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1) With reference to the Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS), consider the following statements:

1. Once declared, BHS are governed under the Forest Rights Act by the Gram Sabha.
2. Sacred groves with spiritual value alone cannot qualify as BHS.
3. State Biodiversity Boards are key institutions involved in declaring BHS.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: a)

Explanation:

- BHS are not governed under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), though FRA and BHS may overlap in community-managed landscapes. BHS governance is framed under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, through State Biodiversity Boards and Biodiversity Management Committees. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.
- Sites with only spiritual value, such as sacred groves, can indeed be declared BHS if they also support ecological functions like pollination, microclimate regulation, or endemic

flora/fauna. The Kasampatty Sacred Grove is a perfect example. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.

- State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) play a central role in conducting ecological assessments, community consultations, and forwarding proposals to state governments for gazette notification of BHS. hence, Statement 3 is correct.

2) With reference to the Green India Mission (GIM), consider the following statements:

1. It is one of the eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) launched in year 2014.
2. It takes 'micro-ecosystem' approach in area and landscape-specific restoration activities in different ecosystems.
3. It targets to increase forest and tree cover on 5 million hectares and improve the quality of forest cover on another 5 million hectares.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: b)

Explanation:

- Green India Mission (GIM) was rolled out in 2014 as one of the eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- The GIM is criticised for taking a plantation-centered approach. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- Objective: Its objective was to increase forest and tree cover on 5 million hectares and improve the quality of forest cover on another 5 million hectares. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.

3) Consider the following statements:

1. Fungi are classified as prokaryotic organisms because they lack a true nucleus.
2. Lichens consist only of fungal species.
3. Certain fungal species have demonstrated the ability to degrade synthetic plastics.
4. Yeasts are unicellular fungi that reproduce primarily by budding.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- Fungi are eukaryotic organisms, meaning they do have a true nucleus and membrane-bound organelles.
- Hence, statement 1 is wrong.
- Lichens are a symbiotic association between a fungus (mycobiont) and an alga or cyanobacterium (photobiont). Since they do not consist of fungi alone, this statement is wrong.
- Some fungi like *Aspergillus tubingensis*, *Penicillium*, and certain white-rot fungi have the ability to degrade plastics such as polyurethane. This is a current area of environmental biotechnology research. Statement 3 is correct.
- Yeasts (e.g., *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) are unicellular fungi. Their most common mode of reproduction is asexual budding. Hence, Statement 4 is correct.

4) With reference to the significance and applications of Salt Chimneys, consider the following statements:

1. They can serve as natural barriers preventing the spread of pollutants.
2. They are indicators of karstification and potential ground collapse.
3. Autonomous mapping of salt chimneys can help mitigate sinkhole risks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- Salt chimneys, also known as salt diapirs, are significant geological formations created by the upward movement of salt through overlying rock layers. They are critical in understanding subsurface geology and associated risks.
- Salt chimneys do not primarily function as natural barriers against pollutants. Instead, they are often pathways for fluid migration and can influence subsurface hydrology, sometimes exacerbating pollutant spread. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.
- Salt chimneys are strong indicators of karstification—a process where soluble rocks dissolve, creating cavities and increasing the potential for ground collapse or sinkholes. Mapping these formations helps in identifying vulnerable areas. Hence, Statement 2 is correct.
- Autonomous techniques, like geophysical surveys and remote sensing, are instrumental in mapping salt chimneys to predict and mitigate sinkhole risks. These technologies help in risk management for infrastructure and communities in karst-prone regions. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.

5) With reference to the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the River Cities Alliance (RCA), consider the following statements:

1. The National Mission for Clean Ganga was launched as a registered society primarily to implement the policies formulated by the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA).
2. The River Cities Alliance (RCA) is an initiative exclusively managed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, without the involvement of other Union ministries.
3. Membership to the River Cities Alliance is restricted to cities located directly on the main stem of the River Ganga.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: a)

Explanation:

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) was registered as a society on 12th August 2011 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It acts as the implementation arm of the National Ganga Council (which replaced the NGRBA). Its primary role is the rejuvenation, protection, and management of the River Ganga, which involves implementing programs and projects. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- The River Cities Alliance (RCA) was launched in 2021 as a collaborative effort by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This joint involvement highlights the inter-ministerial approach required for sustainable urban river management. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- The River Cities Alliance (RCA) is open to all river cities in India, not just those on the main stem of the Ganga. Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.

6) With reference to the Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI), consider the following statements:

1. It is aimed at establishing a framework to certify green hydrogen production and ensure transparency, traceability, and market credibility.
2. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is the nodal ministry of the scheme.
3. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is the implementing agency of the scheme.
4. The green hydrogen certificate issued under the scheme is non-transferable and non-tradable.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India (GHCI) is aimed at establishing a framework to certify green hydrogen production and ensure transparency, traceability, and market credibility. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is the nodal ministry of the scheme. Hence, Statement 2 is correct.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is the implementing agency of the scheme. Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.
- Certificate characteristics: The green hydrogen certificate is non-transferable and non-tradable. It cannot be used to claim any form of emission reduction credits under carbon markets or offset mechanisms. Hence, Statement 4 is correct.

7) In agricultural practices, Nano Sulphur is mainly utilized for which of the following purposes?

1. As a broad-spectrum fungicide.
2. As a nitrogen-fixing agent in soil.
3. As a micronutrient supplement.
4. As an insecticide against specific pests.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- Nano Sulphur plays multiple roles in agriculture due to its enhanced reactivity and nanoscale particle size, which improves absorption and efficacy.
- It acts as a broad-spectrum fungicide, effectively combating fungal pathogens such as powdery mildew and rust. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- Nano Sulphur does not serve as a nitrogen-fixing agent. Nitrogen fixation is a biological process typically carried out by certain bacteria (e.g., Rhizobium, Azotobacter) in association with leguminous plants, not by sulphur compounds. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- Sulphur is a vital micronutrient, essential for synthesizing amino acids, enzymes, and chlorophyll in plants. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.
- Nano Sulphur can function as a biopesticide, disrupting pests' physiological processes, although its primary use remains as a fungicide and nutrient. Hence, Statement 4 is correct.

8) With reference to the access and benefit sharing (ABS) from biological resources, consider the following statements:

1. The Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides a legally binding framework for ABS.

2. In India, digital sequence information of biological resources is not covered under the ABS Regulation, 2025.
3. The ABS Regulation, 2025 covers researchers to share the benefits accruing from their use of biological resources in India.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: b)

Explanation:

- The Nagoya Protocol, adopted in 2010 under the CBD, provides a legally binding framework for access to genetic resources and fair benefit-sharing. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- The ABS Regulation, 2025 includes digital sequence information in the ambit of genetic resources. A multilateral mechanism for sharing benefits accrued from the use of digital sequence information was put in place during COP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia, in 2024. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- The Regulation also puts in place, the requirements for benefit sharing by researchers and for those who want to apply for intellectual property rights. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.

9) With reference to the Bear Markets, consider the following statements:

1. A bear market begins only when GDP contracts for two consecutive quarters.
2. Investors often shift to safe-haven assets like gold and sovereign bonds during bear markets.
3. Bear markets are marked by consistent upward revisions in economic forecasts.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: a)

Explanation:

- While two quarters of GDP contraction defines a recession, a bear market is determined by a 20% fall in stock indices, independent of formal GDP data. Hence, Statement 1 is incorrect.
- In bear markets, investors become risk-averse and reallocate funds to safe-haven assets like gold, government bonds, and sometimes US dollars. This reflects a strategy to protect capital from equity market volatility. Hence, Statement 2 is correct.
- Economic forecasts are usually revised downward during bear markets due to declining corporate earnings, unemployment, and global uncertainty. Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.

10) Which of the following are likely outcomes of a sustained rise in gold prices for the Indian economy?

1. Worsening of India's current account deficit.
2. Appreciation of the Indian rupee (increase in rupee's value) due to costlier gold.
3. Significant direct increase in India's CPI (consumer inflation) because gold has a large weight in the consumer price index.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: a)

Explanation:

- Gold price surges tend to worsen India's current account deficit (CAD) because India is one of the world's largest importers of gold (hundreds of tons annually). When gold becomes more expensive, the import bill for the same quantity rises, thereby widening the trade deficit. In fact, high gold imports have been identified as a key factor in India's record trade deficits; Hence statement 1 is correct.
- So, a larger gold import bill worsens CAD (not improves it), and often the rupee depreciates (weakens) under the strain of higher outflows. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect. Expensive gold does not cause the rupee to strengthen; rather, if India's import costs spike (without a matching rise in exports), the currency can come under pressure.
- Gold is not a major component of the consumer price index (CPI) basket in India. The CPI focuses on goods and services consumed regularly by households (food, fuel, housing, clothing, etc.). Hence, Statement 3 is incorrect.

11) With reference to the Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB), consider the following statements:

1. The CCyB was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2015 under the Basel III framework, but has not been used so far.
2. The primary objective of the CCyB is to ensure banks maintain extra capital during economic downturns to support credit flow.
3. The credit-to-GDP gap is the main indicator for triggering the usage of the CCyB, though other supplementary indicators may also be considered.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

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

Answer: b)

Explanation:

- The CCyB was introduced by the RBI in 2015 as part of the Basel III framework. However, it has never been activated so far, as conditions for its activation have not been met. Hence,

Statement 1 is correct.

- The primary objective of the CCyB is to ensure that banks build extra capital during periods of economic growth (not during downturns) to support credit flow during downturns. This helps in preventing excessive lending during economic booms. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.
- The credit-to-GDP gap is the main indicator for determining when to activate the CCyB, although other supplementary indicators may also be used to assess the need for the buffer. Hence, Statement 3 is correct.

12) Which of the following statements best describes the term 'Reverse Flipping' in the context of Indian startups?

- a) It refers to the practice of startups relocating their operations from smaller towns to major metropolitan cities to access better infrastructure.
- b) It denotes the process where startups shift their ownership and operations from Indian jurisdiction to foreign countries for better funding opportunities.
- c) It refers to the practice where startups that had earlier moved their base to foreign countries return to their home country by shifting their domicile back.
- d) It is a strategy used by venture capital firms to exit from loss-making startups by selling them back to their founders.

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- Reverse Flipping refers to the practice where startups that had earlier moved their base to foreign countries return to their home country by shifting their domicile back.
- The primary reason for start-ups to flip back is to potentially get listed on Indian stock exchanges, attracting interested retail investors to invest in startup shares.
- Some other reasons why start-ups are considering reverse flipping to India are the country's robust economic policies, expanding local market, and growing investor confidence in its startup ecosystem.

13) Consider the following Statements regarding MSP

1. The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
2. The MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which is a statutory body and submits separate reports recommending prices for kharif and rabi seasons.

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c)

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers, and is based on a calculation of at least one-and-a-half times the cost of production incurred by the farmers.
 - The Union Budget for 2018-19 had announced that MSP would be kept at levels of 1.5 the cost of production.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The MSP is fixed twice a year on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which is a statutory body and submits separate reports recommending prices for kharif and rabi seasons.
- MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers. Currently, it fixes MSPs for 23 crops grown in both Kharif and Rabi seasons.
- **Which production costs are taken in fixing the MSPs?**
 - The CACP considers both 'A2+FL' and 'C2' costs while recommending MSP.
 - A2 costs cover all paid-out expenses, both in cash and kind, incurred by farmers on seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, hired labour, fuel and irrigation, among others.
 - A2+FL covers actual paid-out costs plus an imputed value of unpaid family labour.
 - The C2 costs account for the rentals and interest forgone on owned land and fixed capital assets respectively, on top of A2+FL.

14) Consider the following statements about the circular economy approach:

Statement I: A circular economy helps in lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Statement II: A circular economy minimizes dependence on fresh raw materials.

Statement III: A circular economy decreases the amount of waste generated during production.

Which of the following is correct regarding the above statements?

- a) Both Statements II and III are correct, and both provide explanations for Statement I
- b) Both Statements II and III are correct, but only one of them explains Statement I
- c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct, and that one explains Statement I
- d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

Answer: a)

Explanation

- Statement 1 is correct: By promoting recycling, reuse, and longer product life, it reduces carbon emissions from extraction, production, transportation, and waste decomposition.
- Statement 2 is correct: Reuse, recycling, and repairing reduce the need for mining, logging, and processing new materials. Reduced extraction directly lowers energy use → which decreases GHG emissions.
- Statement 3 is correct: Lean design, resource efficiency, and closed-loop cycles cut industrial waste. Less waste → less methane from landfills and lower emissions from waste management.
- Both 2 and 3 supports statement 1.

15)With reference to the Purchasing Manufacturers' Index (PMI), consider the following Statements:

1. PMI or Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of business activity both in the manufacturing and services sectors.
2. PMI ranges from 0 to 100, with values above 50 indicating contraction and below 50 signaling expansion.

Which of the Statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: a)

Explanation:

- PMI or Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of business activity both in the manufacturing and services sectors. It indicates the economic health and investor's sentiments about the manufacturing and services sectors of the country. Hence, Statement 1 is correct.
- The PMI is a number from 0 to 100. A print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction. A reading at 50 indicates no change. Hence, Statement 2 is incorrect.

Thank You

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