## Table of Contents

1. ECONOMY .......................................................................................................................... 2
2. ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT ...................................................................................... 6
3. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES ............................................................... 16
4. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ......................................................................................... 29
5. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS .............................................. 38
6. POLITY .............................................................................................................................. 50
7. HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE ......................................................................................... 56
8. DEFENCE AND SECURITY .............................................................................................. 59
9. REPORTS AND INDICES ................................................................................................. 61
10. MISCELLANEOUS ............................................................................................................ 63
1. Economy

1) Consider the following statements regarding Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
   1. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are geographically delineated ‘enclaves’ in which regulations and practices related to business and trade differ from the rest of the country.
   2. The SEZ Act 2005 envisages key role for the State Governments in Export Promotion and creation of related infrastructure.
   3. Prior to their introduction, India relied on export processing zones (EPZs) which failed to make an impact on foreign investors.

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

Solution: d)

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are geographically delineated ‘enclaves’ in which regulations and practices related to business and trade differ from the rest of the country and therefore all the units therein enjoy special privileges.

The basic idea of SEZs emerges from the fact that, while it might be very difficult to dramatically improve infrastructure and business environment of the overall economy ‘overnight’, SEZs can be built in a much shorter time, and they can work as efficient enclaves to solve these problems.

SEZs were introduced to India in 2000, following the already successful SEZ model used in China. Prior to their introduction, India relied on export processing zones (EPZs) which failed to make an impact on foreign investors. By 2005, all EPZs had been converted to SEZs.

2) Which of the following are the incentives and facilities offered to the units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India.
   1. Duty free import/domestic procurement of goods for development, operation and maintenance of SEZ units.
   2. Exemption from Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).

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

Solution: c)

The incentives and facilities offered to the units in SEZs for attracting investments into the SEZs, including foreign investment include:-
Duty free import/domestic procurement of goods for development, operation and maintenance of SEZ units
100% Income Tax exemption on export income for SEZ units under Section 10AA of the Income Tax Act for first 5 years, 50% for next 5 years thereafter and 50% of the ploughed back export profit for next 5 years. (Sunset Clause for Units will become effective from 01.04.2020)
Exemption from Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) under section 115JB of the Income Tax Act. (withdrawn w.e.f. 1.4.2012)
Exemption from Central Sales Tax, Exemption from Service Tax and Exemption from State sales tax. These have now subsumed into GST and supplies to SEZs are zero rated under IGST Act, 2017.
Other levies as imposed by the respective State Governments.
Single window clearance for Central and State level approvals.

**Source**

3) Reciprocal trade agreements (RTAs) include:
   1. Preferential arrangements
   2. Free trade agreements
   3. Customs unions
   4. Common markets
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2, 3
   b) 1, 2, 4
   c) 2, 3, 4
   d) 1, 2, 3, 4

Solution: d)

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.

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.

4) Consider the following statements regarding Operation Twist.
   1. Operation Twist is a move in which a central bank decides to simultaneously buy long-dated securities while selling short-term securities.
   2. It is the usual practice carried out by RBI for the management of the yield curve.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: a)

Operation Twist is a move in which a central bank decides to simultaneously buy long-dated securities while selling short-term securities. The objective behind such an operation is management of the yield curve.

Other central banks, including the US Federal Reserve, have used similar measures. This is the first time RBI has undertaken such an unconventional policy measure with the aim of flattening the yield curve by lowering longer rates to boost lending and growth.

A conventional Operation Twist involves a central bank buying and selling securities of the same amounts.

**Source**

5) Which of the following are the factors in the determination of Minimum Support Prices (MSP).
   1. Cost of production (CoP)
   2. Price trend in the domestic and international markets
   3. Inter-crop price parity
Select the correct answer code:
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3

d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

Cost of production (CoP) is one of the important factors in the determination of MSP of mandated crops. Besides cost, the Commission for ‘Agricultural Costs and Prices’ (CACP), considers other important factors such as demand and supply, price trend in the domestic and international markets, inter-crop price parity, terms of trade between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and the likely impact of MSPs on consumers, in addition to ensuring rational utilization of natural resources like land and water. Thus, pricing policy is rooted not in ‘cost plus’ approach, though cost is an important determinant of MSP.

6) Consider the following statements regarding Open market operations.

1. Open market operations are conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with an objective to adjust the rupee liquidity conditions in the market on a durable basis.
2. These operations are conducted only on quarterly basis in a manner that balances inflation while helping banks continue to lend.
3. RBI carries out the Open market operations through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

What are open market operations?

- They are conducted by the RBI by way of sale or purchase of government securities (g-secs) to adjust money supply conditions.
- The central bank sells g-secs to suck out liquidity from the system and buys back g-secs to infuse liquidity into the system.
- These operations are often conducted on a day-to-day basis in a manner that balances inflation while helping banks continue to lend.
- The RBI uses OMO along with other monetary policy tools such as repo rate, cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio to adjust the quantum and price of money in the system.
- When the RBI wants to increase the money supply in the economy, it purchases the government securities from the market and it sells government securities to suck out liquidity from the system.
- RBI carries out the OMO through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public.

7) Consider the following statements with respect to Indian economy.

1. GDP covers all productive activity for producing goods and services, without duplication.
2. The System of National Accounting (SNA) is designed to measure production, consumption, and accumulation of income and wealth for assessing the performance of the economy.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c)

GDP covers all productive activity for producing goods and services, without duplication. In effect it adds apples and oranges, tractors and sickles, trade, transport, storage and communication, real estate, banking and government services through the mechanism of value.
The System of National Accounting (SNA) is designed to measure production, consumption, and accumulation of income and wealth for assessing the performance of the economy. GDP data influence markets, signalling investment sentiments, flow of funds and balance of payments.

8) Consider the following statements:
   1. The four-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI was constituted by the Central Government for the first time in 2016.
   2. The implementation of a flexible inflation targeting framework by the MPC has a statutory basis.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: b)

As per the provisions of the RBI Act, out of the six Members of Monetary Policy Committee, three Members will be from the RBI and the other three Members of MPC will be nominated by the Central Government. In exercise of the powers conferred by section 45ZB of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Central Government accordingly constituted, through a Gazette Notification dated 29th Sept 2016, the Monetary Policy Committee of RBI.
2. Ecology and Environment

1) Consider the following statements regarding Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG).
   1. The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) is an integral part of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
   2. The AsESG provides scientifically-grounded evidence of the abundance, distributions, and demographic status of Asian elephant populations.
   3. Gajah is the journal of the IUCN.
   Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3
   Solution: d)

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) is an integral part of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The AsESG shall provide the best available scientifically grounded evidence to the abundance, distribution, and demographic status of Asian elephant populations in all 13 range states.

Gajah is the bi-annual journal of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG).

Source

2) Serengeti National Park is located in
   a) Tanzania
   b) Kenya
   c) South Africa
   d) Somalia
   Solution: a)

Since 1974, the population of herbivorous in Gir forest has been on the rise. In 2013, the population of ungulates was estimated to be 1,26,893 or 76.49 animals per square kilometres. That translates to 8000 kg of biomass available to carnivorous, very close to the levels in Serengeti National Park in Tanzania.

3) Consider the following statements regarding Winter Solstice.
   1. The winter solstice occurs when one of the Earth’s poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun.
   2. At the pole, there is continuous darkness or twilight around the winter solstice.
   3. The seasonal significance of the winter solstice is in the reversal of the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days.
   Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3
   Solution: d)

The winter solstice occurs when one of the Earth’s poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun. It happens twice yearly, once in each hemisphere (Northern and Southern). For that hemisphere, the winter solstice is the day with the shortest period of daylight and longest night of the year, when the Sun is at its lowest daily
maximum elevation in the sky. At the pole, there is continuous darkness or twilight around the winter solstice. Its opposite is the summer solstice.

In the Northern Hemisphere, this is the December solstice (usually 21 or 22 December) and in the Southern Hemisphere, this is the June solstice (usually 20 or 21 June).

The seasonal significance of the winter solstice is in the reversal of the gradual lengthening of nights and shortening of days.

4) Consider the following statements regarding India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019.
   1. The report is published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI).
   2. Forest Survey of India is mandated to assess the forest and tree resources of the country including wall-to-wall forest cover mapping in a biennial cycle.
   3. ISFR 2019 is the 10th report in the series.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 3
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 2
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)

The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar released the biennial “India State of Forest Report (ISFR)”. The report is published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) which has been mandated to assess the forest and tree resources of the country including wall-to-wall forest cover mapping in a biennial cycle. Starting 1987, 16 assessment have been completed so far. ISFR 2019 is the 16th report in the series.

Source

5) Consider the following statements regarding India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019.
   1. India is among few countries in the world where forest cover is consistently increasing and the total forest and tree cover in the country is 24.56 percent of the geographical area of the country.
   2. The top state with increase in forest cover is Kerala followed by Karnataka.
   3. Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 1, 2
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 3

Solution: d)

As compared to the assessment of 2017, there is an increase of 5,188 sq. km in the total forest and tree cover of the country. “Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 3,976 sq km and that in tree cover is 1,212 sq. km; Range increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest and moderately dense forest and the top three states showing increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq. km) followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km).”

Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.

Source

6) Consider the following statements regarding India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019.

www.insightsonindia.com  7  www.insightsactivelearn.com
1. Mangrove cover saw an increase of over 500 sq Km compared to the previous assessment of 2017.
2. Gujarat showed the highest mangrove cover increase.
3. The bamboo bearing area of the country has increased compared to the last assessment of ISFR 2017.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The Mangrove ecosystems are unique & rich in biodiversity and they provide numerous ecological services. Mangrove cover has been separately reported in the ISFR 2019 and the total mangrove cover in the country is 4,975 sq km. An increase of 54 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2017. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Gujarat (37 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (16 sq km) and Odisha (8 sq km).

The extent of bamboo bearing area of the country has been estimated 16.00 million hectare. There is an increase of 0.32 million hectare in bamboo bearing area as compared to the last assessment of ISFR 2017.

Source

7) Consider the following statements regarding the “One Planet One City Challenge”

1. It’s a friendly competition, organized by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to mobilize cities to deliver on the Paris Agreement.
2. The logo of WWF is a Red Panda.
3. Pune was selected as a National Winner in 2017-2018 edition of WWF’s “One Planet City Challenge (OPCC)”.

Which of the above statements is /are correct?

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

Solution: a)

- The black-and white panda (a Giant Panda) is the logo of World Wide Fund for Nature. Panaji, Pune, and Rajkot were the three Indian cities which were selected as national finalists in 2017-2018 edition of WWF’s One Planet City Challenge (OPCC).
- However, Rajkot emerged as the National Winner in 2017-2018 edition of WWF’s One Planet City Challenge (OPCC).

8) Consider the following statements.

1. Bt cotton is a genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to bollworm.
2. In India, it is the responsibility of the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under Department of Science & Technology to assess the safety of a genetically modified plant, and decide whether it is fit for cultivation.
3. Sale, storage, transportation and usage of unapproved GM seeds is a punishable offence under the Rules of Environmental Protection Act.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Bt cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) or genetically modified pest resistant plant cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to bollworm.

In India, it is the responsibility of the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Environment Ministry to assess the safety of a genetically modified plant, and decide whether it is fit for cultivation.

Legally, sale, storage, transportation and usage of unapproved GM seeds is a punishable offence under the Rules of Environmental Protection Act. Also, sale of unapproved seeds can attract action under the Seed Act of 1966 and the Cotton Act of 1957.

9) Consider the following statements regarding smog tower, recently seen in news
   1. Smog towers are structures designed as large-scale air purifiers to reduce air pollution.
   2. Supreme Court has directed all state governments to set up smog tower in cities having high Air Quality Index (AQI) Values.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: a)

The Supreme Court has given three months to the Centre and Delhi government for the pilot project of setting up a 'smog tower' at Connaught Place and Anand Vihar here, while issuing a slew of directions to combat the menace of air and water pollution.

Smog towers are structures designed as large-scale air purifiers to reduce air pollution.

Source

10) India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019 provides information on
   1. Carbon stock in India’s forests
   2. Forest Types and Biodiversity
   3. Forest Fire monitoring
   4. Coral Cover
   5. Mangrove cover

Select the correct answer code:
   a) 1, 2, 3
   b) 1, 2, 4, 5
   c) 1, 2, 3, 5
   d) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Solution: c)

The report provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock inside and outside the forest areas, carbon stock in India’s forests, Forest Types and Biodiversity, Forest Fire monitoring and forest cover in different slopes & altitudes. Special thematic information on forest cover such as hill, tribal districts, and north eastern region has also been given separately in the report.

Source

11) Consider the following statements regarding Turtles.
1. A first-of-its-kind rehabilitation centre for freshwater turtles will be setup in Odisha, which will act as home to sick and severely injured turtles that are being rescued from smugglers.

2. Turtles play a significant role in the river by controlling fish population and controlling aquatic plants and weeds.

3. Turtles have come under serious threat primarily for food and pet trade.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

A first-of-its-kind rehabilitation centre for freshwater turtles will be inaugurated in Bihar’s Bhagalpur forest division in January 2020.

Forest department officials said the need to build such a centre was felt after several turtles were found severely wounded and sick when rescued from smugglers by rescue teams.

Eastern Bihar has been an ideal breeding ground for turtles.

“In Bhagalpur, the flow of water in the Ganga is ample. Also, there are many sandbanks in the middle of the river, which are ideal breeding ground for turtles,”

According to environmentalists, the turtles play a significant role in the river by scavenging dead organic materials and diseased fish, controlling fish population as predators and controlling aquatic plants and weeds.

They are also described as indicators of healthy aquatic ecosystems.

However, these species are now under severe threats due to habitat fragmentation and loss through dams and barrages, pollution, illegal poaching, accidental drowning through fishing nets and threats to their nesting habitats, a report jointly prepared by the National Mission for Clean Ganga and Wildlife Institute of India has said.

The turtles have come under serious threat primarily for two reasons — food and the flourishing pet trade.

“Turtles are being frequently targeted for meat due to the prevailing belief that it gives an energy boost and keeps various diseases away. Usually, soft-shell turtles are victims of this belief,”

According to a recent study conducted by Traffic India, around 11,000 turtles are being smuggled in India every year. “In the past 10 years, as many as 110,000 turtles have been traded,”

Source

12) Consider the following statements regarding Complex Volcano.

1. Complex Volcano consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks.

2. It does not rise from the ground as a distinct, singular dome but consists of multiple stratovolcanoes.

3. Recently in the Philippines, a volcano called Taal erupted which is classified as a complex volcano.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

In the Philippines, a volcano called Taal on the island of Luzon, 50 km from Manila, erupted on Sunday (January 12), spewing lava on the ground, and ash and smoke into the sky.

Taal is classified as a “complex” volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more
vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks. Examples include Vesuvius, besides Taal.

The Taal volcano does not rise from the ground as a distinct, singular dome but consists of multiple stratovolcanoes (volcanoes susceptible to explosive eruptions), conical hills and craters of all shapes and sizes.

**Source**

13) Consider the following statements regarding Royal Bengal tiger.
   1. It is found in India, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar.
   2. It is least in number among all tiger subspecies in the wild.
   3. The mangroves of the Sundarbans shared between Bangladesh and India are the only mangrove forests where tigers are found.

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

Solution: c)

The Bengal tiger is found primarily in India with smaller populations in Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar. It is the most numerous of all tiger subspecies with more than 2,500 left in the wild. The creation of India’s tiger reserves in the 1970s helped to stabilize numbers, but poaching to meet a growing demand from Asia in recent years has once again put the Bengal tiger at risk. The mangroves of the Sundarbans—shared between Bangladesh and India—are the only mangrove forests where tigers are found. The Sundarbans are increasingly threatened by sea level rise as a result of climate change.

**Source**

14) Consider the following statements regarding the recently notified Wetland Conservation Rules.
   1. Wetland Conservation Rules prohibit setting up or expansion of industries, and disposal of construction and demolition waste within the wetlands.
   2. Each state and Union Territory will have to set up an authority that will define strategies for conservation and wise use of wetlands within their jurisdiction.
   3. The wetlands are land areas covered by water, either temporarily\seasonally or permanently.

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

Solution: d)

The Ministry of Environment has notified the new Wetland Conservation Rules that prohibit setting up or expansion of industries, and disposal of construction and demolition waste within the wetlands. The ministry has also directed that each state and Union Territory will have to set up an authority that will define strategies for conservation and wise use of wetlands within their jurisdiction.

"The authority shall prepare a list of all wetlands of the State or UT within three months from the date of publication of these rules, develop a comprehensive list of activities to be regulated and permitted within the notified wetlands and their zone of influence.

It also directed the authority, to be headed by the state or UT’s environment minister, to undertake measures for enhancing awareness among stakeholders and local communities on values and functions of wetland.
The authority will also include one expert each in the fields of wetland ecology, hydrology, fisheries, landscape planning and socioeconomics to be nominated by the state government. The wetlands are land areas covered by water, either temporarily/seasonally or permanently. Marsh, fen and peatland come under this category. The wetlands play a key role in hydrological cycle and flood control, water supply and providing food, fibre and raw materials.

The Centre had in September 2019, identified 130 wetlands for priority restoration in the next five years and asked states to submit their respective integrated management plan. The highest number of such identified wetlands are in Uttar Pradesh (16) followed by Madhya Pradesh (13), Jammu & Kashmir (12), Gujarat (8), Karnataka (7) and West Bengal (6).

The country’s space agency Isro had in 2011 come out with a national wetlands atlas on the basis of satellite image, mapping over two lakh wetlands covering around 4.63% of the total geographic area of India. India’s prominent wetlands include Chilika lake areas (Odisha), Wular lake (J&K), Renuka (Himachal Pradesh), Sambhar lake (Rajasthan), Deepor Beel (Assam), East Kolkata wetlands (West Bengal), Nal Sarovar (Gujarat), Harika (Punjab), Rudra Sagar (Tripura) and Bhoj wetland (Madhya Pradesh) among others.

15) Consider the following statements regarding Forest Advisory Committee.
   1. Forest Advisory Committee can adjudicate the requests by the industry to destroy forest land for commercial ends.
   2. Recently Forest Advisory Committee approved a scheme that could allow forests to be traded as a commodity.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c)

The Forest Advisory Committee, an apex body tasked with adjudicating requests by the industry to raze forest land for commercial ends, has approved a scheme that could allow “forests” to be traded as a commodity. If implemented, it allows the Forest Department to outsource one of its responsibilities of reforesting to non-government agencies.

Source

16) Consider the following statements.
   1. India has successfully achieved the complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, which is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises.
   2. Before the phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, India was one of the major producers of HCFC-141b.
   3. The complete phase out of HCFC 141 b from the country is as agreed under Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

India has successfully achieved the complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, which is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises and one of the most potent ozone depleting chemical after...
Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). (HCFC)-141 b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.

HCFC-141b is not produced in the country and all the domestic requirements are met through imports. With this notification, prohibiting the import of HCFC-141 b, the country has completely phased out the important ozone depleting chemical. Simultaneously, the use of HCFC-141 b by foam manufacturing industry has also been closed as on 1st January, 2020 under the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2014.

Nearly, 50 % of the consumption of ozone depleting chemicals in the country was attributable to HCFC-141 b in the foam sector.

The complete phase out of HCFC 141 b from the country in foam sector is among the first at this scale in Article 5 parties (developing countries) under the Montreal Protocol.

Source

17) Consider the following statements regarding Natural farming.
   1. Natural farming embodies principles of agroecology, activating microbial life in soil via bio-inoculums thereby improving both soil and plant health.
   2. The practice advocates complete elimination of synthetic chemical inputs and encourages natural inputs, mulching practices and symbiotic intercropping.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

   Solution: c)

Natural farming is an alternative to chemical fertiliser-based and high input cost agriculture. It embodies principles of agroecology, activating microbial life in soil via bio-inoculums (prepared using cow dung, cow urine, jaggery, etc.), thereby improving both soil and plant health. The practice advocates complete elimination of synthetic chemical inputs and encourages natural inputs, mulching practices and symbiotic intercropping.

Andhra Pradesh has had a state-wide natural farming programme since 2016, now covering 580,000 farmers. Other states — Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Uttarakhand — have shown interest.

Source

18) Consider the following statements regarding Wetlands.
   1. The Ramsar Convention is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord for preserving the ecological character of wetlands.
   2. More than 40 sites in the India have been recognised under the Ramsar Convention.
   3. Recently Nandur Madhameshwar wetland was declared as Ramsar wetland, which is the first wetland in Maharashtra to be declared by Ramsar Convention.

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

   Solution: b)

India has added 10 more wetlands to sites protected by the Ramsar Convention.
The 10 new ones are Nandur Madhameshwar, a first for Maharashtra; Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve and Nangal in Punjab; and Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and Sarsai Nawar in Uttar Pradesh. The other Ramsar sites are in Rajasthan, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Tripura.

With this, a total of 37 sites in the country have been recognised under the international treaty. Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines.

The Convention, signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord for preserving the ecological character of wetlands. Also known as the Convention on Wetlands, it aims to develop a global network of wetlands for conservation of biological diversity and for sustaining human life.

Source

1. Establish India as a world class Bio-manufacturing Hub
2. Encourage use-inspired discovery research
3. Revitalizing the knowledge environment at par with the growing bio-economy

Select the correct answer code:

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

Solution: d)

The National Biotechnology Development Strategy -2015-2020 was recently unveiled. The Strategy aims to establish India as a world-class bio-manufacturing hub. It intends to launch a major mission, backed with significant investments, for the creation of new biotech products, create a strong infrastructure for R&D and commercialization, and empower India’s human resources scientifically and technologically. The envisaged mission is:

- Provide impetus to utilising the knowledge and tools to the advantage of Humanity
- Launch a major well directed mission backed with significant investment for generation of new Biotech Products
- Empower scientifically and technologically India’s incomparable Human Resource
- Create a strong Infrastructure for R&D and Commercialisation
- Establish India as a world class Bio-manufacturing Hub

The Key elements of the Strategy are:

- Building a Skilled Workforce and Leadership
- Revitalizing the knowledge environment at par with the growing bio-economy
- Enhance Research opportunities in basic, disciplinary and inter-disciplinary sciences
- Encourage use-inspired discovery research
- Focus on biotechnology tools for inclusive development
- Nurturing innovation, translational capacity and entrepreneurship
- Ensuring a transparent, efficient and globally best Regulatory system and communication strategy
- Biotechnology cooperation- Fostering global and national alliances
- Strengthen Institutional Capacity with redesigned governance models
- Create a matrix of measurement of processes as well as outcome

Source

20) Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary, recently seen in news is located in

a) Gujarat

www.insightsonindia.com

www.insightsactivelearn.com
b) Assam
c) Kerala
d) Madhya Pradesh

Solution: d)

The Supreme Court lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis. The plan was to revive the Indian cheetah population. In May 2012, the top court had stalled the plan to initiate the foreign cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh fearing they may come into conflict with a parallel and a much-delayed project to reintroduce lions into the same sanctuary.

Source
3. Government Schemes and Programmes

1) Consider the following statements regarding Trakea, recently seen in news
   1. It is a unique barcoding software to ensure that forensic reports are not tampered.
   2. Karnataka police force is the first to introduce it in the country.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: a)

Haryana Police has adopted a unique barcoding software — Trakea — to ensure that thousands of forensic reports that form the backbone of the criminal investigation system and subsequent trials in the courts of law, are not tampered with.

According to the police, Trakea ensures foolproof security of the samples collected from the scene of crime, and the forensic analysis reports, and is different from traditional methods that the state police force has been following for decades.

Haryana Police claims it is the country’s first police force to have introduced this unique barcoding for forensic reports.

Trakea is aimed at ensuring security and a tamperproof tracking system for forensic reports. It streamlines the functioning of Forensic Science Laboratories.

Essentially, it is a forensic evidence management system that helps in automation of the entire procedure, right from the stage when forensic experts collect vital samples from the scene of crime to conducting analysis of the samples, followed by tracking casewise forensic reports electronically through barcodes.

Even the selection of forensic teams is done randomly through this software.

Due to the unique barcoding, only the authorised investigating officers and forensic science experts shall be able to track the crime exhibits and scientific examination reports, reducing the chances of tampering/leakage of the report at any stage.

Source

2) Consider the following statements regarding Kaleshwaram project.
   1. The Kaleshwaram project is an off-shoot of the original Pranahitha-Chevella Lift Irrigation Scheme.
   2. It is on the Krishna River.
   3. The Centre under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 is mandated to support programmes for the development of backward areas in the successor States, including expansion of physical and social 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 Kaleshwaram project is an off-shoot of the original Pranahitha-Chevella Lift Irrigation Scheme. It is on the Godavari River.
The Centre under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 is mandated to support programmes for the development of backward areas in the successor States, including expansion of physical and social infrastructure.

3) Which of the following is not one of the three important components of Accessible India Campaign.
   a) Built Environment Accessibility
   b) Transportation System Accessibility
   c) Skills and Employment Accessibility
   d) Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility

Solution: c)

The deadline for the government’s Accessible India campaign that aims at making public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities has been extended due to slow progress. The revised deadlines have been extended to March 2020.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has launched Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nation-wide Campaign for achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). It has the following three important components:

Part A: Built Environment Accessibility
   These would include not only buildings, but also footpaths, curb cuts, and obstacles that block the flow of pedestrian traffic.

Part B: Transportation System Accessibility
   The term transportation covers a number of areas including air travel, buses, taxis, and trains.

Part C: Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility
   Access to information refers to all information. This can range from actions such as being able to read price tags, to physically enter a hall, to participate in an event, to read a pamphlet with healthcare information, to understand a train timetable, or to view webpages.

Source

4) Consider the following statements regarding National Economic Census.
   1. The national economic census is conducted once in every ten years and is crucial for framing of policies and planning for the government and other organisations.
   2. Recently seventh Economic Census (7th EC) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) was launched.
   3. For the first time, the entire census is being conducted on a digital platform by the use of an application.

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

Solution: c)

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has tied up with Common Service Centres Network (CSCN), a special purpose vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, to carry out the census. "For the first time, the entire census is being conducted on a digital platform by the use of an application which will ensure high accuracy and data security,"

The national economic census is conducted every five years and is crucial for framing of policies and planning for the government and other organisations.
The process of the economic census was first held in 1978. This is the seventh census which will provide disaggregated information on various operational and structural aspects of all establishments in the country. The census will provide valuable insights into geographical spread and clusters of economic activities, ownership pattern and persons engaged of the establishments.

Source

5) Consider the following statements regarding Future Skills initiative.
   1. It is a new age platform built to bridge the industry-academia skill gap and help students keep pace with the emerging technologies.
   2. It is launched by Ministry of Skill Development And Entrepreneurship.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: a)

Wipro has partnered with NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) to launch a skilling platform called ‘Future Skills’ for 10,000 students from over 20 engineering colleges in India. This is a part of Wipro’s Corporate Social Responsibility programme, TalentNext. TalentNext aims to enhance the quality of engineering education by preparing faculty and academic leaders to train students.

The programme has now been extended to students directly through Future Skills.

It is a new age platform built to bridge the industry-academia skill gap and help students keep pace with the emerging technologies — artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, cybersecurity and internet of things (IoT) – to make them future-ready.

Source

6) SEAD Initiative, some times seen in news is related to
   a) Prevent antibiotic resistance
   b) Energy efficiency
   c) Cyber Security
   d) Skill Development

Solution: b)

The Super-efficient Equipment and Appliance Deployment (SEAD) Initiative is a voluntary collaboration among governments working to promote the manufacture, purchase, and use of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and equipment worldwide. SEAD is an initiative under the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) and a task of the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC).

Source

7) Consider the following statements regarding EChO Network.
   1. EChO Network is a World Bank program to encourage cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.
   2. It aims to catalyse a new generation of Indians that can tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology.
   3. It includes interactive sessions with citizens, industry, academia, and the government.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
Indian Government has launched a network to encourage cross-disciplinary leadership—Called EChO Network.

Aim: To identify gaps in knowledge regarding environment and then train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on these topics, incorporating current public and private efforts.

Key features:
- It will provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.
- The Network would develop a national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology.
- Through interactive sessions with citizens, industry, academia, and the government, the Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems.

Source

8) Nagpur Resolution, Shillong Declaration and the Jammu Resolution are mainly related to
   a) Protecting human rights
   b) Commitment to the principles and ideals of the Constitution
   c) Reservation to minorities
   d) Good Governance

Solution: d)

The ‘Nagpur Resolution – A holistic approach for empowering citizens’ has been adopted at the end of the Regional Conference on ‘Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments’, held recently in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

Previously, the Shillong Declaration and the Jammu Resolution have been adopted for good governance.

Source

9) Consider the following statements.
   1. Department of Military Affairs (DMA) has been created in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and it will be headed by the Defence Minister.
   2. General Bipin Rawat was appointed as the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) which is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services of Indian Armed Forces.
   3. Chief of Defence Staff is not a ministerial position and it is the first time in the history of independent India that a uniformed individual will head a government department.
   Which of the above statements is/are correct?
      a) 1, 2
      b) 1, 3
      c) 2, 3
      d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)

A Department of Military Affairs (DMA) has been created in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and it will be headed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
The decision to appoint a CDS is a huge step towards achieving seamless coordination and greater effectiveness in higher defence management structures by creating an enabling architecture that permits fuller expression on the part of our professional armed forces.

The Kargil Review Committee’s report in 2000 and the Group of Ministers’ Report of 2001 had recommended that serious steps be taken towards integration of our armed forces.

This is the first time in the history of independent India that a uniformed individual will head a government department. The CDS is not a ministerial position. He will be empowered under the Allocation of Business Rules to run his department.

Source

10) Consider the following statements regarding Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF).
   1. The fund will mainly be used by the coastal states to invest in infrastructure facilities for deep-sea fishing, post-harvesting and export promotion of fish and marine products.
   2. The fund will provide subsidised finance to any farmer collectives, cooperatives, individuals and marine entrepreneurs.
   3. State Bank of India (SBI) will act as nodal entity for providing “concessional finance” under the fund.
Which of the above statement is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 1, 2
   c) 1, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: a)

The Centre has created a 7,522.48 crore package for infrastructure development of the fisheries sector, especially in coastal states, in line with the objective of doubling farmers’ incomes.

The fund will mainly be used by the coastal states to invest in infrastructure facilities for deep-sea fishing, post-harvesting, cage culture and export promotion of fish and marine products.

As part of the initiative, the first tripartite memorandum of agreement has been signed between the department of fisheries, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) and the Tamil Nadu government for marine infrastructure development of farmers under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF).

The fund will provide subsidised finance to eligible farmer collectives, cooperatives, individuals and marine entrepreneurs.

The National Cooperatives Development Corporation, Nabard and all scheduled banks will act as nodal entities for providing “concessional finance” under the fund.

Source

11) Consider the following statements regarding Hunar Haats.
   1. Hunar Haats aim to provide market exposure and employment opportunities to artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.
   2. Hunar Haats are organised by Ministry of Culture under Scheme of Financial Assistance for Promotion of Art and Culture.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: a)

Hunar Haats are organised by Ministry of Minority Affairs under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.

The USTTAD scheme aims at preserving & promoting the rich heritage of the traditional arts & crafts of the Minority communities.

Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the Minority communities.

Aimed at promoting and supporting artisans from Minority communities and providing them domestic as well as international markets for displaying and selling their products.

Source

12) Consider the following statements regarding National Green Corps ‘Ecoclub’.

   1. National Green Corps (NGC) popularly known as “a programme of Ecoclubs” is a nationwide initiative of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
   2. It exposes school children to in-depth field experiences, and provides opportunities to convert their ideas into creative action.
   3. There is District Implementation and Monitoring Committee to supervise, organise training for In-charge teachers, and monitor periodically the implementation of scheme at the District level.

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

Solution: d)

MoEFCC embarked upon a major initiative for creating environmental awareness among children by formulating National Green Corps (NGC) in 2001-02. NGC Programme aims at building cadres of young children working towards environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Operated through Eco-clubs set up in schools registered as members of NGC, this programme exposes school children to in-depth field experiences, and provides opportunities to convert their ideas into creative action. This programme seeks to redirect the consciousness of students towards environment friendly attitudes and actions and goes beyond schools, promoting school-society interactions to sensitize the society.

- The scheme is being operated through Eco-clubs of 50-60 students having interest in environment related issues, formed in member schools.
- Eco clubs are supervised by a Teacher In-charge, who is selected from among the teachers of the member school.
- There is District Implementation and Monitoring Committee to supervise, organise training for In-charge teachers, and monitor periodically the implementation of scheme at the District level.
- There is a State Steering Committee for guidance, direction and to oversee the implementation of the scheme.
- The State Nodal Agency coordinates the implementation of the scheme in the State and organize related activities like training to Master Trainers.
• The National Steering Committee will give overall direction to the programme and ensure linkages at all levels.

Source

13) Consider the following statements regarding Digital Village programme.

1. Digital Village was conceptualised by the Common Service Centre (CSC) SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT.
2. The citizens can avail various e-services of the central and the State governments, as well as of private players.
3. One smart phone is provided to each household as a means to promote mobile banking and other mobile services.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

Digital Village, which was conceptualised by the Common Service Centre (CSC) SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, is a village where citizens can avail various e-services of the central and the State governments, as well as of private players. These include banking, insurance, tele-medicine, pension and e-governance services. Such villages are also equipped with LED bulb assembly unit, sanitary napkin unit, and rural-Wifi infrastructure.

CSC SPV has initially selected six villages as a pilot under the Digital Village Campaign where the target is to provide all e-Governance Services to the rural citizens through the medium of CSC Center. CSC Center will act as a one stop channel to digitally connect the entire population of the Village.

Source

14) Project Sashakt’, is related to,

a) Personality development programme through social (or community) service
b) Comprehensive medical care facilities to Central Government employees and their family members.
c) One-time cash incentive to pregnant women for institutional/home births through skilled assistance.
d) A scheme that aims to strengthen the credit capacity, credit culture and credit portfolio of public sector banks.

Solution: d)

Project Sashakt aims to strengthen the credit capacity, credit culture and credit portfolio of public sector banks.

15) Consider the following statements regarding National Strategy for Financial Inclusion.

1. Ministry of Finance under the aegis of Financial Inclusion Advisory Committee (FIAC) initiated the process of formulation of National Strategy for Financial Inclusion.
3. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) view financial inclusion as a key enabler for achieving sustainable development worldwide.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2
b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3
Financial inclusion is increasingly being recognised as a key driver of economic growth and poverty alleviation world over. Access to formal finance can boost job creation, reduce vulnerability to economic shocks and increase investments in human capital. Seven of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of 2030 view financial inclusion as a key enabling factor for achieving sustainable development worldwide. To achieve the above objectives in a coordinated and time-bound manner, preparation of a National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) is essential.

Globally, the adoption of National Financial Inclusion Strategies (NFIS) have accelerated significantly in the past decade. Keeping in view the global trend, Reserve Bank of India under the aegis of Financial Inclusion Advisory Committee (FIAC) initiated the process of formulation of National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI) for the period 2019-2024.

Source

16) Consider the following statements.
   1. The Government of India through the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) aims to boost investments in the food processing industry.
   2. 100% FDI is permitted under the automatic route in Food processing industries.
   3. India is the second largest producer, consumer & exporter of spices.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 3
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 2
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)

The Government of India through the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) is also taking all necessary steps to boost investments in the food processing industry. The government has sanctioned 40 Mega Food Parks (MFPs) to be set up in the country under the Mega Food Park Scheme. Currently, 17 Mega Food Parks have become functional.

India is World's largest producer, consumer & exporter of spices; World's largest processor, producer and consumer of cashew nuts; World's second largest producer of food grains, fruits, and vegetables

Source

17) Which of the following are the critical components of Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) scheme.
   1. Reduction in the aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses.
   2. Timely reduction of tariffs.
   3. Elimination of the gap between average per unit of cost and revenue realised.
Select the correct answer code:
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: b)

Almost five years after the launch of the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY), there are indications that the power sector is once again in trouble. Not only have losses of state-owned distribution companies (discoms) risen, but their dues for power purchases have also surged.
The UDAY scheme, which involved state governments taking over the debt of discoms, had three critical components: A reduction in the aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses, timely revision of tariffs, and elimination of the gap between average per unit of cost and revenue realised.

While progress has been made on some of these fronts, it hasn’t been in line with the targets laid out under UDAY. AT&C losses have declined in some states, but not to the extent envisaged. Under UDAY, discoms were to bring down AT&C losses to 15 per cent by FY19. Similarly, while some states have raised power tariffs, the hikes have not been sufficient as political considerations prevailed over commercial decisions. As a result, the gap between the average cost per unit of power and the revenue realised has not declined in the manner envisaged, forcing discoms to reduce their power purchases and delay payments to power producers. This in turn has impaired the ability of power generating companies to service their debt, causing stress to the banking sector.

Source

18) Consider the following statements regarding National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).
   1. The Union Government unveiled a ₹102 lakh crore national infrastructure pipeline that will be implemented in 5 years as part of Government’s spending push in the infrastructure sector.
   2. The central government and state governments would have an equal share of 50% each in the NIP.
   3. During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, sectors such as Energy, Roads, Urban, and Railways amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 2, 3
   b) 1, 3
   c) 1 only
   d) 1, 2

Solution: b)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has unveiled a ₹102 lakh crore national infrastructure pipeline, in accordance with the Narendra Modi government’s vision to make India a $5 trillion economy by 2024-25.

To achieve this objective, a Task Force was constituted to draw up the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for each of the years from FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25.

The central government and state governments would have an equal share of 39% each in the NIP. The private sector, on the other hand, would have 22% share which the government expects to increase to 30% by 2025. Each Ministry/Department would be responsible for the monitoring of projects so as to ensure their timely and within-cost implementation.

During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, sectors such as Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%) amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.

Source

19) Consider the following statements regarding Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in India.
   1. Primary Health Centre (PHCs) also referred to as public health centres, are state-owned rural health care facilities.
   2. PHCs focus only on regular medical treatments and not on Infant immunization and Pregnancy related care which is dealt by District hospitals.
   3. Bhore Committee had recommended for the development of Primary Health Centres in India.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)
Primary Health Centre (PHCs), sometimes referred to as public health centres, are state-owned rural health care facilities in India. They are essentially single-physician clinics usually with facilities for minor surgeries, too. They are part of the government-funded public health system in India and are the most basic units of this system.

Apart from the regular medical treatments, PHCs in India have some special focuses.

- Infant immunization programs
- Anti-epidemic programs
- Birth control programs
- Pregnancy and related care
- Emergencies

Several States remain laggards when it comes to creating a primary health care system with well-equipped PHCs as the unit. This was first recommended in 1946 by the Bhore Committee.

20) Consider the following statements regarding India 2020 energy policy review.
   1. Ministry of Power in partnership with NITI Aayog, released in-depth review of India’s energy policies.
   2. This first in-depth review of India’s energy policies examines the country’s achievements in developing its energy sector as well as the challenges it faces in ensuring a sustainable energy future.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: b)

In partnership with NITI Aayog, International Energy Agency (IEA) released the first in-depth review of India’s energy policies.

The report highlights the achievements of India’s energy policies and provides recommendations to support the government’s goals of promoting well-functioning energy markets and boosting deployment of renewables.

India has made strong progress in providing clean, secure and affordable energy to its citizens, according to IEA policy review.

IEA regularly conducts in-depth reviews of energy policies for its member and association countries. This is the first review carried out for India, which has been an IEA-association country since March 2017.

Source

21) Consider the following statements regarding National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP).
   2. The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data.
   3. NDAP will follow a user-centric approach and will enable data access in a simple and intuitive portal.

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

Solution: d)

NITI Aayog released its vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP). The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data. It will host the latest datasets from various
government websites, present them coherently, and provide tools for analytics and visualization. NDAP will follow a user-centric approach and will enable data access in a simple and intuitive portal tailored to the needs of a variety of stakeholders.

NDAP will spearhead the standardization of formats in which data is presented across sectors and will cater to a wide audience of policymakers, researchers, innovators, data scientists, journalists and citizens.

Source

22) Consider the following statements about National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA).
   1. The Authority’s main function is to ensure that traders are not realizing unfair profit by charging high price from consumers in the name of GST.
   2. NAA is headed by the Ministry of Finance.
   3. The GST law also provides for the creation of a Consumer Welfare Fund wherein undue benefits made by businesses under the GST law have to be deposited, in case it cannot be passed on to the identified recipient.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

   Solution: c)

   The National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) has been constituted under Section 171 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.
   The Authority’s main function is to ensure that traders are not realizing unfair profit by charging high price from consumers in the name of GST.

   The Authority’s core function is to ensure that the benefits of the reduction is GST rates on goods and services made by GST Council and proportional change in the Input tax credit passed on to the ultimate consumers and recipient respectively by way of reduction in the prices by the suppliers.
   The National Anti-Profiteering Authority shall be headed by a senior officer of the level of a Secretary to the Government of India and shall have four technical members from the Centre and/or the States.

   In the event the National Anti-profiteering Authority confirms the necessity of applying anti-profiteering measures, it has the power to order the business concerned to reduce its prices or return the undue benefit availed along with interest to the recipient of the goods or services.
   If the undue benefit cannot be passed on to the recipient, it can be ordered to be deposited in the Consumer Welfare Fund.

   In extreme cases the National Anti-profiteering Authority can impose a penalty on the defaulting business entity and even order the cancellation of its registration under GST.

Source

23) Consider the following statements regarding Common Services Centers (CSCs).
   1. They are the access points for delivery of essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services to villages in India.
   2. Based on the assessment of CSC scheme, the Government launched the CSC 2.0 scheme to expand the outreach of CSCs to all Gram Panchayats across the country.
   3. It is implemented under the aegis of Ministry of Rural Development.

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

Solution: b)

Common Services Centers (CSCs) are a strategic cornerstone of the Digital India programme. They are the access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India. They are the access points for delivery of essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services, apart from host of B2C services to citizens in rural and remote areas of the country. The CSC project, which forms a strategic component of the National eGovernance Plan was approved by the Government in May 2006, as part of its commitment in the National Common Minimum Programme to introduce e-governance on a massive scale.
It is also one of the approved projects under the Integrated Mission Mode Projects of the National eGovernance Plan.
It is implemented under the aegis of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
Based on the assessment of CSC scheme, the Government launched the CSC 2.0 scheme in 2015 to expand the outreach of CSCs to all Gram Panchayats across the country.

Source

24) Consider the following statements regarding National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act of 2019.
1. The Act empowers the agency to investigate offences committed outside India, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.
2. The NIA can investigate cases related to human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture or sale of prohibited arms and cyber-terrorism.
3. The 2019 amendment allowed the central government to designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences under the Act.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

The NIA Act was enacted in the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks of 2008. A decade later, the Act was amended with the objective of speedy investigation and prosecution of certain offences, including those committed outside India.
The 2019 amendment in the law focussed on three main areas.

OFFENCES OUTSIDE INDIA: The original Act allowed NIA to investigate and prosecute offences within India. The amended Act empowered the agency to investigate offences committed outside India, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries. The amended section reads: “Where the Central Government is of the opinion that a Scheduled Offence has been committed at any place outside India to which this Act extends, it may direct the Agency to register the case and take up investigation as if such offence has been committed in India.” The NIA special court in New Delhi will have jurisdiction over these cases.

WIDENED SCOPE OF LAW: The NIA can investigate and prosecute offences under the Acts specified in the Schedule of the NIA Act. The Schedule originally had The Atomic Energy Act, 1962, The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, and The Anti-Hijacking Act, 1982, among other entries. The amendment has allowed the NIA to investigate, in addition, cases related to (i) human trafficking, (ii) counterfeit currency or banknotes, (iii) manufacture or sale of prohibited arms, (iv) cyber-terrorism, and (v) offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

SPECIAL COURTS: The 2008 Act constituted Special Courts for conducting the trial of offences under the Act. The 2019 amendment allowed the central government to designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of
scheduled offences under the Act. The central government is required to consult the Chief Justice of the High Court under which the Sessions Court is functioning, before designating it as a Special Court. When more than one Special Court has been designated for any area, the seniormost judge will distribute cases among the courts. State governments too, may also designate Sessions Courts as Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences.

Source
4. Science and Technology

1) Consider the following statements regarding Neutrino Observatory (INO) Project.

1. India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) is a particle physics research project under construction to primarily study atmospheric neutrinos in a deep cave under INO Peak near Theni in Tamil Nadu.
2. It is a mega-science project fully funded by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

The Centre has reiterated that the Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO) will be established in picturesque Theni in south Tamil Nadu.

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).

The project includes:
- Construction of an underground laboratory and associated surface facilities at Pottipuram in Bodi West hills of Theni District of Tamil Nadu.
- Construction of an Iron Calorimeter (ICAL) detector for studying neutrinos.
- Setting up of National Centre for High Energy Physics at Madurai, for the operation and maintenance of the underground laboratory, human resource development and detector R&D along with its applications.

2) Consider the following statements regarding Neutrinos.

1. Neutrinos are the most widely occurring particle in the universe.
2. Neutrinos hold the key to several important and fundamental questions on the origin of the Universe and the energy production in stars.
3. They help in detailed investigation of the structure of the Earth from core onwards.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

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.
3) Consider the following statements regarding Voice Over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi).
   1. The VoWiFi technology allows users to make outgoing calls to any mobile phone number by connecting to a public WiFi hotspot or any private home WiFi network.
   2. Using VoWiFi service users cannot make calls to a landline number.
   3. All 4G compatible smartphones supports VoWiFi.
Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 3 only
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 3

Solution: c)

Following its introduction in Delhi/NCR, Bharti Airtel commercially rolled-out its Voice Over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi) service – ‘Airtel Wi-Fi Calling’ in Mumbai, Kolkata, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

The VoWiFi technology allows users to make outgoing calls to any mobile phone number and landline by connecting to a public WiFi hotspot or any private home WiFi network. The service enables no cost calling across operators and minimal data usage using a handset which supports the technology.

VoWiFi will allow telcos to take on over-the-top players like WhatsApp and keep them from eating into their revenue, even as voice calling rates rise.

Source

4) Consider the following statements regarding Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).
   1. NCDs are of short duration and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors.
   2. National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) was launched in order to prevent and control the major NCDs.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: b)

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, tend to be of long duration and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors.

The main types of NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes.

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) was launched in 2010 in 100 districts across 21 States, in order to prevent and control the major NCDs. The main focus of the programme is on health promotion, early diagnosis, management and referral of cases, besides strengthening the infrastructure and capacity building.

5) Consider the following statements regarding Microdot Technology.
   1. Microdot technology involves spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots, which give a unique identification.
   2. Microdots are easily visible upto a distance of 10 feet from the vehicle.
   3. Microdots cannot be removed without damaging the vehicle itself.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
The government has notified rules for fixation of microdots identifiers on motor vehicles and their parts.

Road Transport and Highways Ministry said, microdots will enhance the security of vehicles. The invisible microdots will now come affixed on vehicles and their parts to prevent theft as well as to check fake spare parts.

Microdot technology involves spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots, which give a unique identification.

It can be read physically with a microscope and identified with an ultraviolet light source.

Source

6) Consider the following statements regarding SnowEx.
   1. For a better understanding of how much water is contained in each winter’s snowfall and how much will be available when it melts in the spring, CSIR has launched a programme called SnowEx.
   2. The mission will utilize a suite of airborne instruments, ground measurements and computer modelling to study Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) in snow rich areas.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: b)

For a better understanding of how much water is contained in each winter’s snowfall and how much will be available when it melts in the spring, NASA has launched a seasonal campaign — part of a five-year programme called SnowEx, initiated in 2016-17.

While the geographical focus of SnowEx is North America, NASA’s overall target is optimal strategies for mapping global snow water equivalent (SWE) with remote sensing and models leading to a Decadal Survey “Earth System Explorer” mission.

The mission will utilize a suite of airborne instruments such as Lidar, SAR, Passive Microwave, Multi-spectral/hyperspectral VIS/IR, and others, as well as ground measurements, to study Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) in forested areas.

Source

7) Consider the following statements regarding New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST).
   1. New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST) division will act as the nodal point in India’s foreign ministry for all matters connected to new and emerging technologies.
   2. It will also help assess foreign policy and international legal implications of emerging technology and technology-based resources.
   3. It will also be involved in negotiations to safeguard Indian interests at multilateral fora like the United Nations or the G20 where rules governing the use and access to such technologies could be decided.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

- With India grappling with issues like the security implications of the introduction of 5G and artificial intelligence, the Indian foreign ministry has announced the setting up of a new division on New and Emerging Strategic Technologies (NEST).
- The division will act as the nodal point in India’s foreign ministry for all matters connected to new and emerging technologies including exchange of views with foreign governments and coordination with domestic ministries and departments.
- It will also help assess foreign policy and international legal implications of emerging technology and technology-based resources.
- The desk will also be involved in negotiations to safeguard Indian interests at multilateral fora like the United Nations or the G20 where rules governing the use and access to such technologies could be decided.

Source

8) Extraocular vision, recently seen in news is
   a) Ability to see objects which are very far
   b) Age-related difficulty to focus up close objects
   c) Eyes with Refractive errors
   d) Ability to see without eyes

Solution: d)

For the first time, researchers have shown that a species of brittle stars, which are relatives of starfish, can see even though it does not have eyes.
The ability to see without eyes is known as extraocular vision.

In sea urchins and brittle stars, researchers suspect that extraocular vision is facilitated by the photoreceptor cells found on their bodies.

The researchers suggest that a brittle star sees with the help of light-sensing cells that cover its entire body. These light-sensing cells give the brittle star visual stimuli, allowing it to recognise coarse structures such as rocks, the research suggests.

Source

9) Consider the following statements regarding Coronavirus.
   1. Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.
   2. A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.
   3. In 2019 Maximum cases of novel coronavirus were reported in Japan.

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

Solution: a)
Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. Some transmit easily from person to person, while others do not.

According to WHO Worldwide, there have been a total of 222 officially reported, confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV — 218 in China, two in Thailand, one in Japan and one in the Republic of Korea — as on January 20.

Source

10) Consider the following statements regarding Dengue.

1. Hot weather and intermittent rainfall favour the sustenance of Aedes aegypti — the vector transmitting the dengue virus.
2. Dengue is mostly an asymptomatic infection, and only a very few develop severe disease.
3. WHO highly recommends usage of complementary medicines like Nilavembu kudineer (a Siddha medicine) and papaya leaf extract for treating Dengue.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Dengue is essentially a tropical disease that occurs in the countries around the Equator; hot weather and intermittent rainfall favour the sustenance of Aedes aegypti — the vector transmitting the dengue virus — and Aedes albopictus, a minor contributor. Aedes eggs can remain dormant for more than a year and will hatch once they come in contact with water. Urbanisation, poor town planning, and improper sanitation are the major risk factors for the multiplication of such mosquitoes. Aedes mosquitoes cannot fly beyond a hundred metres. Hence, keeping the ambience clean can help prevent their breeding. Further, these mosquitoes bite during the daytime, so keeping the windows shut in the day hours is also useful.

Dengue is mostly an asymptomatic infection, and only a very few develop severe disease. Those very young or very old and those who have a chronic ailment are at a greater risk of developing severe disease. But the worldwide case fatality rate is as low as 0.3%.

Despite the adequate and well-formed guidelines for the management of dengue cases by the WHO and the Indian government, the usage of complementary medicines like Nilavembu kudineer (a Siddha medicine) and papaya leaf extract are rampant among the people. Nilavembu sooranam, which reportedly contains about nine different substances, has been widely promoted for use to treat dengue fever despite the safety of and complex interactions among its different constituents not having been tested.

There are case reports where Andrographis paniculata, an active constituent of Nilavembu sooranam, showed anti-fertility effects in animal models, causing abortion. Even meta-analysis of various studies has shown that there is no credible evidence for the use of papaya extract in dengue fever.

Source

11) Consider the following statements regarding Interactive voice response (IVR) system.

1. Interactive voice response (IVR) is a technology that allows a computer to interact with humans by accepting a combination of voice telephone input and touch-tone keypad selection.
2. IVR systems can be used for mobile purchases, banking payments and services, retail orders, utilities, travel information and weather conditions.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c)

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is an automated telephony system that interacts with callers, gathers information and routes calls to the appropriate recipients. An IVR system (IVRS) accepts a combination of voice telephone input and touch-tone keypad selection and provides the appropriate responses in the form of voice, fax, callback, email and other contact methods.

IVR systems can be used for mobile purchases, banking payments and services, retail orders, utilities, travel information and weather conditions.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a Complaint Management System (CMS) — an online portal to facilitate bank customer grievance redressal processes. CMS will be accessible on desktops as well as on mobile devices. The RBI also plans to introduce a dedicated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System for tracking the status of complaints.

12) Consider the following statements regarding PUNCH mission.

1. European Space Agency’s PUNCH mission will image regions beyond the Sun’s outer corona.
2. The mission will track the solar wind and also the coronal mass ejections – which are huge masses of plasma that get thrown out of the Sun’s atmosphere.
3. India’s planned satellite Aditya-L1 will also study the Sun’s corona.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

NASA’s PUNCH mission will image the Sun. This is a landmark mission that will image regions beyond the Sun’s outer corona. PUNCH, which stands for “Polarimeter to Unify the Corona and Heliosphere,” is focused on understanding the transition of particles from the Sun’s outer corona to the solar wind that fills interplanetary space.

India is planning to send up its own satellite Aditya-L1, a mission to study the Sun’s corona.

13) Consider the following statements regarding Polio virus.

1. For a country to be declared polio-free, wild transmission of all variants of the polio virus has to be stopped.
2. For Polio eradication, cases of both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection must to be reduced to zero.
3. In the last one year or so no India’s neighbouring countries except Pakistan and Afghanistan has seen polio cases.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)
There are three variants of the polio virus, numbered 1 to 3. For a country to be declared polio-free, wild transmission of all three kinds has to be stopped. For eradication, cases of both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection to be reduced to zero.

In the last one year or so, polio has made a comeback in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Ghana, Myanmar, China, Cameroon, Indonesia and Iran, mostly as vaccine-derived polio infection. All these countries had wiped the virus out at various times during the last couple of decades; some, such as Iran and Malaysia, had done so even earlier.

Source

14) Consider the following statements regarding Polio.
   1. Polio is a potentially deadly disease that affects the nervous system.
   2. Polio infection is easily preventable by a vaccine.
   3. In 2010, India was declared polio-free after three years on zero cases.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 3
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 2
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: c)

According to CDC, “Polio is a crippling and potentially deadly disease that affects the nervous system. Because the virus lives in the faeces (poop) of an infected person, people infected with the disease can spread it to others when they do not wash their hands well after defecating (pooping). People can also be infected if they drink water or eat food contaminated with infected feces. Most people with polio do not feel sick. Some people have only minor symptoms, such as fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, stiffness in the neck and back, and pain in the arms and legs. In rare cases, polio infection causes permanent loss of muscle function (paralysis). Polio can be fatal if the muscles used for breathing are paralyzed or if there is an infection of the brain.”

The virus multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and cause paralysis. Once that happens, the patient is crippled for life because there is no treatment for the affliction. That is why polio is so dreaded. Polio infection, however, is easily preventable by a vaccine.

In January 2014, India was declared polio-free after three years on zero cases, an achievement that is widely believed to have been spurred by the successful pulse polio campaign in which all children were administered polio drops.

Some years ago, India introduced the injectable polio vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme. This was to reduce chances of vaccine-derived polio infection, which continues to happen in the country. If both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection are reduced to zero, it would mean there is no trace left of the virus anywhere in the world, except in controlled situations in laboratories for future contingencies.

Source

15) Consider the following statements regarding Mission Shakti.
   1. Mission Shakti is an anti-satellite missile test conducted by DRDO.
   2. It makes India join an elite club of space superpowers having the capability to target satellites in outer space.
   3. The Outer Space Treaty prohibits only weapons of mass destruction in outer space.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
c) 2, 3
d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

On March 27, DRDO conducted Mission Shakti, an anti-satellite missile test, from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island launch complex. One of India’s existing satellites operating in lower orbit used in the mission. The test was successful on all parameters. India has made it clear that its space capabilities aren’t directed against anyone and the government is committed to safeguarding the country’s national security interest.

India has successfully demonstrated its capability to intercept a satellite in outer space based on indigenous technology. India now joins a select group of nations — USA, Russia and China — with a similar technology.

DRDO’s ballistic missile defence interceptor was used. India used Kinetic Kill, a space technology in which India has developed capability.

Test was done in lower atmosphere to ensure no space debris.

The principal international treaty on space is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. India is a signatory and ratified it in 1982. The Outer Space Treaty prohibits only weapons of mass destruction in outer space. India expects to play a key role in the drafting of an international law on prevention of arms race in outer space.

Source

16) Consider the following statements regarding Superconductivity.

1. Superconductivity is a state in which a material shows very high electrical resistance.
2. Superconducting materials can save huge amounts of energy, and be used to make highly efficient electrical appliances.
3. Superconductivity is possible only at high temperatures.

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

Solution: c)

IISc researchers have reported superconductivity at room temperature. Their finding, now under review, will be a breakthrough if verified. Superconductivity is a phenomenon that, so far, has been possible only at extremely low temperatures, in the range of 100°C below zero. The search for a material that exhibits superconductivity at room temperature, or at least manageable low temperatures, has been going on for decades, without success.

Superconductivity is a state in which a material shows absolutely zero electrical resistance. While resistance is a property that restricts the flow of electricity, superconductivity allows unhindered flow. Because of zero resistance, superconducting materials can save huge amounts of energy, and be used to make highly efficient electrical appliances.

17) Consider the following statements regarding Yada Yada virus (YYV).

1. It is a new virus detected in mosquitoes.
2. Recently Yada Yada virus outbreak was reported in China.
3. Yada Yada does not pose a threat to human beings.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
A novel virus detected in Australian mosquitoes has been provisionally named the Yada Yada virus (YYV).

Yada Yada is an alphavirus, a group of viruses that the researchers described as “small, single-stranded positive-sense RNA viruses (that) include species important to human and animal health, such as Chikungunya virus and Eastern equine encephalitis virus... (and which) are transmitted primarily by mosquitoes and (are) pathogenic in their vertebrate hosts”. Unlike some other alphaviruses, Yada Yada does not pose a threat to human beings.

Source

18) Consider the following statements regarding coronavirus

1. India is still novel coronavirus free, as on January 28, 2020 according to WHO.
2. There is no human-to-human transmission of coronavirus.
3. Nepal, Vietnam and Germany have reported confirmed cases of coronavirus.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

India is still novel coronavirus free, even as 18 countries/regions have reported 67 cases, as on January 28, according to WHO. Nepal reported one case. The first case of human-to-human transmission was reported in Vietnam, and now Germany. The virus has long acquired the ability to spread among humans.

Source
5. International Relations and Organisations

1) Consider the following statements.
   1. Recently External Affairs Ministry hosted the Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue XI.
   2. For the first time, Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue XI was held consecutively and on similar Indo-Pacific themes.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

   Solution: c)

   External Affairs Ministry hosted the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue XI at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.

   The theme for Indian Ocean Dialogue is “Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography”.

   The theme for Delhi Dialogue is "Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific", and is being organized with the assistance of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries.

   Source

2) Consider the following statements regarding Arctic Council.
   1. The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.
   2. Geneva Declaration lists the Members of the Arctic Council.
   3. Decisions of the Arctic Council are taken by consensus among the Arctic Council States.

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

   Solution: c)

   The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

   The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

   Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states, along with inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, global, regional and non-governmental organizations that the Council determines can contribute to its work.

   Arctic Council assessments and recommendations are the result of analysis and efforts undertaken by the Working Groups. Decisions of the Arctic Council are taken by consensus among the eight Arctic Council States, with full consultation and involvement of the Permanent Participants. The Chairmanship of the Arctic Council rotates every two years among the Arctic States.
3) Consider the following statements regarding Chabahar Port.
   1. Chabahar Port is located in South-Eastern Iran, on the Gulf of Bab-el-Mandeb.
   2. The Chabahar Port commenced its operations in 2018.
   3. It serves as Iran’s only oceanic port.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 3 only

Solution: c)

Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman. It serves as Iran’s only oceanic port, and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.

Diplomats from India, Iran and Afghanistan took stock of the activities at the Chabahar Port in South-Eastern Iran one year after its inauguration.

The Chabahar Port commenced operations almost a year ago in December 2018. Since then, we have had as many as 4,500 containers moving from India through Chabahar. Almost half a million tonne of cargo has transitted since the port was inaugurated.

Source

4) Consider the following statements regarding European Green Deal.
   1. European Green Deal is a comprehensive strategy document which puts the European Union (EU) on a trajectory toward “no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050”.
   2. EU with 28 member countries are together the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world.
   3. EU is the first major emitter to agree to the 2050 climate neutrality target.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1 only
   d) 1, 3

Solution: d)

European Commission published its European Green Deal on December 11, 2019. The Deal aims to be a comprehensive strategy document which puts the European Union (EU) on a trajectory toward “no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.”

Climate neutrality: The EU has promised to bring a law, binding on all member countries, to ensure it becomes “climate neutral” by 2050.
What is it? Climate neutrality, sometimes also expressed as a state of net-zero emissions, is achieved when a country’s emissions are balanced by absorptions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Absorption can be increased by creating more carbon sinks like forests, while removal involves technologies like carbon capture and storage.

EU with 28 member countries are together the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world after China and the United States.

The EU is now the first major emitter to agree to the 2050 climate neutrality target.
5) Consider the following statements regarding World Heritage Convention.
   1. It aims to identify and protect the world’s natural and cultural heritage considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value.
   2. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.

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

   Solution: d)

The most significant feature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

The Convention defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The Convention sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.

Source

6) Consider the following statements regarding International Human Solidarity Day.
   1. The United Nations General Assembly identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between people from around the world in the 21st century.
   2. The International Human Solidarity Day is based on the Sustainable Development Agenda.
   3. International Human Solidarity Day aims to Celebrate unity in diversity.

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

   Solution: d)

On December 22, 2005, the United Nations General Assembly identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between people from around the world in the 21st century. The General Assembly, thus, proclaimed December 20 of each year as International Human Solidarity Day.

According to the United Nations, International Human Solidarity Day aims to:
- Celebrate unity in diversity.
- Remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements.
- Raise public awareness on the importance of solidarity.
- Encourage debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty eradication.
- Encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.

The International Human Solidarity Day is based on the Sustainable Development Agenda, which in itself is centered towards lifting people out of a number of debilitating aspects like poverty, hunger and disease.
7) Consider the following statements regarding Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA).

1. It is an intergovernmental agency that is organized under the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
2. It assists member countries in maintaining and further developing safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: b)

The Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) is an intergovernmental agency that facilitates co-operation among countries with advanced nuclear technology infrastructures to seek excellence in nuclear safety, technology, science, environment and law. The NEA, which is under the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, is headquartered in Paris, France.

The NEA’s Mission Statement, as reflected in its Strategic Plan, is:

"To assist its member countries in maintaining and further developing, through international co-operation, the scientific, technological and legal bases required for a safe, environmentally sound and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It strives to provide authoritative assessments and to forge common understandings on key issues as input to government decisions on nuclear energy policy and to broader OECD analyses in areas such as energy and the sustainable development of low-carbon economies."

8) Consider the following statements regarding Universal Postal Union (UPU).

1. Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).
2. Universal Postal Union (UPU) frames rules for international mail exchange, and fixes rates for international postal services.
3. Under UPU rules, when a country decides to suspend postal exchange with a country, it can suspend voluntarily without notifying the postal operator of the other country.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

In a unilateral decision, Pakistan has stopped exchange of postal mails with India since August 27.

What is UPU?

- Established by the Treaty of Bern of 1874.
- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).
- Headquarters are located in Bern, Switzerland.
- The UPU contains four bodies consisting of the Congress, the Council of Administration (CA), the Postal Operations Council (POC) and the International Bureau (IB).
- Universal Postal Union (UPU) frames rules for international mail exchange, and fixes rates for international postal services.
- Under UPU rules, when a country decides to suspend exchange with a country, it must notify the operator of the other country (in India’s case, India Post) and, if possible, the duration for which services are being stopped. The UPU’s International Bureau too has to be notified.
9) One Health Concept, sometimes seen in news means
   a) Strategies to prevent Non-communicable diseases
   b) Providing health insurance to all the individuals
   c) Inter-connectivity among human health, animal health, and the environment
   d) Prioritising human health over animal health

   Solution: c)

The World Organization of Animal Health, commonly known as OIE summarises the One Health concept as “human health and animal health are interdependent and bound to the health of the ecosystems in which they exist”.
The philosophy of One Health recognises inter-connectivity among human health, the health of animals, and the environment.

10) Kalapani border issue, recently seen in news is between which countries
   a) India and Bhutan
   b) India and Bangladesh
   c) Bhutan and Bangladesh
   d) India and Nepal

   Solution: d)

11) Consider the following statements regarding Hong Kong convention.
    2. The Convention is yet to come into force.
    3. India has not yet ratified the Hong Kong convention.

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

   Solution: b)

   • The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 (the Hong Kong Convention), was adopted at a diplomatic conference held in Hong Kong, China in 2009.
   • It was adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2009.
   • The Convention is aimed at ensuring that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives, do not pose any unnecessary risks to human health, safety and to the environment.
   • The Convention is yet to come into force because it has not been ratified by 15 nations, representing 40 per cent of the world merchant shipping by gross tonnage (capacity) and a maximum annual ship recycling volume of not less than 3 per cent of the combined tonnage of the countries.
   • India ratified the convention on 28 November 2019.

12) Consider the following statements regarding e-visa.
2. e-Visa can be processed at airports and seaports.
3. International Travellers having Pakistani Passport can also apply for eVisa.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

28 airports and five seaports across the country have been designated as being eligible to process e-visas facilities.

International Travellers having Pakistani Passport or Pakistani origin may apply for regular Visa at Indian Mission.

eVisa is admissible only under the following categories:
e-Tourist Visa
e-Business Visa
e-Conference Visa
e-Medical Visa
e-Medical Attendant Visa

13) Consider the following statements regarding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
1. It is a multilateral treaty that regulates the international trade in conventional weapons.
2. The treaty was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations (UN).
3. It regulates the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

The treaty does not regulate the domestic sale or use of weapons in any country. It also recognizes the legitimacy of the arms trade to enable states to provide for their own security.

14) Consider the following statements regarding Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
1. SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
2. The Institute cooperates closely with several intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations and the European Union.
3. Trends in International Arms Transfers 2018 Report was released by SIPRI.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)
SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. Based in Stockholm, SIPRI is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.

SIPRI was established on the basis of a decision by the Swedish Parliament and receives a substantial part of its funding in the form of an annual grant from the Swedish Government. Located in Stockholm, Sweden, SIPRI offers a unique platform for researchers from different countries to work in close cooperation.

SIPRI maintains contacts with other research centres and individual researchers throughout the world. The Institute also cooperates closely with several intergovernmental organizations, notably the United Nations and the European Union, and regularly receives parliamentary, scientific and government delegations as well as visiting researchers.

Source

15) Consider the following statements regarding JUS COGENS.

1. JUS COGENS means the principles which form the norms of international law that cannot be set aside.
2. These norms cannot be offset by a separate treaty between parties intending to do so.
3. The jus cogens rules have been sanctioned by the Vienna Conventions on the Law of Treaties of 1969.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

JUS COGENS or ius cogens, meaning “compelling law” in Latin, are rules in international law that are peremptory or authoritative, and from which states cannot deviate. These norms cannot be offset by a separate treaty between parties intending to do so, since they hold fundamental values. Today, most states and international organisations accept the principle of jus cogens, which dates back to Roman times. The jus cogens rules have been sanctioned by the Vienna Conventions on the Law of Treaties of 1969 and 1986. According to both Conventions, a treaty is void if it breaches jus cogens rules.

Source

16) Consider the following statements regarding Raisina Dialogue.

1. Raisina Dialogue is biennial geo-political event, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
2. The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, as well as major private sector executives, members of the media and academics.
3. Recently, Fifth edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: a)

Fifth edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi. The Raisina Dialogue was started in 2016.
The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community. Every year, global leaders in policy, business, media and civil society are hosted in New Delhi to discuss cooperation on a wide range of pertinent international policy matters. The Dialogue is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials, as well as major private sector executives, members of the media and academics.

The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in collaboration with the Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs.

Source

17) ‘Survival International’ sometimes in news is a movement that advocates the rights of
a) Refugees
b) Leprosy patients
c) Tribal people
d) Trafficked human beings

Solution: c)

About SI: “We are Survival, the global movement for tribal peoples’ rights. We’re the only organization that champions tribal peoples around the world. We help them defend their lives, protect their lands and determine their own futures.”

Source

18) Consider the following statements regarding Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.
1. It is the first international treaty focussed exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage during war and armed conflict.
2. It covers only immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture.
3. United States, Iran and India are signatories to the Convention.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: c)

Following the unparalleled destruction of cultural heritage in World War II, the nations of the world adopted at The Hague in 1954, The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the first international treaty focussed exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage during war and armed conflict.

The Convention defined cultural property as “movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites…”, etc. The signatories, referred to in the Convention as “the High Contracting Parties”, committed themselves to protecting, safeguarding, and having respect for cultural property.

There are currently 133 signatories to Convention, including countries that have acceded to and ratified the treaty. Both the United States and Iran (as well as India) signed the Convention on May 14, 1954, and it entered into force on August 7, 1956.
19) The International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over
   1. Genocide
   2. Crimes against humanity
   3. War crimes
   4. Crime of aggression

Select the correct answer code:
   a) 1, 2, 3
   b) 1, 3, 4
   c) 2, 3, 4
   d) 1, 2, 3, 4

   Solution: d)

The Rome Statute of 1998, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, describes as a “war crime” any intentional attack against a historical monument, or a building dedicated to religion, education, art, or science. The International Criminal Court started functioning in 2002 with jurisdiction over four main crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

20) Consider the following statements.
   1. Rome Statute describes war crimes as “intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives”.
   2. India has neither signed nor ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
   3. After World War II, there are no instances of destruction of cultural property of great importance.

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

   Solution: b)

Article 8 of the Rome Statute deals with war crimes. Article 8(2)(b)(ii) says war crimes include “intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives”, and 8(2)(b)(ix) mentions “intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives”.

122 countries are States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The United States is a signatory that has not ratified the Statute. India has neither signed nor ratified the Statute.

There are several examples where cultural property been targeted from World War II and later.

In 2001, the Taliban destroyed statues of the Buddha that had been carved into sandstone cliffs in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD.

Between 2014 and 2017, the Islamic State destroyed several places of religious and cultural significance. In 2015, the IS captured and destroyed the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Source

21) Consider the following statements regarding Antarctic Treaty.
   1. Antarctic Treaty regulate international relations with respect to Antarctica.
2. For the purposes of the treaty system, Antarctica is defined as all of the land and ice shelves south of 60°S latitude.
3. The treaty establishes freedom of scientific investigation, and bans military activity on the continent.
4. Antarctica is Earth’s only continent without a native human population.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

The Antarctic Treaty and related agreements, collectively known as the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), regulate international relations with respect to Antarctica, Earth’s only continent without a native human population. For the purposes of the treaty system, Antarctica is defined as all of the land and ice shelves south of 60°S latitude. The treaty entered into force in 1961.

The treaty sets aside Antarctica as a scientific preserve, establishes freedom of scientific investigation, and bans military activity on the continent. The treaty was the first arms control agreement established during the Cold War. Since September 2004, the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat headquarters has been located in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Source

22) Naf River, sometimes seen in news is bordered between
   a) China and Myanmar
   b) India and Myanmar
   c) Myanmar and Bangladesh
   d) China and Bhutan

Solution: c)

Naf River is an international river marking the border of southeastern Bangladesh and western Myanmar.

Thousands of Rohingya Muslims had sought refuge across the Naf River in the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh.

23) The term Pauk-Phaw is exclusively devoted to denote the relationship between
   a) China and Pakistan
   b) China and Myanmar
   c) Japan and South Korea
   d) Japan and Russia

Solution: b)

The term Pauk-Phaw is exclusively devoted to denote the special nature of the Sino-Myanmar relationship.

Source

24) Consider the following statements regarding BRICS grouping.
   1. Not all BRICS members are the members of G20.
   2. Since 2009, the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits.
   3. New Development Bank (NDB) is a multilateral development bank operated by the BRICS countries with each country contributing equally to its equity.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1, 2

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Solution: b)

BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The BRICS members are known for their significant influence on regional affairs; all are members of G20. Since 2009, the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits.

The main achievement of BRICS is the New Development Bank, with each country contributing equally to its equity.

Source

25) Auschwitz, recently seen in news is located in
   a) Germany
   b) France
   c) Poland
   d) Czech Republic

Solution: c)

In many ways, Auschwitz has become the center of Holocaust history and research and serves as a reminder of the horrors of the Holocaust. On January 27, 2020, survivors of the Holocaust and international heads of state mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The Auschwitz concentration camp was a complex of over 40 concentration and extermination camps operated by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World War II and the Holocaust.

Source

26) Consider the following statements.
   3. India’s life expectancy at birth is 72 years in 2019.
   4. The National Council of Senior Citizens is the highest advisory body for policymaking on the entire gamut of issues related to elderly.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2, 4
   b) 2, 3, 4
   c) 1, 2, 3
   d) 1, 2, 3, 4

Solution: a)

The share of older persons, those aged 60 years or above, in India's population is projected to increase to nearly 20 per cent in 2050 and the country said equipping people in earlier age cohorts will help them remain in good health and involved in the community throughout the ageing process.
The adoption of 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provides a roadmap for addressing challenges of an ageing society and realisation of human rights of older persons. The 2030 Agenda also recognises the importance of realizing their full potential and their contribution for inclusive development. The Madrid International Plan of Action adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 offered a bold new agenda for handling the issue of ageing in the 21st-century. It focused on three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

According to the State of World Population 2019 report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), released last week, India's population in 2019 stood at 1.36 billion, growing from 942.2 million in 1994 and six per cent of India's population was of the age 65 and above. India also recorded an improvement in life expectancy at birth, which was 47 years in 1969, growing to 60 years in 1994 and 69 years in 2019.

Source
6. Polity

1) Consider the following statements.
   1. Supreme Court has declared Right to decent environment including pollution free water as part of Article 21.
   2. Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
   3. Development of inter-state rivers, water supplies, irrigation and canals come under the Union List.
   Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 3
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 2
   d) 1, 2, 3
   Solution: c)

Right to decent environment including pollution free water and air and protection against hazardous industries is part of Article 21.

While water supplies, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankments and storage fall in the State List, issues like development of inter-state rivers come under the Union List.

2) Consider the following statements regarding Anglo-Indians.
   2. According to All India Anglo-Indians Association, West Bengal has the highest population of Anglo-Indians in India.
   3. Parliament passed the Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill, doing away with the provision for nomination of Anglo Indians to Lok Sabha.
   Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 2, 3
   c) 1, 3
   d) 3 only
   Solution: d)

Parliament passed the Constitution (126th Amendment) Bill, extending reservation for SC/STs but doing away with the provision for nomination of Anglo Indians to Lok Sabha and some state Assemblies.

The term Anglo-Indian first appeared in the Government of India Act, 1935. In the present context, Article 366(2) of the Constitution Of India states: “An Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only...”

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**STATE-WISE ENUMERATION**

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<td>Kerala</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: All India Anglo-Indian Association)
3) Consider the following statements about pro-tem speaker.
   1. Article 180 (1) of the Constitution gives the Governor the power to appoint a pro-tem Speaker.
   2. Powers of the Speaker pro-tem are not co-extensive with the powers of elected Speaker.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both
   d) None

Solution: a)

Article 180 (1) of the Constitution gives the Governor the power to appoint a pro-tem Speaker. The Article says that if the chair of the Speaker falls vacant and there is no Deputy Speaker to fill the position, the duties of the office shall be performed “by such member of the Assembly as the Governor may appoint for the purpose”.

The powers of a pro-tem Speaker are wide. The Bombay High Court in its 1994 judgement in the Surendra Vassant Sirsat case holds that a pro-tem is Speaker of the House “for all purposes with all powers, privileges and immunities” until the Speaker is elected. The Odisha High Court also agreed in the Godavaris Misra versus Nandakisore Das, Speaker, Orissa Legislative Assembly case when it said the “powers of the Speaker pro-tem are co-extensive with the powers of elected Speaker”.

4) Consider the following statements regarding Section 144 CrPC.
   1. It gives power to a District Magistrate on behalf of the State Government to issue an order to an individual or the general public in a particular place or area to “abstain from a certain act”.
   2. Mere apprehension of danger is sufficient to curb citizens’ rights by invoking Section 144 CrPC.
   3. Section 144 also empowers the authorities to block the internet access.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2
   b) 1, 3
   c) 2, 3
   d) 1 only

Solution: b)

What is Section 144?

- It gives power to a District Magistrate, a sub-divisional Magistrate or any other Executive Magistrate on behalf of the State Government to issue an order to an individual or the general public in a particular place or area to “abstain from a certain act” or “to take certain order with respect to certain property in his possession or under his management”.
- This order can be passed against a particular individual or general public. The order can be passed even ex-parte.
- As held by the Supreme Court, mere apprehension of danger is not a sufficient ground to curb citizens’ rights by invoking Section 144 CrPC.

Implications:

- Section 144 restricts carrying any sort of weapon in that area where it has been imposed and people can be detained for violating it. The maximum punishment for such an act is three years.
- According to the order under this section, there shall be no movement of public and all educational institutions shall also remain closed and there will be a complete bar on holding any kind of public meetings or rallies during the period of operation of this order.
- Section 144 also empowers the authorities to block the internet access.
Duration of Section 144 order:
- No order under Section 144 shall remain in force for more than two months but the state government can extend the validity for two months and maximum up to six months. It can be withdrawn at any point of time if situation becomes normal.

5) Consider the following statements regarding Leader of the Opposition in either House of the Parliament of India.

1. The position of Leader of the Opposition received statutory recognition through the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977
2. When no party in the Lok Sabha secures required seats to form an opposition party and to designate a Leader of opposition, the matter is then decided by the President of India.

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

Solution: a)

The Leader of the Opposition is the politician who leads the official opposition in either House of the Parliament of India. To claim the status of "official opposition" in either house a party has to secure 55 seats (10%) of the seats in the Lok Sabha and likewise 25 (10%) of the seats in the Rajya Sabha.

It received statutory recognition through the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977 which defines the term "Leader of the Opposition" as that member of the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha who, for the time being, is the Leader of that House of the Party in Opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised, as such, by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha or the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.

As per the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977 by which the post has got official and statutory status, the majority required is decided by the heads of the houses, that is speaker and chairman as the case may be.

Source

6) Consider the following statements regarding Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

1. Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 lays down the law for divorce, which applies only to Hindus.
2. Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 does not include “irretrievable breakdown of marriage” as a ground for divorce.
3. The Supreme Court and High Courts can use extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant divorce in a case of “irretrievable breakdown of marriage”.

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

Solution: a)

The Supreme Court used extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant divorce in a case of “irretrievable breakdown of marriage”. Currently, Hindu marriage law does not include “irretrievable breakdown of marriage” as a ground for divorce. However, the apex court in a number of cases has provided the said relief using its extraordinary powers that allow it to do “complete justice”.

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Grounds for divorce under Hindu law

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, lays down the law for divorce, which applies to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs.
- Under Section 13 of the Act, the grounds for divorce include: “voluntary sexual intercourse with any person other than his or her spouse”; “cruelty”; desertion “for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition”; “ceas(ing) to be a Hindu by conversion to another religion”; and being “incurably of unsound mind”.
- In addition, Section 13B provides for “divorce by mutual consent”.
- Section 27 of The Special Marriage Act, 1954 provides the grounds for grant of divorce in the case of marriages solemnised under that Act.
- However, neither of the two Acts provide for “irretrievable breakdown of marriage” as a ground for divorce.

Under Article 142(1), “The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe”.

Source

7) Consider the following statements.

1. According to Constitution of India, states are supposed to address the issues related to agriculture.
2. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan’ (PM-AASHA) aims to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce.
3. Maharashtra is running the Jalyukta Shivar mission to make it a drought-free state.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Solution: d)

Agriculture is a state subject, i.e. it forms a part of the state list of our Constitution, which essentially means that states are supposed to address all the issues related to agriculture.

“Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan’ (PM-AASHA) Scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce as announced in the Union Budget for 2018.

Madhya Pradesh implemented the Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana in 2017 as a response to low market prices. Karnataka established an electronic market for agricultural produce – Rashtriya e-Market Services (ReMS) – in 2014 to cut down on middlemen. The soil health card scheme was first launched in Gujarat in 2003. Gujarat was also home to the initial micro-irrigation schemes in early 2000s. Maharashtra is running the Jalyukta Shivar mission to make it a drought-free state.

Source

8) Consider the following statements regarding Speaker of Lok Sabha.

1. The Speaker of Lok Sabha leave the office just after dissolution of the assembly.
2. Business Advisory Committee and Rules Committee work directly under the Chairmanship of the Speaker.
3. In the case Speaker decides some bill as a money bill, this decision cannot be challenged in the parliament.

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

Solution: c)

The Speaker of Lok Sabha does not leave the office just after dissolution of the assembly. He continues to be in the office till the newly formed assembly takes its first meeting and elects the new Speaker.

Committees like the Business Advisory Committee, the General Purposes Committee and the Rules Committee work directly under her Chairmanship.

The Speaker decides whether a bill brought to the house is a money bill or not. In the case the Speaker decides some bill as a money bill, this decision cannot be challenged.

9) Consider the following statements regarding Urban local bodies.
   1. 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992 identifies 22 local level functions to be devolved to municipalities, including planning for economic and social development, regulation of land, construction of buildings, urban planning and public health.
   2. Since the enactment of 74th Constitution Amendment Act, elections to urban local bodies are held once in every five years in all states in India.
   3. As per the amended Municipal Corporation Act of 1888, Mayors are directly elected by the people in all states.

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

Solution: a)

In some States, elections to urban local bodies have not been held for years, defeating the lofty goal of decentralised governance. Tamil Nadu is a prominent example. The idea of giving more authority to the third tier of governance has suffered serious stunting, in spite of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992 identifying 18 local level functions to be devolved, including planning for economic and social development, regulation of land, construction of buildings, urban planning and public health. The average of subjects devolved in all these years is nine, and does not include the major municipal services which continue to be run by parastatal authorities that answer to State governments. Newer devices used to bypass local bodies and priorities are styled as special schemes, such as urban renewal and smart cities, directly supervised by the Central government and partnered by State governments.

In seven states Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand; Mayors are directly elected by the people.

Source

10) Consider the following statements.
   1. The right to protest, to publicly question and force the government to answer, is a fundamental political right of the people that flows directly from a democratic reading of Article 19.
   2. Access to the internet is a fundamental right under Article 19.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: d)
7. History, Art and Culture

1) Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts. They are

1. Brahmani
2. Maheshvari
3. Lakshmi
4. Varahi
5. Saraswati

Select the correct answer code:

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

Solution: c)

Who are Saptamatrikas?

- They are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
- They are Brahmani (wife of Brahma), Maheshvari (wife of Shiva), Kaumari (wife of Kumara), Vaishnavi (wife of Vishnu), Varahi (wife of Varaha, or the boar, an avatar [incarnation] of Vishnu), Indrani (wife of Indra), and Chamunda, or Yami (wife of Yama).
- There are references of Saptamatrika worship in early Kadamba copper plates as well as early Chalukyas and Eastern Chalukya copper plates.

2) Consider the following statements.

1. He was the editor of the ‘Indian Opinion’.
2. He was instrumental in founding the Benares Hindu University in 1916 and also became its Vice-Chancellor.
3. He worked for the temple entry of Dalits at the Kalaram Temple at Nashik.

The above statements refer to:

a) V. O. Chidambara Pillai
b) Subhas Chandra Bose
c) Surendranath Tagore
d) None of the above

Solution: d)

Madan Mohan Malaviya was a freedom fighter and social reformer.

- He had served as the President of the INC on four occasions.
- He was awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously in 2014.
- He was the editor of a Hindi magazine, ‘Hindosthan’.
- He became the editor of the ‘Indian Opinion’ in 1889. He also started a Hindi weekly ‘Abhyudaya’, an English daily ‘Leader’, a Hindi newspaper ‘Maryada’.
- Pandit Malaviya was instrumental in founding the Benares Hindu University in 1916. He also became its Vice-Chancellor till 1939.
- He was opposed to separate electorates to Muslims and the Lucknow Pact.
- He was also against the INC’s participation in the Khilafat Movement.
- He was a participant in the Second Round Table Conference in 1931.
- He was also a social reformer who opposed untouchability. He worked for the temple entry of Dalits at the Kalaram Temple at Nashik, Maharashtra.

3) Lai Haraoba, a ritualistic festival is celebrated by
a) Angami Naga of Nagaland  
b) Lusei communities of Mizoram  
c) Hajong communities of Meghalaya  
d) Meitei communities of Manipuri

Solution: d)

In Tripura, Lai Haraoba, is a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri meitei communities since ancient times.

Source

4) Consider the following statements regarding Arya Samaj.
   1. Arya Samaj is a Hindu reform movement that was founded by Dayanand Saraswati.
   2. Arya Samaj does not believe in the authority of the Vedas.
   3. The central objectives of Arya Samaj is to eradicate Ignorance, Poverty and Injustice from this earth.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2  
   b) 1 only  
   c) 2, 3  
   d) 1, 3

Solution: d)

• Arya Samaj is a Hindu reform movement that was founded by Dayanand Saraswati in 1875 in Bombay. The movement believes in the infallible authority of the Vedas.
• According to the website of Arya Samaj Houston, the central objectives of Arya Samaj is to, “eradicate Ignorance (Agyan), Indigence or Poverty (Abhav) and Injustice (Anayay) from this earth. This mission is enshrined in the ten Niyams or Principles.”
• The website says that contrary to the misconception, Arya Samaj is not a religion or a new sect in the Hindu religion.
• Members of the Arya Samaj believe in one God and reject the worship of idols.

Source

5) Consider the following statements regarding Tanaji Malusare.
   1. Tanaji Malusare is known for his role in the Battle of Sinhagad, which he fought under the Maratha flag against the Mughals.
   2. Treaty of Purandar was signed between the Rajput ruler Jai Singh I and Chhatrapati Shivaji.
   3. According to Treaty of Purandar, Shivaji had to hand over important forts including Purandar and Sinhagad to the Mughals.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1, 2  
   b) 2, 3  
   c) 1, 3  
   d) 1, 2, 3

Solution: d)

On January 10, the Ajay Devgn, Kajol and Saif Ali Khan-starrer ‘Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior’ released in theatres. the film is based on the story of Tanaji Malusare, the 17th-century Maratha warrior and general of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.
Malusare is known for his role in the Battle of Sinhagad (1670), which he fought under the Maratha flag against the Mughals, losing his life in the campaign.
In 1665, as Mughal forces led by the Rajput commander Jai Sinh I besieged Shivaji at the Purandar fort in Deccan, the latter was forced to sign the Treaty of Purandar. Under the agreement, Shivaji had to hand over important forts to the Mughals, including Purandar, Lohagad, Tung, Tikona, and Sinhagad (then called Kondhana).
8. Defence and Security

1) StrandHogg, recently seen in news is
   a) Earth Resource Satellite
   b) Chicken pox virus
   c) Dangerous Android vulnerability
   d) Long range drone

   Solution: c)

Cybercriminals have found an under investigated vulnerability to breach Android devices. It is called StrandHogg, and it can allow them to listen to microphone, steal login credentials, take photos using camera, read SMS and even access photos. First reported by Norway-based cybersecurity firm Promon and later confirmed by their partner firm Lookout, the vulnerability has now caught the eye of the cybersecurity wing of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Source

2) Consider the following statements regarding Pinaka Missile System.
   1. Pinaka MK-II rocket is modified as a missile by integrating the navigation, control and guidance system to improve the end accuracy.
   2. The missile system is capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 kilometres with high precision.
   3. It is developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with assistance from Russia.

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

   Solution: b)

India's indigenously developed Pinaka missile system, which is capable of striking up to range of 75 kilometres, was successfully flight-tested.

Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Pinaka MK-II rocket is modified as a missile by integrating the navigation, control and guidance system to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.

The missile system, capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 kilometres with high precision.

Source

3) Juice Jacking, recently seen in news is
   a) ATM card skimming technique to clone debit/credit cards to withdraw money
   b) Cyber-attack which alters the communication between two users
   c) Cyber-attack through a disguised email
   d) Cyber attack during the mobile charging process

   Solution: d)
Juice Jacking – a type of cyber-attack which originates from USB charging port installed at public places such as airports, cafes, bus stands, etc. Once the device is plugged-in and connection is established, it either installs malware or secretively copies sensitive data from a smartphone, tablet, or any other computer device.

Source
9. Reports and Indices

1) Consider the following statements regarding recently released Good Governance Index.
   1. Good Governance Index is released by NITI Ayog.
   2. The index ranks states in the sectors like human resource development, economic governance, environment and citizen-centric governance.
   3. Tamil Nadu has topped the Good Governance Index.

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

Solution: d)

Tamil Nadu has topped the Good Governance Index among 18 big States in the country. The State was ranked among the top five in six parameters, including public infrastructure, judicial and public security and public health, among others. However, it lagged behind its competitors in the ranking for commerce and industries.

The Good Governance Index was released by the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions. The Index takes 10 sectors into consideration: agriculture and allied, commerce & industries, human resource development, public health, public infrastructure & utilities, economic governance, social welfare & development, judicial & public security, environment and citizen-centric governance. Performance in these sectors is measured on the basis of 50 indicators.

Tamil Nadu was followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh in the overall ranking of 18 big States.

2) Women, Business and the Law 2020 report is published by
   a) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
   b) International Women's Forum
   c) World Bank
   d) World Economic Forum

Solution: c)

According to the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law 2020 report, women still have just three-fourths the legal rights of men.

Source

3) Nature Risk Rising Report was recently released by
   a) World Economic Forum
   b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
   c) World Bank
   d) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Solution: a)

Releasing the Nature Risk Rising Report ahead of its 50th Annual Meeting, the World Economic Forum said about 25 per cent of our assessed plant and animal species are threatened by human actions, with a million species facing extinction, many within decades.

Source
4) The report ‘Time to Care: Unpaid and Underpaid Care Work and the Global Inequality Crisis’ is released by
   a) Oxfam
   b) World Economic Forum (WEF)
   c) World Bank
   d) International Monetary Fund (IMF)

   Solution: a)

   The report, titled ‘Time to Care: Unpaid and Underpaid Care Work and the Global Inequality Crisis’ by Oxfam, the international nonprofit focussed on the alleviation of global poverty, underlined what has been said repeatedly by governments, research organisations and a range of multilateral bodies over the past decade or more — that economic inequality “is out of control”, with extremes of wealth existing alongside great poverty.

5) Global Economic Prospects report is released by
   a) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
   b) World Bank
   c) World Economic Forum
   d) New Development Bank

   Solution: b)

   The World Bank cut India’s growth for financial year 2020 to 5% from 6% estimated earlier. The bank’s Global Economic Prospects report cited a lingering weakness in credit from non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) as the main cause for the downgrade.

Source
10. Miscellaneous

Consider the following statements regarding infant mortality rate in India.
1. Infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of deaths of children under five years of age per 1000 live births.
2. The infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country currently stands at 33 per 1,000 live births.
3. Between 2014 and 2017, the IMR in the country has declined by more than 10 per cent.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   a) 1 only
   b) 1, 2
   c) 1, 3
   d) 2, 3

Solution: d)

Infant mortality rate (IMR), which is the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1000 live births.

India has reduced its infant mortality rate (IMR) by 42% over 11 years--from 57 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 33 in 2017, as per the latest government data released on May 30, 2019.

Between 2014 and 2017, India’s IMR has declined by 15.4%.

Source