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For the 3rd Week

Of

February 2021

(15th February to 20th February)

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1. Geography

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

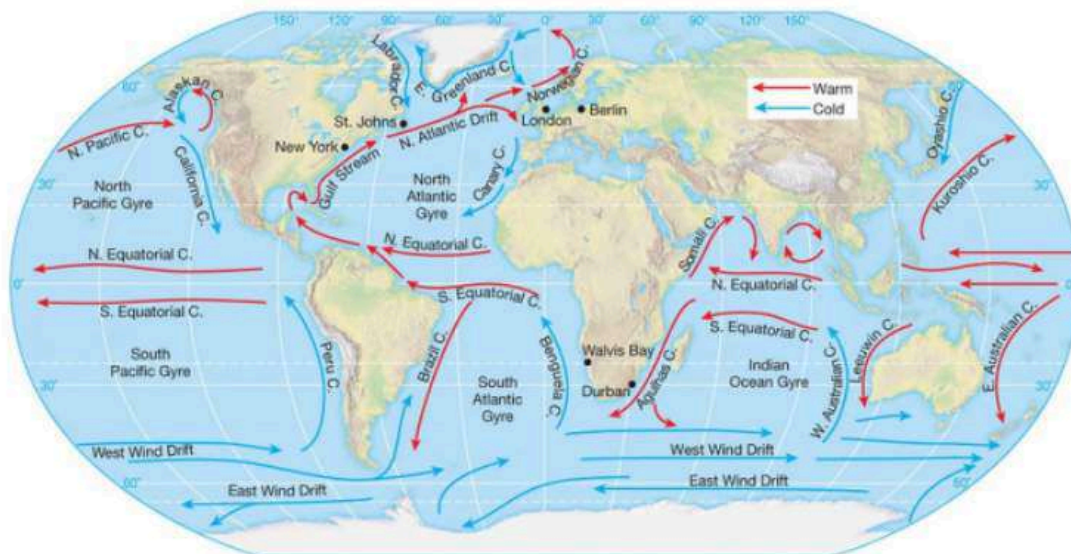
1. Mixing zones of Cold and Warm Ocean Currents are the most productive fishing grounds on earth. In context with the same, which of the following mixing zones can be considered as "Fishing Grounds"?

1. Kuroshio Current - Oyashio Current
2. Brazilian Current - Falkland Current
3. Labrador Current - Gulf Stream

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

Answer: D

Explanation



2. Which of the following is true for North-east Gas Pipeline Grid Project?

1. It will be developed in North East in collaboration with Bangladesh and Myanmar.
2. The pipeline will enable the supply of piped cooking gas to households and CNG to automobiles, besides fuel to industry.

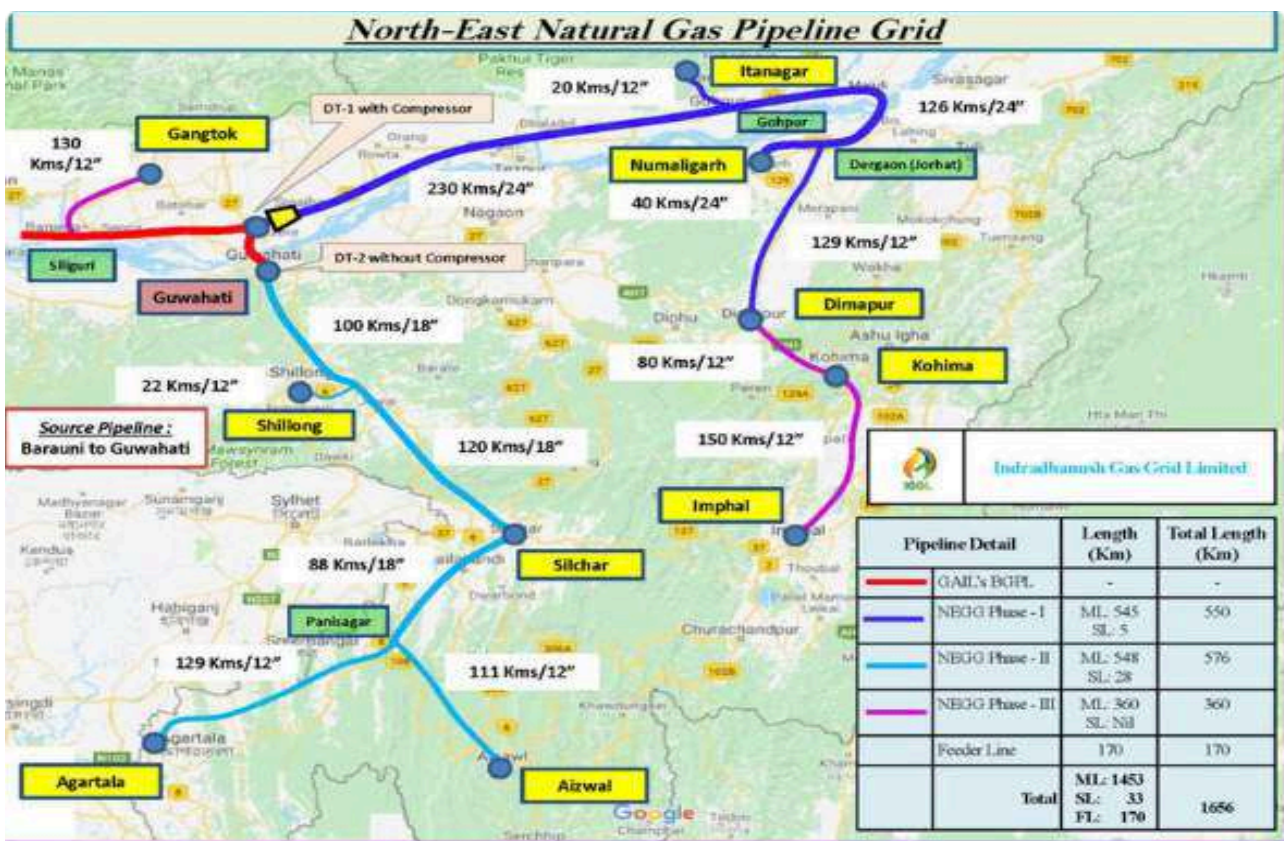
- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation

- The 1,656-km North-East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid will connect Guwahati in Assam to major cities in the region such as Itanagar, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Aizwal, Agartala, Shillong, Silchar, Gangtok, and Numaligarh.
- The pipeline will enable the supply of piped cooking gas to households and CNG to automobiles, besides fuel to industry.
- The North-East pipeline grid is to be implemented by Indradhanush Gas Grid, a joint venture of state-owned GAIL India, Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), Oil India Ltd (OIL) and Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL).
- The consortium had pitched for a 60 per cent funding support from the government and would raise the rest via equity and debt.



3. Consider the following statements with respect to The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB).

1. It focuses on the economic cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.
2. It is an initiative of UNDP.

Which of the above statements is/are not correct?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- Its objective is to highlight the growing cost of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and to draw together expertise from the fields of science, economics and policy to enable practical actions.
- The TEEB study was launched by Germany and the European Commission in response to a proposal by the G8+5 Environment Ministers in Potsdam, Germany in 2007, to develop a global study on the economics of biodiversity loss.
- The second phase of the TEEB study is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with support from a number of organizations, including the European Commission, German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

4. Consider the following statements with regard to Extra-Tropical Cyclones?

1. They generally develop in the lower latitudes.
2. They can originate over both land and in sea.
3. They are formed along the polar front.
4. They move from west to east.

Which of the following are true ?

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- They generally develop in the mid-latitudes in the regions extending between 35-65° latitudes in both the hemispheres due to the convergence of two contrasting air masses- warm tropical and cold polar air masses.

5. Which of the following best defines a Ghost Net?

- A. Dead zones are hypoxic areas in the world's oceans.

- B. They are the fishing nets that have been abandoned by fishermen or lost in the ocean.
- C. They are the fishing nets laced with poisons to kill the marine species.
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- Ghost nets are fishing nets that have been left or lost in the ocean by fishermen. These nets, often nearly invisible in the dim light, can be left tangled on a rocky reef or drifting in the open sea. They can entangle fish, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, dugongs, crocodiles, seabirds, crabs, and other creatures, including the occasional human diver. Acting as designed, the nets restrict movement, causing starvation, laceration and infection, and suffocation in those that need to return to the surface to breathe.



2. Polity

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1. Which of the following statements regarding Motion of Thanks are incorrect?

1. The Speaker makes an address to a joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget session known as motion of thanks.
2. It is also deemed to be as a no-confidence motion.

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

Answer: A

Explanation

- Context: About 50 speakers from 25 political parties participated in the debate in Rajya Sabha on the Motion of Thanks lasting over three days.
- The President makes an address to a joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget session, which is prepared by the government and lists its achievements
- The address is followed by a motion of thanks moved in each House by ruling party MP
- During the session, political parties discuss the motion of thanks also suggesting amendments.
- Amendments to the "Motion of Thanks":
 - ✓ Notices of amendments to Motion of Thanks on the President's Address can be tabled after the President has delivered his Address.
 - ✓ Amendments may refer to matters contained in the Address as well as to matters, in the opinion of the member, the Address has failed to mention
 - ✓ Amendments can be moved to the Motion of Thanks in such form as may be considered appropriate by the Speaker.
 - ✓ The only limitations are that members cannot refer to matters which are not the direct responsibility of the Central Government and that the name of the President cannot be brought in during the debate since the Government and not the President is responsible for the contents of the Address.
 - ✓ President's Address and Motion of Thanks are governed by Articles 86 (1) and 87 (1) of the Constitution and Rules 16 to 24 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
 - ✓ Members of Parliament vote on this motion of thanks. This motion must be passed in both of the houses.

- ✓ A failure to get motion of thanks passed amounts to defeat of government and leads to collapse of government
- ✓ This is why the Motion of Thanks is deemed to be a no-confidence motion.

2. Based on the following statements identify the UN Body?

1. It is an inter-governmental body within the UN system.
 2. The council was created in the year 2006 by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251.
 3. The member states are elected by the UNGA by a direct and secret ballot.
 4. It conducts the Universal Periodic Review.
- A. United Nations Human Rights Council
 - B. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
 - C. Committee against Torture
 - D. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Answer: A

Explanation

- Context: The U.S. has announced plans to reengage with the UN Human Rights Council that former President withdrew in this tenure in the office.
- UNHRC was reconstituted from its predecessor organisation, the UN Commission on Human Rights to help overcome the “credibility deficit” of the previous organisation.
- It is Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The UNHRC has 47 members serving at any time with elections held to fill up seats every year, based on allocations to regions across the world to ensure geographical representation.
- Each elected member serves for a term of three years.
- Countries are disallowed from occupying a seat for more than two consecutive terms.
- The UNHRC passes non-binding resolutions on human rights issues through a periodic review of all 193 UN member states called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- It oversees expert investigation of violations in specific countries (Special Procedures).

3. Which of the following statements are correct about Lokpal act of 2013?

1. The Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level.
2. The Lokpal consists of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.
3. The Lokpal has the power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI for cases referred to them by the ombudsman.

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- Context: The Centre has refused to disclose the minutes of the Lokpal selection committee's meetings, and its decision has now been upheld by the Central Information Commission (CIC).
- The Centre has invoked the exemption clause in Section 8(1)(e) of the RTI Act in its defence.
- The members are appointed by the president on the recommendation of a Selection Committee.
- The selection committee is composed of:
 - ✓ The Prime Minister who is the Chairperson
 - ✓ Speaker of Lok Sabha
 - ✓ Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha,
 - ✓ Chief Justice of India or a Judge nominated by him/her and
 - ✓ One eminent jurist
- The 2016 amendment enables the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha to be a member of the selection committee in the absence of a recognized Leader of Opposition.

Lokpal Act of 2013

- The Act allows setting up of anti-corruption ombudsman called Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the State-level.
- The Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members.
- The Lokpal will cover all categories of public servants, including the Prime Minister. But the armed forces do not come under the ambit of Lokpal.
- The Act also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while the prosecution is pending.
- The States will have to institute Lokayukta within one year of the commencement of the Act.
- The Act also ensures that public servants who act as whistleblowers are protected.
The Lokpal will have the power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI for cases referred to them by the ombudsman.
- As per the Act, the Lokpal can summon or question any public servant if there exists a prima facie case against the person, even before an investigation agency (such as vigilance or CBI) has begun the probe. Any officer of the CBI investigating a case referred to it by the Lokpal, shall not be transferred without the approval of the Lokpal.

- An investigation must be completed within six months. However, the Lokpal or Lokayukta may allow extensions of six months at a time provided the reasons for the need of such extensions are given in writing.
- Special courts will be instituted to conduct trials on cases referred by Lokpal.

4. Which of the following pairs have been correctly matched?

- 1. Article 121 – Appointment of Judges**
- 2. Article 105 – privileges and immunities of either House of the Indian Parliament**
- 3. Article 127 – Court Martial**
- 4. Article 194 – Privileges and immunities of the State Legislatures**

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Context: An MP issued a breach of privilege notice against another Congress MP in the Lok Sabha for her remarks against a former Chief Justice of India.
- While speaking on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address, she has cast some aspersions with respect to the conduct of a judge.
- So, the question is whether the conduct of a judge can be discussed on the floor of the House or not.
- (Article 121 of the Constitution does not allow allegations to be levelled against a sitting or former judge).
- Parliamentary privilege refers to the right and immunity enjoyed by legislatures, in which legislators are granted protection against civil or criminal liability for actions done or statements made in the course of their legislative duties.
- The powers, privileges and immunities of either House of the Indian Parliament and of its Members and committees are laid down in Article 105 of the Constitution.
- Similarly, Article 194 deals with the powers, privileges and immunities of the State Legislatures, their Members and their committee.
- There are no clear, notified rules to decide what constitutes a breach of privilege, and the punishment it attracts.
- Generally, any act that obstructs or impedes either House of the state legislature in performing its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results is treated as breach of privilege.

- It is also a breach of privilege and contempt of the House to make speeches or to print or publish libel reflecting on the character or proceedings of the House, or its Committees, or on any member of the House for or relating to his character or conduct as a legislator.

5. The President or the Governor shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office is listed in which of the following ?

- A. Article 50
- B. Article 121
- C. Article 361
- D. Article 154

Answer: C

Explanation

- Context: Law Minister recently told the Lok Sabha that just as independence of the judiciary is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, the principle of separation of powers is also a part of that basic structure.
- He asserted that governance and lawmaking should be left to the elected members of the legislature.
- He also urged the judiciary to exercise its discretion in accepting public interest litigations.
- It refers to the model of governance where the executive, legislative and judicial powers are not concentrated in one body but instead divided into different branches.
- It is not explicitly mentioned in the constitution.
- Article 50: State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive. This is for the purpose of ensuring the independence of the judiciary.
- Article 122 and 212: Validity of proceedings in Parliament and the Legislatures cannot be called into question in any Court. Also, Legislators enjoy certain privileges with regard to speech and anything said in the Parliament cannot be used against them.
- Judicial conduct of a Judge of the Supreme Court and the High Court cannot be discussed in the Parliament and the State Legislature, according to Article 121 and 211 of the Constitution.
- Articles 53 and 154 respectively, provide that the executive power of the Union and the State shall be vested with the President and the Governor and they enjoy immunity from civil and criminal liability.
- Article 361: The President or the Governor shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office.

3. Economy

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

1. Which of the following statements regarding Open Market Operations are correct?

1. These are directly conducted by RBI through public auctions to infuse liquidity in the monetary system.
2. It is one of the qualitative monetary policy tools which is employed by the central bank of a country.

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- Context: RBI announces ₹20,000 crore open market operations on February 10.
- Open market operations is the sale and purchase of government securities and treasury bills by RBI or the central bank of the country.
- The objective of OMO is to regulate the money supply in the economy.
- It is one of the quantitative monetary policy tools.
- RBI carries out the OMO through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public.
- When the central bank wants to infuse liquidity into the monetary system, it will buy government securities in the open market. This way it provides commercial banks with liquidity.
- When it sells securities, it curbs liquidity.
- Thus, the central bank indirectly controls the money supply and influences short-term interest rates.
- RBI employs two kinds of OMOs:
 - ✓ Outright Purchase (PEMO) – this is permanent and involves the outright selling or buying of government securities.
 - ✓ Repurchase Agreement (REPO) – this is short-term and are subject to repurchase.

2. Which of the following statements regarding National Safety Council are correct?

1. Its work under Ministry of labour & Employment.
2. The NSC is working on the safety rating of establishment based on their Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020) readiness and performance.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Context: The CEO and Managing Director of L&T Ltd, SN Subrahmanyam has been appointed Chairman of the National Safety Council for a period of three years.
- National Safety Council has a major role to play to ensure safety in workplaces under the new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020).
- The National Safety Council will assist Directorate General, Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI) in re-writing the regulations governing OSH in the country which have not been updated for over 50 years.
- The DGFASLI is an attached office of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India and serves as a technical arm to assist the Ministry in formulating national policies on occupational safety and health in factories and docks. It also advises factories on various problems concerning safety, health, efficiency and well - being of the persons at work places.
- The NSC will also be involved in framing the scheme for third party audit and certification under the OSH Code.
- The NSC is already working on the safety rating of establishments based on their OSH readiness and performance which can be extended through the country and linked to the inspection system.
- National Safety Council is a non-profit, self-financing apex body at the national level in India. Its Objective is to generate, develop and sustain a voluntary movement on Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE) at the national level. It is an autonomous body. Set was setup by Ministry of Labour and Employment in 1965.
- It was registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and subsequently, as a Public Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950.

3. Which of the following statements regarding landlord port model are incorrect?

- 1. In the landlord port model, the publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body and as landlord while private companies carry out port operations—mainly cargo-handling activities.**
 - 2. It is a Hybrid Model of Port Governance.**
- A. 1 only
 - B. 2 only
 - C. Both 1 and 2
 - D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Explanation

- In the landlord port model, the publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body and as landlord while private companies carry out port operations—mainly cargo-handling activities.
- Here, the port authority maintains ownership of the port while the infrastructure is leased to private firms that provide and maintain their own superstructure and install own equipment to handle cargo.
- In return, the landlord port gets a share of the revenue from the private entity.
- The role of the landlord port authority would be to carry out all public sector services and operations such as the award of bids for cargo terminals and dredging.
- Currently, most major port trusts in India carry out terminal operations as well, resulting in a hybrid model of port governance.
- The involvement of the port authorities in terminal operations leads to a conflict of interest and works against objectivity
- The neutrality of the landlord port authority is a basic requirement for fair competition between port service providers, particularly the terminal operators.

4. Central banks and Governments engage in this type of monetary settlement.

- 1. It is done with foreign counterparts to meet short term foreign exchange liquidity requirements.**
- 2. At times it is also done to ensure adequate foreign currency to avoid Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis till longer arrangements can be made.**

It is known as:

- A. FX swaps
- B. Currency Swap
- C. Free Trade Agreement
- D. Devaluation

Answer: B

Explanation

- Context: The Reserve Bank of India has agreed to a USD 400 million currency swap facility for Sri Lanka till November 2022 to boost the foreign reserves and ensure the financial stability of the country.
- Currency Swaps are used to obtain foreign currency loans at a better interest rate than could be obtained by borrowing directly in a foreign market.
- Central banks and Governments engage in currency swaps with foreign counterparts to meet short term foreign exchange liquidity requirements or to ensure adequate foreign currency to avoid Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis till longer arrangements can be made.

- The word swap means exchange.
 - A currency swap between the two countries is an agreement or contract to exchange currencies with predetermined terms and conditions.
 - India and Japan in the year 2018 signed a bilateral currency swap agreement.
 - RBI will get a certain amount of yen and the Bank of Japan will get an equivalent amount in Indian rupees on a decided swap rate.
 - After a specified period, both the countries will repay the amount at the same swap rate.
 - The decision comes five months after Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa had visited New Delhi and a recent bilateral discussion on rescheduling Colombo's outstanding debt repayment to India.
 - Sri Lanka owes USD 960 million to India.
5. The penal rate at which banks can borrow money from the central bank over and above what is available to them through the Liquidity Adjustment Facility window is known as:
- A. Marginal Standing Facility
 - B. Repo Rate
 - C. Bank Rate
 - D. Marginal Cost of Fund based Lending Rate

Answer: A

Explanation

- Marginal standing facility (MSF) is a window for banks to borrow from the Reserve Bank of India in an emergency when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.
- The Marginal standing facility is a scheme launched by RBI while reforming the monetary policy in 2011-12.
- It is a penal rate at which banks can borrow money from RBI when they are completely exhausted of all borrowing assistance.
- The Marginal Standing facility allows banks to borrow money with an interest rate above the repo rate and can be termed as the Marginal standing facility rate.
- Banks borrow from the RBI by pledging government securities at a rate greater than the repo rate under LAF (liquidity adjustment facility).
- The MSF rate is pegged 100 basis points or a percentage point above the repo rate.
Under MSF, banks can borrow funds up to one percent of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL).
- The minimum amount for which RBI receives application is Rs.1 Crore, and afterward in multiples of Rs.1 Crore.

4. Science & Technology

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1. Kufri Sahyadri and Kufri Karan are related to which of the following?

- A. Apples
- B. Walnuts
- C. Potatoes
- D. Saffron

Answer: C

Explanation

- ICAR - CPRI, Ooty developed two disease-resistant potatoes – Kufri Sahyadri and Kufri Karan – hybrid varieties.
- Both these varieties are resistant to commonly affecting diseases like Potato Cyst (Nematode) and Late Blight.

2. Which of the following statement(s) regarding INS Viraat are correct?

1. It was originally a British ship known as HMS Hermes.
 2. It participated in Operation Jupiter as a part of Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka.
 3. It is the world's longest serving warship.
- A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: D

Explanation

- All statements are correct.
 - Supreme Court stayed dismantling of the decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat
 - It was in the service of Indian Navy for 30 years before being decommissioned in March 2017
 - It was originally a British ship known as HMS Hermes, which was commissioned into the Royal Navy in 1959
- ✓ India purchased it in 1986

- She had participated in Operation Jupiter as part of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka. She also took part in various international joint military ex

3. Which of the following statements regarding Vigyan Jyoti Programme are correct

- 1. The programme was launched by ISRO in December 2019 to encourage girls to take interest in space sciences and build a career in the same**
- 2. It addresses the underrepresentation of women in various areas of STEM. The programme at first cater to the girls at school level of Class IX to Class XII in order to encourage and empower them to pursue STEM courses**

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

Answer: B

Explanation

- Both the statements are correct
- The second phase of Vigyan Jyoti programme was commenced on the occasion of International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11, 2021, which will spread the programme for encouraging girls to take interest in science and build a career in STEM
- The programme has been started at school level for meritorious girls of Class IX to Class XII to encourage and empower them to pursue STEM courses in reputed institutions of the country
- Other women-oriented programmes by DST:
 - ✓ Women Scientists Scheme to help women with career-break
 - ✓ Indo-US Fellowship for Women in STEMM (WISTEMM) program where women scientists can work in research labs of USA.
 - ✓ Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities (CURIE) programme for improving R&D infrastructure and establishing state-of-the-art research facilities in order to create excellence in S&T in women universities.
 - ✓ Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) program.
 - ✓ Artificial Intelligence (AI) labs in women universities with the goal to foster AI.
 - ✓ innovations and to prepare skilled manpower for AI-based jobs in future.

4. Which of the following is correct about Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)?

- 1. It is an odourless, colourless and tasteless compound with non-corrosive and non-toxic properties.**

2. Ethane is the main component of CNG.
3. It is derived from natural gas wells, coal wells, bed methane wells and oil wells.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- 2nd statement is correct.
- It is an odourless, colourless and tasteless compound with non-corrosive and non-toxic properties
- Methane is the main component of CNG
- It is very healthy as it easily scatters into the air
- It is derived mainly from natural gas wells, coal wells, bed methane wells and oil wells
- It's more environmentally friendly as it releases less toxic and unnecessary gases than other alternatives, i.e. petrol & diesel
- Union Road Minister launched India's first CNG tractor

5. A group of hereditary diseases that progressively destroys motor neurons leading to muscle weakness is

- A. Down syndrome
B. Alzheimer's disease
C. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
D. Spinal Muscular Atrophy

Answer: D

Explanation

- Motor neurons are the nerve cells in the brain stem that control essential skeletal muscle activity such as speaking, walking, breathing and swallowing
- Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a degenerative neuromuscular genetic disorder that causes progressive weakening of muscles used for head and neck control, sitting, crawling, walking and swallowing
- While considered rare, it is found in 1-in-10000 infants and is the second most common autosomal recessive disorder after cystic fibrosis
- Drug treatments for SMA exist, but require hospital visits for affected children, are administered through a spinal tap, and require maintenance dosing several times a year

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