety and nutrition.
5. Collect and collate data regarding food consumption, incidence and prevalence of biological risk, contaminants in food, residues of various, contaminants in foods products, identification of emerging risks and introduction of rapid alert system.
6. Creating an information network across the country so that the public, consumers, Panchayats etc receive rapid, reliable and objective information about food safety and issues of concern.

7. Provide training programmes for persons who are involved or intend to get involved in food businesses.

8. Contribute to the development of international technical standards for food, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

9. Promote general awareness about food safety and food standards.

Source: [https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in/about_fssai.aspx](https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in/about_fssai.aspx)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Crime and Criminal Tracking Network Systems (CCTNS).

1. CCTNS is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan.
2. CCTNS aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effective policing at all level.
3. It also provide public services like registration of online complaints and ascertaining the status of case registered at the police station.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) is a project initiated in June 2009 which aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing at the Police Station level. This will be done through adoption of principles of e-Governance, and creation of a nationwide networked infrastructure for evolution of IT-enabled state-of-the-art tracking system around "investigation of crime and detection of criminals". CCTNS is a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan of Govt. of India.

- The Project will interconnect about 15000 Police Stations and additional 5000 offices of supervisory police officers across the country and digitize data related to FIR registration, investigation and charge sheets in all Police Stations.
- It will not only automate Police functions at Police station and higher levels but will also create facilities and mechanism to provide public services like registration of online complaints, ascertaining the status of case registered at the police station, verification of persons etc.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP).

1. National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) is launched by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to support agricultural universities in providing more relevant and higher quality education to Agricultural University students.
2. This project will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government.
3. A four-year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: d)**

The ICAR has recently launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP).

**Aim:** To attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country.

- **Funded by the World Bank** and the **Indian Government** on a 50:50 basis.
- The objective of the NAHEP for India is to support participating agricultural universities and ICAR in providing more relevant and higher quality education to Agricultural University students. In addition, a four-year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976.

1. The Act is being implemented by the concerned State Governments /UTs and provides for an institutional mechanism at the district level in the form of Vigilance Committees.
2. Government of India has introduced a revamped Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers under which financial assistance is provided to released bonded labourers.
3. The Bonded Labour system has been abolished by law throughout the country.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: d)**

**Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976** is being implemented by the concerned State Govts./UTs.

- The Act provides for an institutional mechanism at the **district level** in the form of **Vigilance Committees**.
- For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Act, the State Governments/UTs may confer, on an **Executive Magistrate**, the **powers of a Judicial Magistrate** of the first class or second class for trial of offences under this Act.
- Government of India has introduced a revamped **Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers- 2016**, under which financial assistance to the tune of Rs.1.00 (one) lakh, Rs.2.00 (two) lakhs & Rs. 3.00 (three) lakhs are **provided to released bonded labourers** based on their category and level of exploitation along with other non-cash assistance for their livelihood.
- The system has been abolished by law throughout the country with effect from October 25, 1975 under the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance** which was replaced by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.
(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).

1. The initiative is a first of its kind, aimed at building an ecosystem for women exclusively in rural India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations.
2. The platform aspires to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India.
3. It is an initiative of NITI Aayog.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)** is a first of its kind, unified access portal which brings together women from different parts of India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations. It is an initiative of NITI Aayog.

- The initiative is aimed at building an ecosystem for women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.
- The platform aspires to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India.


(Q) Consider the following statements.

1. Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards since its inception in 2016, has been recognising and celebrating stories of exemplary women from across India.
2. NITI Aayog has launched the Fourth Edition of Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards, in collaboration with the United Nations.
3. The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is a Government of India initiative by NITI Aayog to promote and support aspiring as well as established women entrepreneurs in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

**NITI Aayog** has launched the Fourth Edition of **Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards**, in collaboration with the United Nations.
The WTI Awards, since its inception in 2016, has been recognising and celebrating stories of exemplary women from across India. The theme for WTI Awards 2019 is “Women and Entrepreneurship”, in continuation with last edition’s theme that recognizes women entrepreneurs who are breaking the glass ceiling and challenging stereotypes, through businesses and enterprises and are providing innovative developmental solutions to building a dynamic New India.

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is a Government of India initiative by NITI Aayog to promote and support aspiring as well as established women entrepreneurs in India, assist and handhold them in their journey from starting to scaling up and expanding their ventures.

Source: https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=192543

(Q) Consider the following statements about Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) programme.

1. It is an initiative that will enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.
2. It was launched by Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: a)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had launched RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil), an initiative that will enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.

- Under this initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.

Source: https://foodsafetyhelpline.com/2018/08/fssai-launches-repurpose-used-cooking-oil-ruco/

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER).

1. It is a sub-mission under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
2. The scheme aims to develop certified organic production.
3. It links growers with consumers and support the development of entire value chain.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched this Central Sector Scheme named "Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region" (MOVCDNER) for implementation in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
The scheme aims at development of certified organic production in a value chain mode to link growers with consumers and to support the development of entire value chain starting from inputs, seeds, certification and creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing, marketing and brand building initiative.

The assistance is provided for cluster development, on/off farm input production, supply of seeds/planting materials, setting up of functional infrastructure, establishment of integrated processing unit, refrigerated transportation, pre-cooling/ cold stores chamber, branding, labelling and packaging, hiring of space, hand holdings, organic certification through third party, mobilization of farmers/processors etc.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha Campaign.

1. ‘Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha’ Drive has been launched by ‘Jal Shakti’ ministry to create awareness about water conservation among all school students in the country.
2. One of the major objectives is to help every Student to save at least one litre of water per day.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: b)

‘Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha’ Drive has been launched by the Department of School Education & Literacy, HRD Ministry to create awareness about water conservation among all school students in the country.

Five Major Objectives:

1. To educate students learn about conservation of water.
2. To sensitize Students about the impact of scarcity of water.
3. To empower Students to learn to protect the natural sources of water.
4. To help every Student to save at least one litre of water per day.
5. To encourage Students towards judicious use and minimum wastage of water at home and school level.

Target:

1. One Student – One Day – Save One Litre Water.
2. One Student – One Year – Save 365 Litres Water.
3. One Student – 10 Years – Save 3650 Litres Water.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).

1. It was created by an executive order.
2. The decision of TDSAT is final and no further appeal in allowed to any court.
3. The jurisdiction of TDSAT stands extended to matters that lay before the Cyber Appellate Tribunal and also the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority Appellate Tribunal.
Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The TRAI Act of 1997 was amended in the year 2000 and TDSAT was set up to adjudicate disputes and dispose of appeals with a view to protect the interests of service providers and consumers of the telecom sector.

- The decision of TDSAT is appealed to Supreme Court of India.
- The jurisdiction of TDSAT stands extended to matters that lay before the Cyber Appellate Tribunal and also the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority Appellate Tribunal.


(Q) Shillong Declaration, recently seen in news is related to

a) Renewable Energy
b) Antimicrobial Resistance
c) Artificial Intelligence
d) e-Governance

Solution: d)

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.


(Q) Consider the following statements about National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

1. It is also called as National Investment Fund.
2. It aims at infrastructure development in commercially viable projects, both Greenfield and brownfield, including stalled projects.
3. The NIIF is established as Alternate Investment Funds (AIF) under the SEBI Regulations.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is a fund created by the Government of India for enhancing infrastructure financing in the country.
• This is different from the National Investment Fund.
• NIIF is envisaged as a fund of funds with the ability to make direct investments as required. As a fund of fund it may invest in other SEBI registered funds.
• The objective of NIIF would be to maximize economic impact mainly through infrastructure development in commercially viable projects, both Greenfield and brownfield, including stalled projects. It could also consider other nationally important projects, for example, in manufacturing, if commercially viable.
• As per the operational framework approved on 20 August 2015 NIIF is not a single entity. There can be more than one fund. The NIIF will be established as one or more Alternate Investment Funds (AIF) under the SEBI Regulations.

Source: http://arthapedia.in/index.php%3Ftitle%3DNational_Investment_and_Infrastructure_Fund_(NIIF)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015.

1. The Act defines a child as someone who is under age 18.
2. The Act makes it mandatory for all children in the age group 16-18 to be tried as adults.
3. To streamline adoption procedures for orphan, abandoned and surrendered children, the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is given the status of a statutory body.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) UN Climate Change secretariat
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: b)

The Juvenile Justice Act of 2000 was amended in 2015 with a provision allowing for Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) to be tried as adults under certain circumstances.

• The Act defines a child as someone who is under age 18. For a CCL, age on the date of the offence is the basis for determining whether he or she was a child or an adult.
• The amended Act distinguishes children in the age group 16-18 as a category which can be tried as adults if they are alleged to have committed a heinous offence — one that attracts a minimum punishment of seven years. The Act does not, however, make it mandatory for all children in this age group to be tried as adults.
• To streamline adoption procedures for orphan, abandoned and surrendered children, the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is given the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively.


(Q) Consider the following statements about National Mineral Policy, 2019

1. It addresses the issues of project affected persons especially those residing in tribal areas.
2. It proposes to grant status of industry to mining activity.
3. Creation of dedicated mineral corridors to boost private sector mining areas.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2  b) 2, 3  c) 1, 3  d) 1, 2, 3
The Union Cabinet has approved **National Mineral Policy 2019**.

**Benefits:**

The **New National Mineral Policy** will ensure **more effective regulation**. It will lead to **sustainable mining** sector development in future while addressing the issues of project affected persons especially those residing in tribal areas.

The National Mineral Policy 2019 includes provisions which will give boost to mining sector such as:

1. *introduction of Right of First Refusal* for RP/PL holders,
2. *encouraging the private sector* to take up exploration,
3. *auctioning in virgin areas* for composite RP cum PL cum ML on revenue share basis,
4. encouragement of merger and acquisition of mining entities and
5. *transfer of mining leases* and creation of dedicated mineral corridors to boost private sector mining areas.

The 2019 Policy proposes to **grant status of industry** to mining activity to **boost financing of mining for private sector** and for acquisitions of mineral assets in other countries by private sector

- It also mentions that **Long term import export policy** for mineral will help private sector in better planning and stability in business
- The Policy also mentions rationalize reserved areas given to PSUs which have not been used and to put these areas to auction, which will give more opportunity to private sector for participation
- The Policy also mentions to make efforts to **harmonize taxes, levies & royalty with world benchmarks** to help private sector

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding ‘Samarth’ scheme.

1. It is a scheme for capacity building and skilling in the textile sector.
2. All south Indian states have signed (MoU) with Union Ministry of Textiles for skilling workers as part of Samarth scheme.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

Solution: c)

Textiles Ministry partners with 16 states for skilling 4 lakh under *Samarth* scheme

- With the exception of spinning and weaving, beneficiaries will be provided training in the entire value chain such as apparel and garments, knitwear, metal handicraft, handloom, textiles, handicraft and carpet.
- The sixteen states that signed the MoUs include Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Karnataka, Manipur, Haryana, Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand.

IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Measles.

1. Measles is a highly contagious viral disease, which remains an important cause of death among young children globally.
2. Severe measles is more likely among poorly nourished young children whose immune systems have been weakened by HIV/AIDS.
3. Recently World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that measles has been eliminated in Sri Lanka.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Sri Lanka has made health history after spending three years free of any new measles cases and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that the deadly childhood infection has been eliminated in the island nation.

• Measles is a highly contagious viral disease. It remains an important cause of death among young children globally, despite the availability of a safe and effective vaccine.

• Severe measles is more likely among poorly nourished young children, especially those with insufficient vitamin A, or whose immune systems have been weakened by HIV/AIDS or other diseases.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Chandrayaan 2 mission.

1. It will be India’s first expedition to attempt a soft landing on the lunar surface with home-grown technology.
2. It comprises of lander, rover and orbiter which will perform mineralogical and elemental studies of the lunar surface.
3. The lunar south pole has more light compared to the north pole.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The primary objective of Chandrayaan-2 is to demonstrate the ability to soft-land on the lunar surface and operate a robotic rover on the surface. Scientific goals include studies of lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, the lunar exosphere, and signatures of hydroxyl and water ice.

According to ISRO, the lunar south pole is an interesting surface area, which remains in shadow as compared to the north pole.
What makes Chandrayaan 2 special?

1. 1st space mission to conduct a soft landing on the Moon's south polar region.
2. 1st Indian expedition to attempt a soft landing on the lunar surface with home-grown technology
3. 1st Indian mission to explore the lunar terrain with home-grown technology
4. 4th country ever to soft land on the lunar surface

Source: [https://www.isro.gov.in/chandrayaan2-home-0](https://www.isro.gov.in/chandrayaan2-home-0)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) Project.

1. It is a mega-science project jointly funded by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
2. Neutrinos hold the key to several important and fundamental questions on the origin of the Universe and the energy production in stars.
3. Neutrinos are the most widely occurring particle in the universe and they are the only particles which can probe the deep interiors of the Earth.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) Project is a multi-institutional effort aimed at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approx. 1200 m for non-accelerator based high energy and nuclear physics research in India. The initial goal of INO is to study neutrinos.

- It is a mega-science project jointly funded by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Neutrinos, first proposed by Swiss scientist Wolfgang Pauli in 1930, are the second most widely occurring particle in the universe, only second to photons, the particle which makes up light. In fact, neutrinos are so abundant among us that every second, there are more than 100 trillion of them passing right through each of us — we never even notice them.

- Neutrinos hold the key to several important and fundamental questions on the origin of the Universe and the energy production in stars.

- Another important possible application of neutrinos is in the area of neutrino tomograph of the earth, that is detailed investigation of the structure of the Earth from core onwards. This is possible with neutrinos since they are the only particles which can probe the deep interiors of the Earth.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding UN-SPIDER.

1. It is a platform which facilitates the use of space-based technologies for disaster management and emergency response.
2. It was established under the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).
3. It aims to enable developing countries to use all types of space-based information in all phases of the disaster management.

www.insightsactivelearn.com 42 www.insightsonindia.com
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) was established in 2006 under the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). UN-SPIDER develops solutions to address the limited access developing countries have to specialized technologies that can be essential in the management of disasters and the reducing of disaster risks.

- Remote sensing for Earth observation, satellite-based telecommunication and global navigation satellite systems contribute to more effective disaster risk management and emergency response. It is UN-SPIDER’s mandate to enable developing countries to use all types of space-based information in all phases of the disaster management cycle including prevention, preparedness, early warning, response and reconstruction.


(Q) The government had launched National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). CPS and its associated technologies include:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)
2. Big Data Analytics
3. Quantum Computing
4. Cyber Security for physical infrastructure

Select the correct code:

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

Solution: d)

The NM-ICPS is a comprehensive Mission which would address technology development, application development, human resource development & skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and start-up development in CPS and associated technologies.

CPS and its associated technologies, like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DP), Big Data Analytics, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum encryption (Quantum Key Distribution), Data Science & Predictive analytics, Cyber Security for physical infrastructure and other infrastructure, have pervaded and is playing a transformative role in almost every field of human endeavour all most in all sectors.

(Q) The applications of Indian Regional Navigation Spacecraft System (IRNSS) include

1. Vehicle tracking and fleet management.
4. Disaster Management.
5. Precise Timing.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2, 3, 4
b) 1, 3, 4, 5
c) 1, 2, 3, 5
d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Solution: d)

IRNSS would provide two types of services, namely Standard Positioning Services available to all users and Restricted Services provided to authorised users.

Its applications include:

2. Disaster Management.
3. Vehicle tracking and fleet management.
4. Integration with mobile phones.
5. Precise Timing.
7. Terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travellers.
8. Visual and voice navigation for drivers.

(Q) Consider the following statements about recently developed Ramanujan Machine.

1. It has been developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
2. It is a portable diagnostic device to detect bacteria without cell culture or microbiological assays.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: d)

Scientists from Technion — Israel Institute of Technology have developed a concept they have named the Ramanujan Machine, after the Indian mathematician.

- It is not really a machine but an algorithm, and performs a very unconventional function.
- The Ramanujan machine is more of a concept than an actual machine—it exists as a network of computers running algorithms dedicated to finding conjectures about fundamental constants in the form of continued fractions—these are defined as fractions of infinite length where the
denominator is a certain quantity plus a fraction, where a latter fraction has a similar denominator, etc.)

- **The purpose of the machine is to come up with conjectures** (in the form of mathematical formulas) that humans can analyze, and hopefully prove to be true mathematically.

- **Conjectures** are a major step in the process of making new discoveries in any branch of science, particularly mathematics. Equations defining the fundamental mathematical constants, including pi, are invariably elegant. New conjectures in mathematics, however, have been scarce and sporadic, the researchers note in their paper, which is currently on a pre-print server. The idea is to enhance and accelerate the process of discovery.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Tardigrades, recently seen in news.

1. Tardigrades – often called water bears – are creatures under a millimetre long that can survive being heated to 150 degree C and frozen to almost absolute zero degree C.
2. Recently NASA spacecraft successfully landed Tardigrades on the Moon.
3. Tardigrades expel water from their bodies and set off a mechanism to protect their cells, and can still revive if placed in water later.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

On April 11, the Israeli spacecraft Beresheet attempted to land on the Moon, but crashed on the surface. It was carrying a number of items — including thousands of specimens of a living organism called tardigrade.

**Tardigrades** – often called water bears – are creatures under a millimetre long that can survive being heated to 150C and frozen to almost absolute zero.

1. The tardigrade, is among the toughest and most resilient creatures on Earth.
2. The tardigrade can only be seen under a microscope.
3. Half a millimetre long, it is essentially a water-dweller but also inhabits land and, a 2008 study found, can survive in the cold vacuum of outer space.
4. The tardigrade can endure extreme hot and cold temperature levels.
5. They themselves expel water from their bodies and set off a mechanism to protect their cells, and can still revive if placed in water later. The organism is known to “come back to life” on rehydration.


(Q) NASA’s ICESat-2 mission aims to

a) To explore the presence of ice on mars  
b) Mapping melting ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica  
c) Understanding the sea level rise across the globe  
d) Both b and c
Solution: d)

- NASA’s ICESat-2 — has mapped melting ice sheets in Antarctica and the resulting sea level rise across the globe, which could help improve climate forecasts.

V. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding World Food Programme.

1. World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance branch of the World Bank.
2. World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
3. WFP also aims to combat disease, including HIV and AIDS.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.

- The WFP strives to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with the ultimate goal in mind of eliminating the need for food aid itself.
- Born in 1961, WFP pursues a vision of the world in which every man, woman and child has access at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life.
- The WFP is governed by an Executive Board which consists of representatives from member states.
- The WFP operations are funded by voluntary donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.
- WFP food aid is also directed to fight micronutrient deficiencies, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat disease, including HIV and AIDS.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA).

1. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements which provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation.
2. It aims to promote mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: a)
Recently **India signed** a key UN convention on international settlement agreements. The signing of the convention is particularly important for the growth of mediation in India.

- The convention is also known as the **"Singapore Convention on Mediation"** (the Convention).
- The Convention provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation.
- It aims to become essential instrument that facilitates international trade and in promotion of mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes.


(Q) Consider the following statements about Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

1. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established by World Bank.
2. It is a policy-making body and promotes implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
3. India is a full-fledged member of FATF.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)
The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

The FATF is therefore a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.

The FATF has developed a series of **Recommendations** that are recognised as the international standard for combating of money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**India has become a full-fledged member of Financial Action Task Force (FATF).** FATF membership is very important for India in its quest to become a major player in the International finance. It will help India to build the capacity to fight terrorism and trace terrorist money and to successfully investigate and prosecute money laundering and terrorist financing offences. India will benefit in securing a more transparent and stable financial system by ensuring that financial institutions are not vulnerable to infiltration or abuse by organized crime groups.

Source: [http://www.fatf-gafi.org/about/](http://www.fatf-gafi.org/about/)
Consider the following statements regarding International Charter on Space and Major Disasters.

1. The Charter is a non-binding, worldwide collaboration, through which satellite data are made available for the benefit of disaster management.
2. The charter was activated for the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

**Solution: c**

The Charter is a **non-binding worldwide collaboration**, through which satellite data are made available for the benefit of disaster management. By combining Earth observation assets from different space agencies, the Charter allows resources and expertise to be coordinated for rapid response to major disaster situations; thereby helping civil protection authorities and the international humanitarian community.

- With Assam inundated by floods, several countries including China, Russia and France collaborated with India on sharing satellite images of the scale of inundation. As signatories to The International Charter Space and Major Disasters, any of the 32 member countries can send a 'request' to activate the Charter. This would immediately trigger a request by the coordinators to space agencies of other countries whose satellites have the best eyes on the site of the disaster.

- Based on an activation request by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on July 17, France's National Centre for Space Studies, China National Space Administration and ROSCOSMOS of Russia shared satellite images of the flood situation in the districts of Dhubri, Marigaon, Barpeta, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur in Assam with ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre. ISRO's CARTOSAT satellites too got the Indian space agency its own images.

- The charter was activated for the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

**India-EU “Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA)” negotiations cover:**

1. Trade in Goods and Service
2. Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
3. Government Procurement
4. Sustainable Development

Select the correct code:

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

**Solution: d**

On 28th June 2007, **India and the EU** began negotiations on a **broad-based** Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) in **Brussels**, Belgium.
The negotiations cover Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Competition, Trade Defence, Government Procurement, Dispute Settlement, Intellectual Property Rights & Geographical Indications, Sustainable Development.

Source: [http://commerce.gov.in/international_nextDetail_WTO.aspx?LinkID=32&idwto=34](http://commerce.gov.in/international_nextDetail_WTO.aspx?LinkID=32&idwto=34)

(Q) Consider the following statements about Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

1. It is a treaty which intends to criminalize all forms of international terrorism and deny terrorists, their financiers and supporters access to funds, arms, and safe havens.
2. All the BRICS countries have ratified the treaty.
3. It was proposed by India in 2008 after Mumbai terror attacks.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism** is a proposed treaty which intends to criminalize all forms of international terrorism and deny terrorists, their financiers and supporters access to funds, arms, and safe havens. The negotiations for this treaty are currently (May 2018) under way has been under negotiation at the United Nations General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee.

- Currently, the negotiations of the Comprehensive Terrorism Convention are deadlocked because of differences over the definition of terrorism.
- **India proposed this convention in 1996** and has since demanded consistently, especially in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai attacks. The issue was once again pushed by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in his address at the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly held in September 2014. India further pressed for the adoption of CCIT following the July 2016 Dhaka attack.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

1. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency in the United Nations system which promotes inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in Member States.
2. UNIDO concentrates its efforts on the development of agro-industries, increasing the participation of women and youth in productive activities.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None
Solution: c)
The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**, is a specialized agency in the United Nations system, headquartered in **Vienna**, Austria. The mission of UNIDO, as described in the Lima Declaration adopted at the fifteenth session of the UNIDO General Conference in 2013, is to promote and accelerate **inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID)** in Member States. It is also a member of the United Nations Development Group.

UNIDO concentrates its efforts on the development of agro-industries, increasing the participation of women and youth in productive activities, and human security in post-crisis situations. The Organization's services for the development of agro-industries focus on adding value to agricultural production by strengthening linkages between agriculture, industry and markets.

Source: [https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/industry-40-can-make-the-world-more-sustainable/article29229325.ece](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/industry-40-can-make-the-world-more-sustainable/article29229325.ece)

**Q** Consider the following statements with respect to bilateral trade between India and Pakistan.

1. Cement is the major import among the items imported from Pakistan.
2. Recently India revoked Pakistan’s most-favoured nation (MFN) status.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

**Solution: c)**

India, the largest importer of Pakistani cement.

- Cement is the only good with a significant chunk coming from Pakistan. No other commodity imported from Pakistan is more than 10% of India’s total imports.
- India revoked Pakistan’s most-favoured nation (MFN) status following the Pulwama terrorist attack.


**Q** Consider the following statements regarding International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

1. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy.
2. It is the first international organisation to focus exclusively on renewable energy, addressing needs in both industrialized and developing countries.
3. IRENA provides financial assistance to developing countries to accelerate renewable energy deployment.
4. IRENA is an official International Solar Alliance observer.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2, 3
b) 1, 2

c) 1, 2, 4
d) 1, 2, 3, 4

www.insightsactivelearn.com www.insightsonindia.com
Solution: b)

IRENA is an intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy.

- It is the first international organisation to focus exclusively on renewable energy, addressing needs in both industrialized and developing countries.
- It was founded in 2009 & its statute entered into force on 8 July 2010 and is headquartered in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi.
- IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

Source: https://www.irena.org/aboutirena

(Q) Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created by the heads of

1. India
2. Georgia
3. Egypt
4. Morocco
5. Indonesia

Select the correct answer code:

a) 1, 2, 3, 4
b) 1, 3, 4, 5
c) 1, 3, 5
d) 1, 2, 3, 5

Solution: c)

Ministerial meeting of Coordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held recently in Caracas, capital of Venezuela.

About NAM:

1. Founded in 1961 in Belgrade.
2. It was created by the heads of Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia.
3. The Non-Aligned Movement was formed during the Cold War as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.
4. The movement represented the interests and priorities of developing countries. The Movement has its origin in the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955.
VI. POLITY

(Q) Consider the following statements about Electronically transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS).

1. Electronically transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) is developed by Election Commission of India with the help of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
2. It is a fully secured system, having two layers of security.
3. This system enables the entitled service voters to cast their vote using an electronically received postal ballot from anywhere outside their constituency.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

ETPBS is developed by Election Commission of India with the help of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), for the use of the Service Voters.

- It is a fully secured system, having two layers of security. Secrecy is maintained through the use of OTP and PIN and no duplication of casted Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot (ETPB) is possible due to the unique QR Code.
- Persons working in paramilitary forces and the military and government officials deployed in diplomatic missions outside India are classified as Service Voters.
- This system enables the entitled service voters to cast their vote using an electronically received postal ballot from anywhere outside their constituency.

Source: https://eci.gov.in/divisions-of-eci/it-applications-etpbs-servicevoter/

(Q) The class of Electors who are eligible for Electronically transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) are

1. Service Voters
2. The wife of a Service Voter who does not reside with him.
3. Overseas Voters.

Select the correct answer code:

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

Solution: b)

Class of Electors who are eligible for ETPBS:

1. Service Voters, other than those who opt for proxy voting (Classified Service Voters).
2. The wife of a Service Voter who ordinarily resides with him.
3. Overseas Voters.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Tenth schedule of the Indian constitution.

1. The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in the 42\textsuperscript{nd} Amendment Act, which lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection.
2. The Supreme Court held that the decision of speaker is final on the question of disqualification on ground of defection.
3. The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least one-third of its legislators are in favour of the merger.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Solution: d)
The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in 1985 by the 52\textsuperscript{nd} Amendment Act. It lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the Presiding Officer of a legislature based on a petition by any other member of the House.

- The decision on question as to disqualification on ground of defection is referred to the Chairman or the Speaker of such House.
- The law initially stated that the decision of the Presiding Officer is not subject to judicial review. This condition was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1992, thereby allowing appeals against the Presiding Officer's decision in the High Court and Supreme Court. However, it held that there may not be any judicial intervention until the Presiding Officer gives his order.
- Legislators may change their party without the risk of disqualification in certain circumstances. The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger. In such a scenario, neither the members who decide to merge, nor the ones who stay with the original party will face disqualification.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding appointment of Supreme Court judges.

1. The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President of India.
2. Whenever there is any doubt about the senior most Judge to hold the office of the Chief Justice of India, the matter is decided by the Parliament.
3. For appointing Judges of the Supreme Court, the recommendation of collegium to the President is binding during first instance.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 1, 2
c) 1, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Solution: a)

The **Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court** are appointed by the **President** under clause (2) of **Article 124** of the Constitution.

- The names are recommended by the **Collegium**.
- The collegium sends its final recommendation to the President of India for approval. The President can either accept it or reject it. In the case it is rejected, the recommendation comes back to the collegium. If the collegium reiterates its recommendation to the President, then he/she is bound by that recommendation.
- Appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the senior most Judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office.
- Whenever there is any doubt about the fitness of the senior most Judge to hold the office of the Chief Justice of India, consultation with other Judges as envisaged in Article 124 (2) of the Constitution would be made for appointment of the next Chief Justice of India.

Source: [https://doj.gov.in/sites/default/files/memosc_1.pdf](https://doj.gov.in/sites/default/files/memosc_1.pdf)

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Governors of States.

1. Like the President of India, the Governor is vested with certain executive, legislative, judicial and emergency powers.
2. The Governor does not have any diplomatic or military powers.
3. There is provision of impeachment, as it happens for the president.

Which of the above statements is/are **incorrect**?

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

Solution: a)

Governor is the nominal head of a state, unlike the Chief Minister who is the real head of a state in India.

- According to an amendment in the Constitution of India (7th Constitutional Amendment Act), brought about in 1956, the same person can be the Governor of two or more states.
- There is no provision of impeachment, as it happens for the president.
- Like the President of India, the Governor of any state in India is vested with certain executive, legislative and judicial powers.
- He or she also possesses certain discretionary or emergency powers.
- But one major difference in the powers enjoyed by the President and those enjoyed by the Governor is, the Governor does not have any diplomatic or military powers.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Demands for Grants.

1. The demands for grants are presented to the Lok Sabha along with the Annual Financial Statement.
2. Regarding Union Territories without Legislature, a separate demand is presented for each of such Union Territories.
3. The voting of demands for grants has to be done by Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha separately.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

**Demand for Grants:**

Article 113 of the Constitution of India mandates that estimates of expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India are included in the Annual Financial Statement, which are required to be voted by the Lok Sabha, and submitted in the form of demand for grants.

1. The demands for grants are presented to the Lok Sabha along with the Annual Financial Statement. More than one Demand may be presented for a Ministry or Department depending on the nature of expenditure.
2. Regarding Union Territories without Legislature, a separate demand is presented for each of such Union Territories.
3. The voting of demands for grants is the exclusive privilege of the Lok Sabha, that is, the Rajya Sabha has no power of voting the demands. The voting is confined to the votable part of the budget—the expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India is not submitted to the vote (it can only be discussed).

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Finance Commission of India.

1. The Finance Commission is constituted by the Parliament, mainly to give its recommendations on distribution of tax revenues between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves.
2. It redresses the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the centre and the States respectively.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

Solution: b)

The Finance Commission is constituted by the President under article 280 of the Constitution, mainly to give its recommendations on distribution of tax revenues between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves.

Two distinctive features of the Commission's work involve redressing the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the centre and the States respectively and equalization of all public services across the States.
(Q) Kihoto Hollohan case, recently seen in news is related to
a) Formation of States and Union Territories
b) Delimitation of Assembly seats
c) Constitutional challenge to the Tenth Schedule
d) Judicial scrutiny on the ground of violation of Fundamental Rights

Solution: c)

What was the Kihoto Hollohan case?

- The law covering the disqualification of legislators and the powers of the Speaker in deciding such matters became part of the statute book in 1985 when the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution was adopted.
- A constitutional challenge to the Tenth Schedule was settled by the apex court in Kihoto Hollohan.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding whip in parliamentary parlance.

1. A whip is an official of a political party whose task is to ensure party discipline in a legislature.
2. In India all parties can issue a whip to their members.
3. Whip cannot be used in all cases.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

A whip is an official of a political party whose task is to ensure party discipline in a legislature. This usually means ensuring that members of the party vote according to the party platform, rather than according to their own individual ideology or the will of their constituents.

- In India all parties can issue a whip to their members. Parties appoint a senior member from among their House contingents to issue whips — this member is called a Chief Whip, and he/she is assisted by additional Whips.
- However, there are some cases such as Indian Presidential elections where whips cannot direct a Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) on whom to vote.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Right to Information (RTI).

1. The Central government established an online RTI portal whereby any Indian citizen, including Non-Residential Indians (NRIs), can apply for information under the RTI Act with the desired Ministry or Department under the Central government.
2. Filing RTI application online is free of cost.
3. More than half of Indian states have established Right to Information (RTI) web portals to file RTI applications online.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre and 25 States to respond to a writ petition for a direction to establish Right to Information (RTI) web portals across all States to enable citizens, especially those living abroad, to file RTI applications online.

The Central government established an online RTI portal whereby any Indian citizen, including Non-Residential Indians (NRIs), can apply for information under the RTI Act with the desired Ministry or Department under the Central government. An applicant can also pay the requisite fee through online payment in this portal and submit the RTI application.

Only Maharashtra and Delhi have set up RTI portals.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Parliamentary standing committees.

1. Members of the committee are bound by party whips.
2. Once the Bill is disposed of, the select committee constituted to deliberate on the particular bill ceases to exist.
3. They also help in obtaining public feedback and building political consensus on contentious issues.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

- Committees are platforms for threadbare discussion on a proposed law.
- Committee meetings are ‘closed door’ and members are not bound by party whips, which allows them the latitude for a more meaningful exchange of views as against discussions in full and open Houses where grandstanding and party positions invariably take precedence.
- Most committees are ‘standing’ as their existence is uninterrupted and usually reconstituted on an annual basis; some are ‘select’ committees formed for a specific purpose, for instance, to deliberate on a particular bill. Once the Bill is disposed of, that select committee ceases to exist. Some standing committees are departmentally related.

Advantages of having such committees:

1. The deliberations and scrutiny by committees ensure that Parliament is able to fulfil some of its constitutional obligations in a politically charged environment.
2. They also help in obtaining public feedback and building political consensus on contentious issues.
3. They help develop expertise in subjects, and enable consultation with independent experts and stakeholders.
4. The committees perform their functions without the cloud of political positioning and populist opinion.
5. These committees allow the views of diverse stakeholders.
6. They function through the year.
7. They also offer an opportunity for detailed scrutiny of bills being piloted by the government.
8. They increase the efficiency and expertise of Parliament.
VII. HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

(Q) Folk art form *Thudumbattam*, is prevalent in which of the following states
   a) Karnataka
   b) Kerala
   c) Andhra Pradesh
   d) Tamil Nadu

Solution: 
1. *Thudumbu* is a **percussion instrument** from the **Kongu region** (that includes Coimbatore, Erode, Tiruppur, Karur, Namakkal, and Salem districts).
2. *Thudumbattam*, the **folk art form**, is prevalent in villages around Karamadai, a small town 26 kilometres from Coimbatore.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/music/beating-the-blues/article28795413.ece

(Q) Consider the following statements.
   1. The temple is known as the “Khajuraho of Vidarbha”.
   2. The temple belongs to nagara style of temple architecture.
   3. The temple belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakta faith.

The above statements are associated with
   a) Lingaraj Temple
   b) Mahadeva Temple
   c) Trikuteshwara Temple
   d) Markandeshwar temple

Solution: 
Restoration work of **Markandeshwar temple** in **Maharashtra** by Archaeological Survey of India is in full swing.

- Known as the “Khajuraho of Vidarbha”, the **temple of Markandadeo** is situated on the bank of River Wainganga in district Gadchiroli of Maharashtra.
- The temples belong to the Nagara group of temples of North India.
- On stylistic grounds, their date ranges in between 9-12th centuries CE.
- The temples belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakta faith. Most of the temples have a simple plan, with **ardhamandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbhagriha** forming the component of the entire set up.

(Q) Consider the following statements about ‘**Panchamirtham**’ of Palani temple.
   1. The Palani panchamirtham, given as ‘prasadam’ at the Murugan temple in Tamil Nadu, has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
   2. This is the first time a temple ‘prasadam’ in India has been bestowed with the GI tag.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: a)

The famous Palani panchamirtham, given as ‘prasadam’ at the Murugan temple there, has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

This is the first time a temple ‘prasadam’ from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.

VIII. STATES

(Q) Limboo and Tamang communities, recently seen in news are present mainly in
a) Assam
b) Sikkim
c) Arunachal Pradesh
d) Nagaland

Solution: b)

- A proposal for reservation of seats for Limboo and Tamang communities in Sikkim Legislative Assembly is under consideration of the Government of India.
- Limboo and Tamang communities, notified as the Scheduled Tribes in Sikkim in January 2003.


(Q) Dixon Plan of 1950, is associated with
a) Radcliffe Line between India and Pakistan
b) Establishment of Election Commission in India
c) Dividing Jammu and Kashmir
d) Integration of Princely States in India

Solution: c)

- The idea of dividing Jammu and Kashmir into two or more parts has a chequered history, tracing its origin to the Dixon Plan of 1950.

IX. DEFENCE & SECURITY

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Mission Shakti.

1. Mission Shakti is a joint programme of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. India has tested and successfully demonstrated its capability to interdict and intercept a satellite in outer space based on complete indigenous technology.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

Solution: c)

On March 27, 2019 India conducted Mission Shakti, an anti-satellite missile test, from the Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam Island launch complex. This was a technological mission carried out by DRDO. The satellite used in the mission was one of India’s existing satellites operating in lower orbit. The test was fully successful and achieved all parameters as per plans. The test required an extremely high degree of precision and technical capability.

- The significance of the test is that India has tested and successfully demonstrated its capability to interdict and intercept a satellite in outer space based on complete indigenous technology.
- With this test, India joins an exclusive group of space faring nations consisting of USA, Russia and China.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Bhabha Kavach.

1. It is India’s first Lightest and indigenous Bullet Proof Jacket which got nod from Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
2. It is developed by DRDO.
3. It is powered with nano technology from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

India’s first Lightest and indigenous Bullet Proof Jacket ‘Bhabha Kavach’ gets nod of MHA.

- The bullet-proof jacket, developed jointly by the Ordnance Factories Board and the public sector metals and metal alloys manufacturer MIDHANI
- The jacket “is powered with nano technology from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre”.

www.insightsactivelearn.com www.insightsonindia.com
(Q) Project Sampark, sometimes seen in news is associated with
a) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
b) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
c) Border Roads Organisation (BRO)
d) NITI Ayog

Solution: c)
Defense Minister Rajnath Singh recently inaugurated two strategically important bridges in Kathua and Samba districts of Jammu and Kashmir that will help in smooth mobility of security forces in the border areas. The bridges, near the International Border, have been built under Project Sampark.

Project Sampark was raised by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in 1975 with its Headquarters at Jammu.

(Q) Which of the following organisations has “Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)” as the counter terrorism wing?
a) North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)
b) Quadrilateral Grouping
c) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
d) Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)

Solution: c)
SCO comprises of two regional bodies – SCO Secretariat and SCO-RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure). SCO-RATS is a permanent body of the SCO and is intended to facilitate coordination and interaction between competent authorities of the SCO Member States in the fight against terrorism, extremism and separatism. The main functions of SCO-RATS are coordination and information sharing.

- India became a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on 09 June 2017 with the support of all the SCO Member States. Since becoming a member India has been participating in the activities of SCO-RATS.

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding SAGAR MAITRI Mission.

1. SAGAR MAITRI is an initiative of Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS).
2. The prime objectives of the SAGAR MAITRI Mission are data collection from the entire North Indian Ocean, and establishing long-term collaboration with Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries in the field of ocean research and development.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None
Solution: b)

DRDO Research Ship INS Sagardhwani Embarks on Sagar Maitri Mission-2.

- SAGAR MAITRI is a unique initiative of DRDO which aligns with the broad objective of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy declaration "Safety And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)" to promote closer co-operation in socio-economic aspects as well as greater scientific interaction especially in ocean research among Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries.

- The prime objectives of the SAGAR MAITRI Mission are data collection from the entire North Indian Ocean, focussing on the Andaman Sea and adjoining seas and establishing long-term collaboration with eight IOR countries in the field of ocean research and development.

- The programme also aims at establishing long term scientific collaboration with these countries in the field of 'Ocean Research & Development' and data collection with a focus in the Andaman Sea.

Source: https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=191928
X. REPORTS & INDICES

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Long Period Average (LPA).

1. LPA is the average rainfall received by the country as a whole during the entire year, for a 50-year period.
2. The current LPA is 89 cm, based on the average rainfall over years 1951 and 2000.
3. India Meteorological Department (IMD) brands the monsoon as ‘normal’ or ‘deficient’ based on how it fares against its benchmark Long Period Average (LPA).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Solution: c)**

IMD brands the monsoon as ‘normal’ or ‘deficient’ based on how it fares against its benchmark **Long Period Average (LPA)**.

1. LPA is the average rainfall received by the country as a whole during the south-west monsoon, for a 50-year period. The current LPA is 89 cm, based on the average rainfall over years 1951 and 2000. This acts as a benchmark against which the rainfall in any monsoon season is measured.
2. The country is said to have received deficient rainfall if the actual rainfall falls below 90 per cent of LPA. Similarly, the country is said to have received excess rainfall if the rainfall is greater than 110 per cent of LPA. It is deemed ‘normal’ when the actual rainfall received falls between 96 and 104 per cent of LPA.
3. A 50-year average is expected to smooth out the day-to-day, month-to-month variations, while also accounting for freak weather events like the El Nino and La Nina.
4. Like the countrywide figure, IMD maintains an independent LPA for every homogeneous region of the country, which ranges from 71.6 cm to 143.83 cm. The region-wise LPA figures are: 143.83 cm for East and Northeast India, 97.55 cm for Central India, 71.61 cm for South Peninsular India, and 61.50 for Northwest India, which put together bring the all-India figure to 88.75 cm.

Source: [https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/slate/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-long-period-average/article23649386.ece](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/slate/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-long-period-average/article23649386.ece)

(Q) Arrange the following states in the descending order in terms of tree plus forest cover as a percentage of geographical area.

1. Mizoram
2. Manipur
3. Gujarat
4. Uttar Pradesh

Select the correct answer code:

a) 1-2-3-4
b) 2-1-3-4
c) 1-2-4-3
d) 2-1-4-3
Solution: a)

(Q) Consider the following statements.

1. India’s population growth rate peaked between 1961 and 1971 and has been falling since.
2. In the last two decades, while Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in rural areas remains higher than in urban areas, it has been declining at a faster rate than the latter, according to National Family Health Surveys.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both
d) None

Solution: c)
STATE OF FERTILITY
Among bigger States, J&K and Delhi registered the biggest drop in TFR (in % terms) from 2007 to 2017, while Kerala & T.N. showed no change. Size of the circle indicates the State’s population as a % of the total

*Avg. no. of children borne by a woman in her lifetime; As given by Sample Registration Survey
**The TFR at which a population exactly replaces its numbers from one generation to the next (without migration)
SOURCE SRS, CENSUS, NFHS

POPULATION CHANGE
Increase in population was highest in Bihar between 2001 and 2011 and lowest in Kerala. The table lists the top and bottom three States (in % terms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population increase 2001-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>25.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J&amp;K</td>
<td>23.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>22.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>13.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>13.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>4.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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XI. MAPS/ PLACES

(Q) Larak Island, recently seen in news is located in
   a) Gulf of Guinea
   b) Mediterranean Sea
   c) Caspian Sea
   d) Persian Gulf

Solution: d)

Larak Island is an island off the coast of Iran in the Persian Gulf, which has been one of Iran’s major oil export points since 1987.

(Q) Motihari-Amlekhgunj Oil pipeline, recently seen in news is between
   a) India – Afghanistan
   b) Pakistan – China
   c) India – Nepal
   d) India – Bhutan

Solution: c)

India and Nepal have successfully concluded the ‘testing transfer’ of the Rs 325 crore Motihari-Amlekhgunj oil pipeline. Along with reducing the huge transportation cost for the landlocked country, the commercial operation of the oil project will also ensure reduction in fuel prices. The 69-km long petroleum pipeline from Motihari in Bihar to Amelkhgunj in Nepal has been constructed by India.

Source: [https://indianexpress.com/article/india/motihari-amlekhgunj-oil-pipeline-to-start-next-month-india-nepal-5837828/](https://indianexpress.com/article/india/motihari-amlekhgunj-oil-pipeline-to-start-next-month-india-nepal-5837828/)

(Q) Dokdo or Takeshima Islands, sometimes seen in news is located between
   a) China and Japan
   b) China and South Korea
   c) Japan and South Korea
   d) North Korea and Japan

Solution: c)

The disputed Dokdo/Takeshima islands, are occupied by South Korea but also claimed by Japan. The islands are in the middle of the Sea of Japan, almost equidistant between Japan and Korea. The Dokdo Islands are the center of a diplomatic dispute between South Korea and Japan that goes back more than 300 years.

(Q) Ream Naval Base, recently seen in news is located in
a) South China Sea
b) Gulf of Mexico
c) Gulf of Aden
d) Gulf of Thailand

Solution: d)

Ream Naval Base is a facility operated by the Royal Cambodian Navy on the coast of the Gulf of Thailand in the province of Sihanoukville, Cambodia.
- China and Cambodia have reportedly signed a secret pact allowing China exclusive use of a naval base on the Gulf of Thailand, although officials from both countries have denied such a deal exists.
- This would be China’s second overseas naval foothold, after a base in Djibouti opened in 2017.


(Q) Tiger Hill, sometimes in news is located in
a) Karnataka
b) West Bengal
c) Madhya Pradesh
d) Jammu and Kashmir

Solution: d)
- Tiger Hill is a mountain in the Drass-Kargil area of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Kargil’s Batalik and Tiger Hill are now open to tourists.


(Q) Miyako strait is located between
a) Scarborough Shoal and Spratly Islands
b) Paracel Islands and Okinawa Island
c) Miyako Island and Paracel Islands,
d) Miyako Island and Okinawa Island
Solution: d)
- The **Miyako Strait** is a waterway which lies between **Miyako Island** and **Okinawa Island**. It has become a **bone of contention between Japan and China** recently.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Ouussudu lake, recently seen in news

1. Ouussudu lake spreads in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu territories.
2. Ouussudu is a mix of reed beds, wetlands and huge stretches of water.
3. The Ouussudu lake is identified as a wetland of national importance under the National Wetland Conservation Programme.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)
The **Ouussudu lake** is identified as a wetland of national importance under the **National Wetland Conservation Programme** of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), and has also been declared one of the significant wetlands in Asia by the Asian Wetland Bureau.

- An important bird area, located between the Pulicat and Point Calimere wetlands, the about 800-acre Ouussudu lake spreads equally in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu territories.
- Ouussudu is a mix of reed beds, wetlands and huge stretches of water: it is singular in that way.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Gogabeel Lake.

1. Gogabeel, an ox-bow lake in Uttar Pradesh, has been declared as the state’s first ‘Community Reserve’.
2. Gogabeel is formed from the flow of the rivers Mahananda and Ganga.
3. The Lake which is a permanent waterbody, is home to many of the migratory bird species.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)
**Gogabeel**, an ox-bow lake in Bihar’s Katihar district, has been declared as the **state’s first ‘Community Reserve’**.
• Gogabeel is formed from the flow of the **rivers Mahananda and Kankhar** in the north and the **Ganga** in the south and east. It is the fifteenth Protected Area (PA) in Bihar.

• “Gogabeel is a **permanent waterbody**, although it shrinks to some extent in the summer but never dries completely.

• More than **90 bird species** have been recorded from this site, of which, about 30 are **migratory**.


(Q) Consider the following statements.

1. Kajin Sara lake is the newly discovered lake in Nepal.
2. Tilicho Lake in China is the world's highest lake.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

**Solution: a)**

**Kajin Sara lake** in Manang district of **Nepal** which was discovered only recently is all set to become popular as the **world's highest lake**. Once it happens, the Kajin Sara Lake will replace **Tilicho lake**, which is also located in Manang, from the number one spot.

XII. Miscellaneous

(Q) Consider the following statements regarding *Pathamadai mat*.

1. It is a popular handmade mat used in Andhra Pradesh during weddings, with the names of the bride and the groom inscribed on it.
2. It has been granted Geographical Indication (GI) status.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

**Solution: b)**

**Pathamadai mat**

It is a standard item of the bridal trousseau at Tamil weddings, with the names of the bride and the groom inscribed on it. Indeed, the fine, handmade Pathamadai mat, which is *made of Korai grass*, is a *symbol of pride for Tamil Nadu*. It has even been *granted Geographical Indication (GI) status* by the trademarks and GI authorities.


(Q) Consider the following statements regarding Australian Hay Fever, recently seen in news.

1. Australian Hay Fever is an allergic disorder caused when a person comes in contact with pollens, dust mite, moulds and animal hair.
2. Australian Hay Fever is endemic to Australia and is commonly treated through medications.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both  
d) None

**Solution: a)**

**Australian Hay Fever**, also known as *Allergic rhinitis*, is one of the most common allergic disorder affecting one in every five people in Australia and New Zealand.

- It usually occurs after the nose or eyes of a person comes in contact with environmental allergens, such as pollens, dust mite, moulds and animal hair. Pollens from grasses are also amongst the most common causes.
- Australian Hay Fever is commonly treated through medications that include antihistamines, decongestants, nasal sprays and Bronchodilators.
- The disorder most commonly affects people between **20-40 years** of age.

Source: [https://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-australian-hay-fever-5858936/](https://indianexpress.com/article/what-is/what-is-australian-hay-fever-5858936/)
Consider the following statements.

1. Rotavirus is a leading cause of diarrhoea in children less than five years of age.
2. Rotavirus diarrhoea can be prevented by maintaining basic hygiene.
3. Rotavirus vaccine is provided free of cost in all states and union territories in India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

Rotavirus is a leading cause of diarrhoea in children less than five years of age.

- Rotavirus diarrhoea, unlike other forms of diarrhoea, can only be prevented through the vaccination. Other forms can be prevented by maintaining basic hygiene — frequent hand washing, safe water and food consumption, exclusive breastfeeding and vitamin A supplementation.
- "Rotavirus vaccine along with proper sanitation, hand washing practices, ORS and zinc supplementation will go a long way in reducing the mortality and morbidity due to diarrhoea in children."

India is committed to ending morbidity and mortality in children due to diarrhoea by 2022.

- The Centre plans to expand the coverage of Rotavirus vaccine which protects children from rotavirus infections, the leading cause of severe diarrhoea, to all states. The vaccine is currently available only in 28 states and union territories in India.


Consider the following statements about Oxytocin.

1. Oxytocin has been dubbed as the hug hormone due to its effects on behaviour.
2. Oxytocin is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus.
3. WHO has come up with Carbetocin as a safe and effective alternative to the drug oxytocin.
4. It does not have any effect on female reproductive functions.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

Oxytocin has also been dubbed the hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone due to its effects on behaviour, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.

- Oxytocin is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus. It is transported to, and secreted by, the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain.
- It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.
• The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to **regulate two female reproductive functions**: Childbirth and Breast-feeding.

**Carbetocin**: The World Health Organization (WHO) has come up with a safe and effective alternative to the controversial drug oxytocin.