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1. Strait of Dardanelles connects

- A. Sea of Marmara and Aegean Sea
- B. Sea of Marmara and Black Sea
- C. Aegean Sea and Mediterranean Sea
- D. Aegean Sea and Ionian Sea

Answer: A

Explanation



2. Which of the following ethnic groups are correctly matched with the countries they live in?

- 1. Hazaras - Pakistan
- 2. Yazidis - Iraq
- 3. Ahmadiyas - Afghanistan
- 4. Tatars - Crimea

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 4 only
- C. All of the above
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- Hazaras – Persian speaking ethnic group native to mountainous central Afghanistan
- Yazidis – Religious minority in Iraq combining elements from, among others, Christianity and Islam
- Tatars – Turkic group of Sunni Muslims in Crimea

3. Natanz has been in news recently. It is located in

- A. Syria
- B. Italy
- C. Iran
- D. China

Answer: C

Explanation



4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recently awarded 'Legion of Merit' award by _____

- A. United Nations
- B. Republic of Korea
- C. Afghanistan
- D. United States

Answer: D

Explanation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the 'Legion of Merit' by U.S. President Donald Trump in December 2020 for his role in advancing the India-U.S. relationship
- The award was also presented to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison
- The Legion of Merit, instituted in 1942 by former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces and also members of foreign (i.e., non-U.S.) armed forces and sometimes heads of state or government.

- The award is presented to foreign recipients in four categories: Chief Commander, Commander, Officer and Legionnaire. Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa who received the Legion of Merit (Degree: Chief Commander) in 1949 from then U.S. President Harry S. Truman

5. Operation Samudra Setu is associated with

- A. Widening of the Suez Canal
- B. Repatriate Indian citizens abroad during Covid-19 pandemic
- C. Ensuring free sea lanes of communication
- D. Gathering polymetallic nodules

Answer: B

Explanation

- It is associated with the national effort to repatriate Indian citizens abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Landing Platform Dock INS Jalashwa and Landing Ship Tanks INS Airavat, Shardul and Magar participated in this operation
- The greatest challenge for the Indian Navy was to avoid any incident of outbreak of infection on board the ships during the evacuation operation. Rigorous measures were planned and medical/safety protocols unique to the operating environment of ships were implemented.

6. MERCOSUR is a trade bloc between which of the following member countries?

- 1. Brazil
 - 2. Argentina
 - 3. Mexico
 - 4. Paraguay
- A. 1, 2 and 3 only
 - B. 1 and 2 only
 - C. 1, 2 and 4 only
 - D. 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: C

Explanation

- Mercosur is a South American regional economic organization.
- Currently, Mercosur is composed of five full members (one of which is suspended), five associated countries and two observers

- Venezuela Associate state (2004), Protocol of Accession (2006), Full Member (2012), suspended (2016)
- Venezuela applied for membership, but its entry has not been ratified by Paraguay, although it was r a t i f i e d by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.
- Venezuela is considered a key member of the Mercosur due to its energy resources, including natural gas and oil. Venezuela is also an important economic market for Brazil because of a favourable balance of trade.
- Mercosur was created in 1991 by the Treaty of Asunción, which was signed by the heads of state of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.



- Several other countries were later admitted as associate members
- Mercosur is headquartered in Montevideo, Uruguay.
- Mercosur's goals include the harmonization of the economic policies of its members and the promotion of economic development.

7. VORUKH recently heard in news lies in which of the following country?

- A. Kyrgyzstan
- B. Tajikistan
- C. Afghanistan
- D. Turkmenistan

Answer: B

Explanation

- Context: At least 31 people have been killed in Kyrgyzstan in heavy clashes at its disputed border with Tajikistan.
- It is a jamoat in northern Tajikistan.
- It is an exclave surrounded by Kyrgyzstan that forms part of the city of Isfara in Sughd Region.
- Jamoats are the third-level administrative divisions, similar to communes or municipalities, in the Central Asian country of Tajikistan.

Key takeaways

- More than a third of the two countries' border is disputed, with the area surrounding the Vorukh, where recent conflict erupted.
- It is a regular flashpoint over territorial claims and access to water.
- Vorukh is a jamoat (administrative division) in northern Tajikistan.
- It is an enclave surrounded by Kyrgyzstan that forms part of the city of Isfara in Sughd Region.
- The location of the border of the enclave is disputed by the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments.
- The fighting has focused on water facilities in territory claimed by both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- Like many parts of Central Asia, the border between the two countries has been a focus of tension for the past 30 years.
- Before that, it mattered little which bit of territory belonged to whom as people could move freely between Soviet Republics.
- But the collapse of the USSR generated hard borders - and potential violence.
- The meandering boundary between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan is particularly tense as over a third of its 1,000-km (600-mile) length is disputed.
- Restrictions on access to land and water that communities regard as theirs have often led to deadly clashes in the past.
- The latest fighting was the heaviest in years and has raised fears of a wider conflict between two impoverished neighbours.

8. Which of the following statements about Arghandab Dam recently heard in news are correct?

1. It is located in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan.
2. It was built by the United States nearly 70 years ago
3. In 2019 the Asian Development Bank approved a grant of nearly \$350 million to be used partly to expand the reservoir-style project.

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

Answer: D

Explanation

- Context: Recently, the Taliban have captured Afghanistan's Dahla dam after months of fierce fighting in Kandahar.
- It is Afghanistan's second-biggest dam.

- It is located in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan
- The Dahla Dam is built on the Arghandab River.
- It provides irrigation to farmers via a network of canals as well as drinking water for the provincial capital.
- It was built by the United States nearly 70 years ago (1952) to provide water for irrigating land in about seven districts of Kandahar.
- It is built on the Arghandab River which flows over a length of 250 miles (400 km).
- In 2019 the Asian Development Bank approved a grant of nearly \$350 million to be used partly to expand the reservoir-style project.



9. Which of the following rivers are available for the unrestricted use of India according to the 'Indus Water Treaty'?

1. Ravi
2. Sutlej
3. Chenab
4. Beas

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Indus Water Treaty is a Water-Distribution Treaty, signed in Karachi on 1960, between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank.



- Under the treaty, India has control over water flowing in the eastern rivers– Beas, Ravi and Sutlej.
- Pakistan has control over the western rivers– Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.
- As per the treaty, the water commissioners of Pakistan and India are required to meet twice a year and arrange technical visits to projects’ sites and critical river head works.
- Both the sides share details of the water flow and the quantum of water being used under the treaty.
- The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers.

10. Which of the following statements are correct about “17+1 initiative” frequently heard in news ?

1. The 17+1 initiative is a China-led format founded with an aim to expand cooperation between Beijing and the CEE The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

2. Latvia recently pulled of the initiative.

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

Answer: A

Explanation

- The 17+1 initiative is a China-led format founded in 2012 in Budapest with an aim to expand cooperation between Beijing and the CEE member countries, with investments and trade for the development of the CEE region
- The framework also focuses on infrastructure projects such as bridges, motorways, railway lines and modernisation of ports in the member states.
- The initiative includes twelve EU member states and five Balkan states – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- The platform is largely seen as an extension of China’s flagship Belt and Road initiative (BRI).
- Lithuania has quit China’s 17+1 cooperation forum with central and eastern European states that includes other EU members.
- It has called it “divisive”.
- It has also urged fellow EU members to pursue “a much more effective 27+1 approach and communication with China.”

11. Belarus shares its boundaries with which of the following countries?

1. Russia
 2. Ukraine
 3. Poland
 4. Hungary
 5. Romania
- A. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
B. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
C. 1, 2 and 3 only
D. All of the above

Answer: C

Explanation

- It is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe.
- Recently, Belarus administration forced a commercial airline flying from Greece to Lithuania to land in its territory allegedly on the pretext of a bomb scare, so it could arrest a dissident journalist on board.
- A gulf is a body of water that is connected to a sea or ocean and is surrounded or penetrated by land. The gulf is almost completely surrounded by land.



- The Gulf of Martaban or the Gulf of Mottama is an arm of the Andaman Sea in the southern part of Burma. The gulf is named after the port city of Mottama (formerly known as Martaban). The Sittaung, Salween, and Yangon rivers empty into it.

12. South - China Sea is surrounded by which of the following countries?

1. Taiwan
 2. Vietnam
 3. Laos
 4. Indonesia
 5. Malaysia
- A. 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
B. 1, 2, 4 and 5 only
C. 1, 4 and 5 only
D. All of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- The South China Sea is a marginal sea and, therefore, largely surrounded by land.
- Countries that have a major influence on and claims to the sea include China, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, although Thailand, Indonesia and Taiwan have some too.



13. Gulf of Bothnia lies between

- A. Norway and Sweden
- B. Sweden and Finland
- C. Poland and Lithuania
- D. Estonia and Latvia

Answer: B

Explanation



14. Tiger Triumph is a military exercise involving the armed forces of

- A. India – Sri Lanka
- B. India – USA
- C. India – Australia
- D. India – Japan

Answer: B

Explanation

- Tiger Triumph is a bilateral tri-service amphibious military exercise involving the armed forces of India and the United States.
- It is the first tri-service military exercise between the two countries.
- India has previously only held tri-service exercises with Russia.

15. Which of the following countries are a part of the Indian Ocean Region?

1. Australia
2. Indonesia
3. Tanzania
4. United Arab Emirates
5. Yemen.

- A. 1, 2, 3 and 4
B. 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
C. 1, 3 and 5 only
D. All of the above

Answer: D

16. Sea of Marmara connects which of the following

- A. Black sea and Mediterranean Sea
B. Aegean Sea and Mediterranean Sea
C. Black sea and Aegean Sea
D. Sea of Azov and Mediterranean Sea

Answer: C

Explanation

- There has been growing environmental concern in Turkey over the accumulation of 'sea snot', a slimy layer of grey or green sludge in the country's seas, which can cause considerable damage to the marine ecosystem.
- Turkey's Sea of Marmara, that connects the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea, has witnessed the largest outbreak of 'sea snot'.
- The sludge has also been spotted in the adjoining Black and Aegean seas.



17. Which of the following statements about Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) are correct?

1. Members of PESCO are also the members of NATO.
2. PESCO has its roots in treaty of Lisbon 2009.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Context: The European Union recently allowed Norway, Canada and United States to participate in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) defence initiative.
- This is the for the first time that the European bloc has allowed a third state to participate in the PESCO project.
- The countries will now participate in the Military Mobility Project in Europe.
- PESCO is a part of the European Union security and defence policy.
- It was introduced based on the Treaty of European Union introduced by Treaty of Lisbon in 2009.
- Around four-fifths of the PESCO members are also NATO members.
- The United States had time and again raised concerns about PESCO several times as it fears loss of influence in Europe.

Military Mobility Project

- It is to aid the free movement of military units in the European Union through improvement of infrastructure and removal of bureaucratic barriers.
- It mainly revolves around two areas namely bureaucratic barriers (like passport checks) and requirement of advance notice.
- During NATO emergency, the troops can move freely and fastly. However, during peacetime, advance notice is required.
- In November 2020, the European Union allowed non-EU members to participate in PESCO. Following this, Canada, US and Norway had requested to participate in PESCO.



- Four of the states in European Union declare themselves as neutral. They are Austria, Ireland, Finland and Sweden.

18. Formosa strait lies between which of the following

- A. Philippines and Brunei
- B. Malaysia and Singapore
- C. China and Hong Kong
- D. China and Taiwan

Answer: C

Explanation

- The Taiwan Strait, also known as the Formosa Strait, separates Taiwan and mainland China.
- The strait is currently part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.
- The entire strait is on Asia's continental shelf





19. Which of the following recently became the first country to formally adopt Bitcoin as legal tender?

- A. El Salvador
- B. Singapore
- C. Venezuela
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

Explanation

- El Salvador officially recognised bitcoin as legal tender, making the Central American nation the first in the world to do so.
- El Salvador also announced that people who invest in bitcoin there will get the country's citizenship.

20. Which of the following statement about Mount Nyiragongo, recently heard in news are correct ?

1. It is located in Gabon
2. It is located inside Virunga National Park
3. It is a part of Albertine rift valley region.

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

D. All of the above

Answer: B

Explanation

- Context: Congo's Mount Nyiragongo volcano erupted.
- Mount Nyiragongo is an active stratovolcano with an elevation of 3,470 m in the Virunga Mountains associated with the Albertine Rift.
- It is located inside Virunga National Park, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Nyiragongo and nearby Nyamuragira are together responsible for 40 percent of Africa's historical volcanic eruptions.



21. 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

- India signed the comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) with the IAEA on February 02, 2009, which entered into force on May 11, 2009. India signed the Additional Protocol (AP) to the IAEA safeguards agreement on May 15, 2009, which entered into force from July 25, 2014.
- The AP is an important tool of the IAEA, over and above the provisions of the CSA's, to verify the exclusively peaceful nature of a country's nuclear programme.
- By ratifying it way back in 2014, India's non-proliferation credentials have been further strengthened

22. "Rule of Law Index" is released by which of the following ?

- A. Amnesty International
- B. International Court of Justice
- C. The Office of UN Commissioner for Human Rights
- D. World Justice Project

Answer: D

Explanation

- The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index® is the world’s leading source for original, independent data on the rule of law.
- Featuring primary data, the WJP Rule of Law Index measures countries' rule of law performance across eight factors: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice.

23. Which of the following statements about Gulf of Berbera are correct?

1. It lies near the Horn of Africa.
2. It connects to the Red Sea via the Bab-el-Mandeb strait.

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

Answer: C

Explanation

- Context: Maiden Indian Navy – European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Exercise was held in Gulf Of Aden.
- The Indian Naval Ship Triakand, mission deployed for Anti-Piracy Operations, is participating in the maiden IN – EUNAVFOR Joint Naval Exercise in the Gulf of Aden.
- EUNAVFOR and the Indian Navy converge on multiple issues including counter-piracy operations and protection of vessels deployed under the charter of the World Food Programme (UN WFP).
- Indian Navy and EUNAVFOR also have regular interaction through SHADE (Shared Awareness and De-confliction) meetings held annually in Bahrain.



24. Which of the following statements are correct about Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) programme?

1. It is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

2. India recently pulled of the programme due to Corporate tax issues.

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

Explanation

- The Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB), a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), was launched in Bhutan.
- India is chosen as the partner jurisdiction and will provide tax experts for this programme.
- India will help Bhutan strengthen the tax administration by sharing technical know-how, skills and best audit practices with its tax auditors.
- This programme is expected to be of about 24 months and the focus will be in the area of International Taxation and Transfer Pricing.

25. Which amongst the following is the first country to ratify International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement (ISA FA) after amendments in the ISA FA entered into force on January 8, 2021?

A. France

B. Denmark

C. Spain

D. Bangladesh

Answer: B

Explanation

- Denmark has become the first country to ratify International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement (ISA FA) after amendments in the ISA FA entered into force on January 8, 2021.
- ISA is an alliance of over 120 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

