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1) Consider the following statements regarding the Kimberley Process (KP):

Statement-I: India has taken over the Chairship of the Kimberley Process for the year 2026 with the theme of “3Cs” — Credibility, Compliance, and Consumer Confidence.

Statement-II: The Kimberley Process is a United Nations regulatory organization responsible for supervising the global trade of all precious gemstones.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement-I is correct. India assumed the Chairship of the Kimberley Process on January 1, 2026, for the third time. During its tenure, India adopted the “3Cs” agenda — Credibility, Compliance, and Consumer Confidence — to enhance transparency and integrity in the global rough diamond trade.

Statement-II is incorrect. The Kimberley Process is not a formal United Nations regulatory body. It is a multi-stakeholder initiative involving governments, the diamond industry, and civil society organizations. Although it emerged following a UN General Assembly Resolution, it functions independently.

Further, the Kimberley Process deals only with rough diamonds and specifically aims to prevent the trade in conflict diamonds or “blood diamonds.” It does not regulate trade in all precious gemstones such as rubies, sapphires, or emeralds.

- 2) The ‘Justice Aravind Kumar Committee,’ recently seen in the news, has been constituted primarily for:
- (a) Reviewing the implementation of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) across states
 - (b) Preparing a roadmap for the modernization of physical and digital judicial infrastructure
 - (c) Examining the feasibility of setting up regional benches of the Supreme Court
 - (d) Investigating the pendency of environmental litigation in High Courts

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The Justice Aravind Kumar Committee, officially known as the Judicial Infrastructure Advisory Committee, was established by the Chief Justice of India to address deficiencies in India’s judicial infrastructure.

Its primary objective is to formulate a long-term roadmap for transforming courts into modern, technology-enabled, and citizen-friendly institutions. The committee focuses on both physical infrastructure, such as court buildings and accessibility, and digital infrastructure, including e-courts and hybrid hearing systems.

The committee is also coordinating with the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council (PM-EAC) for financial support, with proposals involving major investments to improve efficiency in the judiciary and reduce delays in case disposal.

- 3) The recently discussed ‘Wyspa Jana Zabawy-Wróblewskiego’ Island is located in:
- (a) The Mediterranean Sea near Greece
 - (b) The Caspian Sea near the Volga Delta
 - (c) The South China Sea within the Spratly archipelago
 - (d) The Szczecin Lagoon in the Baltic Sea region of Poland

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Wyspa Jana Zabawy-Wróblewskiego is a newly created artificial island situated in the Szczecin Lagoon in Poland, which forms part of the Baltic Sea region.

The island was formed using sediment dredged during the deepening of the Szczecin–Świnoujście shipping channel. Instead of disposing of the dredged material elsewhere, it was utilized to create a protected ecological zone.

The island is inaccessible to humans and has been designated as a sanctuary for migratory birds and rare water species. Scientists are studying ecological succession on this newly formed landmass, making it an important example of balancing infrastructure development with environmental conservation.

- 4) With reference to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), consider the following statements:
1. Every shipment of rough diamonds must be carried in tamper-resistant containers along with a government-certified document.
 2. Member countries are allowed to trade rough diamonds with non-member countries under special circumstances.
 3. The scheme was established under a resolution of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Under the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, every international shipment of rough diamonds must be transported in tamper-resistant containers and accompanied by a government-validated certificate confirming that the diamonds are conflict-free.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The scheme strictly prohibits trade in rough diamonds between member and non-member countries. This restriction ensures that conflict diamonds remain isolated from legitimate international trade.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The KPCS was established following UN General Assembly Resolution 55/56 and not under the World Trade Organization. The initiative began in Kimberley, South Africa, in 2000 as an international effort to curb the trade in blood diamonds.

5) Florence Nightingale came to be known as “The Lady with the Lamp” mainly because of her:

- (a) Development of a portable medical lamp for military hospitals
- (b) Spiritual writings emphasizing the concept of healing through light
- (c) Campaign for electrification of hospitals in rural Britain
- (d) Practice of visiting wounded soldiers at night during the Crimean War

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Florence Nightingale earned the title “The Lady with the Lamp” during the Crimean War, where she served in military hospitals caring for wounded soldiers.

She became famous for making late-night rounds through hospital wards while carrying a lamp, personally attending to injured soldiers and ensuring their comfort. This image became symbolic of compassion, dedication, and nursing service.

Apart from nursing, Nightingale also played a pioneering role in hospital sanitation, public health reforms, and medical statistics. Her work transformed nursing into a respected profession, and her birthday, May 12, is celebrated globally as International Nurses Day.

6) In the context of recently launched weather forecasting systems, how does the ‘Mithuna’ model differ from the ‘AI-enabled Forecast of Monsoon Advance’?

- (a) Mithuna provides seasonal monsoon forecasts, whereas the other system offers short-term daily weather updates
- (b) Both are identical systems with different names
- (c) Mithuna is developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, whereas the other is operated by IMD
- (d) Mithuna delivers rainfall forecasts at 1-km spatial resolution, while the Monsoon Advance system provides block-level probabilistic updates on monsoon progression

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

The AI-enabled Forecast of Monsoon Advance focuses on tracking the movement and likely progression of the southwest monsoon from Kerala across India. It provides probabilistic forecasts at the block level up to four weeks in advance.

In contrast, the Mithuna weather model is designed for highly localized rainfall forecasting. It provides rainfall predictions at a very high spatial resolution of 1 kilometre, significantly improving accuracy compared to conventional forecasting systems.

The Mithuna model is particularly useful for urban planning, disaster management, agriculture, and water resource management. Both systems were jointly developed by institutions such as the India Meteorological Department (IMD), IITM Pune, and NCMRWF.

7) The 'Baan Stambh' or Arrow Pillar at the Somnath Temple is significant because it:

- (a) Indicates that a straight line drawn southward from the point reaches the South Pole without crossing any landmass
- (b) Marks the original site where the Somnath Temple was first constructed in gold
- (c) Contains inscriptions naming all invaders who attacked the temple
- (d) Functions as a sundial based on the shadow of the temple tower

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

The Baan Stambh is a notable pillar located near the Somnath Temple in Gujarat. It bears an inscription claiming that there is no landmass between that point and the South Pole along a straight line southward.

This observation aligns broadly with modern geographical understanding and highlights the advanced maritime and geographical awareness of ancient Indian scholars and temple architects.

The Somnath Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, is also historically significant for being repeatedly destroyed and reconstructed over centuries, symbolizing resilience and cultural continuity.

8) What was the significance of the 'Rumi device' in medieval Indian warfare?

- (a) A cavalry strategy developed by the Lodi rulers
- (b) An Ottoman-style deployment of artillery and matchlocks introduced by Babur
- (c) A naval blockade mechanism used in the Indian Ocean trade
- (d) A diplomatic practice for prisoner exchange during warfare

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

The Rumi device referred to the Ottoman-inspired arrangement of field artillery and firearms used by Babur during the First Battle of Panipat in 1526.

Babur employed cannons and matchlocks effectively in open battle, which was a major innovation in Indian warfare. The artillery units were protected behind carts tied together with ropes or chains, enabling soldiers to fire safely while reloading.

Combined with Babur's Tulughma tactics, this system allowed a smaller but technologically advanced Mughal force to defeat Ibrahim Lodi's much larger army. The battle marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire and introduced a major military transformation in the Indian subcontinent.

9) With reference to the evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended a two-tier structure for democratic decentralization.
2. The L.M. Singhvi Committee recommended constitutional recognition for Panchayati Raj Institutions.
3. Rajasthan became the first state to inaugurate the Panchayati Raj system in Nagaur district.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended a three-tier Panchayati Raj system consisting of Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, and Zila Parishad.

Statement 2 is correct. The L.M. Singhvi Committee strongly advocated granting constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions to protect them from arbitrary state interference.

Statement 3 is correct. Rajasthan was the first state to formally inaugurate the Panchayati Raj system in Nagaur district on October 2, 1959, by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The evolution of PRIs reflects India's efforts to strengthen grassroots democracy and participatory governance, culminating in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act.

10) With reference to the factors responsible for heatwaves in the Indian subcontinent, consider the following statements:

1. Anticyclonic circulation causes sinking air that compresses and heats the lower atmosphere.
2. The Urban Heat Island effect reduces the intensity of heatwaves by creating wind corridors in cities.
3. Oceanic temperature variations such as El Niño Modoki can alter atmospheric circulation and bring dry, hot conditions over India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Anticyclonic systems involve descending air associated with high-pressure conditions. As the air sinks, it gets compressed and warms up, resulting in extremely high temperatures and clear skies.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Urban Heat Island effect intensifies heatwaves rather than reducing them. Urban surfaces such as concrete and asphalt absorb and retain heat, while limited vegetation reduces cooling through evapotranspiration.

Statement 3 is correct. Oceanic phenomena such as El Niño Modoki influence atmospheric circulation patterns and can contribute to reduced rainfall and increased temperatures across the Indian subcontinent.

Heatwaves arise from the interaction of large-scale climatic processes and local environmental conditions, making both global climate variability and urbanization important contributing factors.

11) Consider the following statements regarding the tribal communities of the Nilgiri hills:

1. The Kurumba tribe is traditionally linked with the ancient Pallava kingdom and is especially known for honey collection.
2. The Irula tribe is widely recognized for its traditional knowledge of herbal medicine and collection of forest resources.
3. Both communities are forest-dwelling tribes inhabiting the mid- and lower-elevation regions of the Nilgiris.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. The Kurumba tribe is traditionally associated with the ancient Pallava empire and is renowned for honey-gathering practices. They are especially known for climbing steep rock faces using handmade vine ladders to collect wild honey.

Statement 2 is correct. The Irula tribe possesses extensive knowledge of forest ecology, medicinal plants, and herbal healing traditions. Historically, the community has also been known for snake-catching and rodent control.

Statement 3 is correct. Both the Kurumbas and Irulas are forest-dependent Scheduled Tribes inhabiting the Nilgiri region spread across parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Their cultural practices, spiritual traditions, and livelihood systems remain deeply connected to the forests and hills of the region.

The rediscovery of prehistoric rock art at Oor Pare further highlights their enduring cultural and spiritual association with the Nilgiri landscape.

12) In the context of the Bering Strait, the term 'Beringia' refers to:

- (a) A proposed underwater tunnel linking Asia and North America
- (b) A prehistoric land bridge that enabled migration between Asia and North America
- (c) A Russian military installation on Big Diomed Island
- (d) A form of Arctic sea ice that persists throughout the year

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Beringia was a vast prehistoric land bridge that connected present-day Siberia in Asia with Alaska in North America during the Pleistocene Ice Age.

During glacial periods, large volumes of water were trapped in ice sheets, causing sea levels to fall significantly. This exposed a broad stretch of land across what is now the Bering Strait, creating a migration corridor for plants, animals, and early humans.

Anthropologists believe that early human populations crossed Beringia approximately 20,000 to 35,000 years ago, eventually populating the Americas. Later, as glaciers melted and sea levels rose, the land bridge became submerged, forming the modern Bering Strait.

Today, Beringia remains significant in studies related to human migration, paleontology, climate history, and Arctic geography.

13) With reference to the OPU–IVF–ET technology recently highlighted by the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), consider the following statements:

1. Ovum Pick-Up (OPU) involves retrieving mature eggs from donor cows through ultrasound-guided procedures.
2. The technique depends on intensive hormonal stimulation of donor cows to maximize egg production.
3. Embryo Transfer (ET) involves transferring laboratory-developed blastocysts into surrogate cows.
4. The technology enables rapid multiplication of elite cattle genetics without relying on natural gestation cycles in donor cows.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Ovum Pick-Up (OPU) is a procedure through which oocytes (eggs) are collected directly from the ovaries of donor cows using ultrasound-guided needles.

Statement 2 is incorrect. One of the major advantages of the OPU–IVF–ET system developed by IVRI is that it can be carried out without heavy hormonal stimulation or superovulation. This reduces stress on donor animals and helps preserve their long-term reproductive health.

Statement 3 is correct. After fertilization in the laboratory through In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), embryos are cultured into blastocysts and then implanted into surrogate cows through Embryo Transfer (ET).

Statement 4 is correct. Since elite donor cows are not required to carry pregnancies to term, they can repeatedly provide oocytes throughout the year. This allows rapid multiplication of desirable genetic traits such as high milk production, disease resistance, and climate adaptability.

14) With reference to the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), consider the following statements:

1. It is mainly found in dense tropical rainforests and generally avoids agricultural landscapes.
2. It plays an important ecological role by controlling rodent populations in farmlands.
3. In India, it is classified as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List because of habitat fragmentation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. Despite its name, the Jungle Cat does not primarily inhabit dense rainforests. It prefers open habitats such as wetlands, grasslands, scrublands, and agricultural areas. It is well adapted to human-modified agro-pastoral landscapes.

Statement 2 is correct. Jungle Cats feed extensively on rodents and small pests, thereby helping farmers by naturally controlling rodent populations in agricultural fields. This makes them an important component of ecological pest management.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The Jungle Cat is currently listed as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List, indicating that the species remains relatively widespread. In India, it receives legal protection under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

The species is also considered an important indicator of the health of Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs), which are increasingly under ecological pressure due to land-use changes.

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