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1. Geography

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to watch the following questions on YouTube

1. World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has released the first-ever global assessment of forest biodiversity. The findings were based on the Forest Specialist Index. Which of the following best describes it?

- A. An index that tracks wildlife that lives only in forests.
- B. An index that tracks diversity of flora and fauna in forests.
- C. An index that differentiates between Forest area and Forest Cover to arrive at the biodiversity data in the area.
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has released the first-ever global assessment of forest biodiversity.
- The new findings were based on the Forest Specialist Index, developed following the Living Planet Index methodology – an index that tracks wildlife that lives only in forests.

Key findings

- There has been a 53% decline in the number of forest wildlife populations since 1970.
- Of the 455 monitored populations of forest specialists, more than half declined at an annual rate of 1.7 per cent, on average between 1970 and 2014.
- While the decline was consistent in these years among mammals, reptiles and amphibians (particularly from the tropical forests), it was less among birds (especially from temperate forests).

2. The Term “Global Stocktake” has been in news recently. It is directly associated with:

- A. Sustainable Development Goals
- B. Paris Agreement
- C. Montreal Protocol
- D. Millennium Development goals

Answer: B

Explanation

- GST refers to proposed five-yearly-review of the impact of climate change action undertaken by countries.
- Under the Paris Agreement, each country has to present a climate action plan every five years.

- Under the Paris Agreement, the first global stock take will happen in 2023.
- It will help world to determine whether it needs to do more and how much more.

3. Consider the following statements: (UPSC Question)

1. The Sustainable Development Goals were first proposed in 1972 by a global think tank called the 'Club of Rome'.
2. The Sustainable Development Goals have to be achieved by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- The 'Club of Rome' is a global think tank which in its 1972 book "Limits to Growth" talked about sustainability; however, they didn't propose Sustainable Development Goals.
- As per the resolution of UN General Assembly in September, 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been adopted by 193 member nations.

4. Find the correct statements in context of South Asian Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF):

1. The main activity of SASCOFs is the preparation and issuing of a consensus outlook for the southwest monsoon rainfall over South Asia.
2. It was established in 2010 and is coordinated by India Meteorological Department (IMD).

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- It is a regional forum to forecast for South West Monsoon Season rainfall.
- It was established in 2010 and is coordinated by India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- It covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

- The main activity of SASCOFs is the preparation and issuing of a consensus outlook for the southwest monsoon rainfall over South Asia

5. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 2021–2030 as the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. This endeavour builds on regional efforts such as:

1. Initiative 20×20 in Latin America that aims to restore 20 million hectares of degraded land by 2020.
2. AFR100 African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative that aims to bring 100 million hectares of degraded land under restoration by 2030.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- UN Environment and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will lead the implementation.

6. The term “AKRUTI-KRUTIK-FORCE” has been in news recently. Which of the following is true in context with the same?

- A. It is an informal term used to refer to all the Corona warriors in Kerala.
- B. It is a force specially deployed for countering Naxals in North East India.
- C. It is associated with for techno-economic growth of the rural sector.
- D. It is an informal term used to refer to all the disaster management Teams active in a Pandemic.

Answer: C

Explanation

- The structured program called “AKRUTI-KRUTIK-FORCE” has been formulated by BARC, Mumbai.
- It is implemented through technically oriented NGOs for techno-economic growth of the rural sector.
- AKRUTI is an acronym for Advanced Knowledge and Rural Technology Implementation Initiative.

7. Often in news, what is Skymet

- A. An artificial satellite poised to go beyond Solar System
- B. A private Indian company that provides weather forecast
- C. A supercomputer built to track movements of heavenly bodies affecting Earth’s gravitation

D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- Skymet Weather Services is a private Indian company that provides weather forecast and solutions to Indians.
- Skymet was the first private sector entity to provide weather forecasts and weather graphics to the Indian media in 2003. Sky met was founded in 2003 and is headquartered in Noida, India.

8. Recently, Carbon more than 8,000 years old was found in World's deepest blue hole is Yongle Blue Hole. Which of the following is/are true in context with Blue Holes?

1. Blue holes are deep, circular columns of water, inside oceans, that form when rainwater dissolves a sink hole through limestone rock.
 2. Its waters are mostly isolated from the surrounding ocean and receive little fresh water from rainfall, making it a spot to study the chemistry of oxygen-deprived marine ecosystems
- A. Only 1
B. Only 2
C. Both 1 and 2
D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

Explanation

- The deepest known marine cavern is the Yongle blue hole, which measures roughly 300 meters from top to bottom.
- Blue holes are marine caverns filled with water and are formed following dissolution of carbonate rocks, usually under the influence of global sea level rise or fall.
- Its waters are mostly isolated from the surrounding ocean and receive little fresh water from rainfall, making it a rare spot to study the chemistry of oxygen-deprived marine ecosystems.
- What distinguishes them from other aquatic caverns is that they are isolated from the ocean and don't receive fresh rainwater.
- They are generally circular, steep-walled and open to surface.

9. In the South Atlantic and South-Eastern Pacific regions in tropical latitudes, cyclone does not originate. What is the reason?

- A. Sea surface temperatures are low
B. Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone seldom occurs
C. Coriolis force is too weak

D. Absence of land in those regions

Answer: A

Explanation

- The most proximate reasons for the lack of cyclone formation in the South Atlantic are sea surface temperatures that tend to run a shade cooler than ideal for tropical cyclone formation even in the southern summer

10. Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS) has been in news recently. It provides near-real time information on spatio-temporal occurrence and spread of phytoplankton blooms over the North Indian Ocean, which are detrimental to coastal fisheries and induce respiratory problems within the coastal population. In addition, four regions have been identified as bloom hotspots. Identify them:

1. North Eastern Arabian Sea
2. coastal waters off Kerala
3. Gulf of Mannar
4. Coastal waters of Gopalpur

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

Answer: D

Explanation

Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS): [PIB]

- It provides near-real time information on spatio-temporal occurrence and spread of phytoplankton blooms over the North Indian Ocean, which are detrimental to coastal fisheries and induce respiratory problems within the coastal population.
- For this, four regions have been identified as bloom hotspots
 - ✓ North Eastern Arabian Sea
 - ✓ Coastal waters off Kerala
 - ✓ Gulf of Mannar
 - ✓ Coastal waters of Gopalpur (Odisha)

2. History

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1. Arrange the following monuments in chronological order:

1. Char Minar - Hyderabad
2. Humayun's Tomb - Delhi
3. Tomb of Sher Shah Suri - Sasaram
4. Gol Gumbaz - Bijapur

Select the correct answer from the code given below:

- A. (2), (3), (4), (1)
- B. (4), (1), (3), (2)
- C. (3), (2), (1), (4)
- D. (1), (4), (2), (3)

Answer: C

Explanation

- Char Minar – Hyderabad – 1591 - The fifth ruler of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, built the Charminar in 1591 after shifting his capital from Golkonda to the newly formed city of Hyderabad.
- Humayun's Tomb – 1569-70 - The tomb was commissioned by Humayun's first wife and chief consort, Empress Bega Begum (also known as Haji Begum) in 1569-70
- Tomb of Sher Shah Suri – 1545 - The tomb was built during the lifetime of Sher Shah as well as the reign of his son Islam Shah. An inscription dates its completion to 16 August 1545, three months after the death of Sher Shah
- Gol Gumbaz – 1648 - Gol Gumbaz at Vijayapura is the mausoleum of king Muhammad Adil Shah, Adil Shah Dynasty. Construction began in 1626 and was completed in 1656.

2. After storming Sirhind, Banda Bahadur adopted the title of Padshah, started a new calendar and issued coins bearing the names of which Gurus?

- A. Guru Nanak and Guru Hargobind
- B. Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh
- C. Guru Hargobind and Guru Arjan
- D. Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Tegh Bahadur

Answer: B

Explanation

- Bahādur Shah attempted to make peace with the Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh. But when, after the death of the Guru, the Sikhs once again raised the banner of revolt in the Punjab under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahādur
- The Sikh movement was an open challenge to Mughal royalty. Banda adopted the title of Sacha Badshah (“True King”), started a new calendar, and issued coins bearing the names of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, and Guru Gobind.

3. Match the following and choose the correct answer from the code given below:

(Nationalist women)	(Their activities)
1. Sarojini Naidu	(i) A leader of the underground movement
2. Usha Mehta	(ii) Joined Azad Hind Fauz
3. Aruna Asaf Ali	(iii) Led Salt Satyagraha at Dharsana
4. Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan	(iv) Operated secret radio during Quit India Movement

(1) (2) (3) (4)

- A. (iv) (ii) (i) (iii)
B. (iii) (iv) (i) (ii)
C. (iv) (iii) (ii) (i)
D. (iii) (ii) (iv) (i)

Answer: B

Explanation

- Sarojini Naidu - Led Salt Satyagraha at Dharsana
- Usha Mehta - Operated secret radio during Quit India Movement
- Aruna Asaf Ali - A leader of the underground movement
- Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan - Joined Azad Hind Fauz

4. Chronologically arrange the following top level political negotiations that took place to conciliate the Muslim League position:

1. Bhulabhai Desai-Liaqat Ali Pact
2. Simla Conference
3. Gandhi-Jinnah talks
4. Rajaji (Raj Gopalachari) formula

- A. (3), (1), (4), (2)
- B. (2), (4), (3), (1)
- C. (1), (3), (2), (4)
- D. (4), (3), (1), (2)

Answer: D

Explanation

- The allies in the war seemed to be victorious and attitude of British administration towards Congress softened with this. At the same time, America was pressing on meeting India's demand for self-governance though being an ally of Britain in the war.
- When Gandhi was released on 5 May 1944, he proposed talks with Jinnah on his two-nation theory and negotiating on issue of partition.
- C. Rajagopalachari (CR), the veteran Congress leader, prepared a formula for Congress-League cooperation in 1944.
- The CR formula acted as the basis for the negotiations. Gandhi and Jinnah met in September 1944 to ease the deadlock.
- Gandhi placed the CR formula as his proposal to Jinnah.

Desai – Liaquat Pact

- Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly, met Liaquat Ali Khan, deputy leader of the Muslim League in that Assembly, and both of them came up with the draft proposal for the formation of an interim government at the centre, consisting of—
 - ✓ an equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the central legislature.
 - ✓ 20% reserved seats for minorities.
- No settlement could be reached between the Congress and the League on these lines

Wavell Plan

- Although the war in Europe came to an end in May 1945, the Japanese threat still remained.
- The Conservative government in Britain led by Churchill was keen to reach a solution on the constitutional question in India
- For this purpose, a conference was convened by the viceroy, Lord Wavell, at Shimla in June 1945.

5. After gaining independence from the British rule, who reminded Jawaharlal Nehru, 'freedom comes to India, not to the Congress', urging the formulation of a cabinet that included the ablest men regardless of party affiliation?

- A. C. Rajgopalachari
- B. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
- C. Mahatma Gandhi

D. Vallabhbhai Patel

Answer: C

Explanation

- R. K. Shanmukham Chetty, a Madras businessman who possessed one of the best financial minds in India;
- B. R. Ambedkar, a brilliant legal scholar and an 'Untouchable' by caste;
- Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, a leading Bengal politician who belonged (at this time) to the Hindu Mahasabha.
- All three had collaborated with the rulers while the Congress men served time in British jails.
- But now Nehru and his colleagues wisely put aside these differences.
- Gandhi had reminded them that 'freedom comes to India, not to the Congress', urging the formation of a Cabinet that included the ablest men regardless of party affiliation.

3. Polity & Governance

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1. Which of the following Asian languages are UN official languages?

- A. Chinese and Japanese
- B. Chinese and Arabic
- C. Japanese and Arabic
- D. Chinese and Hindi

Answer: B

Explanation

- United Nations – Chinese, English, French, Russia, Spanish, Arabic

2. Which of the following language(s) is/are a part of Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India?

- 1. Bodo
- 2. English
- 3. Bhojpuri

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

Answer: A

Explanation

- English is not a Scheduled language of India, but the official language
- Bhojpuri is not a Scheduled language
- Bodo is the Scheduled language

3. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct in the context of languages in India?

- 1. As per Constitution of India, every bill introduced in the Parliament is to be accompanied by a Hindi translation
- 2. Supreme Court hears only those who petition or appeal in English

- A. 1 only

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

Answer: B

Explanation

Statement 1 is incorrect and Statement 2 is correct

- The Official Language Act of 1963 lays down that Hindi translation of acts, ordinances, orders, regulations and bye-laws published under the authority of the president are deemed to be authoritative texts. Further, every bill introduced in the Parliament is to be accompanied by a Hindi translation. Similarly, there is to be a Hindi translation of state acts or ordinances in certain cases.
- The act also enables the governor of a state, with the previous consent of the president, to authorise the use of Hindi or any other official language of the state for judgements, decrees and orders passed by the high court of the state but they should be accompanied by an English translation. For example, Hindi is used in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan for this purpose.
- However, the Parliament has not made any provision for the use of Hindi in the Supreme Court. Hence, the Supreme Court hears only those who petition or appeal in English. In 1971, a petitioner insisted on arguing in Hindi a habeas corpus petition in the Supreme Court. But, the Court cancelled his petition on the ground that the language of the Court was English and allowing Hindi would be unconstitutional

4. Hindi is the official language of which of the following institutions?

1. Commonwealth of Nations
2. United Nations
3. World Hindi Secretariat

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- Commonwealth of Nations — English
- United Nations — Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic
- World Hindi Secretariat — Hindi

5. What is the criteria that has to be met for a language to be declared as 'classical language'?

1. Early texts/recorded history over a period of 500 years

2. Original literary tradition

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation

Statement 1 is incorrect 2 is correct

● Currently, six languages enjoy the 'Classical' status: Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014)

● Criteria

✓ High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years;

✓ A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;

✓ The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;

✓ The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

4. Science & Technology

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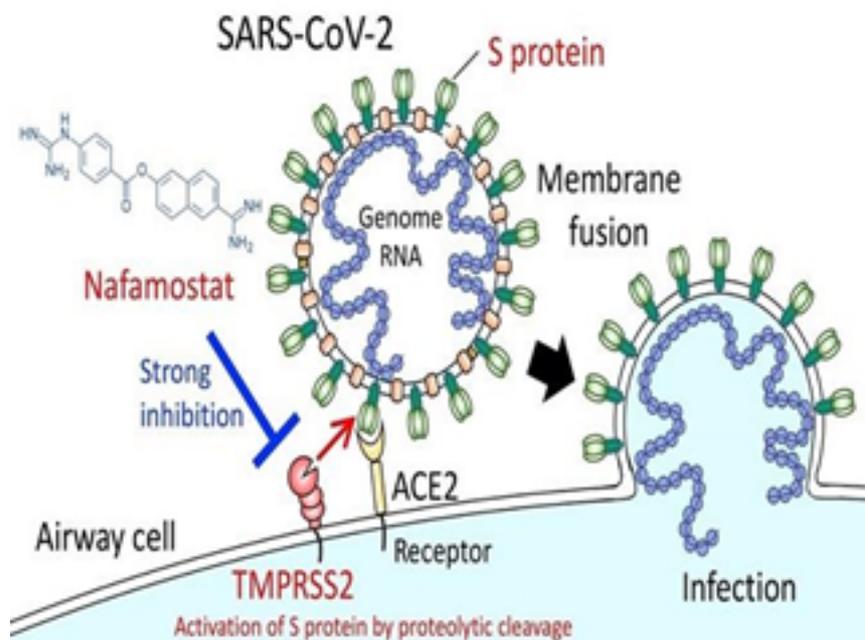
1. 'ACE2' has been in news lately in the context of COVID-19. What is 'ACE2'?

- A. A strain or lineage of the virus
- B. Spike like protein on the surface of SARS-COV-2
- C. Cellular doorway
- D. None of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

- Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2, or ACE2 is a protein on the surface of many cell types.
- It is an enzyme that generates small proteins – by cutting up the larger protein angiotensinogen – that then go on to regulate functions in the cell.
- Using the spike-like protein on its surface, the SARS-CoV-2 virus binds to ACE2 – like a key being inserted into a lock – prior to entry and infection of cells. Hence, ACE2 acts as a cellular doorway – a receptor – for the virus that causes COVID-19.
- SARS-CoV-2 virus requires ACE2 to infect cells but the precise relationship between ACE2 levels, viral infectivity and severity of infection are not well understood.



2. Which of the following is/are true in the context of T-cells?

1. Once infected with SARS-CoV-2, the immune system elicits highly functional memory T cell responses

2. T-cells are a type of Monocytes

- A. 1 Only
- B. 2 Only
- C. 1 and 2 Only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Explanation

- Statement 1 is correct but statement 2 is incorrect.
- White blood cells are the cells that help the body fight infection.
- The three major types of white blood cells are:
 - ✓ Granulocytes
 - ✓ Monocytes
 - ✓ Lymphocytes:
 - ✓ B lymphocytes (B cells)
 - ✓ T lymphocytes (T cells)
- Once infected with SARS-CoV-2, the immune system elicits robust, broad and highly functional memory T cell responses.
- SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells were found even in family members who have been exposed to the virus but have tested negative on antibody blood tests. SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells were also seen in convalescent individuals with a history of asymptomatic infection and mild COVID-19 disease.

3. Which of the following is true about Kongonaphon kely?

- A. Ancestor of dinosaurs
- B. Plant with medicinal properties
- C. Tribe in central Africa
- D. Virus strain helpful against COVID-19 infection

Answer: A

Explanation

- It is a newly described species from Madagascar.
- Believed to be the ancestor of dinosaurs and pterosaurs (extinct flying reptiles), it was just 10 cm tall.

- Analysis of body size throughout the history of dinosaurs and relatives shows that ancestrally medium-sized animals evolved into very small animals, such as Kongonaphon, which would have been around 10 cm tall and about 30 cm long. This then evolved into dinosaurs and pterosaurs which could reach enormous sizes.

4. Which of the following are true?

1. Mice share 98% of DNA with humans
2. Mice are used for laboratory testing of COVID-19 vaccine

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

Answer: A

Explanation

Statement 1 is correct but statement 2 is incorrect

- An animal model for a particular disease should fulfil two criteria. It should be able to “catch” that infection (in case of infectious diseases) and show the clinical outcomes and altered physiology that accompanies the disease.
- Mice, the most widely used “models” to understand human diseases, cannot be infected with SARS-CoV-2. If you imagine the virus to be a lock, it needs a “key” (usually a protein) on the surface of a cell to enter. The “key” is present in humans, rhesus monkeys, to a lesser extent in hamsters, ferrets and cats, but not in mice. Scientists are now creating genetically altered mice that express this “key”, as larger animals pose additional difficulties of housing, handling and are expensive.
- Apart from fever, sore throat, cough, pneumonia, COVID-19 infection in humans is also known to affect the heart, kidneys, intestine, and brain. While ferrets, hamsters, cats, rhesus monkeys and genetically modified mice could get infected with SARS-CoV-2, all of these develop only mild lung infection, most do not show fever, and they recover within seven–nine days.

5. Which of the following disease does not occur due to the change or mutation of sex chromosomes?

- A. Down's Syndrome
- B. Haemophilia
- C. Muscular Dystrophy
- D. Colour Blindness

Answer: A

Explanation

- Down's Syndrome is a chromosome 21 disorder. It is also known as trisomy 21

- Haemophilia is a rare disorder in which your blood doesn't clot normally because it lacks sufficient blood-clotting proteins (clotting factors)
- Muscular dystrophy is a group of inherited diseases that damage and weaken your muscles over time. This damage and weakness is due to the lack of a protein called dystrophin, which is necessary for normal muscle function

5. Miscellaneous

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1. In the Indian context, what is the implication of ratifying the 'Additional Protocol' with the 'International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'?

- A. The civilian nuclear reactors come under IAEA safeguards.
- B. The military nuclear installations come under the inspection of IAEA.
- C. The country will have the privilege to buy uranium from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- D. The country automatically becomes a member of the NSG.

Answer: A

Explanation

- The Additional Protocol is not a stand-alone agreement, but rather a protocol to a safeguards agreement that provides additional tools for verification.
- In particular, it significantly increases the IAEA's ability to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements.

2. Consider the following statements: Human capital formation as a concept is better explained in terms of a process which enables

1. individuals of a country to accumulate more capital.
2. increasing the knowledge, skill levels and capacities of the people of the country.
3. accumulation of tangible wealth.
4. accumulation of intangible wealth.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Human capital formation indicates, "the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience which are critical for the economic and the political development of the country. Human capital formation is thus associated with investment in man and his development as a creative and productive resource."

- Intangible wealth consists of factors such as the trust among people in a society, an efficient judicial system, clear property rights, effective government, and good education system etc. Human capital formation enables accumulation of intangible wealth.

3. The Global Infrastructure Facility is a/an:

- A. ASEAN initiative to upgrade infrastructure in Asia and financed by credit from the Asian Development Bank.
- B. World Bank collaboration that facilitates the preparation and structuring of complex infrastructure Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) to enable mobilization of private sector and institutional investor capital.
- C. Collaboration among the major banks of the world working with the OECD and infrastructure projects that have the potential to mobilize private investment.
- D. UNCTAD funded initiative that seeks to finance and facilitate infrastructure development in the World

Answer: B

Explanation

- The World Bank (WB) has launched the GIF to specifically cater to the infrastructure needs of the emerging economies and developing countries. The GIF will channel money towards bankable infrastructure project in such countries. GIF also places importance on sustainable development. Its key focus will be on climate friendly infrastructure investments and projects that will boost trade.
- The GIF will collaborate with other international and multilateral agencies which provide loans and financial assistance to countries across the globe. It will also help these agencies with its expertise in financing, supervising and implementing projects. Another area where GIF could provide assistance it ensuring that all regulatory, environmental and social safeguards are met with while investing in large scale infrastructure projects. GIF will also work with private entities like asset management companies, private equity firms, pensions and insurance funds and commercial banks to tap into multiple sources of funding.

4. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?

- A. Kanganahalli
- B. Sanchi
- C. Shahbazgarhi
- D. Sohgaura

Answer: A

Explanation

- Kanaganahalli is about 3 km from Sannati, Karnataka.

- Here, excavation found mentions 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka.

5. It is possible to produce algae based biofuels, but what is/are the likely limitation(s) of developing countries in promoting this industry?

1. Production of algae based biofuels is possible in seas only and not on continents.
2. Setting up and engineering the algae based biofuels production requires high level of expertise/ technology until the construction is complete.
3. Economically viable production necessitates the setting up of large scale facilities which may raise ecological and social concerns.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- Production of algal biofuel is possible both in seas and on continents. They can grow on marginal or non-crop land and also on brackish or polluted water.
- Land based systems are more developed then sea based systems