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Current Affairs Q&A PDF – December 2023

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Which of the following points is “Incorrect” with respect to the Cabinet approval on 29th November 2023?

- 1) The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the 16th Finance Commission (FC), whose recommendations span a 5-year period from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031.
- 2) The Union Cabinet also extended Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) — for five years till December 2028.
- 3) The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) with a budget of Rs 24,104 crore.
- 4) The Cabinet also approved the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for providing Drones to the 15000 selected Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) from 2024-25 to 2025-26.
- 5) The continuation of the Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs) was approved for a further five years i.e. from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028.

Answer- **5) The continuation of the Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs) was approved for a further five years i.e. from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028.**

Explanation:

On November 29, 2023, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister (PM) of India Narendra Modi has approved the following:

- i. The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Sixteenth/16th Finance Commission (FC), whose recommendations, spanning a 5-year period from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031, will be submitted by October 31, 2025.
- ii. The Union Cabinet also extended Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) — for five years till December 2028.
 - In this regard, the Central Government will spend approximately Rs 11.80 lakh crore on food subsidies to provide free food grains (rice, wheat and coarse grains/millet) to about 81.35 crore people.
- iii. The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) with a budget of Rs 24,104 crore (Central Share: Rs. 15,336 crore, State Share: Rs. 8,768 crore).
- iv. The Union Cabinet also approved the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) for providing Drones to the 15000 selected Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) from 2024-25 to 2025-26 for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purposes. The outlay of the scheme is Rs 1261 Crore.
- v. The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the **Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs) for a further three years** i.e. from April 1, 2023 to **March 31, 2026**.
 - The financial implication for the same will be Rs 1952.23 crore (Rs. 1207.24 crore as Central Share and Rs. 744.99 crore as State share).

2. According to Quarterly Bulletin Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), released by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in November 2023, unemployment rate (UR) in urban areas fell from 7.2% in July –September 2022 to _____ in July – September 2023 for persons of age 15 years and above.

- 1) 6.5%
- 2) 6.3%

3) 6.1%

4) 6.6%

5) 6.0%

Answer- **4) 6.6%**

Explanation:

According to Quarterly Bulletin Periodic Labour Force Survey (**PLFS**) (**July to September 2023**), released by National Sample Survey Office (**NSSO**), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), **unemployment rate (UR)** in urban areas fell from **7.2%** in July – September **2022** to **6.6%** in **July – September 2023** for persons of age **15 years and above**.

- This bulletin for the second quarter (Q2) of the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) is the 20th edition of the series.

i. A total of 5,706 First Stage Units – FSUs Urban Frame Survey (UFS blocks) were surveyed in urban areas across India during the third quarter of 2023 (July-September). This included 44,738 households and 1,70,004 individuals.

ii. The report indicates that in urban areas, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in the current weekly status (CWS) increased to 49.3% in the July to September quarter of 2023, up from 47.9% in the corresponding period in 2022.

iii. The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) in urban areas has increased to 46.0% in July – September 2023 from 44.5% in July-September 2022.

Note: The UR in January-March 2023 was at 6.8% and in April-June 2023 was at 6.6%.

3. In November 2023, Union Minister of Coal and Mines, Pralhad Joshi launched the auction process of _____ critical mineral blocks, which is estimated to be worth around Rs 45000 crore.

1) 15

2) 40

3) 20

4) 10

5) 30

Answer- **3) 20**

Explanation:

Union Minister, **Pralhad Joshi**, Ministry of Coal and Mines, Government of India (GoI) launched the auction process of **20 critical mineral blocks**, which is estimated to be worth around **Rs 45000 crore**.

i. The 20 blocks on sale are across various states, including Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Bihar. This includes the lithium reserves in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

ii. This is a part of India's efforts to strengthen the critical mineral supply chain for energy transition and to achieve its net-zero target by 2070.

4. Name the Institution that has recently (in Nov '23) conferred with the President's Colour (represented by a flag) by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu.

1) Mechanical Training Institute

2) Air Force Technical College

3) Air Force Administrative College

4) Armed Forces Medical College

5) Flying Instructors School

Answer- **4) Armed Forces Medical College**

Explanation:

The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, conferred the **President's Colour** (represented by a flag) to the Armed Forces Medical College (**AFMC**) at Pune, Maharashtra.

- To commemorate the AFMC's platinum jubilee year, the President released a commemorative coin (Rs. 75), a special cover, and a stamp.
- President Droupadi Murmu also inaugurated the Armed Forces Centre for Computational Medicine, 'Prajna'.

i. The president's colour, also known as "Rashtrapati ka Nishaan," is the highest honour bestowed upon a military unit for its exemplary service, courage, and discipline.

ii. The Indian Navy was the first Indian Armed Force to be awarded the President's Colour by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1951.

iii. The President's Colour Award ceremony is presided over by the President, who is also the supreme commander (under Article 53 of the Indian Constitution) of the armed forces, or by the respective armed forces head designated by the President for the event.

5. Who has recently (in Nov '23) topped the first edition of 'India's Top 200 Self-made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2023' released by First Private (Private Banking by IDFC First Bank Limited) and Hurun India?

- 1) Abhay Soi
- 2) Radhakishan Shivkishan Damani
- 3) Deepinder Goyal
- 4) Vijay Shekhar Sharma
- 5) Kunal Shah

Answer- **2) Radhakishan Shivkishan Damani**

Explanation:

Radhakishan Shivkishan Damani, the founder of Avenue Supermarts Limited (DMart) topped the first edition of 'India's Top 200 Self-made Entrepreneurs of the Millennia 2023' released by **First Private** (Private Banking by IDFC First Bank Limited) and **Hurun India**, with the value of Rs.2.38 lakh crore.

- He is followed by Binny Bansal and Sachin Bansal (founders of Flipkart India Private Limited) with an equity value of Rs. 1.19 lakh crore.
- Deepinder Goyal, the founder of Zomato Media Private Limited, is ranked third with a net worth of Rs 86,835 crore.

i. The list also recognized 20 women entrepreneurs and Ghazal Alagh(35) of Mamaearth and Saumya Singh Rathore(35) of Winzo are the youngest women on the list of women entrepreneurs.

ii. As per the list, Falguni Nayar of Nykaa is the top women entrepreneur.

6. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the recent approval granted by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in November 2023?

A) The DAC chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Ministry of Defence(MoD), granted approval for Acceptance of Necessity (AoNs) for diverse Capital Acquisition Proposals, worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore to enhance the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces.

B) The Council has approved the procurement of 2 types of Anti-tank Munitions namely, Area Denial Munition (ADM) Type-2 and Type-3, which are capable of neutralising Tanks and Armoured personnel carriers and enemy personnel.

C) DAC has approved the procurement of defence equipment worth Rs.1.5 lakh crores such as 97 new LCA Mk 1A fighter aircraft and the indigenous upgrade of 84 Su-30 MKI combat planes.

1) All A, B & C

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) Only A

Answer- 1) All A, B & C

Explanation:

The [Defence Acquisition Council \(DAC\)](#) chaired by Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Ministry of Defence(MoD), granted **approval** for Acceptance of Necessity (**AoNs**) for diverse Capital Acquisition Proposals, **worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore** to enhance the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces.

- Around **98%** of the total AoN amount (Rs 2.20 lakh crore) worth acquisition will be sourced from domestic industries.
- This is in line with efforts towards achieving self-reliance in the Indian Defence sector (Aatmanirbharta).

i. The Council has approved the procurement of 2 types of Anti-tank Munitions namely, Area Denial Munition (ADM) Type-2 and Type-3, which are capable of neutralising Tanks and Armoured personnel carriers and enemy personnel.

ii. A state-of-the-art Towed Gun System (TGS) was also approved to replace the Indian Field Gun (IFG), which has completed its service life.

iii. In addition, the DAC has also accorded approval for the procurement of:

- Light Combat Helicopters (**LCH**) for the Indian Air Force (**IAF**) and Indian Army; and
- Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mark (Mk) 1A for IAF from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

iv. DAC has approved the procurement of defence equipment worth **Rs.1.5 lakh crores** such as **97 new LCA Mk 1A fighter aircraft** and the indigenous upgrade of 84 Su-30 MKI combat planes.

7. In which state ‘The Hump World War-II (WW-II) Museum’ was inaugurated in November 2023?

1) Maharashtra

2) Himachal Pradesh

3) Arunachal Pradesh

4) Assam

5) West Bengal

Answer- 3) Arunachal Pradesh

Explanation:

Pema Khandu, Chief Minister (CM) of Arunachal Pradesh along with Eric Garcetti, Ambassador of the United States of America(USA) to India inaugurated '**The Hump World War-II (WW-II) Museum**' in Pasighat, East Siang district of **Arunachal Pradesh**.

- i. This 2nd of its kind museum in Asia is dedicated to the fallen airmen of the Allied forces who participated in the 'Hump' airlift during WWII. The Hump Museum is named after the Hump route, a treacherous air route from Assam (India) to Yunnan (China).
- ii. The route traverses regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tibet, Yunnan and Myanmar. Around 650 aircraft crashed during 1942-45 on missions over this territory

8. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the 'National Compilation on Dynamic Ground Water Resources of India, 2023' released by the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) in December 2023?

- A) The Total Annual Groundwater Recharge is 449.08 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM), an increase of 11.48 BCM from 437.6 BCM (2022).
- B) The Annual Extractable Ground Water Resources is 407.21 BCM, showing an increase from 398.08 BCM in 2022.
- C) Out of the total 6553 assessment units (Blocks/ Mandals/ Talukas) in the country, 736 units in various States/ UTs (11.23%) have been categorized as 'Over-exploited' indicating ground water extraction exceeding the annually replenishable ground water recharge.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

The Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Ministry of Jal Shakti (**MoJS**) released the '**National Compilation on Dynamic Ground Water Resources Of India, 2023**' whose assessment was carried out jointly by Central Ground Water Board (**CGWB**) and States/UTs for taking suitable interventions by various stake-holders.

- CGWB works under the aegis of Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, MoJS.
- i. The **Total Annual Groundwater Recharge** is **449.08 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM)**, an increase of 11.48 BCM from 437.6 BCM (2022).
 - The major increase is noticed in the States of West Bengal (WB), Assam, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Bihar.
 - ii. The **Annual Extractable Ground Water Resources** is **407.21 BCM**, showing an increase from 398.08 BCM in 2022.
 - iii. Out of the total 6553 assessment units (Blocks/ Mandals/ Talukas) in the country, 736 units in various States/ UTs (**11.23%**) have been **categorized as 'Over-exploited'** indicating ground water extraction exceeding the annually replenishable ground water recharge.

These units are mostly concentrated in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Western Uttar Pradesh (UP), Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

9. In December 2023, the high-level central committee, headed by Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah, approved the Recovery and Reconstruction (R&R) plan of Rs 1,658 crore for _____ (city/district).

- 1) Jorhat, Assam
- 2) Chamba, Himachal Pradesh
- 3) Joshimath, Uttarakhand
- 4) Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir
- 5) Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand

Answer- 3) Joshimath, Uttarakhand

Explanation:

The **high-level central committee**, headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has approved the Recovery and Reconstruction (R&R) plan of Rs 1,658 crore for **Joshimath in Uttarakhand**, which was affected by landslides and land subsidence.

i. About Joshimath's Natural Disaster:

- Joshimath, a hill town in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, suffered a land subsidence (sink) of about 5.4 cm in the 12 days from December 27, 2022, to January 8, 2023.
- After this incident, Joshimath has been declared a landslide-subsidence zone by the Uttarakhand government. Land subsidence is a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to removal or displacement of subsurface earth materials.

ii. About the recovery plan for Joshimath:

- The recovery plan for Joshimath will be implemented in three years, following best practices, Build Back Better (BBB) principles, and sustainability initiatives.

10. In December 2023, _____ is set to become the first Airport in India to introduce the Computer Tomography X-ray (CTX) machine for effortless screening experience.

- 1) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport
- 2) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport
- 3) Kempegowda International Airport
- 4) Indira Gandhi International Airport
- 5) Chennai International Airport

Answer- 3) Kempegowda International Airport

Explanation:

The **Kempegowda International Airport (KIA)** in Bengaluru, Karnataka, is set to become the **first Airport in India** to introduce the Computer Tomography X-ray (CTX) machine to eliminate the need for removing personal electronic devices from handbags during pre-boarding security checks.

i. KIA operator Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) has initiated a trial run for the CTX machine.

ii. The CTX system will allow the passengers to leave electronic devices, such as laptops, and items categorized as Liquids, Aerosols, and Gels (LAGs), in their bags, expediting the **screening process**.

11. According to the GoI report 'The Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' released in December 2023, India reduced its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) emission intensity by _____ between 2005 and 2019.

- 1) 22%
- 2) 33%

3) 52%

4) 44%

5) 25%

Answer- **2) 33%**

Explanation:

According to a Government report titled 'The Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change', **India** reduced its Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) **emission** intensity by **33%** between **2005** and **2019**. This was 11 years ahead of the target.

i. India's average rate of emission reduction increased from 1.5% annually during 2014 – 2016 to 3% annually from 2016 – 2019. This is the fastest recorded rate of reduction so far across any country.

ii. India created an additional carbon sink of 1.97 Billion tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) equivalent during this period.

- However, India's total emissions (including the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector) have increased by 4.56% with respect to 2016.

iii. The energy sector accounted for the maximum share of anthropogenic emissions (75.81%), followed by agriculture (13.44%), Industrial Process and Product Use (8.41%), and waste (2.34%).

12. According to 'Q3 2023 Mercom India Rooftop Solar Report' released by Mercom India Research in December 2023, the rooftop solar installations in India registered a 34.7% year-on-year (YoY) jump to _____ MegaWatt (MW) in the third quarter (Q3- July-September) of 2023.

1) 490

2) 289

3) 431

4) 302

5) 351

Answer- **3) 431**

Explanation:

According to '**Q3 2023 Mercom India Rooftop Solar Report**' released by Mercom India Research, the rooftop solar installations in India registered a **34.7%** year-on-year (YoY) jump to **431 MegaWatt (MW)** in the **third quarter (Q3- July-September)** of calendar year (CY) **2023**.

- With this India's cumulative rooftop solar capacity reached 10.1 GigaWatts (GW) at the end of September 2023.
- Rooftop solar installations saw a significant increase in the first nine months (January – September) of 2023, reaching 1.3 GW, compared to 1.2 GW in the same period of 2022.
- As far as Q3 of 2022 is concerned, the installation capacity was at 320 MW.

i. Gujarat retained its top position in rooftop solar installations, contributing 26.7% to the cumulative installations, followed by Maharashtra (13.5%) and Rajasthan (8.3%).

- As of September 2023, the top 10 states collectively accounted for ~77% of the cumulative rooftop solar installations.

ii. Between Q3 2022 and Q3 2023, Kerala recorded the highest compounded growth of 15%, followed by Gujarat(7.3%) and Maharashtra (5.1%).

13. In which Indian city, the world's first portable hospital, the 'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube' was unveiled in November 2023?

- 1) New Delhi, Delhi
- 2) Mumbai, Maharashtra
- 3) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- 4) Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- 5) Gurugram, Haryana

Answer- 5) Gurugram, Haryana

Explanation:

The **world's first portable hospital**, the 'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube,' which can be set up within one hour of arriving at the emergency site to treat the injured, was **unveiled in Gurugram, Haryana.**

- i.** It was designed indigenously under **Project BHISHM** (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri).
- ii.** The modular trauma management and aid system is made up of 72 detachable mini-cubes, each being a specialised station for emergency response and humanitarian efforts.

14. In December 2023, _____ became the 1st state in the country to get the highest number of Geographical Indication (GI) tags (18) in a single day.

- 1) Assam
- 2) Jharkhand
- 3) Uttar Pradesh
- 4) Uttarakhand
- 5) Madhya Pradesh

Answer- 4) Uttarakhand

Explanation:

18 products of Uttarakhand including 12 agricultural goods, 4 Handi-craft goods, 1 food-stuff and 1 manufactured goods received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- Uttarakhand has become the **1st state in the country** to get the highest number of **18 GI tags in a single day.**
 - Chief Minister (CM) of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami officially distributed GI certificates to 18 products.
- i.** With these [18 new products](#), the total number of GI products in Uttarakhand has become **27.**
 - ii.** The 9 products from Uttarakhand – Tejpat, Basmati Rice, Aipan Art, White Rajma of Munsiyari, Ringal craft, Thulma, Bhotiya, Chiura Oil and Copper products have already received GI tag

15. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the Crime in India – 2022 report released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in December 2023?

A) A total of 58,24,946 cognisable crimes which includes 35,61,379 Indian Penal Code(IPC) crimes and 22,63,567 Special & Local laws(SLL) crimes were registered in 2022.

B) The crime rate registered per lakh population has declined from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022 and shows a decline of 4.5% in registration of cases compared to 2021.

C) Hyderabad (Telangana) emerged as the safest city in India for the 3rd consecutive year among major metropolises.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B

- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- **2) Only A & B**

Explanation:

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released its annual report titled "Crime in India – 2022". The report shows that a total of **58,24,946 cognisable crimes** which includes 35,61,379 Indian Penal Code(IPC) crimes and 22,63,567 Special & Local laws(SLL) crimes were registered in 2022.

- It shows a decline of **4.5% in registration of cases** compared to 2021.
- The crime rate registered per lakh population has declined from **445.9** in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.
- This (2022) is the 70th edition of Crime in India, the annual report published by NCRB.
- Kerala, Puducherry and West Bengal have witnessed the highest charge sheeting rates under IPC crimes.
- According to the NCRB report, **Kolkata (West Bengal)** emerged as the **safest city** in India for the **3rd consecutive year** among major metropolises. Kolkata has witnessed a drop in the number of cases of cognizable offences per lakh people from 103.4(2021) to 86.5(2022).
- Kolkata is followed by Pune (Maharashtra) (280.7 cases) and Hyderabad (Telangana) (299.2 cases) as the 2nd and 3rd safest cities in India.
- Overall, 1.70 lakh suicides were reported in 2022, which was 4.2% higher than (1.64 lakh cases) in 2021.
- A total of 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were registered in 2022. It shows an increase of 4% compared to 2021.

16. Name the ministry that has recently (in Dec '23) collaborated with Indian Army (IA) to infuse cutting-edge technology and digital infrastructure into the core of the Indian Army's operational framework.

- 1) Ministry of Science and Technology
- 2) Ministry of Home Affairs
- 3) Ministry of Communications
- 4) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- 5) Ministry of Education

Answer- **4) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**

Explanation:

Indian Army (**IA**) and the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** collaborated to infuse cutting-edge technology and digital infrastructure into the core of the Indian Army's operational framework.

- i.** The collaboration is rooted in a 'Whole of the Nation' approach.
- ii.** The partnership aims to establish indigenous fifth Generation (**5G**) labs and plans to designate the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering in Madhya Pradesh as a sixth generation (6G) test bed, to drive technological advancements.

17. Which of the following is/are 'Incorrect' with respect to cabinet approval on 8th December 2023?

A) The Union cabinet made it mandatory to pack 100% of food grains and 50% of sugar in jute bags.

B) The Union cabinet has approved an additional allocation of Rs.2500 Cr for the continuation of the Interest Equalisation Scheme till 30th June 2024.

C) The Interest Equalisation Scheme will be jointly monitored by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

1) Only A

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- 1) Only A

Explanation:

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, approved the following

i. Reservation norm for mandatory use of jute in Packaging for jute year 2023-24 under the Jute Packaging Material (JPM) Act, 1987.

- The Mandatory packaging norms provide for 100% reservation of the foodgrains and **20%** of sugar to be compulsorily packed in **jute bags**.

ii. Additional allocation of Rs.2500 Cr for the continuation of the **Interest Equalisation Scheme** till 30th June 2024. This initiative allows exporters, MSME manufacturer exporters, to avail the pre- and post-shipment Rupee export credit at competitive interest rates.

- The scheme shall be implemented by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) through various Public and non-Public Sector banks who provide pre and post shipment credit to the exporters. The Scheme is jointly monitored by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and RBI.

18. The government of India (GoI) has approved the first urban flood mitigation project of Rs. _____ crore (in Dec'23) for the 'Integrated Urban Flood Management Activities for Chennai Basin Project'

1) 972.32

2) 325.83

3) 561.29

4) 631.14

5) 142.85

Answer- 3) 561.29

Explanation:

The government of India (GoI) has approved the first urban flood mitigation project of **Rs. 561.29 crore** for the '**Integrated Urban Flood Management Activities for Chennai Basin Project**' under the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF), which also includes central assistance of Rs. 500 crore.

i. Government of India has directed the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to release in advance the central share of the 2nd installment of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) of Rs 493.60 crore to

Andhra Pradesh and Rs 450 crore to Tamil Nadu to help state governments with the management of relief necessitated by the **Cyclone Michaung**.

19. Which ministry has organised 1st Indian Art, Architecture, and Design Biennale 2023 (IAADB' 23) from 9th to 15th December 2023 at Red Fort in New Delhi, Delhi?

- 1) Ministry of Culture
- 2) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
- 3) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
- 4) Ministry of Minority Affairs
- 5) Ministry of Rural Development

Answer- **1) Ministry of Culture**

Explanation:

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi inaugurated the **1st Indian Art, Architecture, and Design Biennale 2023 (IAADB'23)**, which is being organized by the Ministry of Culture from 9th to 15th December 2023 at Red Fort in **New Delhi, Delhi**.

i. The event brings together artists, designers, and architects from India to showcase innovations in art, design, and architecture.

ii. During the program, the PM inaugurated the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design' and the student Biennale- Samunnati. He also launched a Commemorative Stamp.

20. _____ edition of the Hornbill festival was concluded recently (in Dec' 2023) in Nagaland.

- 1) 23rd
- 2) 25th
- 3) 22nd
- 4) 24th
- 5) 21st

Answer- **4) 24th**

Explanation:

The **24th edition** of the **Hornbill Festival** was held from 1st to 10th December 2023 in Naga Heritage Village of Kisama located at a distance of 12 km from Kohima, in **Nagaland**. The festival is annually organised by the Government of Nagaland.

i. Hornbill Festival, referred as '**Festival of Festivals**' is annually celebrated in Nagaland to encourage inter-tribal interaction and to preserve, protect and revive the uniqueness and richness of the Naga heritage.

21. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the 2nd edition of International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)'s InFinity Forum 2.0 held in December 2023?

A) Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated and addressed the InFinity Forum 2.0, the 2nd Edition IFSCA's flagship financial technology event, held at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

B) GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services is the theme of InFinity Forum 2.0.

C) During the event, MoUs were exchanged by IFSCA with Ahmedabad University of Gujarat and Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), for mutual collaboration.

- 1) All A, B & C
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) Only A

Answer- **1) All A, B & C**

Explanation:

On 9th December 2023, Prime Minister **(PM) Narendra Modi** virtually inaugurated and addressed the **InFinity Forum 2.0**, the 2nd Edition International Financial Services Centres Authority **(IFSCA)**'s flagship financial technology event, held at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- IFSCA under the aegis of Government of India and GIFT City is the Organiser of the event and Bloomberg is International partner.
- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI); Invest India; Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) are Domestic Partners of the event. Boston Consulting Group is a Knowledge Partner.
- **Theme:** 'GIFT-IFSC: Nerve Centre for New Age Global Financial Services'
- Objective: To unite the world's leading minds in policy, business, and technology to explore and advance the biggest ideas in finance and technology and to develop those ideas into global solutions and opportunities.
- During the event, Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were exchanged by IFSCA with Ahmedabad University of Gujarat and Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), for mutual collaboration.

22. As of December 2023, India's first bullet train terminal was built at the Sabarmati Multimodal transport hub in _____ (city).

- 1) New Delhi, Delhi
- 2) Indore, Madhya Pradesh
- 3) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- 4) Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- 5) Nagpur, Maharashtra

Answer- **4) Ahmedabad, Gujarat**

Explanation:

According to Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Ministry of Railways (MoR), India's first bullet train terminal was built at the Sabarmati Multimodal transport hub in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.

i. The terminal is equipped with state-of-the-art and modern features, and it will host the inaugural bullet train which is scheduled to operate between Ahmedabad and Mumbai (Maharashtra).

- The foundation stone for India's Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project was laid in 2017.
- ii. National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), a 'Special Purpose Vehicle' was incorporated to finance, construct, maintain, and manage the High-Speed Rail Corridor in India.

23. As per the report 'Women Empowerment & Ladli Behna_Dec23' released by the State Bank of India's (SBI) Economic Research Department (ERD) in December 2023, women voters in India will surpass male voters from the _____ General Election onwards.

- 1) 2044
- 2) 2024
- 3) 2034
- 4) 2029
- 5) 2039

Answer- **4) 2029**

Explanation:

On December 14, 2023, the State Bank of India's (SBI) Economic Research Department (ERD) released a report titled 'Women Empowerment & Ladli Behna_Dec23' which states that women voters in India will surpass male voters from the **2029** General Election onwards.

- In 2029, the total voter turnout is expected to be **73 crores** of which **women voters** will be at **37 crore**, which will be higher than the registered **men voters at 36 crore**.
- The report projects that the total voter turnout in the 2024 general election will be around 68 crores of which 33 crore (49%) will be women.
- ERD projects that in **2047** (probable election year 2049), women voter turnout should increase to 55% and men voter turnout might decrease to 45%.
- It is projected that in 2047, around 115 crore would be registered electors.
- The voter turnout is projected to be at 80% (92 crore), with women outnumbering men (50.6 crore women, 41.4 crore men).

24. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the report "Logistics Cost in India: Assessment and Long-Term Framework" released in December 2023?

A) The Logistics Division of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) launched a report which was prepared by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), along with Asian Development Bank (ADB) experts and task force members.

B) India's logistic costs ranged between 7.9% and 9.0% during 2021-22, down from 8.2-9.9% during 2011-12.

C) The report recommends a hybrid approach which combines primary and secondary survey data along with real-time Big Data to provide an estimate of logistics cost.

- 1) All A, B & C
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) Only A

Answer- **4) Only A & C**

Explanation:

On 14th December 2023, The Logistics Division of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) launched a report titled "Logistics Cost in India: Assessment and Long-Term Framework" in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The report provides a framework to contribute towards achieving the target of reducing logistics costs in India.

i. The Report was prepared by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (**NCAER**), along with Asian Development Bank (**ADB**) experts and **task force members**.

- It uses available secondary data from the Supply Use Tables and National Account Statistics of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) and the NCAER's 2019 study, "Analysis of India's Logistics Costs".

ii. Findings: **India's logistic costs** ranged between **7.8% and 8.9%** during **2021-22**, down from 8.7-9.9% during 2011-12.

iii. Also the **logistics cost was reduced** from **8.3-9.4% to 7.8-8.8%** during 2014-15 to 2016-17 due to a faster growth in nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than in logistic costs.

iv. Recommendations: The report **recommends** a hybrid approach which combines primary (covering all trade flows, product types, industry trends, Origin-Destination pairs, etc.) and secondary survey data along with real-time Big Data to provide an estimate of logistics cost.

- In order to improve logistics efficiency, the logistics costs should be estimated regularly (preferably annually).
- For this purpose, the process of data collection should be institutionalised.

25. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) report titled 'Coal 2023-Analysis and forecast to 2026' released in December 2023, Indian coal demand is expected to rise by _____ annually to 1397 million tonnes (Mt) til 2026.

- 1) 4.0%
- 2) 3.5%
- 3) 3.0%
- 4) 4.2%
- 5) 3.7%

Answer- **2) 3.5%**

Explanation:

According to the International Energy Agency (**IEA**) report titled '**Coal 2023-Analysis and forecast to 2026**', **Indian coal** demand is expected to rise by **3.5%** annually to 1397 million tonnes (Mt) til **2026**. In 2023, the coal demand in India is estimated to have increased by 8% or 98 Mt.

- The **global demand for coal** will rise by 1.4% in 2023, reaching an all time high of about 8536 Mt. The global coal consumption in 2026 is expected to be 2.3% lower than in 2023, in the

absence of governments announcing and implementing stronger clean energy and climate policies.

- In 2022, coal demand reached a new record high of 8 415 Mt, increasing by 4%.
- China, India and Indonesia are the three largest coal producers globally in 2023. They account for more than 70% of the world's coal production.
- In absolute terms, **coal demand in 2023** is estimated to have increased most strongly in China (up 220 Mt, or 4.9%), followed by India (up 98 Mt, or 8%) and Indonesia (up 23 Mt, or 11%).
- The largest declines are expected in the European Union (down 107 Mt, or 23%) and the United States (down 95 Mt, or 21%),
- India aims for 50% non-fossil fuel power by 2030 but may need extra coal capacity to meet growing demand and ensure supply security.
- India's National Electricity Plan aims to add 19-27 GW (Giga Watt) of coal capacity by 2027. With this, the Coal consumption grows by 2.4% in the next three years; renewables increase by 12% annually.

26. Which company has recently (in Dec '23) signed a Rs 5,336.25 crore contract with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to procure electronic fuzes for the Indian Army (IA)?

- 1) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- 2) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- 3) Electronics Corporation of India Limited
- 4) MTAR Technologies Limited
- 5) Bharat Electronics Limited

Answer- **5) Bharat Electronics Limited**

Explanation:

On December 15, 2023, the Ministry of Defence (**MoD**) signed a 10-year **contract** worth Rs 5,336.25 crore with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** to procure electronic fuzes for the Indian Army (IA).

i. This contract has been signed for ammunition procurement under 'Manufacture of Ammunition for Indian Army by Indian Industry' as a part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision.

ii. Electronic Fuzes will be manufactured by the BEL at its Pune, Maharashtra and upcoming Nagpur Plant, Maharashtra.

iii. Aim: To attain self-sufficiency in ammunition production, minimize imports, acquire critical technologies, and secure stock during supply chain disruptions.

27. Which company has recently (in Dec '23) collaborated with the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications (India) to launch a customised Stamp and a special cover?

- 1) Anglo American plc
- 2) Alcoa Corporation
- 3) Rio Tinto
- 4) Glencore plc
- 5) Teck Resources

Answer- **3) Rio Tinto**

Explanation:

Rio Tinto, a British-Australian multinational metals and mining company, has launched a customised '**My Stamp**' and a **special cover** called '**Rio Tinto 150**' in collaboration with the **Department of Posts**, Ministry of Communications, Government of India.

- The stamp commemorates the **150th anniversary of Rio Tinto** which was founded in 1873.
- Ashok Kumar, Postmaster General, Delhi Circle released the stamp & special cover in the presence of H.E. Mr. Philip Green OAM, the High Commissioner of Australia to India.
 - The cover features 6 blocks of images with the Rio Tinto 150 logo, it captures the essence of Rio Tinto's products that are integral to everyday life.

28. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the Cabinet approval on 15th December 2023?

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to declare Surat Airport as an International Airport.**
- The Union Cabinet also approved the MoU signed between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), India and the Ministry of Information, Communication and IT of Spain on cooperation in the field of sharing successful digital solutions.**
- Cabinet Approved the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between MeitY of India and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on cooperation in the field of Digitization and Electronic Manufacturing.**

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- **4) Only A & C**

Explanation:

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the following [proposals on 15th December 2023](#):

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to declare **Surat Airport** as an **International Airport**.
- The Union cabinet chaired by prime minister Narendra Modi was notified about a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) of the Republic of **India** and the Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology of the United Republic of **Tanzania** on cooperation in the field of sharing successful Digital Solutions implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.
- The cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was notified of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between **MeitY** of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia** on cooperation in the field of Digitization and Electronic Manufacturing
- The union cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister approved the draft MOU between the United States of America (USA) and the Republic of India to 'enhance innovation ecosystems through an innovation handshake'.
- The Union cabinet chaired by the prime minister approved the signing of the MOU between the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry of the Republic of India, and the Directorate General for the Protection of Industrial Property- Italian Patent and Trademark Office of the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy of the Italian Republic on Cooperation in the field of Industrial Property Rights (IPR).

29. In December 2023, Union Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju launched '1st Indian Winter Expedition to Arctic' to expand India's scientific activities to other critical and core Arctic realms.

The expedition is facilitated under _____ scheme of Ministry of Earth Sciences, through the aegis of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa.

- 1) Seismological Research
- 2) Atmospheric Processes, Modelling and Services
- 3) Ocean Science and Services
- 4) Polar Science and Cryosphere Research
- 5) Polar Climate Change Research

Answer- 4) Polar Science and Cryosphere Research

Explanation:

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has launched '1st Indian Winter Expedition to Arctic' to expand India's scientific activities to other critical and core Arctic realms, in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The expedition is **facilitated** under Polar Science and Cryosphere Research (**PACER**) **scheme** of MoES, through the aegis of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa.
- i.** The Arctic winter expedition comprised four scientists from NCPOR, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi (Himachal Pradesh); Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM – Pune, Maharashtra) and Raman Research Institute(RRI – Bengaluru, Karnataka).
 - ii.** The expedition aims to make atmospheric observations in Earth's North Pole during the winter (November to March) night and carry out auroral studies and changes in sea ice.
 - With the launch of Winter Expedition, India will have a year-long presence at Himadri.
 - It also aims to establish a network of observatories to study 'land-sea-atmosphere-cryosphere' interactions.

30. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the recent launch made by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways(MoRTH) in December 2023?

A) Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Jairam Gadkari launched 'DigiELV', an authorised End of Life Vehicle (ELV) Certificate of Deposit (CD) Trading Platform.

B) DigiELV, developed by Meta Materials Circular Markets (MMCM) and authorized by the MoRTH, offers a platform for the users to lawfully trade CDs.

C) The Union minister also launched the Automotive Circularity Orchestrator by MMCM in New Delhi, Delhi.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

Union Minister **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) launched '**DigiELV**', an authorised End of Life Vehicle (**ELV**) Certificate of Deposit (**CD**) **Trading Platform**, and **Automotive Circularity Orchestrator** by Meta Materials Circular Markets (**MMCM**) in New Delhi, Delhi.

- DigiELV, developed by **MMCM** and authorized by the MoRTH, offers a platform for the users to lawfully trade CDs.
- The ACO addresses global environmental concerns by fostering collaboration among consumers, manufacturers, and recyclers.

- i. The launch event was organised by MMCM in collaboration with the Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI) and Policy Times Chamber of Commerce (PTCC).
- ii. The launch is in line with India's commitment to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the transport sector.

31. As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in December 2023, the Unemployment Rate (UR) for graduates aged 15 and above declined to ____ in July 2022- June 2023.

- 1) 13.4%
- 2) 10.4%
- 3) 11.3%
- 4) 12.8%
- 5) 14.2%

Answer- **1) 13.4%**

Explanation:

As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (**PLFS**) by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the Unemployment Rate (**UR**) for graduates aged 15 and above **declined to 13.4% in 2022-2023** (July 2022 and June 2023) from 14.9% in July 2021-June 2022.

- Chandigarh and Delhi had the lowest URs for graduates, at 5.6% and 5.7% respectively.
- The highest unemployment is in Andaman & Nicobar Island at 33%, followed by Ladakh at 26.5% and Andhra Pradesh (AP) at 24%.
- This information was part of the 6th annual report on the basis of the PLFS conducted during July 2022-June 2023 by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- Among larger states, the unemployment rate was high in Rajasthan at 23.1% and in Odisha at 21.9%.

32. In December 2023, Union Minister of Mines Pralhad Joshi launched the National Geoscience Data _____ (NGDR) Portal & the Roadshow on Critical Minerals in New Delhi, Delhi.

- 1) Radio
- 2) Rate
- 3) Record
- 4) Report
- 5) Repository

Answer- **5) Repository**

Explanation:

On 19th December 2023, Union Minister **Pralhad Joshi**, Ministry of Mines (MoM), launched the National Geoscience Data Repository (**NGDR**) Portal, and the **Roadshow on Critical Minerals** in New Delhi, Delhi.

- NGDR is a flagship initiative of the MoM created as a part of the National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP), 2016.
- The initiative aims to increase the investment attractiveness of the mining sector in India.
- It is spearheaded by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N).
- The Objective of Roadshow on Critical Minerals to guide the potential bidders regarding the auction process of critical & strategic mineral blocks.

33. On 11th December 2023, Union Minister of AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal, released a commemorative postal stamp to mark the first foundation day of the _____ (Institute).

- 1) National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM), Karnataka
- 2) Institute of Teaching & Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Gujarat
- 3) National Institute Of Ayurveda (NIA), Rajasthan
- 4) All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa
- 5) National Institute of Homeopathy (NIH), West Bengal

Answer- 4) All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa

Explanation:

On 11th December 2023, Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**, Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) has released a commemorative postal stamp to mark the **first foundation day** of the All India Institute of Ayurveda (**AIIA**), **Goa**.

- **AIIA, Goa** was inaugurated on 11th December 2022.
- AIIA is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Ayush which aims to bring synergy between the traditional wisdom of Ayurveda and modern tools and technology.
- The event was jointly organised by the AIIA and India Post at the Transport Bhawan in New Delhi, Delhi.

34. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the 5th LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) 2023 Survey Report released by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal in December 2023?

- A) 13 states and UTs (11 States and two UTs) categorized have been named as ‘achievers’ in the LEADS [Logistics Ease Across Different States] 2023 report**
- B) Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are categorized as achievers among the Coastal states in the 5th LEADS 2023 Survey Report.**
- C) Haryana, Punjab, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh are categorized as achievers among the Landlocked States in the 5th LEADS 2023 Survey Report.**

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (**MOCI**) released the **5th LEADS** (Logistics Ease Across Different States) **2023 Survey Report** in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The report was released in the presence of Smt. Sumita Dawra, Special Secretary (Logistics), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Mr. Sajiv Puri, President-Designate of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) & MD ITC, and Mr. Mihir Shah, Partner, Ernst & Young.
- LEADS 2023 categorizes States based on their geographic demographics into 4 categories viz. Landlocked Group, Coastal Group, north-eastern Group and UTs Group.
- 13 states and UTs (11 States and two UTs) categorized as achievers, 10 (7 states and 3 UTs) are fast movers, and 13 (10 states and 3UTs) are aspirers.

i. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are categorized as **achievers** among the Coastal states in the 5th LEADS 2023 Survey Report.

ii. Haryana, Punjab, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh are categorized as achievers among the Landlocked States in the 5th LEADS 2023 Survey Report.

iii. The Union Minister also stated that the logistics sector will play a major role in increasing its growth 10 times from USD 3.5 trillion to USD 35 trillion by 2047.

- A total of 7,321 responses were received across 36 States/ Union territories (UTs) and additionally, 750 stakeholder consultations, facilitated by National, Regional, and State Associations, significantly contributed to this comprehensive evaluation.

35. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the 1st edition of National Quantum Science and Technology Symposium (NQSTS 2023) held at New Delhi, Delhi in December 2023?

A) Quantum Ecosystems and Technology Council of India (QETCI) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) jointly organised the 1st edition of NQSTS 2023.

B) QETCI released the Quantum Value Chain Report for India and Quantum Security Whitepaper for the Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) Segment.

C) QETCI and the Bengaluru Science and Technology (BeST) Cluster, Bengaluru (Karnataka) signed an MoU for strategic partnerships to accelerate research and adoption of Quantum Technology.

1) Only A

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

Quantum Ecosystems and Technology Council of India (**QETCI**) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) jointly organised the 1st edition of National Quantum Science and Technology Symposium (**NQSTS 2023**) at the Scope Convention Centre in New Delhi, Delhi from 14th to 15th December 2023.

- During the event, QETCI **released** the Quantum Value Chain Report for India and Quantum Security Whitepaper for the Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) Segment

i. NQSTS 2023 Objective: To stimulate the nation's quantum ecosystem and create opportunities for collaboration in utilising quantum technology for real-world problem-solving.

ii. QETCI and the Bengaluru Science and Technology (BeST) Cluster, Bengaluru (Karnataka) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strategic partnerships to accelerate research and adoption of Quantum Technology.

- The report was developed through a 6-month policy research project by QETCI.

36. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the Offshore Wind Energy Lease Rules 2023, new regulations for the lease of sites of offshore wind projects notified by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in December 2023?

A) The Lease shall be valid for a period of 3-year for conducting resource measurements and surveys and it can be extended for an additional 2 years. The lease expires after 5 years.

B) Post expiry of the lease, the lessee should submit the survey data to the National Institute of Wind Energy(NIWE), unless they have started the work to set up wind energy capacity.

C) The lease shall be further extended for a period of 25 years for construction and operation of the project.

- 1) All A, B & C
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) Only A

Answer- **2) Only A & B**

Explanation:

On 19th December 2023, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) notified " **Offshore Wind Energy Lease Rules 2023**", new regulations for the lease of sites of offshore wind projects.

Term of Lease:

- i. According to the new rules, the **Lease** shall be valid for a period of **3-year** for conducting resource measurements and surveys and it can be extended for an additional 2 years. The lease expires after 5 years.
- ii. Post expiry of the lease, the lessee should submit the survey data to the National Institute of Wind Energy(NIWE), unless they have started the work to set up wind energy capacity.
- iii. The lease shall be further extended for a period of **35 years** for construction and operation of the project. This can be further extended on a case to case basis based on the functional viability and safety of the project.
 - Lease Area: 25 square kilometres (Sq Km) to 500 sq km (based on the project)
 - Refundable Security Deposits: Rs 1 lakh per MegaWatt(MW) for wind energy project and Rs 50,000 per MW for wind transmission project.
 - The deposit amount will be returned upon successful project operation and decommissioning.

37. Which company has recently (in Dec '23) received orders worth Rs 2,673 crore for the supply of 14 types of sensors for use on Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPV) from Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Limited?

- 1) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- 2) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- 3) Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited

4) Electronics Corporation of India Limited

5) Bharat Electronics Limited

Answer- **5) Bharat Electronics Limited**

Explanation:

Bengaluru (Karnataka) Based **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, a Navratna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), has received orders worth **Rs 2,673 crore** for the supply of 14 types of sensors for use on Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (**NGOPV**).

- Order Details: BEL has received the order from Goa based Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for Rs 1701 crore and from Kolkata(West Bengal) based Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Limited for Rs 972 crore.

Note: Both GSL and GRSE are 'Miniratna Central Public Sector Undertaking' under MoD.

38. Which of the following points is/are "Incorrect" with respect to 11th edition of the India skills Report (ISR) titled 'India Skills Report 2024: Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Skills, Work, Mobility' released in December 2023?

- 1) Kerala emerged as the most preferred State to work for both male and female employable talent.
- 2) Bengaluru(Karnataka) emerged as the most preferred area to work for women employable talent followed by Chennai(Tamil Nadu) and New Delhi(Delhi).
- 3) The report was prepared by Wheebox (a talent assessment agency) with the theme 'Impact of AI on the Future of Work, Skilling, and Mobility'.
- 4) Haryana has the highest employable youth concentration at 76.47% whereas UP has the highest talent concentration in the 22-25 age group with 74.77%.
- 5) Pune (80.82%) ranked 1st among the cities with employable talent in the age group of 18-21, followed by Bengaluru (72.18%) and Thiruvananthapuram (67.22%).

Answer- **2) Bengaluru(Karnataka) emerged as most preferred area to work for women employable talent followed by Chennai(Tamil Nadu) and New Delhi(Delhi).**

Explanation:

11th edition of the India skills Report (**ISR**) titled '**India Skills Report 2024: Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Skills, Work, Mobility**' was released on 20th December 2023 and Kerala(followed by Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh) have emerged as the most preferred State to work for both male and female employable talent.

i.Kochi(Kerala) emerged as most preferred area to work for women employable talent followed by Bengaluru(Karnataka) and Trivandrum(Kerala).

ii.The Indian Artificial Intelligence (**AI**) industry is projected to reach USD 28.8 billion by 2025, with a notable Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 45%.

iii.Overall employability in India has increased to **51.25%** among surveyed youth with the necessary skills.

iv.In terms of large talent availability, States with the highest concentration of highly employable youth are **Haryana**, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (AP), Uttar Pradesh (UP), Kerala, and Telangana.

39. In December 2023, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya virtually launched MedTech Mitra, a strategic initiative to empower MedTech innovators and advance healthcare solutions.

Which of the following Government agencies/apex/ regulatory bodies have initiated the MedTech Mitra?

- 1) NITI Aayog
- 2) Indian Council of Medical Research
- 3) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
- 4) Both 1 & 2
- 5) All 1, 2 & 3

Answer- **5) All 1, 2 & 3**

Explanation:

Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), virtually launched **MedTech Mitra**, a strategic initiative to empower MedTech innovators and advance healthcare solutions.

- It is a collaborative initiative of the **NITI Aayog**(National Institution for Transforming India); **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**; and **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)**.

i. About MedTech Mitra:

- Objective: The collaborative efforts aim to boost indigenous development, fostering affordable and quality MedTech devices and diagnostics, thereby reducing import dependence in the MedTech sector.
- Note: India's MedTech sector is currently heavily import-dependent (80%).

ii. MedTech Mitra plays a pivotal role in strengthening India's commitment to Universal Health Coverage (UHC), its objective is to extend healthcare services to even the remotest corners of India to become an integral aspect of Viksit Bharat.

- The initiative aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat, aiming to transform India's health landscape by 2047.

40. According to "India's Crypto Portfolio 2023" report released by CoinSwitch in December 2023, which Indian city has topped India's crypto adoption (measured in terms of value invested) in 2023?

- 1) Pune, Maharashtra
- 2) Hyderabad, Telangana
- 3) New Delhi, Delhi
- 4) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- 5) Mumbai, Maharashtra

Answer- **3) New Delhi, Delhi**

Explanation:

According to "**India's Crypto Portfolio 2023**", the annual investor report of **CoinSwitch**, India's largest crypto trading platform, **Delhi** tops India's crypto adoption (measured in terms of value invested) in 2023.

- **New Delhi (Delhi)** accounted for 8.8% of total crypto investment followed by Bengaluru (Karnataka) with 8.3% and Mumbai (Maharashtra) with 5.2%.
- These three metros accounted for more than 20% of the total crypto investment in India.

i. Top Indian cities:

- Hyderabad (Telangana) accounted for 3.8% of India's Crypto adoption followed by Pune (Maharashtra) with 2.7%; Gurgaon (Haryana) with 2.2%; Thane (Maharashtra) with 2%; Jaipur (Rajasthan) with 1.9% ; Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh) with 1.7% ; Lucknow (UP) with 1.5% and others accounted for 62%.

ii. Crypto coins:

- Bitcoin, the most prominent crypto, is up by more than 150% year on year, compared to December 2022.
- The report stated that Dogecoin (DOGE), is the most popular coin for retail investors. DOGE accounted for 11.1% of total invested value, followed by Bitcoin (8.5%) and Ethereum (6.4%).
- Solana (SOL) was the best-performing crypto asset with a 633% (As of 20 Dec 2022) rise in 12 months.

41. According to the report titled "PwC Global Risk Survey 2023 – India highlights" released in December 2023, _____ tops as the biggest threat faced by the Indian organisations.

- 1) Macroeconomic volatility risks
- 2) Climate change risks
- 3) Cyber risks
- 4) Inflation risks
- 5) Digital and Technology risks

Answer- 3) Cyber risks

Explanation:

According to the report titled "PwC Global Risk Survey 2023 – India highlights", **Cyber risks tops** as the **biggest threat faced** by the **Indian organisations**. Around 38% of respondents are feeling highly or extremely exposed to cyber risk.

- Climate change (37%) and inflation (36%) were the 2nd and 3rd biggest threats for Indian organisations. Cyber risk was ranked 3rd in the 2022 survey.
- Globally, business leaders considered inflation (39%) as the biggest threat followed by cyber (37%), macroeconomic volatility (33%), and digital and technology risks (32%).

About the Survey:

- Aim: To capture views on the top risks faced by organizations across different industries in 2023.
- Assessment: The final result of the survey is based on 3,910 responses from business and risk management leaders across 67 territories.
- 163 Indian organizations were a part of this survey.

Note:

- PwC refers to PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited.
- PwC India Headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal (WB) while PwC Global headquartered in London, United Kingdom (UK).

42. In December 2023, Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Raj Kumar Singh (RK Singh) informed that the cumulative Rooftop Solar (RTS) installed capacity increased to _____ Gigawatts (GW) (as of 30th November 2023).

- 1) 6.230
- 2) 10.406

3) 9.342

4) 8.790

5) 7.239

Answer- **2) 10.406**

Explanation:

Union Minister Raj Kumar Singh(RK Singh), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy(MNRE), informed that the cumulative Rooftop Solar (RTS) installed capacity increased to **10.406 Gigawatts (GW)** (as of 30th November 2023) from 1.8 GW (as of 31st March 2019).

- The Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of RTS installations is around 46%.
- With 3.2 GW of RTS installed capacity(30% of the total installed capacity), **Gujarat** has emerged as the **leader** in the **RTS segment**.
- Gujarat is followed by Maharashtra with 1.85 GW and Rajasthan with 1.06 GW capacity.

i. In 2015, the government of India approved the Grid Connected Rooftop and Small Solar Power Plants Programme to install 4,200 megawatt (MW) PTS plants in India by the year 2019-20.

- The RTS programme was extended till March 2026.

43. In which state/UT, the first-ever week-long winter carnival was inaugurated in December 2023?

1) Uttarakhand

2) Ladakh

3) Jammu and Kashmir

4) Sikkim

5) Himachal Pradesh

Answer- **5) Himachal Pradesh**

Explanation:

Himachal Pradesh (HP) Chief Minister (CM) Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated the **first-ever week-long winter carnival** at its historic Ridge in Shimla on 25 December 2023. The winter carnival will last up to 5 January 2024 and aims to boost the tourism activities in HP.

- The event started with a cultural parade featuring 450 women presenting Mahanati, showcasing the talent of self-help groups and Anganwadi workers.

i. CM Sukhu also inaugurated the exhibition on the ridge, featuring stalls set up by the District Administration Shimla and various departments

ii. The carnival offers local dishes, laser shows, and various cultural programs, contributing to the celebration of Himachal Pradesh's rich cultural heritage.

44. In December 2023, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Jairam Gadkari announced that the Government of India plans to introduce a Global Positioning System (GPS)-based toll collection system by _____.

1) July 2024

2) April 2024

3) March 2024

4) June 2024

5) May 2024

Answer- **3) March 2024**

Explanation:

Union Minister **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) announced that the **Government of India** plans to introduce a **Global Positioning System (GPS)**-based toll collection system to replace the existing highway toll-collection booths entirely.

- The National Highways Authority of India (**NHAI**) will begin implementing this new system by **March 2024**.

i. Aim: To reduce traffic congestion and institute a system where motorists are charged accurately for the distance travelled on highways.

ii. Pilot Projects with ANPR Systems:

- The MoRTH has successfully conducted 2 pilot projects featuring Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems, specifically automatic number plate reader cameras.
- These trials aim to enable automated toll collection without stopping the vehicles.

45. Name the Foundation/Trust that has recently (in Dec '23) signed an MoU with the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) to strengthen the performance of the Indian leather industry in domestic and international markets.

- 1) Oxfam India
- 2) Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centre
- 3) Akshaya Patra Foundation
- 4) Sreya Foundation
- 5) Care India Trust

Answer- 2) Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centre

Explanation:

Solidaridad Regional Expertise Centre (**SREC**), New Delhi-based Charitable Trust, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with the Council for Leather Exports (**CLE**) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) to strengthen the performance of the **Indian leather industry** in domestic and international markets.

i. The MoU signed in Delhi aims to introduce comprehensive training programmes and enrich the skills and knowledge of 150,000 workers in the leather industry.

ii. The MoU will be effective from 1st January 2024 till 31 December 2028.

Note: CLE has set an ambitious target of USD 47-billion business by 2030 for the Indian leather industry.

46. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the Tansen Samaroh 2023?

A) Tansen Samaroh 2023, the 99th edition of the annual World Music Festival, is being held in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (MP) from 22 to 28 December 2023.

B) A renowned Indian Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Ganpati Bhatt from Karnataka was conferred with the Tansen Samman 2022.

C) Guru Saxena, a renowned poet from Narsinghpur, MP was conferred with the Kavi Pradeep Samman 2022 award for his outstanding contributions to poetry and culture.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

Tansen Samaroh 2023, The 99th edition of the annual World Music Festival, is being held in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (MP)** from 22 to 28 December 2023. The festival also includes the presentation of the Rashtriya Tansen Samman Award, to individuals who have made significant contributions to Hindustani classical music.

- Tansen Samaroh 2023 is organised jointly by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy and the Department Of Culture, Government of MP near the tomb of Tansen and various venues across Gwalior.
 - The music festival is annually organised in the month of December in Gwalior to pay tribute to the Indian musical legend, “father of Hindustani music” Ramtanu Misra, famously known as Mian Tansen.
- i. The Department of Culture of the MP honoured the winners of Rashtriya Tansen Samman 2022; Kavi Pradeep Samman 2022 and Raja Mansingh Tomar Samman 2022. The award ceremony was held at the Tansen Samadhi Parisar, Hazira, Gwalior (MP) on 25 December 2023.
- ii. A renowned Indian Hindustani classical vocalist **Pandit Ganpati Bhatt** from Karnataka was conferred with the **Tansen Samman 2022**.
- iii. **Guru Saxena**, a renowned poet from Narsinghpur, MP was conferred with the **Kavi Pradeep Samman 2022** award for his outstanding contributions to poetry and culture.
- iv. **Malwa Lok Kala Kendra** from Ujjain, MP was conferred with the **Raja Mansingh Tomar Samman 2022** award, for his excellence in arts and culture preservation.

47. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the assent given to the various bills by the President of India Droupadi Murmu in December 2023?

A) The President of India Droupadi Murmu gave assent to three new criminal bills: Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita (BNS2), 2023; Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita(BNSS2), 2023; and Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Adhinyam, 2023.

B) The three new criminal bills will replace the British-colonial era laws: the Indian Penal Code(IPC), 1860; the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act(IEA), 1872 respectively.

C) President of India also gave assent to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023 which repealed the Indian Telegraph Act (2000), the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act (2005).

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 2) Only A & B

Explanation:

On 25th December 2023, the President of India Droupadi Murmu gave assent to **three new criminal bills**: Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita (BNS2), 2023; Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita(BNSS2), 2023; and Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Adhinyam, 2023.

- The **three new criminal bills** will replace the British-colonial era laws: the Indian Penal Code(IPC), 1860; the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act(IEA), 1872 respectively.

- She also gave assent to the **Telecommunications Bill, 2023** and Post Office Bill, 2023.
- i. Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita or BNS2, 2023 replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860.
 - The new bill includes acts endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India; terrorism; Organised crime; kidnapping, extortion and cyber-crime committed on behalf of a crime syndicate and Petty organised crime as an offence.
 - The bill also considers murder by a group of 5 or more persons on grounds of caste, language or personal belief as an offence.
 - Age of criminal responsibility is retained at 7 years.
 - ii. Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita (BNSS2), 2023 replaced the CrPC, 1973. It governs the procedure for investigation, arrest, prosecution and bail for offence.
 - According to CrPC, an accused who has spent half of the maximum period of imprisonment in jail, has the right to get bail. This does not apply to offences punishable by death.
 - As per BNSS2, this provision will also not apply to,
 - i. Offences punishable by life imprisonment.
 - ii. Persons against whom proceedings are pending in more than one offence.
 - It also adds that 1st time-offenders can get bail after serving 1/3rd of maximum sentence.
 - iii. Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Adhinyam, 2023, 2023 replaced the Indian Evidence Act(IEA), 1872.
 - It retains most provisions of Indian Evidence Act, 1872 such as: confessions, relevancy of facts and burden of proof.
 - It recognizes electronic records as primary evidence. It expands such records to include information stored in any communication devices such as laptops and smartphones.
 - The BSB2 retains original classification of evidence i.e. documentary or oral. It classifies electronic records as documents.
 - iv. Telecommunications Bill 2023 repealed the **Indian Telegraph Act (1885)**, the **Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act (1933)** and the **Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act 1950** and amended the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997**.
 - The Telecommunications Bill, 2023 falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Communication.
 - v. The enactment of the Post Office Bill 2023 will replace the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act 1898.
 - The Post Office Act 2023 authorises post office employees to open or detain any item during transmission in the interest of national security or public safety.

48. In December 2023, Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah released a commemorative Postal Stamp to mark the ____ year of Pandit Jasraj Motiram's music festival 'Pandit Motiram Pandit Maniram Sangeet Samaroha' in New Delhi, Delhi.

- 1) 60th
- 2) 50th
- 3) 70th
- 4) 25th
- 5) 75th

Answer- 2) 50th

Explanation:

Union Minister **Amit Shah**, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and Ministry of Cooperation (MoC), has released a commemorative **Postal Stamp** to mark **50th year** of Pandit Jasraj Motiram's music festival '**Pandit Motiram Pandit Maniram Sangeet Samaroha**' in New Delhi, Delhi.

- The Pandit Motiram Pandit Maniram Sangeet Samaroha is an annual Indian classical music festival held at Chowmahalla Palace in Hyderabad, Telangana. It is also the oldest festival of Hyderabad.
- The festival was first initiated in 1972 by Pandit Jasraj in memory of his father 'Sangeet Ratna Pandit Motiram' and uncle 'Pandit Maniram' and the 51st edition of the musical festival titled 'Jai Ho Pandit Jasraj', was observed from 24th to 30th November 2023 by Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation.

i. Pandit Jasraj is an Indian classical vocalist, belonging to the Mewati gharana (a musical apprenticeship tribe of Hindustani classical music). He was nicknamed the "Son of Hyderabad."

- He was a recipient of the Padma Shri (1975), Padma Bhushan (1990) and Padma Vibhushan (2000) in the field of art.

Note- Vice-President (VP) of India Jagdeep Dhankhar has released a special postal cover to celebrate the 100th Birth Anniversary of Late Justice Konda Madhava Reddy in Hyderabad, Telangana.

49. Which state government has recently (in Dec '23) signed an MoU with respect to the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) to boost the overall development by financing various housing and urban infrastructure projects?

- 1) West Bengal
- 2) Gujarat
- 3) Maharashtra
- 4) Madhya Pradesh
- 5) Odisha

Answer- **2) Gujarat**

Explanation:

The Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (**HUDCO**), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with Government of **Gujarat** to invest up to Rs 14,500 crore to boost the overall development of Gujarat by financing various housing and urban infrastructure projects.

About the MoU:

- i. The MoU was executed under the Financial Services Sector in the form of financial assistance.
- ii. The MoU is the aftermath of the proposals made by the Government of Gujarat for Investment Promotion Activity from Banks and Financial Institutions ahead of the 10th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2024 (scheduled to happen in January 2024).

50. Which of the following points is "Incorrect" with respect to the Cabinet approval on 27th December 2023?

- 1) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of milling copra has been fixed at Rs. 11,160 per quintal and for ball copra at Rs.12,000 per quintal for the 2024 season.
- 2) CCEA approved the project for the improvement and widening of the Khowai-Harina road covering a total length of 234.192 kms in Arunachal Pradesh.
- 3) CCEA approved the Construction of a New 4556 meter-long, 6-Lane High Level/ Extradosed Cable-stayed Bridge across the River Ganga connecting Patna and Saran (National highway NH-139W), Bihar.
- 4) The Union Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval for the proposal to sign the Migration and Mobility Agreement between the government of India (GoI) and the Government of the Italian Republic.

5) The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi has approved the proposal to open the Consulate General of India in Auckland, New Zealand to increase India's diplomatic footprint.

Answer- 2) CCEA approved the project for the improvement and widening of the Khowai-Harina road covering a total length of 234.192 kms in Arunachal Pradesh.

Explanation:

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved the following proposals on 27th December 2023.

i. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi, approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for Copra for the 2024 season.

- The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of **milling copra** has been fixed at **Rs. 11,160 per quintal** and for **ball copra** at **Rs.12,000 per quintal** for the **2024 season**.
- The MSP has been increased by Rs 300 per quintal for milling copra and Rs.250 per quintal for ball copra over the previous season.
- The new rates will ensure a margin of 51.84% for milling copra and 63.26% for ball copra. This is over 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production.

ii. CCEA approved the project for the improvement and widening of the **Khowai-Harina road** covering a **total length of 134.913 kms** in **Tripura**.

- About Khowai-Harina Road Project: It involves the improvement and widening of the road from Khowai (approx. 101 Km) to Harina (approx. 236Km) of National Highway (NH)-208 to two lanes with paved shoulder.
- Budget: The estimated cost of the Project is Rs 2486.78 crore (including a loan component Rs 1511.70 crore (Japanese Yen 23,129 million))
- The loan assistance will be from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) scheme.

iii. CCEA approved the Construction of a New 4556 meter-long, 6-Lane High Level/ Extradosed Cable-stayed Bridge across the River Ganga connecting Patna and Saran (National highway NH-139W), Bihar.

- This is a part of the Buddha circuit, which connects the Buddha Stupa at Vaishali and Keshariya.
- About the Bridge: Total cost: Rs 3,064.45 crore (includes civil construction cost of Rs.2,233.81 crore).

iv. The Union Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval for the proposal to sign the Migration and Mobility Agreement between the government of India (GoI) and the Government of the Italian Republic.

- Italy has offered incremental reserved quotas for both seasonal and non-seasonal workers under the Flow of Decree for 2023-2025.

v. The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi has approved the proposal to open the Consulate General of India in Auckland, New Zealand to increase India's diplomatic footprint.

- The Consulate will be fully operationalised within 1 year (12 months).

vi. The Union Cabinet approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Prasar Bharati, a Public Broadcaster of India and Radio Television Malaysia, a Public Service Broadcaster of Malaysia on 7th November 2023.

51. In December 2023, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued the guidelines under sub-section 4 of section _____ of the Income-tax Act 1961.

- 1) 194-O
- 2) 200-D
- 3) 196-A
- 4) 190-C
- 5) 214-O

Answer- **1) 194-O**

Explanation:

On 28th December 2023, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (**CBDT**), under the Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance (MoF), issued the guidelines under sub-section 4 of **section 194-O** of the **Income-tax Act 1961**.

- The guidelines were issued to provide clarity on issues related to the applicability of section 194-O in e-commerce operator (ECO) model framework.

i. About Section 194-O:

- Section 194-O of the IT Act, 1961 states that an ECO shall deduct income tax at the rate of 1% of the gross amount of sale of goods or provision of service, or both, facilitated through its platform.
- Note: The section was inserted through the Finance Act, 2020.

ii. According to the guidelines, the tax deducted at source (TDS) liability will cover the gross amount of transaction including the packaging and shipping fee as well as the convenience fee levied by the e-commerce platforms on the side of both the buyer and the seller.

- TDS is deducted by the seller side ECO during the payment or credit.

52. Which Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has recently (in Dec '23) collaborated with the Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (Jio) to develop the 'BharatGPT(Generative Pre-Trained Transformer)' program?

- 1) IIT Kharagpur
- 2) IIT Bombay
- 3) IIT Kanpur
- 4) IIT Delhi
- 5) IIT Madras

Answer- **2) IIT Bombay**

Explanation:

Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (**Jio**), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited(RIL), has collaborated with the Indian Institute of Technology (**IIT**) **Bombay**, Mumbai, Maharashtra, to develop the '**BharatGPT(Generative Pre-Trained Transformer)**' program.

i. About Bharat GPT program:

- Bharat GPT program aims to use large language models and generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve various sectors in India.
- The program is part of an upgraded mobile ecosystem 'Jio 2.0' of Reliance Jio.

ii. IIT Guwahati & Assam Govt Collaborated for Arohan Scheme to Promote STEM Subjects

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati, Assam in collaboration with the Government of Assam had hosted a career progression session for meritorious students of Assam to help them

to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects in their higher education as part of Assam's flagship programme 'Arohan'.

- The programme happened during a four/five-day stay in IIT Guwahati from October to December 2023.

53. In December 2023, the Indian Navy (IN) introduced a new design for the Admirals' Epauettes, drawn from the Naval Ensign and features elements inspired by the Rajmudra of _____ (Leader/king).

- 1) Ashoka
- 2) Sher Shah Suri
- 3) Tipu Sultan
- 4) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
- 5) Subhas Chandra Bose

Answer- **4) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**

Explanation:

The **Indian Navy (IN)** has introduced a new design for the **Admirals' Epauettes**, drawn from the Naval Ensign and features elements inspired by the Rajmudra of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the new design during Navy Day (4 December 2023) at Sindhudurg, Maharashtra.

Note: This new design signifies a departure from the previous design, which features Nelson's Ring, a colonial legacy and reflects the rich maritime heritage of India.

i. The [new design](#) incorporates several symbolic elements such as the Golden Navy Button, Octagon, Indian Sword, and Telescope.

ii. The redesigned Epauettes have been unveiled for the ranks of Admiral, Vice Admiral, and Rear Admiral, the top 3 positions in the naval forces.

54. In December 2023, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal announced that the government has extended the benefits of the Scheme for _____ of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) to e-commerce exports through courier and postal services.

- 1) Redemption
- 2) Remission
- 3) Rate
- 4) Registration
- 5) Record

Answer- **2) Remission**

Explanation:

Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (**MoCI**), announced that the government has **extended** the benefits of the Scheme for **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP)** to e-commerce exports through courier and postal services.

- The Union Minister also released the "**E-Commerce Exports Handbook for MSMEs**(Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises)" prepared by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in New Delhi, Delhi.

i. The scheme provides for refund of taxes, duties, and levies that are incurred by exporters for manufacturing and distribution of goods and are not reimbursed under any other mechanism at the center, state, or local level.

ii. The DGFT will implement the necessary Information Technology (IT) framework and other enablers for the extension of the scheme for the exporters.

iii. During the event, DGFT and Shiprocket, an E-Commerce enabler, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support new and first-time exporters, especially from MSMEs, in leveraging E-Commerce for international trade.

- The MoU was signed as part of the E-Commerce outreach conducted by DGFT Regional Authorities under its Districts as Export Hubs Initiative.

55. According to the recent data (as of Dec '23) from the National Stock Exchange (NSE), which state tops the list of states with the highest number of registered investors?

- 1) West Bengal
- 2) Gujarat
- 3) Maharashtra
- 4) Uttar Pradesh
- 5) Karnataka

Answer- **3) Maharashtra**

Explanation:

According to recent data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE), **Maharashtra** tops the list of states with the **highest number of registered investors**. Maharashtra registered a growth of 16.9% with over 1.48 crore registered investors.

- Uttar Pradesh (UP), with 89.47 lakh investors, has surpassed Gujarat (76.68 lakh) and secured the 2nd position on the list.
 - As of December 25, 2023, the total count of investors across India was 8.49 crore, which is a hike of 22.4% from last year. The count stood at 6.94 crore on 31st December 2022.
 - The total count of investors in India increased from around 7 crore to 8 crore in the past 8 months.
- i. For the first time, the market capitalization of listed companies on the NSE has surpassed the USD 4 trillion (Rs 334.72 trillion) mark, as of December 29, 2023, it stood at USD 4.32 trillion .
- At present, India is ranked 4th in the world in terms of market capitalisation, following the United States of America (USA), China and Japan.
 - Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is India's most valued firm with a market valuation of Rs 17,63,001.81 crore

56. Which ministry has recently (in Dec '23) launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS), envisioned as a One National One Pass system?

- 1) Ministry of External Affairs
- 2) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- 3) Ministry of Home Affairs
- 4) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- 5) Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

Answer- **4) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

Explanation:

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** (MoEF&CC) launched the **National Transit Pass System (NTPS)**, envisioned as a One National One

Pass system, which will enable seamless transportation of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce across India.

- At present, state-specific transit rules govern the issuance of transit permits (TP) of timber and forest produce; NTPS will replace this with a uniform, pan-India approach.
- This unified online mode permit system will ease the process of getting TP for tree growers and farmers involved in agroforestry across India.

i. The Union Minister also flagged off the special Pan Indian vehicles carrying forest produce to create awareness about the applicability and ease of using NTPS.

ii. 2 vehicles carrying timber and other forest produce from Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) bound for West Bengal and Tamil Nadu were flagged off during the event.

57. In December 2023, the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, increased the interest rate on the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS) to _____ from 8% for the 4th quarter (January-March 2024) of 2023-2024 (Q4FY24).

- 1) 8.1%
- 2) 8.4%
- 3) 8.2%
- 4) 8.3%
- 5) 8.5%

Answer- **3) 8.2%**

Explanation:

On December 29, 2023, the Department of Economic Affairs-DEA (Budget Division), Ministry of Finance released the interest rates for Small Savings Schemes applicable in the January-March 2024 quarter (**Q4FY24**) i.e. from January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024.

- As per it, the interest rate on the **Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS)** increased by 20 basis points from 8% to **8.2%** for **Q424**.
- The interest rate on **three-year time deposits** also increased by 10 basis points from 7% to 7.1%.
- The interest rates for all other small savings schemes will remain unchanged from the rates offered in [Q3FY24 \(October-December 2023\)](#).

58. In which city, Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary, Ministry of Defence (MoD), inaugurated a new state-of-the-art design and test facility of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in December 2023?

- 1) Pune, Maharashtra
- 2) Gandhinagar, Gujarat
- 3) Chandipur, Odisha
- 4) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- 5) Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

Answer- **4) Bengaluru, Karnataka**

Explanation:

On 29th December 2023, Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary, Ministry of Defence (MoD), inaugurated a new **state-of-the-art design and test facility** at Aero Engine Research and Development Centre (**AERDC**) of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

Note: AERDC, established in the 1960s, is the only design house that has developed test beds for engines of both Western and Russian origin.

i. The new facility of over 10,000 sq. meters houses set ups to test engine components and Line Replacement Units (LRUs).

ii. The facility also has special machines, advanced setups leveraging on computational tools and in-house fabrication facility.

59. Name the Institute/Centre that has recently (in Dec '23) launched a Online Voluntary Certification modules of Certificate of Approval (CoA) and Technology Approval under its voluntary certification scheme.

1) National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation & Training

2) Telecommunication Engineering Centre

3) Advanced Level Telecommunication Training Centre

4) National Institute of Communication Finance

5) Bharat Ratna Bhim Rao Ambedkar Institute of Telecom Training

Answer- **2) Telecommunication Engineering Centre**

Explanation:

Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) launched a Online Voluntary Certification modules of Certificate of Approval (**CoA**) and Technology Approval under its voluntary certification scheme to enhance the Ease of Doing Business and Promote Atmanirbhar Bharat.

- TEC is the technical arm of the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) under the Ministry of Communications (MoC) .
- The module was launched by A.K.Sahu, Member, Digital Communication Commission (DCC).

i. The online module was developed by Centre for Development of Telematics(C-DOT), a Research and Development(R&D) centre of DOT.

60. In December 2023, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Administrative Council led by Lieutenant Governor(LG) Manoj Sinha amended J&K Panchayati Raj Act, _____ to incorporate the definition of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Act to ensure reservation for OBCs in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

1) 1987

2) 1985

3) 1982

4) 1989

5) 1986

Answer- **4) 1989**

Explanation:

Jammu and Kashmir (**J&K**) **Administrative Council** led by Lieutenant Governor(**LG**) **Manoj Sinha** amended **J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989** to incorporate the definition of Other Backward Classes (**OBCs**) in the Act to ensure reservation for OBCs in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

- For the 1st time, OBCs in J&K will benefit from reservations for positions such as Sarpanchs and Panchs.

About the Amendments:

i. The amendments not only guide new reservations but also bring clarity to the rules governing disqualification from Halqa Panchayat membership.

ii. Moreover, provisions for the suspension or removal of Sarpanch, Naib Sarpanch, and Panch by the government have been outlined.

- Removal is pursued in cases of confirmed misappropriation of funds or specified issues during investigation.

iii. It also defines the process for removal and conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner (SEC).

iv. OBCs will also have reserved positions in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It requires separate amendments to the existing J&K Municipal Corporation and Municipalities Acts.

- Presently, reservations in ULBs are only available for Women, SCs, and STs.

61. Which state government has recently (in Dec '23) launched the 3rd phase of its flagship universal health coverage scheme, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY)?

- 1) Maharashtra
- 2) Madhya Pradesh
- 3) Odisha
- 4) Jharkhand
- 5) West Bengal

Answer- 3) Odisha

Explanation:

Odisha Chief Minister (CM) Naveen Patnaik launched the **3rd phase** of its flagship universal health coverage scheme, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (**BSKY**), covering nearly 90% of the population of Odisha.

i. All the families in rural areas excluded in the 1st and 2nd phases of BSKY will now be covered under the scheme and get the "BSKY Nabin Card".

ii. All rural families in Odisha (excluding government employees and income tax payees), who are presently not covered under BSKY, will now receive the BSKY Nabin Card.

iii. Cardholders are entitled to cashless healthcare of Rs 5 lakh per annum (up to Rs 10 lakh for women members) for critical illnesses in private hospitals, both within and outside Odisha.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the World AIDS Day Report 2023, released in November 2023?

A) The Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (UNAIDS) released the World AIDS Day Report 2023, titled "Let Communities Lead".

B) The report states that AIDS can be ended as a public health threat by 2030, if only frontline communities get full support from governments and donors.

C) The report was launched in London, United Kingdom (UK) at a World AIDS Day event hosted by STOPAIDS, a civil society organisation.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- **5) All A, B & C**

Explanation:

Ahead of World AIDS Day 2023 (1 December 2023), the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (**UNAIDS**) released the **World AIDS Day Report 2023**, titled “Let Communities Lead”.

- The report states that AIDS can be ended as a public health threat by **2030**, if only frontline communities get full support from governments and donors.
 - The report was launched in London, United Kingdom (UK) at a World AIDS Day event hosted by **STOPAIDS**, a civil society organisation.
 - The 2023 **theme** of World AIDS Day is “**Let Communities Lead**”.
- i.** The report underscores the pivotal role of community-led interventions in achieving the end of AIDS and ensuring sustained progress.
- ii.** The report is “an urgent call to action for governments and international partners to enable and support communities in their leadership roles”.

2. Which organisation has recently (in Nov ‘23) published the Global Snapshot on HIV and AIDS: Progress and Priorities for Children, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women with key highlight that nearly 98,000 adolescent girls aged 10-19 were infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in 2022?

- 1) United Nations Children’s Fund
- 2) World Health Organization
- 3) United Nations Human Settlement Programme
- 4) World Bank
- 5) Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

Answer- **1) United Nations Children’s Fund**

Explanation:

The **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** published the **Global Snapshot on HIV and AIDS: Progress and Priorities for Children, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women**, which provides global statistical and response updates on children, adolescents, and pregnant women.

- i.** As per the publication, **nearly 98,000 adolescent girls** aged **10-19** were infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (**HIV**) **in 2022** – or 1,900 new infections every week, it shows a significant testing and medication access gaps persist among children and adolescents.
- ii.** The report was published ahead of World Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) Day 2023 (1 December)
- iii.** The Global Snapshot further highlights how children and young adolescents encounter significant hurdles in accessing HIV treatment. ii.Globally, almost 1 million people aged 0-19 living with HIV lack treatment.

3. What is India’s rank in the International Institute for Management Development (IMD)’s 7th edition of World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (WDCR) 2023 released in December 2023?

- 1) 35th
- 2) 42nd
- 3) 49th
- 4) 30th

5) 32nd

Answer- **3) 49th**

Explanation:

India Ranks 49th in the International Institute for Management Development (IMD)'s 7th edition of World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (WDCR) 2023.

- The report measures the capacity and readiness of 64 economies based on three broad categories which are: Knowledge, Technology and Future readiness.

i. The **U.S.A** reclaimed its top position (**Rank 1**) which performs well in all three categories – Knowledge, Technology and Future Readiness.

ii. Switzerland retained the top position in the knowledge factor and maintained its overall position to 5th best performing country in the ranking.

iii. According to IMD's Report, India has been ranked 49th among 64 countries. The report mentioned that India made a little progress in the field of cyber security knowledge (Rank 45) but perform low in the fields of technology and future readiness.

4. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the World's Top 100 Arms Producing Companies 2022 report released in December 2023?

A) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released the report titled "World's Top 100 Arms Producing Companies 2022".

B) For the 1st time, three Indian Public Sector Units (PSUs)- (41st rank) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, (63rd rank) Bharat Electronics Limited and (99th rank) and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers are listed in the Top 100 arms producing companies.

C) Lockheed Martin Corporation from the United States ranked 1st in the List followed by Raytheon Technologies from the United States.

1) Only A

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- **4) Only A & C**

Explanation:

Swedish think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released the report titled "World's Top 100 Arms Producing Companies 2022". SIPRI Top 100 listing includes the 100 companies with the largest arms revenue during the year covered. It lists the companies which make arms, weapons, military planes and equipment.

i. For the 1st time, three Indian Public Sector Units (PSUs) : (41st) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (**HAL**), (63rd) Bharat Electronics Limited (**BEL**) and (**89th**) Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (**MDL**) are listed in the Top 100 arms producing companies.

ii. Top Three Global Companies (2022) in the List are:

Rank	Company	Country
1st	Lockheed Martin Corporation	United States
2nd	Raytheon Technologies	United States

3rd

Northrop Grumman Corporation

United States

5. Name the country that has recently (in Dec '23) become a member of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Consortium, led by the Global Leadership Council (GLC) of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP).

- 1) Australia
- 2) India
- 3) Bangladesh
- 4) Indonesia
- 5) Pakistan

Answer- 2) India

Explanation:

On December 4, 2023, during the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (**COP28**), **India** became a member of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (**BESS**) Consortium, led by the Global Leadership Council (**GLC**) of the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (**GEAPP**).

- A total of 11 countries (first-mover countries), including India, have joined the BESS consortium during the COP28.
- i.** The BESS consortium is committed to achieving a combined commitment of 5 Gigawatts (GW) of BESS by the end of 2024.
 - ii.** The other first-mover countries are: Barbados, Belize, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Togo
- Note:** COP28 is being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

6. Which of the following personalities from India is 'not' listed among the Forbes' 2023 World's 100 Most Powerful Women published in December 2023?

- 1) Nirmala Sitharaman
- 2) Roshni Nadar Malhotra
- 3) Nita Ambani
- 4) Soma Mondal
- 5) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

Answer- 3) Nita Ambani

Explanation:

Forbes' 20th annual ranking of the [World's 100 Most Powerful Women \(2023\)](#) features a total of 4 Indian women. Union Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs is ranked 32nd on the list.

- i.** The other 3 Indians are **Roshni Nadar Malhotra** (rank 60), Chairperson of HCLTech; **Soma Mondal** (rank 70), former Chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw** (rank 76), Founder and Executive Chairperson of Biocon India Private Limited.
- ii.** von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, European Union (EU) topped the list for the second consecutive year.

7. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2024 published by Quacquarelli Symonds(QS) in December 2023?

A) The University of Delhi (DU), ranked 220th (globally), has topped among the 56 Indian Universities featured on the list.

B) The University of Toronto, Canada, has topped the list as the world’s most sustainable University.

C) IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, and IIT Roorkee are ranked among top 400 globally.

1) All A, B & C

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) Only A

Answer- 1) All A, B & C

Explanation:

According to the **QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2024**, the **2nd** edition of the list published by **Quacquarelli Symonds(QS)**, a global higher education analyst, the University of Delhi (DU), ranked 220th (globally), has topped among the 56 Indian Universities featured on the list.

- DU is ranked 30th among Asian Universities.

i. The University of Toronto, Canada, has topped the list as the world’s most sustainable University, followed by the University of California (UCB), Berkeley, the United States of America(USA) at 2nd and the University of Manchester, the United Kingdom (UK) at 3rd place.

ii. Among the 56 Indian universities 22 are ranked in the top 700, but none in the top 100.

iii. IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, and IIT Roorkee are ranked among top 400 globally.

8. As per the 2023 World Malaria Report by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2023, India constituted _____ of malaria cases in the WHO’s South-East Asia region in 2022.

1) 60%

2) 54%

3) 50%

4) 66%

5) 58%

Answer- 4) 66%

Explanation:

As per the **2023 World Malaria Report** by the World Health Organization (**WHO**), **India** constituted **66%** of malaria cases in the WHO’s **South-East Asia region in 2022**.

i. Despite an overall decrease of 11.9% in estimated cases between 2021 and 2022 in the region, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand recorded an increase in cases.

ii. Plasmodium vivax(P. vivax), a protozoan parasite, contributed to almost 46% of cases in the region.

- Notably, India and Indonesia accounted for about 94% of all malaria deaths in the South-East Asia region in 2022.
- Around 249 million malaria cases have been reported around the world(in 85 malaria endemic countries and areas) which exceeded the pre-pandemic count of 233 million in 2019.
- The WHO South-East Asia Region, including India, managed to contain malaria over the last two decades, with a 77% reduction in cases and deaths since 2000.

9. As per the Mercom Capital Group's Leading Global Large-Scale Solar PV Developers report published in December 2023, _____ (Indian company) is ranked as the World's 2nd largest large-scale solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) developer.

- 1) REC Limited
- 2) Adani Green Energy Limited
- 3) Reliance Industries Limited
- 4) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
- 5) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited

Answer- 2) Adani Green Energy Limited

Explanation:

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL), a part of Adani Group, is ranked as the **World's 2nd largest large-scale solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) developer** in the Mercom Capital Group's annual global report titled "**Leading Global Large-Scale Solar PV Developers**". AGEL has a total solar portfolio of 18.1 GigaWatt (GW).

- The list is topped by France-based **TotalEnergies** with 41.3 GW of solar in its portfolio of projects. Canada-based Brookfield Renewable Partners is ranked 3rd with a capacity of 18 GW.
- AGEL is the only solar PV developer from Asia to feature on the list.
- The report considered Large-scale projects with operational capacity of 1 MegaWatt (MW) or more.

10. Which of the following points is "Incorrect" with respect to the 28th edition of Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) hosted by the United Arabs of Emirates (UAE) in December 2023?

- 1) As per the 20th annual report card on the state of the Global Carbon Budget 2023 by the Global Carbon Project (GCP), India is now the 4th largest fossil CO2 emitter in the world.
- 2) The WMO (World Meteorological Organisation)'s Global Climate Report declared 2023 as the Hottest Year on Record .
- 3) COP28 approves a "Loss and Damage" fund worth USD 260 Million to help vulnerable countries to cope with extreme weather conditions.
- 4) The COP28 UAE along with WHO (World Health Organisation) unveiled the "COP28 UAE declaration on Climate and Health", signed by 123 countries.
- 5) UAE inaugurated the 2-GW (Gigawatt) Al Dhafra Solar Photovoltaic(PV) Independent Power Project(IPP) situated a few Kilometers (Kms) away from Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Answer- 1) As per the 20th annual report card on the state of the Global Carbon Budget 2023 by the Global Carbon Project (GCP), India is now the 4th largest fossil CO2 emitter in the world.

Explanation:

The [28th edition of Conference of Parties \(COP\)](#) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Dubai, UAE (United Arabs of Emirates). The annual climate summit was held from November 30, 2023 to December 12, 2023. The summit witnessed the participation of more than 70,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries.

- Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and UAE Special Envoy for Climate Changes served as President of COP28.
- As per the **18th annual report card** on the state of the Global Carbon Budget 2023 by the Global Carbon Project (GCP) , the Global emissions of fossil carbon dioxide (CO₂) will increase by 1.1% in 2023. India is now the **3rd largest fossil CO2** emitter in the world.

- WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) released the provisional state of the Global Climate Report at the 28th COP meeting in Dubai, UAE and declared 2023 as the Hottest Year on Record.
- The year 2023 recorded 1.4 degree Celsius higher than pre- industrial levels (1850-1900) according to the data collected till October, 2023.
- COP28 approves “Loss and Damage” Fund worth USD 260 Million to help vulnerable countries to cope with extreme weather conditions.
- The COP28 **UAE along with WHO (World Health Organisation)** unveiled the “COP28 UAE declaration on Climate and Health”. It was **signed by 123 countries**.
- The COP28 Presidency unveiled the COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate Relief, Recovery and Peace on December 3, 2023 in Dubai, UAE.
- UAE inaugurated the **2-GW (Gigawatt) Al Dhafra Solar Photovoltaic(PV)** Independent Power Project(IPP) situated a few Kilometers (Kms) away from Abu Dhabi, UAE. Now, it has become the world’s largest single-site solar power plant just in time for COP28.

11. Name the company that has recently (in Dec ‘23) entered into an agreement with Mozambique Ports and Railways (CFM) to supply 10 diesel locomotives along with incidental services.

- 1) Amtek Railcar Industries
- 2) RailTel Corporation of India Limited
- 3) RITES Limited
- 4) Engineers India Limited
- 5) Rail Vikas Nigam Limited

Answer- **3) RITES Limited**

Explanation:

RITES Limited (formerly known as Rail India Technical and Economic Service Limited), a Navratna and Schedule ‘A’ Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Railways (MoR) has entered into an agreement with Mozambique Ports and Railways (**CFM**), **Mozambique**.

i. As per the agreement, RITES will supply 10 diesel locomotives along with incidental services to CFM, Mozambique.

ii. The contract is valued at USD 37.68 million (approximately Rs 314.1 crores)

12. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the Tracxn Geo Annual Report: India Tech 2023 released by the Tracxn Technologies Ltd in December 2023?

A) The report reveals a notable 73% decline in funding for the Indian tech startup ecosystem in 2023, compared to USD 25 billion in 2022, making it the lowest-funded year in the last 5 years.

B) India, with total funding of USD 7 billion (till 5 December 2023), has slipped from 3rd place (in 2022 and 2021) to 6th place among the highest-funded geographies globally in the 3rd Quarter (Q3) of 2023.

C) United States of America (USA) secured the 1st place followed by the United Kingdom (UK).

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- **4) Only A & C**

Explanation:

Tracxn Technologies Ltd., a leading global market intelligence platform, released its '**Tracxn Geo Annual Report: India Tech 2023**,' which reveals a notable **73%** decline in funding for the Indian tech startup ecosystem in 2023, compared to USD 25 billion in 2022, making it the lowest-funded year in the last 5 years.

- **India**, with total funding of USD 7 billion (till 5 December 2023), has slipped from 4th place (in 2022 and 2021) to **5th place** among the highest-funded geographies globally in the 3rd Quarter (**Q3**) of 2023.
- The top **4 highest-funded countries** are the United States of America (**USA**), the United Kingdom (UK), China, and France respectively.
- Only 2 new unicorns (startups valued at over USD 1 billion) emerged in the 2023 report namely, Incred and Zepto, which is a notable decline from 23 Unicorns in 2022.
- Bengaluru(Karnataka), Mumbai(Maharashtra), and Delhi-National Capital Region(NCR) continued to be hotspots for funding in India's tech startup ecosystem.

13. According to the report '5th edition of Asia and the Pacific- Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends' released by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in December 2023, _____ of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021.

- 1) 75.7%
- 2) 74.1%
- 3) 69.0%
- 4) 70.3%
- 5) 72.4%

Answer- **2) 74.1%**

Explanation:

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (**FAO**) of the United Nations(UN) launched a digital report on the **5th edition** of Asia and the Pacific- Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends'. As per it, **74.1%** of **Indians** were **unable to afford** a healthy diet in **2021**. In 2020, it was 76.2%.

- It is an annual report published by FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP).
 - It provides a glimpse on the progress in meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets.
- i. The Asia-Pacific region, with 370.7 million undernourished, represents half the global total.
 - ii. An estimated 232.8 million people in the region couldn't afford a healthy diet in 2021.

14. According to the Mercer's Quality of Living City Ranking 2023 released in December 2023, _____ (city) ranked 153rd & tops among Indian Cities for the 6th time, while Vienna (Austria) topped the list for the _____ consecutive year.

- 1) Hyderabad (Telangana); 9th
- 2) Bengaluru (Karnataka); 10th
- 3) Hyderabad (Telangana); 11th
- 4) Bengaluru (Karnataka); 9th

5) New Delhi (Delhi); 11th

Answer- **3) Hyderabad (Telangana); 11th**

Explanation:

According to Mercer's Quality of Living City Ranking 2023, **Hyderabad (Telangana)**; Pune(Maharashtra) and Bengaluru(Karnataka) ranked **153rd**, 154th and 156th respectively, have emerged as the top three Best cities in India in terms of living standard. For the **6th time, Hyderabad** has emerged as the **Best Indian city**.

i. Vienna(Austria) has topped the list for the **11th consecutive year** and retained its title as the Best City offering the highest quality of life in the world, followed by Zurich(Switzerland), and Auckland(New Zealand) in the 2nd and 3rd ranks.

- The quality of living (QOL) ranking evaluates the practicalities of daily life for employees working abroad and their families in assignment locations worldwide. This relies on data from over 500 cities all over the world.
- Mercer produces a worldwide QOL ranking annually from its Worldwide Quality of Living Survey.

15. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the Global Status Reports on Road Safety 2023 released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in December 2023?

A) The annual number of road traffic deaths across the world has slightly decreased to 1.19 million from 1.25 million, marking a 5% decrease in 10 years between 2010 and 2021.

B) In India, the total number of road traffic fatalities went up from 1.34 lakh in 2010 to 1.54 lakh in 2021.

C) India's share in global road fatalities has also increased from 11% to 13%.

- 1) All A, B & C
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) Only A

Answer- **1) All A, B & C**

Explanation:

The World Health Organisation (**WHO**) launched the report titled "**Global Status Reports on Road Safety 2023**", which shows that the annual number of road traffic deaths across the world has slightly decreased to 1.19 million from 1.25 million, marking a **5% decrease** in 10 years between 2010 and 2021.

- The reduction occurred amid a doubling of the global motor vehicle fleet, expanding road networks, and nearly a billion increase in the global population.
- The 2023 report provides an overview of progress between 2010 and 2021. This is the **5th edition** in the series published since 2009.
- As of 2019, road traffic injuries are the primary cause of death for those aged 5-29, and the 12th leading cause of death globally when all ages are considered.
- In India, the total number of road traffic fatalities went up from **1.34 lakh** in 2010 to **1.54 lakh** in 2021.
- India's share in **global road fatalities** has also increased from **11% to 13%**.

16. In December 2023, the Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) launched a program in Saint Lucia to strengthen its tax administration.

Which country was chosen as the Partner Administration?

- 1) India
- 2) Japan
- 3) United States of America
- 4) China
- 5) Australia

Answer- 1) India

Explanation:

The Tax Inspectors Without Borders (**TIWB**), a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched a **program** in **Saint Lucia** to strengthen its **tax administration**.

- **India** is chosen as the **Partner Administration**, and will provide Tax Experts for this 12-18 month program.
- i. As a part of this programme, India will collaborate with the TIWB Secretariat and get the support of the UNDP Country Office, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, to strengthen the Tax administration of Saint Lucia.
- Note:** This is the 7th TIWB program for which India has supported by providing Tax Experts. Previously, India has helped countries like Bhutan and Seychelles for tax administration.

17. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the 18th session of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage(ICH) held in December 2023?

- A) The 18th session of the UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the ICH was held from 5th to 8th December 2023 in Asunción, Paraguay.**
- B) The session inscribed 55 new cultural practices, including India’s Garba Dance, to its Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) List.**
- C) Garba becomes the 15th ICH element from India to join the Representative List of ICH.**

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 3) Only B & C

Explanation:

The **18th session** of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**)’s [Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage\(ICH\)](#) was held from 5th to 8th December 2023 in Kasane, Republic of Botswana.

- The session was chaired by H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Botswana to UNESCO.
- i. The newly inscribed **55 cultural** practices include, (**including India’s Garba Dance**)
- 6 practices on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.
 - 45 practices on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

- 4 on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices
- With these new inscriptions, 730 cultural practices spread across 145 countries are now a part of UNESCO's living heritage.

ii. Gujarat's popular folk dance form "**Garba dance**" has been inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO.

- The recognition was granted under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH.
- Garba becomes the **15th ICH** element from India to join the Representative List of ICH.

iii. The 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was celebrated during the Session.

- The next committee session(19th session) will be held in December 2024. It will be chaired by Paraguay.

18. According to the 'Migration and Development Brief 39: Leveraging Diaspora Finances for Private Capital Mobilization' released by World Bank in December 2023,

_____ (country) tops remittance charts with an estimated inward remittance flow of USD 125 Billion in 2023.

- 1) Japan
- 2) United States of America
- 3) Mexico
- 4) China
- 5) India

Answer- **5) India**

Explanation:

According to World Bank (**WB**)'s Migration and Development Brief 39 titled 'Leveraging Diaspora Finances for Private Capital Mobilization', **India** is considered a top remittance recipient with an estimated inward **remittance** flow of **USD 125 Billion**.

- Mexico stands at the second position with an estimated recipient value of USD 67 billion followed by China as third with USD 50 billion.
- This report indicates a continuing growth in remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in 2023.
- The report raises awareness about the potential impact of global economic conditions on remittance flows.

i. The key drivers of remittance growth in India are the tight labour market in the United States of America(USA), and high employment growth in Europe.

ii. The remittance was estimated to be USD 189 billion with a growth of 7.2% in 2023. In 2022, the remittance growth rate was at 12%.

19. Name the disease that has recently (in Dec '23) recognised as the Neglected Tropical Disease (NTDs) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

- 1) Buruli
- 2) Chagas
- 3) Leishmaniasis
- 4) Noma
- 5) Rickettsioses

Answer- **4) Noma**

Explanation:

The World Health Organization (**WHO**) has officially recognised **Noma**, also known as cancrum oris or gangrenous stomatitis, as a neglected tropical disease (**NTDs**).

- With the inclusion of noma, WHO's NTD list now has 21 diseases or groups of diseases. [Click here for full list of NTD Diseases](#)
- i. Noma is a severe gangrenous (Dead tissue) disease of the mouth and face, primarily affecting malnourished young children (between age 2 & 6) in regions of extreme poverty.
- ii. It is a fast-spreading bacterial infection starting with gum inflammation. Without prompt antibiotic treatment, it can rapidly destroy facial tissue and bone, often resulting in death or severe disfigurement.

20. Which Indian company has recently (in Dec '23) joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network (GLN) as "Factory Lighthouse"?

- 1) Cipla Limited
- 2) Sun Pharmaceutical Industries
- 3) ACG Associated Capsules
- 4) Alkem Laboratories
- 5) Glenmark Pharmaceuticals

Answer- **3) ACG Associated Capsules**

Explanation:

ACG Associated Capsules Pvt. Ltd. (ACG Capsules), a pharmaceuticals contract manufacturer, in Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh (MP), has joined the World Economic Forum's (**WEF**) Global Lighthouse Network (**GLN**) as "**Factory Lighthouse**".

- ACG Capsules is a part of the ACG Group (formerly known as the Associated Capsules Group of Companies).
- i. The 2023 cohort of GLN includes 21 lighthouses (16 Factory Lighthouses and 5 End-to-End (E2E) Lighthouse). In addition, 4 sustainability lighthouses have been recognised in 2023.
- ii. These lighthouses represent 8 countries: China, Germany, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Thailand, Türkiye and the United States of America (USA).
- iii. Lighthouses from India:
 - 4 Indian Companies (including ACG Capsules) are featured among the 2023 cohort.
 - The other 3 Indian companies are:
 - Renew Power Ventures Pvt Ltd (Ratlam, MP) as Factory Lighthouse
 - Schneider Electric India (Hyderabad, Telangana) as Sustainability Lighthouse
 - Hindustan Unilever (Sonepat factory in Haryana) as E2E Lighthouse

21. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the updated Red List of Threatened Species of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) released during the COP 28 of the UNFCCC at Dubai, the United Arab Emirates in December 2023?

A) The updated IUCN list includes 157,190 species, of which 44,016 are threatened with extinction.

B) The first comprehensive assessment of the world's freshwater fish species revealed, which states around 25% (3,086 out of 14,898 assessed species) are at risk of extinction.

C) The Status of Lake Turkana robber (Brycinus ferox) changed from Critically Endangered to Near Threatened.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- **2) Only A & B**

Explanation:

On 11th December 2023, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**) released the updated **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species** during the 28th Conference of the Parties (**COP 28**) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) at Dubai, the United Arab Emirates(**UAE**).

- The updated IUCN list includes **157,190 species**, of which **44,016** are **threatened** with extinction.
- This also completes the **first comprehensive** assessment of the **world's freshwater fish species**, which states around 25% (3,086 out of 14,898 assessed species) are at risk of extinction.
- The Status of **Lake Turkana robber** (Brycinus ferox) changed from **Least Concern** to **Vulnerable**. [List of Changes in Red List Status](#)

22. In December 2023, the United Nations (UN) declared the year 2024 as the International Year of _____.

- 1) Indigenous Languages
- 2) Camelids
- 3) Glass
- 4) Millets
- 5) Plant Health

Answer- **2) Camelids**

Explanation:

The United Nations (**UN**) has declared the year **2024** as the **International Year of Camelids (IYC 2024)** to raise awareness of the economic and cultural significance of camelids in protecting ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, assuring food security, and adapting to climate change.

i. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) is the lead agency for celebrating the IYC 2023 in collaboration with other relevant organisations and bodies of the UN system.

ii. Slogan of IYC 2024: Heroes of deserts and highlands: Nourishing people and culture.

iii. Camelids are members of the family "Camelidae", the only currently living family in the suborder Tylopoda.

- Dromedary camels, Bactrian camels, wild Bactrian camels, llamas, alpacas, vicuñas, and guanacos are the 7 distinct members of this Camelids.

23. Name the organisation that has recently (in Dec '23) partnered with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to launch Project PRAYAS (Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals).

- 1) United Nations Human Settlement Programme
- 2) United Nations Development Programme
- 3) United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- 4) International Organization for Migration
- 5) United Nations Population Fund

Answer- 4) International Organization for Migration

Explanation:

International Organization for Migration (**IOM**) launched **Project PRAYAS** (Promoting Regular & Assisted Migration for Youth and Skilled Professionals) in partnership with the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, Government of India (GoI) to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration for Indian workers and students.

- The project was launched by Muktesh K. Pardeshi, Secretary (Consular, Passport, Visa and Overseas Indian Affairs/CPV& OIA), MEA, to commemorate the International Migrants Day (18 December).
- i.** Project PRAYAS is a joint collaboration between the IOM India and Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).
- ii.** PRAYAS, backed by the IOM Development Fund, seeks to develop a roadmap for enhanced coordination between Central and State Governments, fostering the sharing of best practices among States and bolstering engagement with MEA on international migration matters.
- iii.** PRAYAS consolidates state initiatives for safe migration in alignment with GoI's migration priorities and Goal 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

24. In December 2023, Bhutan's Reigning King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has announced that the Gelephu Mindfulness City project covers over 1,000-square-kilometre area in Gelephu, in Bhutan which also borders the Indian state of _____.

- 1) Sikkim
- 2) Arunachal Pradesh
- 3) Assam
- 4) West Bengal
- 5) Mizoram

Answer- 3) Assam

Explanation:

Bhutan's Reigning **King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck** has announced that the **Gelephu Mindfulness City**, or Special Administrative Region (SAR) project on the 116th National Day of the Kingdom of Bhutan held at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu (Bhutan).

- i.** The project covers over **1,000-square-kilometre** area in **Gelephu**, located in Sarpang District in Bhutan which also borders the Indian state of **Assam**.
- ii.** During the Bhutan King's speech on National Day, he thanked the Indian government for the approval of the first India-Bhutan railway line that connects Gelephu (Bhutan) to Kokrajhar (58 km rail link) in Assam.
- iii.** The project aims to establish an economic corridor connecting South Asia with Southeast Asia via India's northeastern states.

Note- Bhutan's National Day (celebrated on December 17th every year) commemorates the coronation of the first King of Bhutan, Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck, in 1907, to mark the unification of Bhutan under a single monarchy.

25. As of December 2023, India's coking coal imports was at _____ million tonnes (mt) during the April-November period (11 months) of fiscal year 2023-24(FY24).

- 1) 41.11
- 2) 32.76
- 3) 15.95
- 4) 22.37
- 5) 38.14

Answer- **5) 38.14**

Explanation:

India's coking coal imports are at a **five-year high** during the April-November period(11 months) of fiscal year 2023-24(FY24) at **38.14 million tonnes (mt)**.

i.On a year-over-year (y-o-y) basis, this represents a slight increase compared to the **38.12 mt** imported during the same period in FY23.

ii.**Australia** is the dominant supplier for India, accounting for over 60% of shipments. Over the past 5 years, Australia's market share has decreased from 75%.

26.In December 2023, which country along with India has extended their protocol route and declared Safardighi in West Bengal as the new port of call?

- 1) Japan
- 2) Russia
- 3) Myanmar
- 4) Bangladesh
- 5) China

Answer-**4) Bangladesh**

Explanation:

As per the Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade (**PIWT&T**), the Government of India (**GOI**) and the Government of Bangladesh (**GoB**) have agreed to extend Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (**IBP**) route and declare Safardighi in West Bengal as the new port of call.

i.Three high-level talks between India and Bangladesh was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 19th and 20th December, 2023.

ii.Both countries agreed to extend the trade and connectivity through the land route of Land Customs Station (LCS) Radhikapur (Birol) and Hodibari (Chilahati) of West Bengal.

27. Which country has recently (in Dec '23) announced its decision to withdraw from OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), with effect from January 2024?

- 1) Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 2) Gabon
- 3) Nigeria
- 4) Algeria
- 5) Republic of Angola

Answer- **5) Republic of Angola**

Explanation:

The **Republic of Angola** announced its decision to **withdraw from OPEC** (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), with effect from **January 2024**, after disagreements regarding the OPEC's production targets.

- The decision was taken during the cabinet meeting and was approved by João Lourenço, President of Angola.

i. Background:

- In June 2023, OPEC and OPEC+ decided to reduce the overall production target from 2023 by 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd)
- In November 2023, OPEC agreed to a combined 2.2 million bpd in output cuts for the 1st quarter of 2024. Angola's oil output target was reduced to 1.1 million barrels per day.
- Angola, which sought a quota of 1.18 million bpd, did not agree to this target and decided to withdraw its membership.
- With this, the total number of members of OPEC reduces to 12.

28. In which city, 8th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) (2023) was held in December 2023?

- 1) Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2) Bangkok, Thailand
- 3) Paris, France
- 4) Delhi, India
- 5) Tehran, Iran

Answer- **2) Bangkok, Thailand**

Explanation:

The **8th edition** of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (**IONS**) **Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) (2023)** hosted by the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) was held in **Bangkok, Thailand** from 19–22 December 2023.

- The 8th Conclave marks the transition of IONS Chairmanship from France(2021-23) to Thailand(2023-2025).
- Chiefs of Navies, and Heads of Maritime Agencies from 27 IONS member/observer countries participated in the conclave.
- Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy (IN), led the 3-member Indian Naval delegation for the conclave.

i. During the CoC, Thailand assumed the duties of Chair of IONS, and finalised the Work Plan for the next 2 years.

ii. As a first, the Flag designed by India has been chosen as the IONS Flag.

iii. India also took over as the co-chair of IONS Working Groups on Maritime Security and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) for the forthcoming cycle.

iv. Highlights of the Conclave: A Seminar on the theme 'Blue Economy: Ways Forward for Sustainable Development of IONS Member States', was conducted on the sidelines of CoC.

- Cmde Manmeet S Khurana, Cmde (Foreign Cooperation) from IN presented a paper on 'Security is Foundation for Peaceful and Sustainable Blue Economy'.
- Commendations were exchanged between CNS IN and Adm Adoong Pan-Iam, Commander-in-Chief, RTN to uphold a trajectory of Bilateral Defence engagements.
- It includes the naming of IN – RTN Bilateral based on historical and cultural connections.

GOVT SCHEMES

1. Name the state government that has recently (in Dec '23) launched 'AMA bank' Scheme to provide banking service in Unbanked Gram Panchayats (GPs).

- 1) Maharashtra
- 2) Odisha
- 3) Gujarat
- 4) West Bengal
- 5) Jharkhand

Answer- **2) Odisha**

Explanation:

Chief Minister (CM) of **Odisha** Naveen Patnaik has launched “**AMA Bank**” scheme for providing banking services through Customer Service Point (**CSP**) **Plus banking outlets** in 4373 unbanked Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Odisha.

- Ama Bank model is the **first-of-its-kind** financial inclusion programme in India.

i. Ama Bank offers credit for small businesses along with 15 banking services through CSP Plus banking outlets.

ii. It is positioned between a business correspondent (BC) and a small bank branch and offers all banking services.

iii. The scheme was launched in collaboration with six public sector banks (PSBs) namely State Bank of India (SBI), Punjab National Bank (PNB), Union Bank of India (UBI), UCO Bank, Bank of India (BoI) and Bank of Baroda(BoB).

2. In December 2023, the Government of Punjab launched “Bhagwant Mann Sarkar Tuhade Dwaar”, a state government scheme to _____.

- 1) provide awareness about crops to farmers
- 2) offer financial assistance for Startups
- 3) provide electricity facilities to un-electrified rural areas
- 4) deliver 43 citizen-centric services at people’s doorstep
- 5) provide financial health coverage Government employees, pensioners

Answer- **4) deliver 43 citizen-centric services at people’s doorstep**

Explanation:

On December 10, 2023, the Government of **Punjab** launched “Bhagwant Mann Sarkar Tuhade Dwaar”, a state government scheme **to deliver 43 citizen-centric services at people’s doorstep.**

- It was launched by Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister (CM) of Delhi and AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) national convenor; and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann during the event held in Ludhiana, Punjab.

i. The scheme will provide hassle-free and straight access to 43 critical Government to Citizen (**G2C**) **services** covering around 99% services offered by the Punjab government.

ii. The 43 services include certificates of birth, marriage, death, income, residence, caste, rural area, border area, backward area, pension, payment of electricity bills and land demarcation.

iii. The doorstep service fee is Rs 120 per service (+Govt. fees + Facilitation Charges), and the appointment booking timing is 9AM to 5PM for 7 days a week.

3. Which of the following points is/are “correct” with respect to the scheme, launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in December 2023?

A) The MoEF&CC has launched the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme (IFWCS) to encourage sustainable forest management and agroforestry in India by offering voluntary third-party certification.

B) IFWCS is governed by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (IFWCC) and operated by the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh as the designated Scheme Operating Agency (SOA).

C) The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies(NABCB) will be responsible for conducting independent audits through accredited CBs(Certification Bodies).

1) Only A

2) Only A & B

3) Only B & C

4) Only A & C

5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (**MoEF&CC**) has launched the [Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme \(IFWCS\)](#) to encourage sustainable forest management and agroforestry in India by offering voluntary third-party certification.

- **IFWCS is governed** by the Indian Forest and Wood Certification Council (**IFWCC**) and **operated** by the Indian Institute of Forest Management (**IIFM**) in **Bhopal**(Madhya Pradesh) as the designated Scheme Operating Agency (**SOA**).
- The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (**NABCB**) under the Quality Council of India will be responsible for conducting independent audits through accredited CBs (Certification Bodies), to assess the adherence of various organisations is aligned with the standards of the IFWS scheme
- The scheme includes individual farmers or Farmer Producer Organisations (**FPOs**), state forest departments engaged in agroforestry and farm forestry and other wood-based industries in the value chain.

4. Which state government has recently (in Dec ‘23) initiated the Rajiv Gandhi Swarozgaar Yojna-2023 (RGSY) to generate self-employment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship among local youth?

1) West Bengal

2) Odisha

3) Jharkhand

4) Madhya Pradesh

5) Himachal Pradesh

Answer- 5) Himachal Pradesh

Explanation:

Government of **Himachal Pradesh** (HP) has initiated the **Rajiv Gandhi Swarozgaar Yojna-2023** (RGSY), with an outlay of **Rs 680 crore**, to generate self-employment opportunities and promote entrepreneurship among local youth.

- The RGSY will ensure guaranteed livelihoods for the youth and help HP reduce vehicular pollution and move forward to become a 'green state'.
- In its initial phase, the RGSY focuses on the Standard of Procedures (SoP) for hiring e-taxis by various entities, including government departments, local authorities, etc.
 - The government guarantees employment and offers startup assistance to the youth of HP by providing a 50% subsidy on the purchase of e-taxis under RGSY.

5. Which of the following sub-schemes were launched under the aegis of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme by the Union Minister of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Narayan Rane in December 2023?

- 1) MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme (MSME GIFT Scheme)
- 2) MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy (MSE SPICE Scheme)
- 3) MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments (MSE ODR scheme)
- 4) Both 1 & 2
- 5) All 1, 2 & 3

Answer- **5) All 1, 2 & 3**

Explanation:

On 20th December 2023, Union Minister Narayan Rane, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MoMSME), launched **three sub-schemes** under the aegis of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance **(RAMP) programme**.

i. The 3 sub schemes are:

- MSME Green Investment and Financing for Transformation Scheme **(MSME GIFT Scheme)**.
- MSE Scheme for Promotion and Investment in Circular Economy **(MSE SPICE Scheme)**.
- MSE Scheme on Online Dispute Resolution for Delayed Payments **(MSE ODR scheme)**.

ii. The schemes were launched during the 2nd meeting of the National MSME Council chaired by Union Minister Narayan Rane.

iii. MoMSME has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the implementing agencies Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for MSME GIFT Scheme and MSE SPICE Scheme and with National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI) for the MSE ODR scheme.

VISITS

1. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the President of the Republic of Kenya, William Samoei Ruto's visit to India in December 2023?

A) India announced to extend USD 250 million as Line of Credit (LOC) to Kenya to help the country modernize its agriculture sector.

B) India and Kenya signed 5 MoUs (Memorandum of Understandings) providing cooperation in key areas such as sports, culture, education and digital solutions.

C) India and Kenya unveiled a blueprint on "Joint Vision Statement on Maritime Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region- BAHARI (Ocean in Swahili)".

- 1) All A, B & C
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C

5) Only A

Answer- **1) All A, B & C**

Explanation:

The President of the Republic of Kenya, **William Samoei Ruto** was on an official visit to India from December 4 to 6, 2023 at the invitation of the President of India. This marks Ruto's 1st visit to India as President representing Kenya.

- **India** announced to extend **USD 250 million** as Line of Credit (**LOC**) to **Kenya** to help the country modernize its agriculture sector.
- **India and Kenya** signed [5 MoUs \(Memorandum of Understandings\)](#) providing cooperation in key areas such as sports, culture, education and digital solutions. MoU signed on culture exchanges for the period **2023-27**.
- India and Kenya unveiled a blueprint on "Joint Vision Statement on Maritime Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region- **BAHARI (Ocean in Swahili)**".
- Kenya announced to join the International Solar Alliance (**ISA**) and Global Biofuels Alliance (**GBA**) which will bolster India and Kenya relations in renewable energy. Also, Kenya decided to join the International Big Cat Alliance (**IBCA**) to help strengthen global efforts to conserve big cats. India has decided to open its market to avocados from Kenya.

2. Which of the following points is "Incorrect" with respect to the Prime Minister(PM) Narendra Modi's visit to Surat, Gujarat and Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh(UP) in December 2023?

- 1) During his Visit to surat, PM Modi inaugurated the state-of-the-art New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB) of Surat International Airport in Surat, Gujarat.
- 2) PM Modi inaugurated the Surat Diamond Bourse(SDB), the World's largest and most modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business.
- 3) During his Visit to Varanasi, PM Modi inaugurated the 2nd phase of Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023 at Namoo Ghat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- 4) PM Modi Inaugurated the New Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Nagar-New Bhaupur Dedicated Freight Corridor Project built at a cost of around Rs 10,900 crore.
- 5) PM Modi inaugurated Tushita Mahamandir, the world's 3rd largest meditation centre in Shivpur, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

Answer- **5) PM Modi inaugurated Tushita Mahamandir, the world's 3rd largest meditation centre in Shivpur, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.**

Explanation:

Prime Minister(PM) Narendra Modi visited Surat, Gujarat and Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh(UP) from 17th to 18th December 2023.

- **PM's Visit to Surat, Gujarat:**
 - PM Modi inaugurated the state-of-the-art New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB) of Surat International Airport in Surat, Gujarat.
 - PM Modi inaugurated the Surat Diamond Bourse(SDB), the World's largest and most modern centre for international diamond and jewellery business.
 - The project is part of the Diamond Research and Mercantile (DREAM) City, a greenfield project spread over nearly 700 acres.
- **PM Modi's Visit to Varanasi, UP:**
 - PM Modi inaugurated the 2nd phase of Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2023 at Namoo Ghat, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

- PM Modi inaugurated **Swarved Mahamandir, the world's largest meditation centre** in Umaraha, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He was accompanied by Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister(CM) of Uttar Pradesh.
- During his visit to Varanasi, UP, PM Modi laid the foundation stone and dedicated various development projects worth Rs 19,150 crore in Varanasi, UP.
- PM Modi Inaugurated the New Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Nagar-New Bhaupur Dedicated Freight Corridor Project built at a cost of around Rs 10,900 crore.
- He also flagged off the Dohrihat-Mau Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) train and a pair of Long Haul goods trains in the newly inaugurated corridor.
- PM Modi flagged off the 2nd Vande Bharat Express train on the Varanasi-New Delhi route.

3. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the visit of Haitham Bin Tarik, the Sultan of Oman to India in December 2023?

A) Narendra Modi, PM of India and Haitham Bin Tarik, the Sultan of Oman adopted the joint Vision document titled 'A Partnership for the Future' for strengthening bilateral cooperation in diverse areas and to scale up the partnership between India and Oman.

B) The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Government of the Sultanate of Oman and Ministry of Culture, Government of India(GoI) signed a MoU in the field of culture.

C) The 3rd tranche of the Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF-III), has been announced as a significant development in trade and capital cooperation in the India-Oman economic partnership.

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 5) All A, B & C

Explanation:

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India and Haitham Bin Tarik, the Sultan of Oman adopted the joint Vision document titled '**A Partnership for the Future**' for strengthening bilateral cooperation in diverse areas and to scale up the partnership between India and Oman.

- The vision document was adopted on 16th December 2023 during the maiden visit of his Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultanate of Oman, to India

i. This joint vision underscores a shared vision, aligning the strategic goals of Oman Vision 2040, Oman's national development blueprint, with India's development objectives under 'Amrit Kaal'.

ii Several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and agreements were also signed during his visit.

- The **Ministry of Culture**, Sports and Youth, Government of the Sultanate of Oman and Ministry of Culture, Government of India(**GoI**) signed a MoU in the field of culture.
- Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Oman and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), GoI signed a MoU in the field of information technology(IT)

- **Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of India** and National Centre for Financial Information (**FNCI**), **Oman**, signed an MoU for cooperation in the exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, associated predicate offences and terrorism financing.
 - Oman and India signed an agreement related to the gainful employment of accompanying persons of official employees.
 - Dhofar University in Salalah, Oman and the Indian Council For Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi, Delhi, signed a MoU to establish the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies- Hindi Language.
- iii.** The **3rd tranche** of the Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (**OIJIF-III**), has been announced as a significant development in trade and capital cooperation in the India-Oman economic partnership.
- The OIJIF worth USD 300 million (around Rs. 2,500 crores) aims to channel investments into the fastest-growing sectors of the Indian economy.

BANKING AND FINANCE

1. Name the new life insurance plan that has recently (in Nov '23) launched by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) with Lifetime Guaranteed Returns.

- 1) Jeevan Utsav
- 2) Jeevan Anand
- 3) Jeevan Dhan Sanchay
- 4) Jeevan Dhan Vridhhi
- 5) Jeevan Jyoti

Answer- **1) Jeevan Utsav**

Explanation:

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (**LIC**) has launched **Jeevan Utsav** plan, a Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual, Savings, Whole Life Insurance plan, which provides insurance coverage for the entire lifetime of the insured individual.

i. The plan is available in two payout options namely

- **Regular income benefits:** 10% of the basic sum assured chosen by the policyholder will be paid at the end of each policy year (starting after 3 to 6 years).
- **Flexi income benefits:** 10% of the basic sum assured payable can be accumulated and withdrawn later.

2. Which Small Finance Bank (SFB) has recently (in Nov '23) partnered with Water.org to offer accessible financing solutions for water and sanitation solutions?

- 1) Jana SFB
- 2) Utkarsh SFB
- 3) Capital SFB
- 4) Ujjivan SFB
- 5) AU SFB

Answer- **4) Ujjivan SFB**

Explanation:

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Limited (**Ujjivan SFB**) has partnered with **Water.org**, a global nonprofit organisation dedicated to providing clean water and sanitation, to offer accessible financing solutions for **water and sanitation solutions**.

- i. Under this partnership, Water.org will assist Ujjivan SFB in identifying areas that require financing for clean water and hygienic sanitation.
- ii. Water.org will also provide technical assistance, market assessment, development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material, monitoring and evaluation support.
- iii. Ujjivan SFB will offer loans of about Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 to existing as well as new customers to enable them to construct and renovate water and sanitation facilities.

3. Name the bank that has recently (in Nov '23) signed an MoU with NCDEX e-Markets Limited (NeML) to strengthen the integration of e-procurement and e-auction systems.

- 1) YES Bank
- 2) Federal Bank
- 3) RBL Bank
- 4) IndusInd Bank
- 5) IDFC FIRST Bank

Answer- 2) Federal Bank

Explanation:

A Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) was signed between the **Federal Bank** Limited and NCDEX e-Markets Limited (**NeML**) to strengthen the integration of e-procurement and e-auction systems. This partnership will facilitate an advanced e-procurement solution and streamline e-procurement and e-auction systems for Central and State Government organisations.

- i. Under this initiative, farmers' list crop details on NeML's platform, with the government purchasing them at the Minimum Support Price (**MSP**).
- ii. Federal Bank's host-to-host integration with NeML's e-procurement platform will enable a secure payment processing system.
- iii. NeML's eAuction solution offers a price-discovery mechanism, benefiting the Government of India by providing a robust price-discovery mechanism for various commodities NeML holds major market share in transparent price discovery across more than 90 commodities.

4. Which of the following points is/are "correct" with respect to the recent step taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in December 2023?

- A) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Central Bank of Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation and information exchange regarding the Clearing Corporation of India Limited (CCIL).**
- B) RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 10,000 on Bank of America, N.A. for violation of RBI's instructions on reporting requirements under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme of FEMA, 1999.**
- C) RBI approved the promoter of CSB Bank to retain a 26% stake in the lender.**

- 1) Only A
- 2) Only A & B
- 3) Only B & C
- 4) Only A & C
- 5) All A, B & C

Answer- 3) Only B & C