



*Drishti IAS Presents...*

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

(January 2021 – March 2022)



Detailed  
Explanation

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**1. Ans: B****Exp:**

- Recently, **India and Pakistan** have exchanged a list of their nuclear installations. The exchange was in accordance with the Article-II of **Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- According to this agreement, **both countries have to inform each other of the nuclear installations and facilities**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
  - ◆ The agreement was signed in 1988 and ratified in 1991.
  - ◆ This was the 31st consecutive exchange of the list between the two neighboring countries.
- **Nuclear power and research reactors, fuel fabrication, uranium enrichment, isotopes separation and reprocessing facilities**, as well as **any other installations with fresh or irradiated nuclear fuel** and materials in any form and establishments storing significant quantities of radioactive materials, are all included under the umbrella term “nuclear installations and facilities”. Hence, **statement 3 is not correct**.

**2. Ans: D****Exp:**

- India is **Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia** and seventh largest globally.
  - ◆ Both countries currently have USD 4.14 billion of trade (April 2020 – February 2021), a figure that doesn't include the **defence trade which has been increasing**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - ◆ Israeli companies have invested in **India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies**, and are focusing on setting up Research & Development centres or production units in India.
  - ◆ The first recipients of grants from the Israel-India Industrial R&D and **Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)** were announced in July 2018, including companies working to better the lives of Indians and Israelis through efficient water use, improving communications infrastructure, **solar energy** use, and life-changing surgeries.
    - The fund aims to help Israeli entrepreneurs enter the Indian market.
- Israel has been **among the top four arms suppliers to India** for almost two decades now, notching military sales worth around USD 1 billion every year.

- ◆ The Indian armed forces have inducted a wide array of Israeli weapon systems over the years, which range from **Phalcon AWACS** (airborne warning and control systems) and Heron, **Searcher-II and Harop drones to Barak anti-missile** defence systems and Spyder quick-reaction anti-aircraft missile systems.
- ◆ The acquisitions also include a host of Israeli missiles and precision-guided munitions, from Python and Derby air-to-air missiles to Crystal Maze and Spice-2000 bombs. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- ◆ At the 15th Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on Bilateral Defence Cooperation between India and Israel, both countries agreed to form a Task Force to formulate a comprehensive Ten-Year Roadmap to identify new areas of cooperation.
- In 2020, an Israeli team arrived in India with a multi-pronged mission, codenamed **Operation Breathing Space** to work with Indian authorities on the Covid-19 response. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

**3. Ans: A****Exp:**

- Recently, the **Five permanent United Nations Security Council members** (China, France, Russia, the U.K. and US) **pledged to prevent atomic weapons spreading and to avoid nuclear conflict**.
  - ◆ The pledge was made in a rare joint statement **ahead of a review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 1970**. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.
  - ◆ The statement comes as tensions between Russia and the US have reached heights rarely seen since the Cold War over a troop build-up by Russia close to the Ukrainian border.
- The **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament.
  - ◆ Presently, it has 190 member states.
  - ◆ The **NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** are two of the most important global efforts towards nuclear disarmament. **India has not signed NPT and CTBT**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.

4. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, the US Sea Dragon 22 exercise began along with the navies of India, Australia, Canada, Japan and South Korea in the Pacific Ocean.
- Sea Dragon is a **US-led multinational exercise** designed to practice and discuss **Anti-submarine warfare tactics** to operate together in response to traditional and non-traditional **maritime security challenges** in the **Indo-Pacific region**. It is an **annual exercise**.
  - Hence, statement 1 is correct but statement 2 is not correct.
- The exercise **assumes significance in the face of strained relations** that some countries have with China and the growing forays of the PLA-Navy into the **Indian ocean region**.

5. Ans: C

Exp:

**North Atlantic Treaty Organisation**

- It is a **military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the Washington Treaty) of April, 1949**, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to **provide collective security against the Soviet Union**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- A key provision of the treaty, the **so-called Article 5**, states that **if one member of the alliance is attacked in Europe or North America, it is to be considered an attack on all members**.
- That effectively put Western Europe under the “nuclear umbrella” of the US. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

6. Ans: B

Exp:

**International Telecommunication Union:**

- It is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs.
  - It is the **oldest among all the 15 specialized agencies** of the UN. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- Based in Geneva, Switzerland**, it is also a member of the United Nations Development Group and has 12 regional and area offices in the world. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- Its membership includes 193 Member States and around 800 public and private sector companies and academic institutions as well as international and regional telecommunication entities.

- Recently, India got elected as a member of ITU Council for another 4-year term - from 2019 to 2022. India has remained a regular member since 1952.

7. Ans: A

Exp:

**International Counter Terrorism Conference 2022:**

- Recently, the **International Counter Terrorism Conference 2022** was organised by the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC). Hence **statement 1 is correct**.
- GCTC is an International Think-Tank Council with an overarching mission of reducing the vulnerability of people worldwide to terrorism by preventing, combating and prosecuting terrorist acts and countering incitement and recruitment to terrorism. Hence **statement 2 is not correct**.

8. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, the **Chinese Foreign Minister (CFM) visited Sri Lanka**. The CFM visit envisaged launching **celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the historic Rubber-Rice Pact 1952** and the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between **China and Sri Lanka**.
  - Under the Rubber-Rice Pact, **China needed to import rubber** and other supplies and Sri Lanka, for whom rubber was a key export, was facing a rise in the price of rice and a slump in the price of rubber.
- Other Highlights of the CFM visit to Sri Lanka:**
  - CFM asserted that the two sides should make good use of “the two engines”, referring to the Colombo Port City in Colombo and the Hambantota Port (also in Sri Lanka).
  - He urged Sri Lanka to consider the prospects of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and restart talks on a free-trade agreement.
  - A “forum on the development of Indian Ocean island countries” to build consensus and synergy and promote common development, was also proposed.
- Hence, **option C is correct**.

9. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** is the demarcation that **separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory**.

- LAC is different from the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan:

- ◆ The LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War.
- ◆ It was **designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries**. It is delineated on a map signed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.
- ◆ The **LAC, in contrast, is only a concept** – it is **not agreed upon by the two countries**, neither delineated on a map or demarcated on the ground. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- **Sectors Across the LAC:**

- ◆ It is divided into three sectors: the eastern sector which spans Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (1346 km), the middle sector in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (545 km), and the western sector in Ladakh (1597 km).
- ◆ The **alignment of the LAC in the eastern sector is along the 1914 McMahon Line**.
  - The McMahon line marked out previously unclaimed/undefined borders between Britain and Tibet.
  - The middle sector is the least disputed sector, while the **western sector witnesses the highest transgressions between the two sides**. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

10. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** was established by the UN Charter in 1945. It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.
  - ◆ The other 5 organs of the United Nations are—the General Assembly (UNGA), the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat.
- Its primary responsibility is to work to maintain international peace and security.
- The council is headquartered at New York.
- Members: The council has 15 members: the five permanent members and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.
  - ◆ The five permanent members are the United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom.

- India, for the **eighth time, has entered the UNSC as a non-permanent member last year (2021)** and will stay on the council for two years i.e 2021-22. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Each year, the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of ten in total) for a two-year term. The ten **non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The council's presidency is a capacity that rotates every month among its 15 members.

11. Ans: D

Exp:

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission:**

- **CWGC is an intergovernmental organization of six member-states (Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom)** who ensure the men and women who died in the wars will never be forgotten.
- It was formed in 1917 as the Imperial War Graves Commission. However the present name was given in 1960.
- Its headquarters is situated in Maidenhead, UK.
- **Hence, option D is correct.**

12. Ans: A

Exp:

**Panchsheel Agreement:**

- The Panchsheel Agreement served as the **foundation for India-China relations**. It would advance economic and security cooperation between the two nations.
- The Five Principles of the Panchsheel Agreement are as follows:
  - ◆ Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
  - ◆ Mutual non-aggression
  - ◆ Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
  - ◆ Equality and mutual benefit
  - ◆ Peaceful co-existence

13. Ans: A

Exp:

**Blue Dot Network (BDN):**

- The BDN was formally announced on 4th November, 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand. **It will be led by the US along with Japan and Australia.**
- It is a multi-stakeholder initiative **to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society** to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development.

- It is expected to serve as a globally recognised evaluation and certification system for roads, ports and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.
  - ◆ Infrastructure projects would be graded on debt, environmental standards, labour standards etc.
  - ◆ This system would apply to projects in any citizen-centric country where citizens would like to evaluate such projects.
- It seems to be planned as a direct counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, unlike the BRI, the BDN would not offer public funds or loans for the project. BDN will serve as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects, letting people know that projects are sustainable and not exploitative.
- Hence option A is correct.

14. Ans: D

Exp:

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action:

- The JCPOA, popularly known as the **Iran nuclear deal**, was the **result of prolonged negotiations from 2013 and 2015 between Iran and P5+1** (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States).
- It happened **due to the backchannel talks between the US** (President Barack Obama) **and Iran, quietly brokered by Oman**, in an attempt to repair the accumulated mistrust since the 1979 Islamic revolution.
  - ◆ Islamic Revolution, also called Iranian Revolution, popular uprising in Iran in 1978–79 that resulted in the toppling of the monarchy on 11th February, 1979, and led to the establishment of an Islamic republic.
- As part of the deal, **Iran agreed to reduce its number of nuclear centrifuges by two-thirds.**
- Iran **also agreed to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98% and limit uranium enrichment to 3.67%, i.e., it will have enough enriched uranium to maintain the country's energy needs, without having the ability to build a nuclear bomb.**
- The deal aimed to restrict Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for lifting economic sanctions against Iran.
- The JCPOA **ensured the comprehensive lifting of all UN Security Council sanctions** as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran's nuclear programme.
- Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were given access to Iran's nuclear facilities for inspection on a regular basis.
- Hence option D is correct.

15. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the Union Finance Minister in the Union Budget for 2022-23 announced National Ropeways Development Programme – "Parvatmala" to improve connectivity in hilly areas.
- The idea is to **improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- This may also cover congested urban areas, where conventional mass transit systems are not feasible.
- The scheme is being presently started in regions like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir and the other North Eastern states.
- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH)** will have responsibility for development of ropeway and alternative mobility solutions technology, as well as construction, research, and policy in this area. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

16. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **British, in 1765, were the first to settle West Falkland**, but they were **driven off in 1770 by the Spanish**, who had bought out the **French settlement about 1767.**
- The **British outpost on West Falkland was restored in 1771** after threat of war, but then the **British withdrew from the island in 1774** for economic reasons, without renouncing their claim to the Falklands.
- Spain maintained a settlement on **East Falkland (which it called Soledad Island)** until 1811.
- In **1820 the Argentina Government, which had declared its independence from Spain in 1816, proclaimed its sovereignty over the Falklands.**
- After **World War II (1939-45)** the issue of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands shifted to the **United Nations (UN)** when, in 1964, the islands' status was debated by the UN committee on decolonization.
- In **1965, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to hold discussions** to find a peaceful solution to the dispute.
- These protracted discussions were still proceeding in February **1982, but in April Argentina's military government invaded the Falklands.**
- This act started the **Falkland Islands War**, which ended 10 weeks later with the **surrender of the Argentine forces at Stanley to British troops who had forcibly reoccupied the islands.**



- Although Britain and Argentina reestablished full diplomatic relations in 1990, **the issue of sovereignty remained a point of contention.**
- Hence, option B is correct.

17. Ans: A

Exp:

- Falkland Islands, also called Malvinas Islands or Spanish Islas Malvinas, **internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom** in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- It lies about **300 miles northeast of the southern tip of South America** and a similar distance east of the **Strait of Magellan.**
- The capital and major town is Stanley, on East Falkland; **there are also several scattered small settlements as well as a Royal Air Force base** that is located at Mount Pleasant.
- The two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, and about 200 smaller islands. The **government of the Falkland Islands also administers the British overseas territory of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands**, including the Shag and Clerke rocks.
- Hence option A is correct.



18. Ans: C

Exp:

Line of Credit

- It is a **credit facility extended by a bank or any other financial institution to a government, business or an individual customer**, that enables the customer to draw the maximum loan amount. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**

- The borrower can access funds from the line of credit at any time as long as they do not exceed the maximum amount (or credit limit) set in the agreement and meet any other requirements such as making timely minimum payments.

**Recent Economic Support that India is Providing to Sri Lanka**

- Beginning January 2022, India has been providing crucial economic support to the island nation in the grip of a severe dollar crisis that, many fear, might lead to a sovereign default, and a severe shortage of essentials in the import-reliant country.
- The relief extended by India from the beginning of this year totals over USD 1.4 billion —a USD 400 currency swap, a USD 500 loan deferment and a USD 500 Line of Credit for fuel imports. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
- Sri Lanka is further negotiating a USD 1 billion assistance from India to help the country as it faces an unprecedented economic crisis.

19. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, the US administration has announced its long-awaited **Indo-Pacific strategy**. The document focuses on building **collective capacity** to deal with challenges in the region.
  - These include a focus on **challenges from China**, advancing the US relationship, a **‘Major Defence Partnership’ with India** and supporting its role as a net security provider in the region. **Hence statement 2 is correct.**
  - There is an emphasis on working with other countries **not just from the region, but also from beyond.**
- Vision of Indo-Pacific:** The US will seek an Indo-Pacific that is **free and open, connected, prosperous, secure and resilient.**
  - Free:** One of the strategic actions outlined is investing in civil society, a free press and democratic institutions. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
  - Connections:** Within and beyond the region.
    - The US says it will work **“in flexible groupings”** to tackle major issues, “particularly through the **QUAD.**”
    - It will also deepen its (five) regional treaty alliances and work with groups such as **ASEAN, the European Union (EU) and NATO.**
    - AUKUS**, a security alliance between Australia, the UK and the US has also been recently launched.

- ◆ **Prosperity:** To advance its prosperity goal for the region, the US' strategy includes seeking **higher labour and environmental standards**, helping to establish secure supply chains and investing in clean energy.
- ◆ **Security:** The US has announced that "**Integrated deterrence**" will form the "cornerstone" of the US' security plan for the region.
  - It will drive initiatives that reinforce deterrence and counter coercion, such as opposing efforts to alter territorial boundaries or undermine the rights of sovereign nations at sea.
- ◆ **Resilience:** The Indo-Pacific faces major **transnational challenges**.
  - **Climate change** is growing ever-more severe as South Asia's glaciers melt and the Pacific Islands battle existential rises in sea levels.
  - Further, the Indo-Pacific governments grapple with natural disasters, resource scarcity, internal conflict, and governance challenges.
  - In this context, US envisages to build regional **resilience to 21st century transnational threats, including by:**
- ◆ Working with allies and partners to develop 2030 and 2050 targets, strategies, plans, and policies consistent with limiting global temperature increase to **1.5 degrees Celsius**.
- ◆ Reducing regional vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

20. Ans: D

Exp:

**Commonwealth of Nations**

- It is an international intergovernmental organization of countries that were **mostly former territories of the British Empire and dependencies**.
- It was established by the **London Declaration** in 1949. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Queen Elizabeth II** is the head of the Commonwealth. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The current membership includes 54 Countries. The membership is based on **free and equal voluntary co-operation**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- ◆ It is home to 2.5 billion people, and includes both advanced economies and developing countries.

- The last country to join the Commonwealth was **Rwanda** in 2009.
- The **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting** is a **biennial summit** meeting of the heads of government from all Commonwealth nations.

21. Ans: C

Exp:

- **India and Maldives** have been conducting **Exercise Ekuverin** meaning 'Friends' in the Maldivian language since 2009.
  - ◆ Recently, the 11th Edition of Joint Military Exercise EKUVERIN between India & Maldives has been started at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives.
- It is a 14 days Joint Exercise held alternatively in India and Maldives.
- It **focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces** for carrying out counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate.
- **Hence, option C is correct.**

22. Ans: C

Exp:

- The Black Sea is located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
- It is surrounded by the Pontic, Caucasus, and Crimean Mountains in the south, east and north respectively.
- The Black Sea is also connected to the **Sea of Azov** by the **Strait of Kerch**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The **Turkish straits system** - the Dardanelles, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea - forms a transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Bordering countries of Black Sea are:** Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.
- There is a significant **absence of oxygen** in the water (anoxic waters).



23. Ans: C

Exp:

- The Human Rights Council is an **inter-governmental body within the United Nations system** responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The most innovative feature of the Human Rights Council is the **Universal Periodic Review**. This unique mechanism involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN member states once every four years. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the secretariat for the Human Rights Council.

24. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, a **Curtain Raiser Event for PANEX-21** for the member nations of **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** countries was held recently.
- It is a **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise**.
  - ◆ It aims to foster joint planning and build regional cooperation for responding to natural disasters.
- It will be participated by subject matter experts and delegates from **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand**.
  - ◆ A Multi-Agency Exercise (MAE) comprising a static display showcasing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HDR) equipment employed by the Indian Armed Forces and various civil agencies will also take place.
- **Hence, option A is correct.**

25. Ans: B

Exp:

Brasilia Declaration (2015):

- The declaration was signed at the **second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety** held in Brazil. **India is a signatory to the Declaration. Hence, statement 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct.**
- The countries plan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 i.e. to half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.

26. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** was established as a multilateral association to ensure security and **maintain stability across the vast Eurasian region**.
  - ◆ Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were collectively called the Shanghai Five. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- SCO-RATS is a permanent body of the SCO and is intended to **facilitate coordination and interaction** between the SCO member states in the fight **against terrorism, extremism and separatism. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India and Pakistan became members in 2017. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ **Member countries:** Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan.

27. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982** divides marine areas into five main zones namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.
- **Baseline** is the low-water line along the coast as officially recognized by the coastal state.
- Internal waters are **waters on the landward side of the baseline** from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.
- The **territorial sea extends seaward up to 12 nautical miles (nm) from its baselines. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ A nautical mile is based on the circumference of the earth and is equal to one minute of latitude. It is slightly more than a land measured mile (1 nautical mile = 1.1508 land miles or 1.85 km).
- The contiguous zone **extends seaward up to 24 nm from its baselines.**
  - ◆ It is an **intermediary zone between the territorial sea and the high seas. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ The coastal state has the right to both prevent and punish infringement of fiscal, immigration, sanitary, and customs laws within its territory and territorial sea.



- ◆ Unlike the territorial sea, the contiguous zone **only gives jurisdiction to a state on the ocean's surface and floor**. It does not provide air and space rights.
- Each coastal State may claim an **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** beyond and adjacent to its territorial sea that extends seaward **up to 200 nm from its baselines**.
- The ocean surface and the water column beyond the EEZ are referred to as the **high seas**.
  - ◆ It is **considered as "the common heritage of all mankind"** and is beyond any national jurisdiction.
  - ◆ States can conduct activities in these areas as long as they are for peaceful purposes, such as transit, marine science, and undersea exploration.

28. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs)** in criminal matters are the bilateral treaties entered between the countries for providing international cooperation and assistance.
  - ◆ These agreements **allow for the exchange of evidence and information** in criminal and related matters between the signing countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The **Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry** and the Central authority for seeking and providing mutual legal assistance in criminal law matters. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The Ministry of External Affairs may be involved in this process when such requests are routed through diplomatic channels by these Ministries.
- As of November 2019, India has entered into Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties/Agreements with 42 countries.
  - ◆ Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the **Government of India and Poland**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

29. Ans: A

Exp:

#### About Green Strategic Partnership

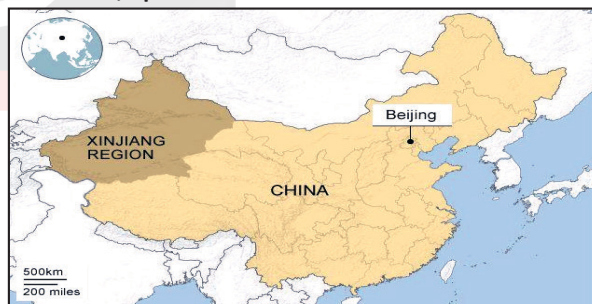
- In September 2020, **India and Denmark entered into a new age Green Strategic Partnership** following a virtual summit chaired by both prime ministers.
- India and Denmark **both have ambitious goals** within the **climate agenda** and are including more **sustainable practices day by day**.

- The Green Strategic Partnership provides a **perfect framework** because it emphasizes how **international collaboration can help accelerate the green transition** and deliver on global goals.
- The Partnership focuses on **expanding economic ties, green growth, and cooperation on global challenges** such as **climate change**.
  - ◆ Green growth is a term to describe a path of economic growth that uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- Other key points under the partnership include dealing with the **Covid-19 pandemic** and cooperation in water efficiency and water loss.
- **Hence, option A is correct.**

30. Ans: D

Exp:

- Xinjiang is technically an autonomous region within China — its largest region, rich in minerals, and sharing borders with eight countries, including India, Russia, Mongolia and Afghanistan.
- It is bordered by the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Gansu to the east, the Tibet Autonomous Region to the south, Afghanistan and the disputed territory of Kashmir to the southwest, **Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the west, Kazakhstan to the northwest, Russia to the north, and Mongolia to the northeast.**
- **Hence, option D is correct.**



31. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, India and Vietnam signed a letter of intent (LOI) to collaborate in the field of digital media, paving the way for further strengthening the partnership between the two countries.
- **Cooperation at Multiple Fora:**
  - ◆ At the **UN Security Council**, both India and Vietnam are serving concurrently as **non-permanent members in 2021**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- ◆ India and Vietnam closely cooperate in various regional forums such as **East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)**.

- The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – **India** and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and **Vietnam** for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**32. Ans: B**

**Exp:**

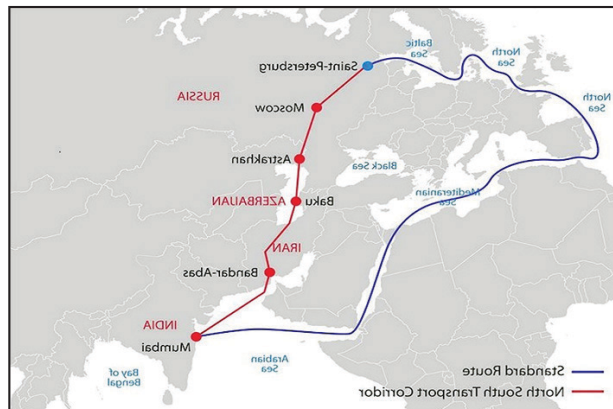
- Recently, the **Prime Minister of India** has been conferred by **Bhutan's highest civilian award, 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo'** also known as "**Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo**".
  - ◆ The announcement of the award coincided with the occasion of the 114th National Day of Bhutan.
- This is the highest decoration of Bhutan and is **awarded in recognition of a lifetime of service to the people and the Kingdom of Bhutan.**
  - ◆ Order of the Dragon King was founded on 7th November 2008, to reward those who devoted a lifetime of service to the nation and people of Bhutan.
  - ◆ The honours exist in two categories. Order of the Dragon King is the pinnacle of the honour system in Bhutan and also takes precedence over all other orders, medals and decorations.
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

**33. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

- It is a **multi-modal transportation established on 12th September 2000** in St. Petersburg, by **Iran, Russia and India** for the purpose of promoting transportation cooperation among the Member States. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ The INSTC was expanded to include eleven new members, namely: the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Ukraine, Republic of Belarus, Oman, Syria, Bulgaria (Observer).
- It envisions a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail and road route for transporting freight, aimed at reducing the carriage cost between India and Russia by about 30% and bringing down the transit time from 40 days by more than half.

- This corridor **connects India Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea** via the Islamic Republic of Iran and then is connected to St. Petersburg and North Europe via the Russian Federation. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**



**34. Ans: A**

**Exp:**

- The Islamic Development Bank is an international financial institution established in pursuance of the Declaration of Intent issued by the Conference of Finance Ministers of Muslim Countries held in Jeddah in December 1973, and the Bank was formally opened in October 1975.
  - ◆ The **purpose of the Bank is to foster the economic development and social progress** of member countries and Muslim communities individually as well as jointly **in accordance with the principles of Shari'ah** i.e., Islamic Law. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ The Bank's principal office is in Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The present membership of the Bank consists of 56 countries.
  - ◆ The **basic condition for membership is that the prospective member country should be a member of the OIC**, pay its contribution to the Capital of the Bank and be willing to accept such terms and conditions as may be decided upon by the IDB Board of Governors. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

**35. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

**About**

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It is the **second-largest intergovernmental organisation** after the **United Nations** with a membership of 57 states.

- It was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in **Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco** on the 25th of September 1969. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- India is not a member of the OIC. However, India was invited as a guest of honour at the **46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers** in 2019. Hence, **statement 3 is correct.**

36. Ans: D

Exp:

- **Katchatheevu Island** is an uninhabited off-shore island in the **Palk Strait** originally owned by a king of Ramnad (present-day Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu).
- The island is used by fishermen to dry their nets.
- During British rule, it was administered jointly by India and Sri Lanka.
- In the early 20th century, Sri Lanka claimed territorial ownership over the islet, so in 1974 India ceded the island to Sri Lanka, through a joint agreement.
- Two years later through another accord, India further gave up its fishing rights in the region.
- Hence, **option D is correct.**



37. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, the **Prime Minister of India** has been conferred by **Bhutan's highest civilian award**, 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' also known as "Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo".

- Other Awards Won by the Indian PM

- ◆ **Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud (2016):** The highest honour of **Saudi Arabia** awarded to non-muslim dignitaries. Hence, **Pair 1 is correctly matched.**
- ◆ **State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan (2016):** The highest civilian honour of **Afghanistan**. Hence, **Pair 3 is correctly matched.**
- ◆ **Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award (2018):** The highest honour of Palestine awarded to foreign dignitaries.
- ◆ **Order of Zayed Award (2019):** The highest civilian honour of the **United Arab Emirates**. Hence, **Pair 2 is not correctly matched.**
- ◆ **Order of St. Andrew award (2019):** The highest civilian honour of **Russia**
- ◆ **Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin (2019):** The highest honour of the **Maldives** awarded to foreign dignitaries. Hence, **Pair 4 is not correctly matched.**
- ◆ **King Hamad Order of the Renaissance - First Class (2019):** Bahrain's top honour.
- Hence, **option A is correct.**

38. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** is the **second-largest intergovernmental organisation after the United Nations** with a membership of 57 states.
- ◆ It is the **collective voice of the Muslim world**. It endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.
- It was established upon a decision of the **historical summit which took place in Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco** on the 25th of September 1969.
- ◆ It is headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Hence, **option B is correct.**

39. Ans: A

Exp:

- **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** is a multi-billion-dollar initiative launched to undertake big infrastructure projects in the world which in turn would also enhance the global influence of China.
- ◆ It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the **Gulf region**, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**

- It encompassed five kinds of activities; Policy coordination, Trade promotion, Physical connectivity, Renminbi internationalization (China's currency) and People to people contacts.
- Routes of BRI:**
  - New Silk Road Economic Belt:** It encompasses trade and investment hubs to the north of China; by reaching out to Eurasia including a link via Myanmar to India.
  - Maritime Silk Road (MSR):** It begins via the South China Sea going towards Indo-China, South-East Asia and then around the Indian Ocean thus reaching Africa and Europe. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Initiatives to Tackle BRI:**
  - B3W Initiative:** The G7 Countries proposed a 'Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative' at the 47th G7 summit to counter China's BRI.
  - Blue Dot Network (BDN):** It is a multi-stakeholder initiative formed by the US, Japan and Australia to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - Global Gateway:** In a bid to compete with BRI, the **European Union recently launched the Global Gateway**, a new infrastructure development scheme.



40. Ans: D

Exp:

**Mission Sagar:**

- Launched in May 2020, 'Mission Sagar' was India's initiative to deliver Covid-19 related assistance to the countries in the Indian Ocean Littoral states. The countries included were **Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles.**

- Under 'Mission Sagar', the Indian Navy has been deploying its ships to send medical and humanitarian aid to the countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and beyond.
- Under the mission, the Indian Navy has delivered assistance of more than 3,000 metric tons of food aid, over 300 metric tons of liquid medical oxygen, 900 oxygen concentrators and 20 ISO containers to 15 friendly foreign countries.

- Hence, option D is correct.

41. Answer: D

Explanation:

**About Indo-Lanka Accord:**

- It is popularly referred to as the **Rajiv-Jayewardene Accord**, after its architects Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene. It was **signed in 1987**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It was signed on the pretext of the **Civil War in Sri Lanka** (between Tamils and Sinhala community). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - The accord sought to balance India's **strategic interests**, interest of **people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka** and **Tamil minority rights** in Sri Lanka.
- The accord saw the placement of the **Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF)** in Sri Lanka to resolve the Sri Lankan Civil War. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The accord also resulted in the enactment of the **thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka** and the **Provincial Councils Act of 1987**.

42. Ans: D

Exp:

- In September 2021, the US announced a new trilateral security partnership for the **Indo-Pacific**, between **Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS)**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is the first agreement on the technology to be publicly signed since the three countries announced the formation of a **defence alliance, AUKUS**, to confront strategic tensions in the Pacific where China-US rivalry is growing. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Under the AUKUS deal, Australia would obtain **eight state-of-the-art, nuclear-powered but conventionally armed submarines** capable of stealthy, long-range missions. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**



43. Ans: B

Exp:

**Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):**

- PTAs or Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a special status given in trade by various countries. In this type of agreement, two or more partners give preferential right of entry to certain products by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines.
- Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA. India signed a PTA with Afghanistan. Hence, statement 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct.**

44. Ans: D

Exp:

**Minsk Agreements:**

- Minsk I:** Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the capital of Belarus in September 2014.
  - Its provisions included prisoner exchanges, deliveries of humanitarian aid and the withdrawal of heavy weapons.
  - The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.
- Minsk II:** In 2015, an open conflict was averted after the 'Minsk II' peace agreement was signed, under the mediation of France and Germany.
  - It was designed to end the fighting in the rebel regions and hand over the border to Ukraine's national troops.
  - It was signed by Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions.
- Hence, option D is correct.

45. Ans: C

Exp:

- Chile is officially known as the Republic of Chile. Its capital is Santiago.
- It is a South American country **occupying a narrow strip of land between the Andes to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.**
- It borders Peru to the north, Bolivia to the northeast, Argentina to the east, and the Drake Passage in the south.
- The **Atacama desert** is one of the driest places in the world and touches Chile in its northern side and is a source of sodium nitrate fertilizer.
  - It owes its aridity due to a constant temperature inversion of **cool north-flowing Humboldt ocean current.**

- Chuquibambilla is the World's largest copper town of Chile.**
- Hence, option C is correct.



46. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982** is an international agreement that establishes the legal framework for marine and maritime activities.
- It is also known as **Law of the Sea**. It divides marine areas into **five main zones** namely- **Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** and the **High Seas**. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- It is the only international convention which **stipulates a framework for state jurisdiction in maritime spaces**. It provides a different legal status to different maritime zones. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- It provides the backbone for offshore governance by coastal states and those navigating the oceans.
- It not only zones coastal states' offshore areas but also provides specific guidance for states' rights and responsibilities in the five concentric zones.
- While UNCLOS has been signed and ratified by nearly all the coastal countries in the South China Sea, its interpretation is still hotly disputed.
- There is a maritime dispute in the East China Sea as well.

47. Ans: A

Exp:

- World Programme of Action (WPA):** It is a **global strategy to enhance disability prevention**, rehabilitation and equalisation of opportunities, which pertains to full participation of persons with disabilities in social life and national development. The WPA also **emphasises the need to approach disability** from a human rights perspective. Hence, option A is correct.



48. Ans: C

Exp:

- **BIMSTEC** is a regional organization which comprises seven countries.
- Five of these seven countries- India, **Nepal**, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh- are from South Asia while the remaining two, **Thailand** and **Myanmar**, are from Southeast Asia.
- The group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which despite having the potential, has not been able to move forward due to friction between India and Pakistan.
- Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Hence, option C is correct.

49. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Minsk Agreement-I and II** was signed by Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the **Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions.
- The **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group**, chaired by France, Russia and the USA. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- OSCE is the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organisation. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections.
- **OSCE Minsk Group** was created in 1992 by the **Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)** to encourage a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

50. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, Barbados has officially removed **Queen Elizabeth II** as its head of state and become the **world's newest republic** nearly 400 years after the country became a British colony.
- The **Caribbean island nation**, 55 years after its independence, got rid of the remnants of colonial rule by separating from Britain.
- Barbados, however, will continue to be one of the 54 **Commonwealth nations**.
- Hence, option B is correct.

51. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, the **European Commission (the executive body of the European Union)** has announced a plan, called **Global Gateway**, to mobilise EURO 300 billion by 2027 in public and private infrastructure investment around the world.
  - ◆ Although the plan doesn't mention China, it is seen as a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- With Global Gateway, the EU will offer its partners a response to the urgent needs:
  - ◆ To develop sustainable and high quality digital, climate and energy and transport infrastructures.
  - ◆ Strengthen health, education and research systems across the world.
- The EU will use its European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus for financing the project.
- This strategy of the EU is an **offshoot of the G7's Build Back Better World (B3W)** Initiative.
- Hence, option A is correct.

52. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** is a regional grouping that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
  - ◆ It was **established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand** with the **signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)** by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- Its chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- ASEAN countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.8 trillion. **It is India's 4th largest trading partner** with about USD 86.9 billion in trade. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

53. Ans: C

Exp:

- **East Asia Summit**, established in 2005, is a forum of **18 regional leaders** for strategic dialogue and cooperation on the key political, security, and economic challenges facing the **Indo-Pacific region**.

- ◆ It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) which are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- ◆ It also includes 8 other countries; Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.
- ◆ It is an ASEAN-centred forum so it can **only be chaired by an ASEAN member. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

○ Brunei Darussalam is the chair for 2021.

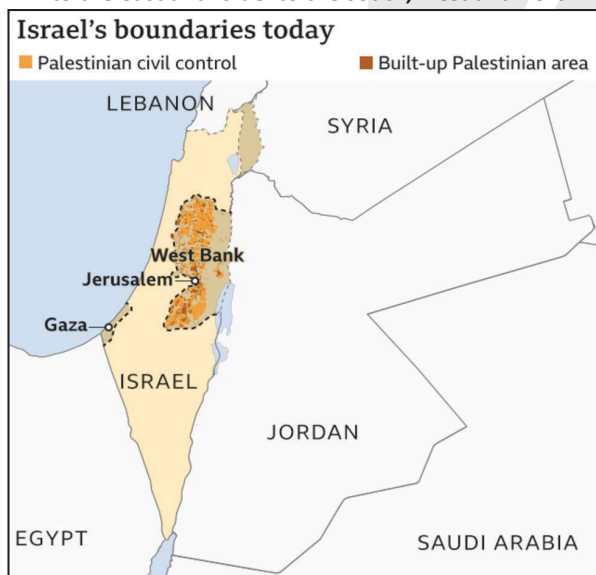
● India and EAS:

- ◆ India is one of the founding members of the East Asia Summit. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- ◆ At the East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November 2019, India had unveiled India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), which is aimed at forging partnerships to create a secure and stable maritime domain.

54. Ans: A

Exp:

- West Bank is a landlocked territory, bordered by Jordan to the east and Israel to the south, west and north.



- Hence, answer A is correct.

55. Ans: C

Exp:

About India-France Defence Relations:

- AUKUS is a new trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS). **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- The two countries also signed the **Agreement regarding the Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- ◆ This agreement will help to facilitate the replenishment of fuel, rations, spares, and berthing and maintenance for the other nations' warships, military aircraft and troops during routine port calls, as well as during **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).**

- Recently, **France became the 23rd member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).**

- ◆ It is the first time that a country whose mainland is not on the Indian Ocean has been brought into the fold of the IORA. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

56. Ans: C

Exp:

- Freedom of air rule emanates from the **Chicago Convention** in 1944.
- The signatories to the convention decided to set rules that would act as fundamental building blocks to **international commercial aviation. Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- It also **established the core principles permitting international transport by air**, and also led to the creation of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
  - ◆ ICAO is a **United Nations (UN)** specialized agency, established in 1944, which laid the foundation for the standards and procedures for peaceful global air navigation.
  - ◆ Hence, statement 2 is correct.

57. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, the **Delhi Regional Security Dialogue** on Afghanistan was held. The meeting was composed of National Security Advisors' (NSA) of regional countries and **chaired by the Indian NSA.**
- The meeting called for **"urgent humanitarian assistance"** to the Afghan people and urged close cooperation and consultation among the regional countries over the Afghan scenario.
- This is the **third meeting** of the Regional Security Dialogue (the earlier two meetings were held in Iran, in 2018 and 2019).
- Hence, option C is correct.

58. Ans: D

Exp:

India-Sweden Multilateral Engagement:

- India and Sweden jointly launched the Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) in association with World Economic Forum (WEF) at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- In the 1980s India and Sweden worked together on nuclear disarmament issues within the framework of the 'Six Nation Peace Summit' (that also included Argentina, Greece, Mexico and Tanzania). Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- At the UN General Assembly, India and Sweden present an annual Joint Statement on Humanitarian Affairs.
- In 2013, during the Swedish Presidency, India joined the Arctic Council as an Observer at the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

59. Ans: D

Exp

- The sixth edition of the Indo-French Shakti 2021 (bilateral joint training exercise), will be conducted in November in Frejus, France.
  - ◆ Gagan Shakti is conducted by the Indian Air Force to showcase its air dominance over the entire extended area of the Indian Ocean Region.
  - ◆ Garuda Shakti is the joint military exercise between India and Indonesia.
  - ◆ Mitra Shakti is the joint military exercise between India and Sri Lanka.
  - ◆ Harimau Shakti is India-Malaysia joint military exercise.
- Hence, option D is correct.

60. Ans: C

Exp:

- The Red Sea is a semi-enclosed tropical basin, bounded by northeastern Africa, to the west, and the Arabian peninsula, to the east. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The elongated and narrow-shaped basin extends between the Mediterranean Sea, to the north-west, and the Indian Ocean, to the south-east.
- At the northern end, it separates into the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, which is connected to the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal.
- At the southern end, it is connected to the Gulf of Aden, and the outer Indian Ocean, via the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- It is surrounded by desert or semi-desert areas, with no major freshwater inflow.
- 6 Bordering Countries: Yemen; Saudi Arabia; Egypt; Sudan; Eritrea; Djibouti.



61. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the third edition of the trilateral naval exercise Singapore-India-Thailand Maritime Exercise (SITMEX) has been conducted in the Andaman Sea of the Indian Ocean.
  - ◆ It is conducted annually, and was announced by India at Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018.
    - The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue is Asia's premier defence summit. It was launched in 2002.
- It aims to strengthen mutual confidence and develop common understanding and procedures towards enhancing the overall maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.
  - ◆ The exercise is in line with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision.
- Hence, option D is correct.

62. Ans: D

Exp:

- The Build Back Better World (B3W) is an international infrastructure investment initiative announced by the Group of Seven (G-7) richest democracies in June 2021.
- The B3W initiative is being seen as the US' initiative to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The Build Back Better Plan is a Covid-19 relief, future economic, and infrastructure package proposed by G-7 countries for developing and lower-income countries.

- Components of B3W: Through B3W, the G7 and other like-minded partners will coordinate in mobilizing private-sector capital in four areas of focus:

- ◆ Climate,
- ◆ Health and health security,
- ◆ Digital technology,
- ◆ Gender equity and equality.

- Hence, option D is correct.

63. Ans: A

Exp:

- The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs is being hosted by the French Navy at Paris from 15th-16th Nov 21.
- The IONS is a **voluntary and inclusive initiative** that brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region (IOR) littoral states to increase maritime co-operation and enhance regional security. **Hence statement 1 is correct.**
- It also serves to develop an effective response mechanism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) against natural disasters.
- The chairmanship of IONS has been held by **India (2008-10)**, UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21). **France assumed the Chairmanship in June 2021** for a two-year tenure. **Hence statement 2 is not correct.**

64. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Sydney Dialogue** is an initiative of the **Australian Strategic Policy Institute**.
- It is an **annual summit of cyber and critical technologies** to discuss the fallout of the digital domain on the law and order situation in the world.
- Recently, the Prime Minister delivered the keynote at the inaugural Sydney Dialogue via video conferencing where he spoke on the theme of India's technology evolution and revolution.
- Hence, option B is correct.

65. Ans: A

Exp:

About International Court of Justice

- ICJ is a **principal judicial organization** of the United Nations (UN).
- It was established in 1945 by a **UN Charter** and began working in 1946 as the successor to the **Permanent Court of International Justice**.

- It settles legal disputes between member countries and gives advisory opinions to authorized UN Organs and Specialized Agencies.

- It is seated in the **Peace Palace of Hague, Netherlands**.

- Hence, option A is correct.

66. Ans: B

Exp:

- The 15th edition of the biennial **trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti' involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka** was recently concluded.
- The year 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched.
- Hence, option B is correct.

67. Ans: D

Exp:

- BRICS member countries have agreed to a **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)-led BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan (2021-24)** proposed by India during the 12th meeting of the grouping's science & technology steering committee.
  - ◆ It will **facilitate sharing of experiences** of each other's innovation ecosystem and networking of innovators and entrepreneurs.
- **Thematic areas included:**
  - ◆ Transient Astronomical Events and Deep Survey Science, **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**, **Big Data Analytics**, Innovation and Entrepreneurship on Photonic, **Nanophotonics**, and **Metamaterials** for Addressing Biomedicine, Agriculture, **Food Industry**, Energy Harvesting Issues etc. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- In accordance with the plan BRICS Ministers and their representatives endorsed the **BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Calendar of Activities 2020-2021**.

68. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** has launched the first edition of the **India Young Water Professional Programme**.
- Its launch **marks a significant milestone in Australia-India Water relationship**. This Programme looks to prepare future water leaders. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ This program has been taken up under the **National Hydrology Project**. It will be implemented by Australia India Water Centre (a consortium of Australian and Indian universities). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- The **National Hydrology Project** was started in 2016 as a **Central Sector Scheme** by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and is supported by the **World Bank**. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

69. Ans: C

Exp:

- The 37<sup>th</sup> edition of **India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol** (India-Indonesia CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted.
- CORPATs help build understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitate the institution of measures to prevent and suppress **Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy**.
- To reinforce maritime links, the two navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their **International Maritime Boundary Line twice a year** since 2002.
- Hence, **option C is correct**.

70. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)** is the **United Nations Specialised Agency** responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - ◆ It was established in 1975 with **headquarters at Madrid, Spain**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
  - ◆ UNWTO encourages the implementation of the **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism**, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts.
- The **Best Tourism Villages Initiative** is a **Pilot initiative by UNWTO** to highlight those villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions, celebrates diversity, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.
  - ◆ It aims to award those villages which are outstanding examples of rural destinations and showcase good practises in line with its specified nine evaluation areas.

71. Ans C

Exp:

- It was established in 1997 and is a regional forum that seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach.

- **IORA has 23 member states**, including Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, **India, Indonesia, Iran**, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE, and Yemen.

◆ Recently, France became the **23rd member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**.

- Its Secretariat is based in Cyber City, Ebène, Mauritius.
- **IORA has 9 dialogue partners**: China, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Turkey, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom and the **United States of America**.
- Hence, **option C is correct**.

72. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)** is a **United Nations (UN) specialized agency**, established in 1944, which laid the foundation for the standards and procedures for peaceful global air navigation. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - ◆ The Convention on International Civil Aviation was signed on 7th December 1944 in Chicago.
  - ◆ It established the core principles permitting international transport by air, and also led to the creation of the ICAO.
- One of its objectives is to foster the planning and development of international air transport so as to ensure the safe and orderly growth of international civil aviation throughout the world.
  - ◆ **India** is among its 193 members. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- It is **headquartered in Montreal, Canada**. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

73. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
  - ◆ It is headquartered in Beijing, China.
- Presently, it comprises eight member states namely India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.



- ◆ India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005.
- ◆ India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.

- **RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure)** is a **permanent organ of the SCO**, headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

- ◆ The summit is held annually and chairmanship goes to the member states for a year on rotation basis.

- Hence, option B is correct.

74. Ans: D

Exp:

- **Stockholm Conference (1972)**: One of the major results of the Stockholm conference was the creation of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- **World Climate Conference, Geneva (1979)**: The World Climate Conference, now usually referred to as the First World Climate Conference was held in Geneva.
- **Rio Summit (1992)**: It recommended a list of development practices called Agenda 21. It gave the concept of sustainable development to be combined economic growth with ecological responsibility.
- **COP1 (Berlin, Germany, 1995)**: The first Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-1) met in Berlin in 1995.
- **Kyoto Protocol (1997)**: In Kyoto, developed countries agreed to a collective target of a 5.2% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by between 2008 and 2012.
- **COP13 (Bali, Indonesia, 2007)**: Parties agreed on the Bali Road Map and Bali action plan, which charted the way towards a post-2012 outcome.
- **COP21 (Paris, 2015)**: To keep global temperature well below 2.0°C above pre-industrial times and endeavor to limit them even more to 1.5°C.
  - ◆ It requires rich nations to maintain USD 100bn a year funding pledge beyond the year 2020.
- **Incheon**: The **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** is based in Incheon, South Korea.
- Hence, option D is correct.

75 Ans: C

Exp:

- India and the UK are likely to announce a joint declaration on **"one sun, one world, one grid"** — or **OSOWOG** at the upcoming **Conference of Parties (COP26)**.
- The **UN Climate Change Conference, or COP26**, is scheduled to be held between 31st October and 12th November in Scotland.
- The concept of OSOWOG is what the British have called a **green grid**.
- The idea behind the concept is a **trans-national electricity grid supplying solar power** across the globe. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- The vision behind the **OSOWOG** is **'The Sun Never Sets'** and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
  - ◆ This is by far **one of the most ambitious schemes** undertaken by any country (India) and is of global significance in terms of sharing economic benefits.
  - ◆ It has been taken up under the technical assistance program of the **World Bank**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
  - ◆ The OSOWOG plan may also leverage the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, co-founded by India that has 80 countries as members.
  - ◆ With India in the middle, the **solar spectrum can easily be divided into two broad zones**, which are:
    - Far East including countries like Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Lao, Cambodia etc.
    - Far West covering the Middle East and the Africa Region

76. Ans: B

Exp:

- The concept of an ADIZ is **not defined in any international treaty** and is **not regulated by any international body**. It is **determined by a country** in the interest of national security. It is a **self-declared region** which is monitored by the country's military for defence purposes. Hence, **Statement 1 is incorrect**.
- **One China Policy**: It is the diplomatic acknowledgement of China's position that there is only one Chinese government. Under the policy, the **US recognises and has formal ties with China** rather than the island of Taiwan, which China sees as a breakaway province to be reunified with the mainland one day. Hence, **Statement 2 is incorrect**.

- Taiwan Strait is between China and Taiwan only. Hence, **Statement 3 is correct.**



77. Ans: D

Exp:

- India recently joined the group. It was founded by **Costa Rica, France and Britain in 2019.** Hence, **Statement 1 is incorrect.**
- It has **more than 70 countries** which are a mix of countries in the global north and south, **European, Latin American, Africa and Asia countries** are among the members. Hence, **Statement 2 is incorrect.**
- Its aim is **to promote an international agreement to protect at least 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030 (Global 30x30 target).** HAC has no relation to nuclear proliferation. Hence, **Statement 3 is incorrect.**

78. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures (CICA)** is an intergovernmental forum aimed at **strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring peace, security, and stability in Asia.** Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- The idea of creating the organization was first voiced by Kazakhstan's First President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 1992 at the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly, while the first CICA summit was held in June of 2002.
- The **CICA Secretariat** has been located in **Almaty (Kazakhstan)** since June 2006. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- CICA members include 27 Asian countries, including Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Russia, South Korea, and Turkey, nine observer states, and five international organizations.

- India co-chairs two CICA CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) on 'Development of Secure and Effective Systems of Transportation Corridors,' and 'Energy Security'.

79. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Uighurs** are a predominantly Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group, whose origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.
- The Uighurs are considered to be one of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minority communities in China.
- However, China recognises the community only as a regional minority and rejects that they are an indigenous group.
- Currently, the **largest population of the Uighur ethnic community lives in the Xinjiang region of China.** Hence, **statement 1 is not correct.**
- A significant population of Uighurs also lives in the neighbouring Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.
- **China's Stand on Uighur Crisis:** China has long denied accusations of ethnic cleansing. It also denounced the declaration and termed it as a plot to hurt China's image.
- China claims its camps to be 'educational centres' where the Uighurs are being cured of "extremist thoughts" and radicalisation, and learning vocational skills. However, in actuality, they are brutal incarceration camps.
- **India's Stand:** The Indian government **has maintained near silence** on the Uighur crisis. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct.**

80. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, on the banks of the Sarayu in Ayodhya, the **Ram Katha Park** has been renovated which will be **renamed as Queen Heo Hwang-ok memorial park.** The Korean queen is believed to have had Indian roots. Hence, **statement 3 is correct.**
- She was a Korean queen who is believed to have been born Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya, daughter of King Padmasen and Indumati.
- Her story is described in Samguk Yusa (Memorabilia of Three Kingdoms).
- It is a 13th-century collection of legends, folktales and history of Korea's three kingdoms — Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla — and some other regions.

- In 2000, India and South Korea signed an agreement to **develop Ayodhya and Gimhae as sister cities**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- Earlier, in March 2021 Indian Defence Minister and his South Korean counterpart inaugurated the **India-Korea Friendship Park** in a ceremony at the **Delhi Cantonment**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

81. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.
  - ◆ It is established by the AIIB Articles of Agreement (entered into force December 2015) which is a multilateral treaty.
  - ◆ It is headquartered in Beijing.
- India was among the AIIB's 57 founding members in 2016. It is also its second-largest shareholder (with 7.62% voting shares) after China (26.06%).
  - ◆ It has received USD 4.35 billion from the Bank. This is the highest of any country, with the bank so far approving loans of USD 19.6 billion to support 87 projects in 24 countries.
    - Turkey is second with USD 1.95 billion.
- **AIIB has approved financing projects in India** in a host of sectors like energy, transport and water including the **Bangalore metro rail project** (USD 335 million), **Gujarat rural roads project** (USD 329 million) and **Phase 3 of the Mumbai urban transport project** (USD 500 million).
- Hence, option A is correct.

82 Ans: D

Exp:

- **About Vajra Prahar:**
  - ◆ The **joint exercise by the Military Special Forces** of both the countries is conducted alternatively between India and the United States.
    - **Special Forces** are the units of a country's armed forces that undertake covert, counterterrorist, and other specialized operations.
  - ◆ In 2021 11th edition of the exercise was conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh.
- Hence, option D is correct.

83. Ans: B

Exp:

**India-Russia's Military Relations:**

- **Indian Dependence:** According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), **since 2010, Russia has been the source of nearly two-thirds (62%) of all Indian arms imports**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
  - ◆ Further, India has been the largest Russian arms importer, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all Russian arms exports.
- **Favourable Russian Military Exports to India:** Much of Russia's influence in India comes through its willingness to provide weapons systems and technologies that no other country will export to India.
  - ◆ The **US only provides non-lethal defence technology** like C-130j Super Hercules, C-13 Globemaster, P-8i Poseidon etc, **while Russia provides high-end technology** like Brahmos supersonic missile, S-400 anti-missile system. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
  - ◆ Russia also continues to offer advanced weapons platforms at relatively attractive rates.

84. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.
  - ◆ It is established by the AIIB Articles of Agreement (entered into force December 2015) which is a multilateral treaty.
  - ◆ **India was among the AIIB's 57 founding members** in 2016. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- India is the **second-largest shareholder** (with 7.62% voting shares) **after China (26.06%)**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
  - ◆ It has **received USD 4.35 billion from the Bank**. **This is the highest of any country**, with the bank so far approving loans of USD 19.6 billion to support 87 projects in 24 countries. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.
  - ◆ Turkey is second with USD 1.95 billion.
- AIIB has approved financing projects in India in a host of sectors like energy, transport and water including the **Bangalore metro rail project** (USD 335 million), **Gujarat rural roads project** (USD 329 million) and **Phase 3 of the Mumbai urban transport project** (USD 500 million).

85. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, **India, UAE, USA and Israel** held their **first quadrilateral foreign ministers meeting**. This crucial meeting took place during India's Union Minister of External Affairs' ongoing visit to Israel.
- The meeting is being called by the media as the **Western QUAD** as it is a strong manifestation of the changes in west Asian geopolitics and formation of another Quad like grouping in the Middle East.
  - ◆ Economic growth, trade, climate change, energy, maritime security along with generally expanding economic and political cooperation in the west-Asian region were the key highlights of the meeting.
  - ◆ The alliance is not yet institutionalised but a physical meeting of these four nations has been planned for November, 2021.
- Hence, option A is correct.

86. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **Conference of Parties** comes under the UNFCCC which was formed in 1994. The UNFCCC was established to work towards "stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere."
  - ◆ COP is the **apex decision-making authority of UNFCCC**. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- COP members have been meeting every year since 1995. The UNFCCC has 198 parties including India, China and the USA. meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session.
  - ◆ Generally it meets in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host the session.
- COP's with Significant Outcomes
  - ◆ 1995: COP1 (Berlin, Germany)
    - **2011: COP 17 (Durban):** Governments commit to a new universal climate change agreement by 2015 for the period beyond 2020 (Resulted in the Paris Agreement of 2015). Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
  - ◆ 1997: COP 3 (Kyoto Protocol)
    - It legally binds developed countries to emission reduction targets.
  - ◆ **2002: COP 8 (New Delhi, India) Delhi Declaration.** Focuses on the development needs of the poorest countries and the need for technology transfer for mitigating climate change.

- **2010: COP 16 (Cancun).** Resulted in the Cancun Agreements, a comprehensive package by governments to assist developing nations in dealing with climate change. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

- ◆ 2015: COP21 (Paris). To keep global temperature well below 2.0C above pre-industrial times and endeavor them to limit them even more to 1.5C.
- It requires rich nations to maintain USD 100bn a year funding pledge beyond the year 2020.

87. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris.
  - ◆ Assesses the strength of a country's anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing frameworks, however it does not go by individual cases.
- Its Secretariat is located at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** headquarters in Paris. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Member Countries:
  - ◆ The FATF currently has 39 members including two regional organisations - the **European Commission** and **Gulf Cooperation Council**. India is a member of the FATF.
  - ◆ Hence, statement 2 is correct.

88. Ans: C

Exp:

**Connectivity Projects between India and Nepal:**

- **Inland Waterways:** India is looking to develop the inland waterways for the movement of cargo, within the framework of trade and transit arrangements, providing additional access to sea for Nepal calling it linking Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) with Sagar (Indian Ocean).
- **Petroleum Pipeline:** In 2019, India and Nepal had jointly inaugurated a cross-border petroleum products pipeline.
  - ◆ Pipeline carries petroleum products from **Motihari (Bihar)** in India to **Amlekhgunj** in Nepal.
  - ◆ This is **South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline**.
- **Rail Link:** The rail link between Nepal and India has been popular since the early 20th century.
  - ◆ In 1937, the British had built a narrow gauge line to ferry cargo, mainly logs, from Nepal to India.
- Hence, option C is correct.

89. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have launched the **Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) Programme** in Seychelles.
  - ◆ TIWB is a **capacity-building programme**.
  - ◆ **India** has been chosen as the **Partner Administration** and has **provided Tax Expert** for this programme.
- It deploys qualified experts in developing countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean to help build tax capacity in the areas of audit, criminal tax investigations and the effective use of automatically exchanged information.
  - ◆ TIWB assistance has led to increased domestic resource mobilisation in some of the least developed countries in the world.
- Hence, option B is correct.

90. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **Special Drawing Rights (SDR)** is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF. Rather, it is a potential claim on the freely usable currencies of IMF members. SDRs can be exchanged for these currencies.
- The SDR serves as the unit of account of the IMF and some other international organizations.
- The currency value of the SDR is determined by summing the values in US dollars, based on market exchange rates, of a SDR basket of currencies.
- The SDR basket of currencies includes the **US dollar, Euro, Japanese yen, pound sterling** and the **Chinese renminbi** (included in 2016). Hence, statement 3 is not correct.
- The SDR currency value is calculated daily (except on IMF holidays or whenever the IMF is closed for business) and the valuation basket is reviewed and adjusted every five years.
- Quota (the amount contributed to the IMF) of a country is denominated in SDRs.
  - ◆ Members' voting power is related directly to their quotas.
  - ◆ IMF makes the **general SDR allocation** to its members in **proportion to their existing quotas** in the IMF. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- India's foreign exchange reserves also incorporate SDR other than gold reserves, foreign currency assets and Reserve Tranche in the IMF. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

91. Ans.: C

Exp.:

- **Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE)** is the flagship program on clean energy between the **U.S. and India** to jointly work on a range of issues related to energy security, clean energy and climate change. It includes **three key** components: Research (PACE-R), Deployment (PACE-D), and Off-Grid Energy Access (PEACE).

92. Ans: D

Exp:

- **Climate Action and Finance Mobilisation Dialogue (CAFD)** is one of the two tracks of the **India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030** partnership launched at the **Leaders' Summit on Climate** in April 2021.
  - ◆ Earlier, the **revamped US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership SCEPT** (first track) was launched.
- CAFD will provide both countries an **opportunity to renew collaborations on climate change** while **addressing financing aspects and deliver climate finances** primarily as grants and concessional finance as envisaged under the **Paris Agreement**.
- CAFD will also **help to demonstrate how the world can align swift climate action** with inclusive and resilient economic development, taking into account national circumstances and sustainable development priorities.
- Hence, option D is correct.

93. Ans: B

Exp:

- **Quad Grouping** is a four-nation grouping of India, Australia, the USA and Japan which was established in 2007.
  - ◆ Quad member countries have also indicated a willingness to **expand the partnership through a so-called Quad Plus** that would include South Korea, New Zealand, and Vietnam amongst others.
  - ◆ However, as of now, Quad members are restricted to these four countries only. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- In March 2021, the **Quad leaders met virtually** and later released a joint statement titled '**The Spirit of the Quad**,' which outlined the group's approach and objectives.



- ◆ According to the 'Spirit of the Quad', the group's primary objectives **include** maritime security, combating the Covid-19 crisis, **especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy, addressing the risks of climate change**, creating an ecosystem for investment in the region and boosting **technological innovation**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

- Despite the potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.

- ◆ The Quad is not structured like a typical multilateral organisation and lacks a secretariat and any permanent decision-making body.
- ◆ Additionally, unlike **NATO**, the **Quad does not include provisions for collective defence**, instead choosing to conduct joint military exercises as a show of unity and diplomatic cohesion. Hence, **statement 3 is not correct**.

94. Ans: D

Exp:

- **About Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP):**
  - ◆ To develop connectivity **through water**, ASEAN and India are working on KMMTTP.
  - ◆ Initiated by the Indian government in 2008 and is entirely funded by India.
  - ◆ To seek an **alternative route through Myanmar for the transportation of goods to the northeast region of India**.
  - ◆ Connects **Kolkata in India to Sittwe and Paletwa in Myanmar** by sea and river respectively.
  - ◆ Alongside this initiative, India has contributed to build a sea link via Sittwe port in Myanmar in order to enable an **alternative transit route through Bangladesh**.
  - ◆ Hence, **option D is correct**.

95. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **G20** is an **informal group of 19 countries and the European Union**, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- The **G20 operates as a forum and not as an organisation**. Therefore, it does not have any permanent secretariat or management and administrative structure. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

- ◆ The membership comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, **representing about two-thirds of the world's population**, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

#### ● Members:

- ◆ Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the EU.
- The 2021 G20 Rome summit is the upcoming sixteenth meeting of Group of Twenty, scheduled to take place in Rome, the capital city of Italy, on 30–31 October 2021.

96. Ans: B

Exp:

#### India - Saudi Arabia Ties:

- **Saudi Arabia is currently India's second-largest supplier of crude oil** (Iraq has been India's top supplier). Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- Saudi Arabia is India's fourth largest trade partner (after China, USA and Japan). The bilateral trade was valued at US \$33.07 billion during FY 2019-20.
  - ◆ During the same period, India's imports from Saudi Arabia reached US \$26.84 billion and exports to Saudi Arabia were worth US\$ 6.24 billion registering an increase of 12.18% over last year.
- The 2.6 million-strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia is the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom and is the 'most preferred community' due to their expertise, sense of discipline, law-abiding and peace-loving nature.
- Recently, India and Saudi Arabia started their **first-ever Naval joint exercise** called the **Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

97. Ans: A

Exp:

- A **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** is a kind of **free trade pact** which **covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership.
  - ◆ It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and **Intellectual Property Rights**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.

- Partnership agreements or cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than Free Trade Agreements.
  - ◆ A Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) generally covers negotiation on trade tariff and TRQ (Tariff Rate Quotas) rates only. **CECA is not as comprehensive as CEPA. hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- CEPA also looks into the regulatory aspect of trade and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues.
- **India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan.**
  - ◆ India signed a **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Afghanistan** and **CECA with Malaysia.** **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

98. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Build Back Better World (B3W)** Initiative is being seen as the US' initiative to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
  - ◆ The B3W is an **international infrastructure investment initiative** announced by the **Group of Seven (G-7) richest democracies** in June 2021. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Build Back Better Plan is a Covid-19 relief, future economic, and **infrastructure package** proposed by G-7 countries for **developing and lower-income countries.**
- Components of B3W: Through B3W, the G7 and other like-minded partners will coordinate in mobilizing private-sector capital in four areas of focus:
  - ◆ Climate,
  - ◆ Health and health security,
  - ◆ Digital technology,
  - ◆ Gender equity and equality.
- The B3W to infuse investment by **complying with the standards promoted by the Blue Dot Network**, relating to the environment and climate, labor and social safeguards, transparency, financing, construction, anti-corruption, and other areas. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

99. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **Blue Dot Network (BDN)** was formally announced on 4th November, 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand. It will be led by the US along with Japan and Australia.

- It is a **multi-stakeholder initiative** to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society **to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development.** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It is expected to serve as a globally recognised **evaluation and certification system** for roads, ports and bridges with a focus on the **Indo-Pacific region.** **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ Infrastructure projects would be graded on debt, environmental standards, labour standards etc.
  - ◆ This system would apply to projects in any citizen-centric country where citizens would like to evaluate such projects.
- It seems to be planned as a direct counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, unlike the BRI, the **BDN would not offer public funds or loans for the project.** **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ BDN will serve as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects, letting people know that projects are sustainable and not exploitative.
- The new Blue Dot Network, therefore, is best seen as part of the U.S.A.'s strategy of trying to persuade developing countries in Asia-Pacific not to rely on Chinese funds for infrastructure.

100. Ans: D

Exp:

Types of Trade Agreements:

- **Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** It is an agreement in which two or more countries agree to provide preferential trade terms, tariff concession etc. to the partner country.
  - ◆ **India has negotiated FTA with. Sri Lanka, ASEAN and many other countries.** **Hence, pair 1 is not correctly matched.**
- **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):** In this type of agreement, two or more partners give preferential right of entry to certain products.
  - ◆ This is done by reducing duties on an agreed number of tariff lines. Tariffs may even be reduced to zero for some products even in a PTA.
  - ◆ **India signed a PTA with Afghanistan.** **Hence, pair 2 is not correctly matched.**
- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement:** It is a kind of free trade pact which covers negotiation on the trade in services, investment and sometimes in trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and Intellectual Property Rights.
  - ◆ India has signed CEPAs with South Korea and Japan. Hence, pair 3 is correctly matched.

101. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Five Eyes alliance** is an intelligence-sharing arrangement between **five English-speaking democracies**: the **US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand**.
  - ◆ The **alliance was created during the Cold War (1946-1991)** that was fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as their respective allies.
- The alliance was needed to share sensitive information regarding their adversaries on all possible fronts available.
- It is often described as the **world's most successful intelligence alliance**.
- Hence, option B is correct.

102. Ans: A

Exp:

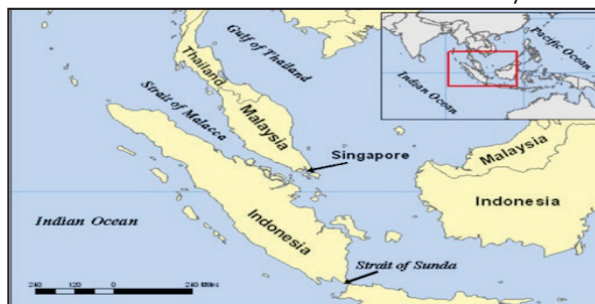
- The **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** was established by the UNs Charter as one of the six main organs of the United Nations.
  - ◆ The UNSC has been given primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and may meet whenever peace is threatened.
  - ◆ While other organs of the UN make recommendations to member states, **only the Security Council has the power to make decisions** that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ UNSC is headquartered at New York.
- The UNSC is composed of 15 members, 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent.
  - ◆ Five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
  - ◆ Ten non-permanent members: Elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
- Voting and Discussions at UNSC:
  - ◆ Each member of the Security Council has one vote. **Decisions of the Security Council on matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members** including the concurring votes of the permanent members.
    - A **"No" vote from one** of the five permanent members **blocks the passage of the resolution**. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

- ◆ **Any member of the UN** which is not a member of the Security Council **may participate, without vote, in the discussion** of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that member are specially affected. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

103. Ans: C

Exp:

- The South China Sea is an arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia.
  - ◆ It is south of China, east & south of Vietnam, west of the Philippines and north of the island of Borneo.
  - ◆ Bordering states & territories (clockwise from north): the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.
  - ◆ It is **connected by Taiwan Strait** with the **East China Sea** and by **Luzon Strait** with the **Philippine Sea**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It contains numerous shoals, reefs, atolls and islands. The Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal are the most important.
- The **Strait of Malacca is a waterway** that connects the **Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean)** and the **South China Sea (Pacific Ocean)**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ It runs between the Indonesian island of Sumatra to the west and peninsular (West) Malaysia and extreme southern Thailand to the east and has an area of about 25,000 square miles.
- The strait derived its name from the trading port of Melaka (formerly Malacca)—which was of importance in the 16th and 17th centuries—on the Malay coast.



104. Ans: D

Exp:

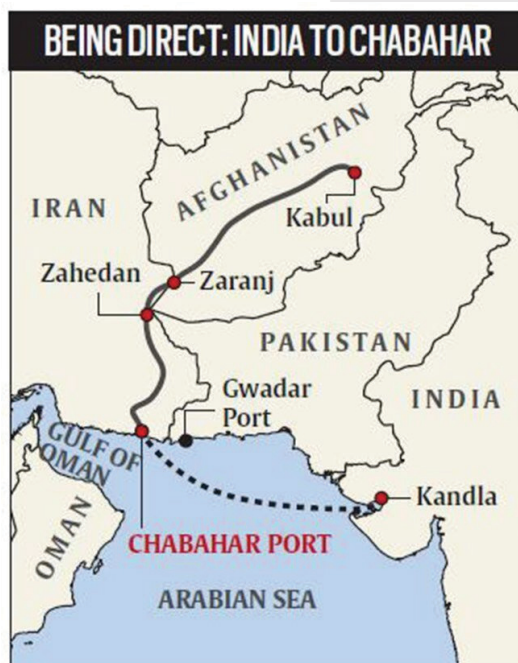
Recently, Bangladesh and India started **regular operation of freight trains through the restored Haldibari (India)-Chilahati (Bangladesh) rail route** after over 50 years, which will strengthen railway connectivity and bilateral trade between the two countries.

- The Haldibari-Chilahati rail link is one such route that was **operational till 1965**.
- The Haldibari-Chilahati route is expected to enhance the **connectivity to Assam and West Bengal from Bangladesh**.
- It will **enhance rail network access to the main ports and dry ports to support the growth in regional trade** to encourage economic and social development of the region.
- Hence, option D is correct.

105. Ans: B

Exp:

- It is located on the **Gulf of Oman** and is only 72 km away from the Gwadar port in Pakistan which has been developed by China.
  - ◆ The port serves as the only oceanic port of Iran and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- India views Iran as key to **access land-locked Afghanistan and Central Asia** through Chabahar Port.
  - ◆ Iran's geographical position is paramount to India's geopolitical outreach, especially to Central Asia, a rich reservoir of natural resources.
  - ◆ Similarly, Iran is vital for India's access to Afghanistan in which India has immense strategic and security interests.
  - ◆ Hence, statement 2 is correct.



106. Ans: A

Exp:

- India is **currently (in 2021 and 2022) a non-permanent member of the UNSC** and is president for the month of August. Before this, India has served seven times in the UN Security Council. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- **Uniting for Consensus or informally called "coffee club"**, comprising 40-odd member states, has been instrumental in holding back reforms to the United Nations Security Council.
  - ◆ Most members of the club are **middle-sized states who oppose bigger regional powers grabbing permanent seats** in the UN Security Council.
  - ◆ The prime movers of the club include **Italy, Spain, Australia, Canada, South Korea, Argentina and Pakistan**.
  - ◆ While Italy and Spain are opposed to Germany's bid for Security Council's permanent membership, **Pakistan is opposed to India's bid**.
  - ◆ **G-4 is a group of four countries** i.e. Brazil, Germany, India and Japan which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
  - ◆ Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

107 Ans: D

Exp:

- In 2015, **India signed an agreement with Mauritius for the development of the Agalega Islands**.
  - ◆ It provided for setting up and up-gradation of infrastructure for improving sea and air connectivity enhancing capabilities of the Mauritian Defence Forces in safeguarding their interests in the Outer Island.
  - ◆ However, since then, there have been growing reports over the Indian naval and coastguard's interests in setting up transponder systems and surveillance infrastructure, which has led to some local protests.
- Recently, Mauritius has denied a report that it has allowed India to build a military base on the remote island of Agalega.
- Hence, option D is correct.



108 Ans: B

Exp:

- The 'Law of the Sea Treaty', formally known as the **United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)** was adopted in 1982 to establish jurisdictional limits over the ocean areas.
- The convention **defines distance of 12 nautical miles from the baseline as Territorial Sea limit and a distance of 200 nautical miles distance as Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) limit. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ India became a signatory to the UNCLOS in 1982.
- **International Seabed Authority (ISA)** is mandated under the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to organize, regulate and control all mineral-related activities** in the international seabed area for the benefit of mankind as a whole. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ ISA has the duty to ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed related activities.
- The ISA is made up of 167 Member States, and the European Union.

109 Ans: C

Exp:

- The **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)**, also called the **Palermo Convention** is an United Nations-sponsored multilateral treaty against transnational organized crime. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ It was adopted in Palermo in Italy in 2000, entered into force in 2003.
  - ◆ The idea behind having an international convention against organized crime was that if crimes could cross borders, so must law enforcement.
  - ◆ India joined UNTOC in 2002.
- This protocol is the **first global legally binding instrument** with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons. In addition the **protocol aimed at protecting and assisting victims of human trafficking. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

110 Ans: A

Exp:

- The **IBSA is a trilateral, developmental initiative** between **India, Brazil and South Africa** to promote South-South cooperation and exchange. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.
- The **idea of South-South Cooperation (SSC) is not new.**
  - ◆ Its genesis can be traced back to the decades of efforts by countries and groupings working together to ensure South-South solidarity such as Bandung conference 1955, Non-Aligned Movement 1961, G77 grouping, UNCTAD, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 1978, and the 2009 Nairobi declaration. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat.
- **The IBSA Fund** (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation), established in 2004, is a **unique Fund through which development projects are executed with IBSA funding in fellow developing countries. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The fund is managed by the United Nations (UN) Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Each IBSA member country is required to contribute \$1 million per annum to the fund.

111 Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** was formed during the Cold War as an organisation of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the USA (Capitalism) or the Soviet Union (Socialism) but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- The **Bandung Conference that resulted in the adoption of the founding principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).**
  - ◆ The basic concept for NAM originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia.
- Six years after the Bandung Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was founded on a wider geographical basis at the First Summit Conference of Belgrade, which was held in September 1961.



- ◆ It was held under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia.

● Hence, option B is correct.

112. Ans: A

Exp:

Major Indian Maritime Exercises	
Name of the Exercise	Name of the Country
Al-Mohed Al-Hindi	Saudi Arabia
SLINEX	Sri Lanka
Bongosagar and IN-BN CORPAT	Bangladesh
JIMEX	Japan
Naseem-Al-Bahr	Oman
Indra	Russia
Za'ir-Al-Bahr	Qatar
Samudra Shakti	Indonesia
Indo-Thai CORPAT	Thailand
IMCOR	Malaysia
SIMBEX	Singapore
AUSINDEX	Australia
Malabar Exercise	Japan, and the USA

- Recently, India and Saudi Arabia started their first-ever Naval joint exercise called the Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise. The decision on this Bilateral exercise was taken in the Riyadh Summit held in 2019. Hence, option A is correct.

113. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, the Taliban has seized Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan, raising questions over the US and NATO(North Atlantic Treaty Organization) trained Afghan Forces.

- ◆ The Taliban have proclaimed that there will be no witch hunt, that it will respect a transitional process, and that it will work for a future Islamic system that is acceptable to all.

- Peace Talks between Taliban, Afghanistan and USA:

◆ Murree Talks:

- ◆ In 2015 the US had sent a representative to the **first-ever meeting between the Taliban and the Afghan government** that was hosted by Pakistan in Murree in 2015. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

○ However, the Murree talks did not progress.

- Doha Talks:

- ◆ In 2020, before the Doha Talks started, the Taliban had maintained that they would hold direct talks only with the US, and not with the Kabul government, which they did not recognise.

- ◆ In the agreement, the **US administration promised that it would withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan by 1st May, 2021.** Hence, statement 2 is correct.

○ The deadline has been pushed to 11th September 2021.

○ This provided the Taliban a sense of victory and demoralised the Afghan troops.

- ◆ The Taliban promised to reduce violence, join intra-Afghan peace talks and cut all ties with foreign terrorist groups.

114. Ans: A

Exp:

- India, in collaboration with the **United Nations (UN)**, has launched a technology platform to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers who are operating across the world.

- ◆ The launch of the UNITE AWARE platform came as India assumed the **Presidency of the 15-nation UN Security Council** for the month of August.

◆ Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- This project aims to demonstrate the impact of **modern surveillance technology** on the **detection of asymmetric threats.** Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

115. Ans: B

Exp:

- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)-Transport Initiative for Asia (NDC-TIA)** is a joint programme of seven organisations that will engage China, India, and Vietnam in promoting a comprehensive approach to decarbonising transport in their respective countries.

The project is **part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI)**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.

- The IKI is a key element of **Germany's climate financing** and the funding commitments in the **framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity**. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

116. Ans: D

Exp:

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** is a regional development bank established in 1966. It has 68 members. India is a founding member.
  - ◆ 49 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- Aim: To **promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific region**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- Headquarters: Manila, Philippines
- As of **31st December 2019**, **ADB's five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares)**, the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%). Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- Recently, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** released a report titled as the **"Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2021"**.
  - ◆ It presents comprehensive economic, financial, social and environmental statistics for ADB's 49 regional members.
  - ◆ The report **"Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-Covid-19 resilient economies"** was released by the **UNESCAP** (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

117. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Retrospective Taxation** allows a country to pass a rule on taxing certain products, items or services and deals and charge companies from a time behind the date on which the law is passed.
- Countries use this route to correct any anomalies in their taxation policies that have, in the past, allowed companies to take advantage of such loopholes. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- Retrospective Taxation hurts companies that had knowingly or unknowingly interpreted the tax rules differently.

- Apart from India, many countries including the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Australia and Italy have retrospectively taxed companies.
- Retrospective law was introduced after an **amendment to the Finance Act** which enabled the tax department to impose retrospective capital gains tax for deals. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

118. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **United Nations Refugee Convention 1951** is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, and **sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - ◆ It also set out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals.
  - ◆ It grants certain rights to people fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, affiliation to a particular social group, or political opinion.
  - ◆ The Convention also provides for some visa-free travel for holders of travel documents issued under the convention.
- The **Convention builds on Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948**, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- A refugee may enjoy rights and benefits in a state in addition to those provided for in the Convention
- The 1967 Protocol included refugees from all countries as opposed to the 1951 Convention that only included refugees from Europe.

119. Ans: A

Exp:

- Fifty years ago, the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 had added the colours of victory for India as it led the charge towards the formation of the new nation of Bangladesh.
  - ◆ India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border, which is the **longest land boundary** that India shares with any of its neighbours. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- **Economic Relations:**
  - ◆ Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in the sub-continent with the total bilateral trade between the two nations standing at \$9.5 billion (2019-20).

○ India's exports to Bangladesh account for more than 85% of the total bilateral trade.

◆ Bangladesh has appreciated the **Duty-Free and Quota Free access given to Bangladeshi exports to India** under South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement since 2011. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

● **Cooperation in Connectivity:**

◆ In March 2021, **Maitri Setu**—a 1.9 km bridge **built over Feni river** joining Sabroom in India and Ramgarh in Bangladesh was inaugurated. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

◆ Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT).

◆ Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement is in pipeline.

120. Ans: B

Exp:

● The **G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union**, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.

◆ The members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

● The G20 membership comprises a mix of the **world's largest advanced and emerging economies**, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross domestic product, 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.

● It does **not have any permanent secretariat or headquarters**. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

121. Ans: A

Exp:

● The **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** is a voluntary and inclusive initiative that brings together navies of Indian Ocean Region littoral states to increase maritime co-operation and enhance regional security.

◆ It is a **biennial event which was conceived by the Indian Navy** in 2008. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

◆ Recently, the 7th edition of IONS was hosted by the French Navy at Réunion island.

● IONS includes 24 member nations that touch or lie within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and 8 observer nations.

● It also serves to develop an effective response mechanism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) against natural disasters.

● The chairmanship of IONS has been held by **India (2008-10)**, UAE (2010-12), South Africa (2012-14), Australia (2014-16), Bangladesh (2016-18) and **Islamic Republic of Iran (2018-21)**. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

◆ France assumed the Chairmanship in June 2021 for a two-year tenure.



122. Ans: D

Exp:

● **Child Soldier** refers to any person **below 18 years of age** who has been, recruited or **used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity**. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

◆ It includes but is not limited to children, boys and girls who are used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes (Paris Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict 2007).

● The recruitment or use of **children below the age of 15 as soldiers is prohibited** by both the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and the **additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions**. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

◆ The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects.

- They protect people not taking part in hostilities and those who are no longer doing so.

- Recruiting Child Soldiers is also considered a **war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

123. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)** inclusive framework is an **OECD initiative, approved by the G20**, to identify ways of providing more standardised tax rules globally. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- **India has ratified the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting ("Multilateral Instrument" or "MLI")** - outcome of the OECD/G20 Project to tackle BEPS. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

124. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **GloLitter Partnerships Project** was launched by the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the **United Nations** with initial funding from the Government of Norway. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- It aims to prevent and reduce marine plastic litter from shipping and fisheries. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- It will also **assist developing countries in reducing marine litter, including plastic litter**, from within the maritime transport and fisheries sectors, and to decrease the use of plastics in these industries.
- Also assist in identifying opportunities to **reuse and recycle plastics**.

125. Ans: A

Exp:

- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the **second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations (UN)** with a membership of 57 states. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- It is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.
- India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

126. Ans: C

Exp:

- Nepal is an important neighbour of India and occupies special significance in its foreign policy because of the geographic, historical, cultural and economic linkages/ties that span centuries.
  - ◆ The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal.
- **India and Nepal** share multiple multilateral forums such as **BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal)**, **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)**, **Non Aligned Movement (NAM)**, and **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)** etc.
- In 2017, **Nepal signed up to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which sought to create highways, airports and other infrastructure in the country.
  - ◆ BRI was **rejected by India** and this move of Nepal was seen as an inclination towards China. Hence, **option C is correct**.

127. Ans: D

Exp:

- In 1989, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** recommended that **11th July** be observed by the international community as **World Population Day**, a day to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
  - ◆ UNDP was inspired by the public interest and awareness that was created by "Five Billion Day" on 11th July 1987 when the world's population reached 5 billion.
  - ◆ A resolution to the effect was passed, and the day was first marked on 11th July, 1990.
- The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** was **created in 1969**, the same year the **United Nations General Assembly** declared "parents have the exclusive right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."
  - ◆ In 1987, it was **officially renamed the United Nations Population Fund** but the original abbreviation, 'UNFPA' for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities was retained. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.
  - ◆ The UNFPA is a **subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly** and works as a sexual and reproductive health agency.
  - ◆ The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) establishes its mandate.

- UNFPA works directly to tackle Sustainable Development Goals on health (SDG3), education (SDG4) and gender equality (SDG5).
- UNFPA is **not supported by the UN budget**, instead, it is **entirely supported by voluntary contributions of donor governments**, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, foundations and individuals. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

128. Ans: C

Exp:

- **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** is an initiative launched by **Indian Prime Minister at the East Asia Summit in Thailand** in November 2019. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The initiative is **centred around seven pillars** including **maritime security**; maritime ecology; maritime resources; capacity building and resource sharing; **disaster risk reduction and management**; science, technology, and academic cooperation; and **trade connectivity** and maritime transport. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

129. Ans: D

Exp:

- **India and South Africa have a long history of working together** by coordinating their views and efforts in institutions of **global governance/multilateral fora**, in order to achieve greater autonomy and ensure that the agenda of 'South' is prioritised.
  - ◆ For Example: **BRICS** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), **IBSA** (India, Brazil, and South Africa), **G20**, **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** and **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**.
- **Hence, option D is correct.**

130. Ans: C

Exp:

- **International Solar Alliance** was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, France **on the side-lines of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21)**, with 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **PM- KUSUM:**
  - ◆ KUSUM stands for **Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan**.
  - ◆ It's objective is to **provide financial and water security to farmers through harnessing solar energy** capacities of 25,750 MW by 2022. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

131. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **G7 (Group of Seven)** Countries proposed a '**Build Back Better World (B3W)** initiative' at the recent **47th G7 summit to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It **aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower income countries** - the **space which has been increasingly captured by China** through 2,600 BRI projects with trillions of dollars of investment. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- This infrastructure plan is **being led by the United States**.
  - ◆ B3W initiative will **provide a transparent infrastructure partnership to help narrow about \$40 trillion** needed by developing nations by 2035.
  - ◆ It calls for spending **hundreds of billions of dollars** in collaboration with **the private sector** while **adhering to climate standards and labour practices**.
  - ◆ However, the **announcement is yet to be made about how exactly the plan would work or how much capital it would ultimately allocate.**

132. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the **European Commission released** a new climate proposal, the **Fit for 55 package**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union, responsible for proposing legislation, enforcing EU laws and directing the union's administrative operations.
- The EU in December 2020 submitted a revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.
  - ◆ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% below 1990 levels by 2030.
  - ◆ It also set a long-term goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.
- The new package attempts to **deliver the NDC and carbon neutrality goal through proposed changes** that would impact the economy, society and industry, as well as ensure a fair, competitive and green transition by 2030 and beyond. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It claims to achieve a balance between "regulatory policies" and market-based carbon pricing to avoid the pitfalls of each.



- It includes a **new emissions trading system** for **transport and buildings**, a ban on the sale of polluting cars from 2035 and a **carbon border price on imported goods**. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

133. Ans: B

Exp:

- International Labour Organisation (ILO)** is the **only tripartite United Nation (UN) agency**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States (India is a member), to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
  - ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.
- ILO was established in 1919 by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an **affiliated agency of the League of Nations**. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.
  - It became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.
  - It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Indian Labour Conference (ILC) also known as the 'labour parliament' of the country formed on the lines of International Labour Conference is the apex level tripartite (Government, Employers and Workers) consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
  - International Labour Conference** also known as International Parliament of Labour is a conference **organized by ILO every year**. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.

134. Ans: D

Exp:

- China-South Asian Initiative: Members:** China, **Afghanistan**, Bangladesh, Nepal, **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka**.
- India, Bhutan and the **Maldives** are the other SAARC countries that are **not part of this initiative**. Hence **option D is correct**.
- Intended Vision: China has different kinds of strategic, maritime, political and ideological interests with different South Asian nations so it is increasing its engagements with each country on equal footing to counterbalance India.

135. Ans: A

Exp:

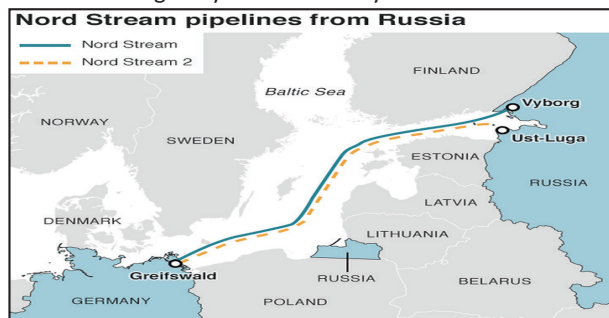
- A **World Heritage Site** is a place that is listed by UNESCO for its special cultural or physical significance. The list of World Heritage Sites is maintained by the **international 'World Heritage Programme', administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
  - It seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- The sites can be delisted from the World Heritage List. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.
  - Eg. Recently**, the city of Liverpool, England has been removed from UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) list of world heritage sites.
    - Reasons for Delisting:** The new buildings including a football stadium undermine the attractiveness of its Victorian docks and were destroying the heritage value of its waterfront.
    - The over development would irreversibly damage the heritage of the historic port.
- Other Delisted Sites:**
  - Wildlife sanctuary in Oman in 2007.
    - Reason: poaching and habitat loss.
  - Dresden Elbe valley in Germany in 2009.
    - Reason: A four-lane motorway bridge was built over the river.

136. Ans: A

Exp:

- Recently, the US has approved the **Germany-Russia Nord Stream 2 Pipeline (NS2P)** project - which significantly increases Europe's energy dependence on Russia.
  - The US had previously imposed sanctions to prevent the completion of this **gas pipeline between Russia and Germany**. Hence, **option A is correct**.
  - This is a 1,200-km pipeline that runs from Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany through the Baltic Sea. It will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year.

- Nord stream 1 system is already completed and together with NS2P, it will supply 110 billion cubic metre of gas a year to Germany.



137. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Western Indian Ocean (WIO)** is where the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea meet.
  - ◆ It connects North America, Europe and Asia, and as such is of global strategic importance. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region comprises 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and the French overseas territory of Réunion.
  - ◆ Its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players to view the region with increasing interest in recent years.
- The **Maritime Security (MASE) Programme** was adopted in 2010 in Mauritius, and is jointly run by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
  - ◆ The programme's primary objective is to strengthen the maritime security capacity of Eastern and Southern Africa and the WIO region in order to implement the Regional Strategy and Action Plan against Piracy. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
  - ◆ Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is a part of the MASE Programme. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

138. Ans: C

Exp:

- The 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of **Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA** will be held at Volgograd, Russia in August 2021. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The INDRA series of exercises began in 2003 and was conducted as a bilateral naval exercise alternately between the two countries. However, the **first joint Tri-Services Exercise** was conducted in 2017. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- Exercise INDRA will entail **conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate** by a joint force against international terror groups.

139. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
  - ◆ Presently, the SCO comprises eight member states namely India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- The SCO, seen as a counterweight to NATO, is an eight-member economic and security bloc and has emerged as one of the largest transregional international organisations.
- India was made an observer at the SCO in 2005.
  - ◆ India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

140. Ans: B

Exp:

- **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** was launched in 2015. It is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
  - ◆ Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.
  - ◆ The key relevance of SAGAR emerges when seen in conjunction with India's other policies impacting the maritime domain like Act East Policy, Project Sagarmala, Project Mausam, India as 'net security provider', focus on Blue Economy etc.
- The **36<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (India-Indonesia CORPAT)** between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted.
  - ◆ As part of Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region for coordinated patrols, cooperation in Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance, passage exercises and bilateral/multilateral exercises. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

141. Ans: C

Exp:

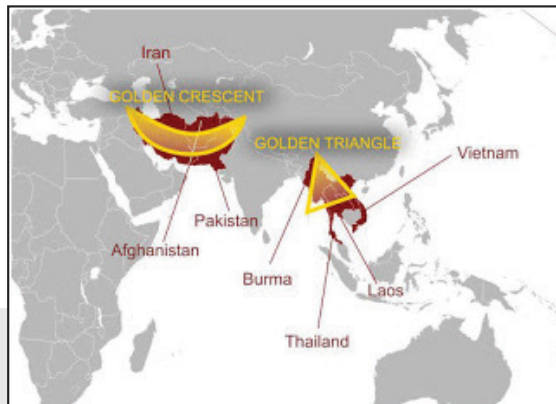
- From the 15th century, Cuba was a **colony of Spain** until the **Spanish–American War** of 1898, when Cuba was occupied by the US. However, Cuba gained nominal independence as a de facto United States protectorate in 1902.
- In 1940, Cuba attempted to strengthen its democratic system. But, political radicalization and social strife culminated in a coup and subsequent dictatorship under **Fulgencio Batista in 1952**.
- Open corruption and oppression under Batista's rule led to his ousting in January 1959 by the 26th of July Movement. This established communist rule under the leadership of Fidel Castro.
  - Since 1965, the state has been governed by the Communist Party of Cuba.
- Moreover, the country was a point of contention during the **Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States**. A nuclear war nearly broke out during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.
- Cuba got involved in the Cold War when the US broke off its diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961, and Soviet Union increased their economic aid to Cuba.
- In 1961, the **USA planned the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba**, intending to **overthrow the head of Cuban state (Fidel Castro)**, who was backed by the Soviet Union. However, the operation failed. **Hence, option C is correct.**
  - Fidel Castro then appealed to the Soviet Union for military help, to which Soviet Union decided to set up a nuclear missile launcher in Cuba aimed at the USA.
  - Cuban Missile Crisis, brought two superpowers on the brink of a nuclear war. However, the crisis was averted diplomatically.

142. Ans: D

Exp:

- The menace of drug addiction has spread fast among the youth of India.
- According to the World Drug Report 2021, prescription drugs and their ingredients or 'precursors' are being increasingly diverted for recreational use in India--the largest manufacturer of generic drugs in the world.
  - India is also linked to shipment of drugs sold on the 19 major darknet markets analysed over 2011-2020.

- India is sandwiched between **two largest Opium producing regions of the world** that is the **Golden triangle on one side and the Golden crescent on other**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
- The **golden triangle** area comprises **Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam** and Laos. hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
- The **golden crescent** area includes **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran**. hence. **Statement 3 is correct.**



143. Ans: C

Exp:

- Bharat Interface for Money-Unified Payments Interface (BHIM-UPI)** is developed by the **National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI)**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
  - It is an initiative to enable fast, secure, reliable cashless payments through the mobile phone
- Recently, the Union Minister of Finance of India along with her counterpart, the Finance Minister of Bhutan has jointly launched BHIM-UPI in Bhutan.
  - Bhutan** is the first country to adopt UPI standards for its Quick Response (QR) code, and the **first country in our immediate neighbourhood to accept mobile based payments through the BHIM App**. Hence, **statement 2 is correct.**
  - It is also the second country after Singapore to have BHIM-UPI acceptance at merchant locations.

144. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** is the world's first permanent international criminal court, **governed by an international treaty called 'The Rome Statute'**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct.**
  - On 17 July, 1998 Rome Statute was adopted by 120 States in the direction of creating a more just world.

- ◆ On 1 July, 2002 Rome Statute took effect upon ratification by 60 states, officially establishing the ICC. Since it has no retroactive jurisdiction, the ICC deals with crimes committed on or after this date.

◆ ICC Headquarters at The Hague, the Netherlands.

- India did not sign the Rome Statute, and thus, is not a member of ICC.
- The Rome Statute, grants the ICC jurisdiction over four main crimes:
  - ◆ The crime of Genocide
  - ◆ Crimes against Humanity
  - ◆ War crimes
  - ◆ Crime of Aggression
  - ◆ **Recruiting Child Soldiers is considered a "war crime" under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The ICC has no retrospective jurisdiction as it can deal only with crimes committed after 1 July 2002 when the 1998 Rome Statute came into force. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ However, it has automatic jurisdiction only for crimes committed on the territory of a state which has ratified the treaty; or by a citizen of such a state; or when the United Nations Security Council refers a case to it.

145. Ans: C

Exp:

- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- It's a **Eurasian political, economic and military organisation** aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**
  - ◆ It was created in 2001.
  - ◆ The SCO Charter was signed in 2002, and entered into force in 2003.
- The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- Eight countries are part of SCO, which are: Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.
- **SCO has two Permanent Bodies:**
  - ◆ SCO Secretariat in Beijing (China), and
  - ◆ Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Chairmanship of SCO is by rotation for a year by Member States.
- The Republic of Tajikistan has assumed chairmanship of SCO for 2021-22.

146. Ans: C

Exp:

- **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)** is a collaboration of 35 nations launched in 1985. It is located in **France**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ It aims to build the world's largest tokamak to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy.
  - ◆ The tokamak is an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion. Inside a tokamak, the energy produced through the fusion of atoms is absorbed as heat in the walls of the vessel.
  - ◆ Like a conventional power plant, a fusion power plant uses this heat to produce steam and then electricity by way of turbines and generators
- China's **Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST)** is part of the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) facility**, which will become the world's largest nuclear fusion reactor when it becomes operational in 2035. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The ITER Members include China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

147. Ans: C

Exp:

- **United Nations Development Industrial Organisation (UNIDO)** is the **specialized agency of the United Nations** that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.
  - ◆ There are 170 Member countries as of 1st April 2019.
  - ◆ **India is also a member country. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Members regularly discuss and decide UNIDO's guiding principles and policies in the sessions of the Policy Making Organs.
- The mission of UNIDO, as described in the **Lima Declaration adopted** at the fifteenth session of the UNIDO General Conference in 2013, is to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in Member States. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- UNIDO's mandate is fully recognized in SDG-9, which calls to "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation".
- Headquarters: Vienna, Austria



148. Ans: B

Exp:

About:

- **International Energy Agency (IEA)** is an **autonomous Intergovernmental** Organisation established in 1974 in Paris, France. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ IEA mainly focuses on its energy policies which include economic development, energy security and environmental protection. These policies are also known as the 3 E's of IEA.
- India **became an Associate member of IEA in March 2017** but it was in engagement with IEA long before its association with the organization. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Recently, India has inked a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the IEA to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability.

149. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **World Environment Day** is observed on the 5th of June annually to encourage awareness and environmental protection.
  - ◆ The **United Nations Assembly established World Environment Day in 1972**, which was the first day of the **Stockholm Conference** on the human environment. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Theme for 2021:** 'Ecosystem Restoration'.
  - ◆ It will kick off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) - a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the sea. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- Pakistan is the global host for 2021.
- **Initiatives Taken by India:**
  - ◆ The **E-100 pilot project** has been launched in Pune for the production and distribution of ethanol across the country.
  - ◆ The government is releasing the E-20 notification that will allow oil companies to sell 20% ethanol blended petrol from 1st April, 2023, and BIS specifications for higher ethanol blends E12 and E15. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

150. Ans.: D

Exp:

- **The Basel Convention:** It came into force in 1992, intended to **reduce transboundary movements of hazardous waste** from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and ensure their safe disposal as closely as possible to the source of generation. **Hence, pair 1 is correctly matched.**

- **Rotterdam Convention:** It covers **pesticides and industrial chemicals** that have **been banned or severely restricted** for health or environmental reasons by Parties and which have been notified by Parties for inclusion in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
  - ◆ The Convention creates legally binding obligations for **the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure**. **Hence, pair 2 is correctly matched.**
- **Stockholm Convention:** It is a **global treaty to protect human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**. **Hence, pair 3 is correctly matched.**

151. Ans: D

Exp:

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental organisation that was formed in 1975.
  - ◆ The bloc meets annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- The G7 countries are the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US.
  - ◆ All the **G7 countries are a part of G20**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The G7 does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.
- There are **no G7 members from Africa, Latin America or the southern hemisphere**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ Fast-growing emerging economies, like India and Brazil are not members of the G7.

152. Ans: B

Exp:

- **CEO Water Mandate** is a special initiative of the **UN Secretary-General and the UN Global Compact**, implemented in partnership with the Pacific Institute. It was established in 2007. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It aims to demonstrate commitment and efforts of companies to better their water and sanitation agendas as part of long term Sustainable Development Goals.
- **NTPC Ltd. has become a signatory** to the United Nations' Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ NTPC Ltd is India's largest power utility under the Ministry of Power.



153. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the **International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)** through its **Operation Pangea XIV** targeted the **sale of fake medicines and products online**.
  - More than 1.10 lakh web links, including websites and online marketplaces, were taken down in the operation.
- Operation Pangea**, is a well-established international effort of Interpol to **disrupt the online sale of counterfeit and illicit health products**. Just as importantly, Pangea works to raise awareness of the risks associated with buying medicines from unregulated websites.
- The first Operation Pangea was conducted in 2008.
- The current operation (14th) involved the police, customs and health regulatory authorities of 92 countries. It was coordinated by Interpol. Indian agencies also participated in the operation.
- Hence, option D is correct.

154. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **Bretton Woods Conference** held in 1944, created the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
  - The IBRD later became the World Bank. hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
- It has 189 member countries. India is also a member country.
- Its Five Development Institutions:
  - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
  - International Development Association (IDA)
  - International Finance Corporation (IFC). Hence, statement 3 is not correct.
  - Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
  - International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
    - India is not a member of ICSID.

155. Ans: D

Exp:

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** is a regional grouping that promotes economic, political, and security cooperation.
  - It was established in August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Its chairmanship rotates annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- Members: **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam**.
- Hence, option D is correct.



156. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)** is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre working for the people of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH). Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- It is based in **Kathmandu, Nepal** and works in and for eight regional member countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
  - The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) mountain ranges span Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.



157. Ans: D

Exp:

- G-7 is a bloc of industrialized democracies i.e. France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Canada.
  - ◆ It's an intergovernmental organisation that was formed in 1975. The bloc meets annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
  - ◆ The G7 does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.
  - ◆ Apart from India, Australia and South Korea were also invited to participate in the proceedings of the summit as "guest countries". (India is not part of G7 grouping). Hence, option 1 is not correct.
- At the 47th G7 summit 2021 the G7 signed the Carbis Bay Declaration. It is aimed at preventing future pandemics. Hence, option 2 is not correct
- The G7 also pledged over 1 billion coronavirus vaccine doses for poorer nations with half of that coming from the United States and 100 million from Britain.

158. Ans: C

Exp:

- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in 1994, the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The Great Green Wall initiative by Global Environment Facility (GEF), where eleven countries in Sahel-Saharan Africa have focused efforts to fight against land degradation and revive native plant life to the landscape. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

159. Ans: C

Exp:

- The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization that was established in 1921 to support the safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment.
  - ◆ India is also a member of IHO. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Recently, on the occasion of World Ocean Day (8th June), the National Geographic magazine has recognised the 'Southern Ocean' as the world's fifth ocean.
  - ◆ The IHO too had recognised 'Southern Ocean' as a distinct body of water surrounding Antarctica in 1937 but had repealed the same in 1953. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
- The Southern Ocean is the only ocean 'to touch three other oceans (Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Ocean) and to completely embrace a continent rather than being embraced by them'. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

160. Ans: D

Exp:

- Thailand is a country located in the centre of mainland Southeast Asia.
  - ◆ It is bordered in west and northwest by Myanmar (Burma), in east and north east by Laos, in southeast by Cambodia, in south by Malaysia. It shares land borders neither with Vietnam nor with China. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- India and Thailand have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line twice a year since 2005. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
  - ◆ Recently, the 31st edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted in the Andaman sea close to the Strait of Malacca.



161. Ans: C

Exp:

- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- World Food Day is celebrated every year on 16th October to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.
  - ◆ It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy).
  - ◆ Its sister bodies are the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
- Initiatives Taken:
  - ◆ **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ Monitors the Desert Locust situation throughout the world.
  - ◆ The Codex Alimentarius Commission or CAC is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
  - ◆ The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
- The U.N. General Assembly recently adopted a resolution, sponsored by India and supported by more than 70 countries, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
  - ◆ FAO has supported the Indian proposal for an International Year of Pulses which was celebrated in 2016 and **for declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ India released a commemorative coin of Rs. 75 denomination to mark the 75th Anniversary of the FAO (16th October 2020).

162. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France in 2015 on the **side-lines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21)**, with 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ 89 countries have signed the ISA framework agreement.

- ISA's vision is to enable **One World, One Sun, One Grid (OSOWOG).**

◆ One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) focuses on a framework for facilitating global cooperation, building a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources (mainly solar energy) that can be seamlessly shared. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

163. Ans: D

Exp:

- **SHADE (Shared Awareness and Deconfliction)** is an international operational counter piracy platform, convened in Bahrain.
  - ◆ It aimed to encourage partners for sharing information, assessing the evolution of trends, best practices and to de-conflict operations amongst counter-piracy actors in the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman and the Western Indian Ocean.
  - ◆ The Indian Navy and the European Union Naval Force are conducting the IN-EUNAVFOR Exercise in the Gulf Of Aden.
    - The two navies also have regular interaction through SHADE meetings held annually at Bahrain.
- **Hence, option D is correct.**

164. Ans: C

Exp:

- The United Nations General Assembly appointed Antonio Guterres as the ninth UN Secretary General (UNSG) for a second term beginning 1st January, 2022 and ending on 31st 2026.
  - ◆ He was the former Prime minister of Portugal.
- Under the UN Charter, the Secretary-General is **appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ **Each Secretary-General has the option of a second term** if they can garner enough support from Member states. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ Guterres was elected after a reformed selection process that included a public informal dialogue session in the General Assembly, involving civil society representatives, aimed at ensuring transparency and inclusivity.

165. Ans: B

Exp:

- Every two years, the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** organizes the **Land for Life Award**. The Award recognizes excellence and innovation in efforts towards land in balance. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was established in 1994, it is the **sole legally binding international agreement** linking environment and development to sustainable land management. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**, **Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)** and **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** are three Rio Conventions. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

166. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO)** was established by the North Atlantic Treaty (**also called the Washington Treaty**) of 4th April, 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ It is headquartered at Brussels, Belgium.
- A **"NATO decision"** is the expression of the collective will of all 30 member countries since **all decisions are taken by consensus**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The recently held North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit for the first time has explicitly described China as a security risk.
  - ◆ The other two threats identified by the NATO 'declaration' are Russia and terrorism.

167. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **Antarctic treaty** remains the only example of a single treaty that governs a whole continent.
- The **Antarctic Treaty was signed between 12 countries in Washington** on 1st December 1959 for making the Antarctic Continent a demilitarized zone to be preserved for scientific research only.
  - ◆ The twelve original signatories are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the UK and the US.
  - ◆ Currently it has 54 parties. **India became a member of this treaty in 1983. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- **Dakshin Gangotri was the first Indian scientific research base station** established in Antarctica, as a part of the Indian Antarctic Program. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ It has weakened and become just a supply base.

- **Maitri is India's second permanent research station** in Antarctica. It was built and finished in 1989.
  - ◆ Maitri is situated on the rocky mountainous region called Schirmacher Oasis.
  - ◆ India also **built a freshwater lake around Maitri known as Lake Priyadarshini. Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

168. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, the **Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)**, a **joint initiative** of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, launched its programme in Bhutan. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ India was chosen as the Partner Jurisdiction and has provided the Tax Expert for this programme.
- This programme is expected to be of about 24 months' duration.
- It aims to aid Bhutan in strengthening its tax administration by transferring technical know-how and skills to its tax auditors, and through sharing of best audit practices. The focus of the **programme will be in the area of International Taxation and Transfer Pricing. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- This programme is another milestone in the continued cooperation between India and Bhutan and India's continued and active support for South-South cooperation.

169. Ans: B

Exp:

- **International Renewable Energy Agency** is an intergovernmental organisation, it was officially founded in Bonn, Germany, in January 2009.
  - ◆ Currently it has 164 members, **India is the 77th Founding Member of IRENA. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ It has its headquarters in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.
- It **supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future**, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**



- It promotes the widespread adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydropower, ocean, solar and wind energy in the pursuit of sustainable development, energy access, energy security and low-carbon economic growth and prosperity. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

170. Ans: B

Exp:

- **Special Frontier Force(SFF)** was established in November 1962 in the immediate aftermath of the 1962 Sino-India war. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- It falls under the purview of the Cabinet Secretariat where it is headed by an Inspector General who is an Army officer of the rank of Major General.
- The units that comprise the SFF are known as Vikas battalions.
- **SFF units are not part of the Army** but they function under operational control of the Army. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- They are highly trained special forces personnel who can undertake a variety of tasks which would normally be performed by any special forces unit.
- The recruits initially consisted of Tibetan refugees hailing from the Khampa community (now it has a mixture of Tibetans and Gorkhas).
- **Women soldiers, too, form a part of SFF units and perform specialised tasks.** Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

171. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, Indian Prime Minister virtually inaugurated a Japanese 'Zen Garden - Kaizen Academy' at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) in Gujarat.
- It is a joint endeavour of the Japan Information and Study Centre at the AMA and the Indo-Japan Friendship Association (IJFA), Gujarat. It is supported by the **Hyogo International Association (HIA) Japan**. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
  - ◆ It has traditional Japanese elements such as Red Bridge Guzei, Shoji Interior, Glory of Tori, a 3D art mural, fusion Chabutaro, Taki waterfall, Tsukubai basin and Kimono scroll.
  - ◆ It will propagate Japan's work culture in India and increase business interactions between Japan and India.

- **Zen is a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism** emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition rather than ritual worship or study of scriptures. Zen in Japan is meditation in India. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- **Kaizen translates to 'change for the better' or 'continuous improvement'.** Kaizen is a Japanese business philosophy that focuses on gradually improving productivity by involving all employees and by making the work environment more efficient. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

172. Ans: A

Exp:

- The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is one of the oldest specialised agencies of the United Nations.
  - ◆ It was created in 1967 to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of Intellectual Property (IP) throughout the world.
- It currently administers 26 international treaties. Some of the major treaties are:
  - ◆ Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure.
  - ◆ **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.** Hence pair 1 is correctly matched.
  - ◆ Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks- Madrid Protocol.
  - ◆ **Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.** Hence, pair 2 is not correctly matched.
  - ◆ Washington Treaty on IP in respect of Integrated Circuits.
  - ◆ **Nairobi Treaty on the Protection of the Olympic Symbol.** Hence, pair 3 is not correctly matched.
  - ◆ Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities.
- Hence, option A is correct.

173. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Indian Antarctic Programme** is a scientific research and exploration program under the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCPOR).
  - ◆ It started in 1981 when the first Indian expedition to Antarctica was made.
  - ◆ **NCPOR functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.** Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- **Bharti, India's latest research station operation since 2012.** It has been constructed to help researchers work in safety despite the harsh weather. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

- ◆ It is India's first committed research facility and is located about 3000 km east of Maitri.

- **Sagar Nidhi is an ice-class vessel of India,** commissioned in 2008 for research.

- ◆ It can cut through the thin ice of 40 cm depth and is the first Indian vessel to navigate Antarctic waters.

174. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Yuelu Proclamation** was adopted at the first international conference on language resources protection in Changsha, Central China's Hunan province in 2018 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It calls upon the international community, states, governments and non-governmental organizations, among others, to reach a **consensus on the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity in the world.** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

175. Ans: C

Exp:

- India tested its first nuclear device in May 1974, and **remains outside both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ However, India has a facility-specific safeguards agreement in place with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) allowing it to participate in global civilian nuclear technology commerce.
- India was admitted as a member into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016, **Wassenaar Arrangement** in 2017 and **Australia Group** in 2018. **Hence, statement 2 is correct**
- India maintains its official commitment to no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

176. Ans: C

Exp:

- **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** is a regional development bank established on 19th December 1966. It is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines.** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- ◆ It now has 68 members, 49 from within Asia. India is a member.

- Its five largest shareholders are Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the **People's Republic of China (6.4%)**, India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- ◆ It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.

177. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Council of Europe's (CoE) Cybercrime Convention**, also known as the **Budapest Convention** is the **sole legally binding international multilateral treaty on cybercrime.** It coordinates cybercrime investigations between nation-states and criminalizes certain cybercrime conduct. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It was opened for signature in 2001 and came into force in 2004.
- The Budapest Convention is supplemented by a Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism committed through computer systems.
- India is **not a party** to the Budapest Convention. India recently voted in favour of a Russian-led UN resolution to set up a separate convention. The resolution seeks to set up new cyber norms considered as a counter alternative to the US backed Budapest Accord. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

178. Ans: D

Exp:

- **The Basel Convention:** It came into force in 1992, intended to reduce transboundary movements of hazardous waste from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and ensure their safe disposal as closely as possible to the source of generation.
  - ◆ **India is a member.**
- **The Rotterdam Convention:** It was adopted in September 1998 by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam, Netherlands and entered into force in February 2004.
  - ◆ **India is a member.**
- **The Stockholm Convention:** It is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
  - ◆ **India is a member.**
- **Chemical Weapons Convention:** It is a multilateral treaty banning chemical weapons and requiring their destruction within the stipulated time.

- ◆ It makes it mandatory to destroy old and abandoned chemical weapons.
- ◆ It has 192 state parties and 165 signatories.
- India signed the treaty in January 1993.

● Hence, option D is correct.

179. Ans: D

Exp:

- **CEO Water Mandate** is a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General and the UN Global Compact, implemented in partnership with the Pacific Institute. It was established in 2007.
  - ◆ It aims to demonstrate commitment and efforts of companies to better their water and sanitation agendas as part of long term Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Industrial Deep Decarbonization Initiative (IDDI)** is a global coalition of public and private organisations who are working to stimulate demand for low carbon industrial materials.
  - ◆ Coordinated by UNIDO (United Nations Development Industrial organisation), the IDDI is co-led by the UK and India.
- **Race to Zero** is the UN-backed global campaign rallying non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial and educational institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer, zero-carbon world in time.
- Hence, option D is correct.

180. Ans: D

Exp:

- Reports released by **International Energy Agency (IEA)**:
- Recently, IEA has released the **India Energy Outlook 2021 Report** and **Net Zero by 2050**, World's first comprehensive energy roadmap.
- **World Energy Investment Report, World Energy Outlook Report**, Global Energy Review.
- Hence, option D is correct.

181. Ans: A

Exp:

- The World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.

- It was created in the Bretton Woods Conference held in 1944 along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Major Reports released by the World Bank:
  - ◆ Ease of Doing Business.
  - ◆ Human Capital Index.
  - ◆ **World Development Report.**
  - ◆ **Migration and Development Brief.** Hence, option A is correct.
  - ◆ Global Economic Prospects.
- The **World Economic Outlook Report** is released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- The **Global Competitiveness Report** is released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

182. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)** is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of 194 member countries.
- Each of the member countries hosts an **Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB)**. This connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** is designated as the National Central Bureau of India. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
- It is headquartered in Lyon, France.
- Interpol Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.

183. Ans: A

Exp:

- Kyrgyzstan is a country in the central asia region sharing border with Uzbekistan, **Kazakhstan, China** and Tajikistan. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- India has enjoyed strong bilateral ties with Kyrgyzstan since 1991.
  - ◆ India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Kyrgyzstan in 1992.
- In 2011, the joint '**Khanjar**' series of military exercises between **India and Kyrgyzstan** was started.
  - ◆ **KAZIND** is the joint military exercise between India and Kazakhstan. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.



184. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** is a **multi-modal transportation** established on 12th September 2000 in St. Petersburg, by **Iran, Russia and India** for the purpose of promoting transportation cooperation among the Member States. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ The INSTC was expanded to include eleven new members, namely: the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Ukraine, Republic of Belarus, Oman, Syria, Bulgaria (Observer).
- It envisions a 7,200-km-long multi-mode network of ship, rail and road route for transporting freight, aimed at reducing the carriage cost between India and Russia by about 30% and bringing down the transit time from 40 days by more than half.
  - ◆ This **corridor connects India Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea** via the Islamic Republic of Iran and then is connected to St. Petersburg and North Europe via the Russian Federation. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**



185. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Taiwan - the Republic of China (ROC)** is an island off the southern coast of China that has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949.
  - ◆ Its neighbours include **China to the west**, Japan to the northeast, and **the Philippines to the south**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Taiwan is the most populous state that is **not a member of the United Nations (UN)** and the **largest economy outside the UN**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ Taiwan is Asia's 5th largest economy.
- India and Taiwan do not have formal diplomatic relations but since 1995, both sides have maintained representative offices in each other's capitals that function as de facto embassies.
  - ◆ At present, about 15 countries worldwide continue to recognise Taiwan as an independent state. **India is not among those countries. India has backed the "one-China policy". Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

186. Ans: C

Exp:

- The Group of Seven (G7) countries is an intergovernmental organisation that was formed in 1975.
  - ◆ The bloc meets annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- The G7 **does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters**. The **decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding**. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct but statement 3 is correct.**
  - ◆ The leaders of important international organizations like European Union, IMF, World Bank and the United Nations are also invited.
- **Each member nation takes over the G7 presidency for a year on a rolling basis and hosts the annual centrepiece two-day summit meeting**. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The 47<sup>th</sup> G7 Summit will be held in June 2021 and the UK is the host country.
  - ◆ The 2020 G7 summit (46<sup>th</sup> summit) was to be hosted by the USA but could not take place due to the pandemic.
  - ◆ The 45<sup>th</sup> summit of G7 was held in Biarritz, France, in August 2019.



187. Ans: D

Exp:

- The Arctic region comprises the Arctic Ocean and parts of countries such as **Canada, Denmark** (Greenland), Norway, **Russia, USA** (Alaska), Finland, Sweden and Iceland.
  - ◆ These countries together form the **core of the Arctic Council**, an intergovernmental forum. **Hence, option A is correct.**
  - ◆ Arctic Council is headquartered in Norway.
- India's engagement with the Arctic dates back to 1920 with the signing of the **Svalbard Treaty in Paris**. **Hence, option B is correct.**
- Since July 2008, India has had a **permanent research station in the Arctic called Himadri** at NyAlesund, Svalbard Area in **Norway**. **Hence, option D is not correct.**
  - ◆ It has also deployed a multi-sensor moored observatory called IndARC in the Kongsfjorden fjord since July 2014.
- **India received the 'Observer' country status in the Arctic Council** in 2013 and is one among the 13 countries across the world, including **China**, to have that position which was again renewed in 2018. **Hence, option C is correct.**

188. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, Israeli armed forces attacked **Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Haram esh-Sharif in Jerusalem**, ahead of a march by Zionist nationalists commemorating Israel's capture of the eastern half of the city in 1967. **Hence, option B is correct.**
- Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of the holiest structures in the Islamic faith. It sits inside a 35-acre site known by Muslims as Haram al-Sharif, or the Noble Sanctuary, and by Jews as the Temple Mount.
  - ◆ The site is part of the Old City of Jerusalem, sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims.
  - ◆ It is believed to have been completed early in the eighth century and faces the Dome of the Rock, the golden-domed Islamic shrine that is a widely recognized symbol of Jerusalem.
  - ◆ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, has classified the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls as a World Heritage Site.

189. Ans: B

Exp:

- **India is a member** whereas **Mongolia is an observer state** at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ Other Forums of which both the countries are members: Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Defence Cooperation between India and Mongolia:
  - ◆ Joint defence exercises code-named Nomadic Elephant.
  - ◆ India is also an active participant in an annual week-long joint training exercise called the **Khaan Quest**, hosted by Mongolia. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

190. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, Iran gave the **Farzad-B Gas Field** to a domestic gas producer.
- Farzad-B Gas Field is located in **Persian Gulf (Iran)**. **Hence, option D is correct.**
- The contract for exploration of the field was signed in 2002 by Indian consortium comprising ONGC Videsh, Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India.
- The contract expired in 2009 after declaration of commerciality of the field, based on the gas discovery.
- In January 2020, India was informed that in the immediate future, Iran would develop the field on its own and would like to involve India appropriately at a later stage.



191. Ans: B

Exp:

- **India and Oman** conduct regular **biennial bilateral exercises** between all three services.

- ◆ Army exercise: Al Najah
- ◆ Air Force exercise: **Eastern Bridge**
- ◆ Naval Exercise: **Naseem Al Bahr**

- **Ex Prabal Dostyk** is joint military exercise between **India and Kazakhstan**.
- The Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force have been holding **Exercise Ekuverin**.
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

192. Ans: B

Exp:

- BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
  - ◆ The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in 2006.
  - ◆ **South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010**, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS (and not Brazil). **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **BRICS does not exist in the form of organization, but it is an annual summit** between the supreme leaders of five nations. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ The Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- Various agreements have been concluded among the BRICS states in the areas of Economic and Trade Cooperation; Innovation Cooperation, Customs Cooperation; strategic cooperation between the BRICS Business Council, Contingent Reserve Agreement and the **New Development Bank**.
  - ◆ The **New Development Bank**, formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a **multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

193. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, signed in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development also known as the Earth Summit, the Rio Summit or the Rio Conference. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- India is among the select few countries to have **hosted the COP of all three Rio conventions on climate change (UNFCCC), biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity) and land (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification)**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- The UNFCCC entered into force on 21st March 1994, and has been ratified by 197 countries.

- ◆ It is the **parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- ◆ It is also the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.
- ◆ The UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. It is located in Bonn, Germany.

194. Ans: A

Exp:

- The Nagoya Protocol (along with Cartagena Protocol) is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- The **Nagoya Protocol** on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) was **adopted in Nagoya, Japan at COP10**.
- The **COP-10** also adopted a ten-year framework for action by all countries to save biodiversity.
  - ◆ Officially known as "Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020", it provided a set of 20 targets, collectively known as the **Aichi Targets for biodiversity**.
- The **Cartagena Protocol** on Biosafety was adopted in 2000 at the fifth session of the Conference of Parties (COP-5).
- The **Marrakesh Accords** were signed at the seventh session of the Conference of Parties (COP-7).
- **Hence, option A is correct.**

195. Ans.: D

Exp:

- "**Sowa-Rigpa**" commonly known as **Tibetan system of medicine** is one of the oldest, living and well documented medical traditions of the world. It originated from Tibet and popularly practiced in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and Russia. The **Unani system originated in Greece** and its foundation was laid by Hippocrates. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Sowa-Rigpa is based on the principle that bodies of all the living beings and non living objects of the universe are composed of five Cosmo physical elements of Jung-wa-nga (Prithvi, Jal, Agni, Vayu and Akash). **Naturopathic medicine is a system that uses natural remedies to help the body heal itself**. It embraces many therapies, including herbs, massage, acupuncture, exercise, and nutritional counseling. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

196. Ans: C

Exp:

- **Operation Raahat** was launched by the Indian Armed Forces, to evacuate 4,640 Indian citizens and 960 foreign nationals of 41 countries **from Yemen** during the 2015 **Yemen Crisis**. Hence, **Pair 1 is not correctly matched**.
  - ◆ The evacuation took place both by sea and the air.
- **Operation Maitri** was the rescue and relief operation was carried out by the government of India and Indian armed forces in the aftermath of the April 2015 **Nepal earthquake**. Hence, **Pair 4 is correctly matched**.
  - ◆ The Indian Armed Forces evacuated around 5,188 persons, while nearly 785 foreign tourists were provided transit visas.
- **Operation Safe Homecoming** was launched by the Indian government on 26th February, 2011 to evacuate its citizens, fleeing from the **Libyan Civil War**. Hence, **Pair 2 is not correctly matched**.
  - ◆ The air-sea operation was conducted by the Indian Navy and Air India. Around 15,000 civilians were rescued in the operation.
- **Operation Sukoon** was an operation carried out by the Indian Navy to evacuate Indian, Sri Lankan and Nepalese nationals, from the conflict zone during the 2006 **Lebanon War**. Hence, **Pair 3 is correctly matched**.
  - ◆ It was one of the largest evacuations conducted by the Indian Navy in which a total of 2,280 people were evacuated.

197. Ans: C

Exp:

- **United Nations Refugee Convention 1951** is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.
  - ◆ It also set out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals.
  - ◆ **India is not a party to this convention**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is a UN Refugee Agency and a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting the rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.
  - ◆ It is **headquartered at Geneva**, Switzerland. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

198. Ans: B

Exp:

- ACT-Accelerator was launched in the month of **April, 2020** at an event **co-hosted by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)**, the President of **France**, the President of the **European Commission**, and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- It brings together governments, scientists, businesses, civil society, and philanthropists and global health organizations.
  - ◆ The participants include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CEPI, Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), Gavi, The Global Fund, Unitaids, Wellcome Trust (London), the WHO and the World Bank.
- It **aims to end the pandemic**, restore full societal and economic activity globally and facilitate high-level control of Covid-19 disease. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.
- The ACT-Accelerator is organized into four pillars of work:
  - ◆ Diagnostics, treatment, vaccines and health system strengthening.
  - ◆ Each pillar is vital to the overall effort and involves innovation and collaboration.

199. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** is a regional organization.
  - ◆ It comprises seven countries. Five of these seven countries- India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh- are from **South Asia** while the remaining two, Thailand and Myanmar, are from **Southeast Asia**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.
- The group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which despite having the potential, has not been able to move forward due to friction between India and Pakistan.
- Currently, the BIMSTEC is involved in 15 sectors including trade, technology, agriculture, tourism, fisheries, energy and climate change among others, for sectoral cooperation.
- The **Permanent Secretariat** of BIMSTEC was established in **Dhaka, Bangladesh** on 13th September, 2014 after a span of 17 years of the founding of BIMSTEC. Hence, **statement 2 is correct**.

200. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, Indian Navy Ships INS Satpura and INS Kiltan along with P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft are participating, for the first time in multilateral maritime **exercise La Pérouse**, being conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region from 5th to 7th April 2021.
  - The first edition of La Pérouse joint exercise, initiated by France in 2019, included ships from Australia, Japan and the US.
  - India's participation in 2021 **completed the QUAD force representation** in the French led La Pérouse.
- Post conduct of La Perouse, the **Indo-French Naval exercise "Varuna" is scheduled in the Western Indian Ocean, wherein UAE too shall be participating. Hence, statement 1 and 3 are correct but statement 2 is not correct.**

201. Ans: C

Exp:

- India is also a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It is a global standard-setting authority with responsibility to improve the safety and security of international shipping and prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.

202. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, the Indian and Russian Foreign Ministers in a meeting discussed cooperation in various sectors such as economic opportunities in the Russian Far East.
  - The **Russian Far East stretches from Lake Baikal, the world's largest freshwater lake, to the Pacific Ocean** and comprises roughly a third of Russia's territory. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- India and Russia have set the bilateral trade target at USD 30 billion by 2025.
- Other areas of India-Russia cooperation include the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)**, which is being built in Tamil Nadu, India with Russian cooperation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- The **common multilateral forums** of the two countries include the BRICS Summit, Russia-India-China Grouping: RIC and **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The military exercises of India and Russia include Exercise TSENTR 2019 and Indra Exercises (Joint Tri-Services (Army, Navy, Air Force) Exercises).

203. Ans: A

Exp:

- The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of 4th April, 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations **to provide collective security against the Soviet Union. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - It is **headquartered at Brussels, Belgium. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- A key provision of the treaty, the so-called Article 5, states that if one member of the alliance is attacked in Europe or North America, it is to be considered an attack on all members. That effectively put Western Europe under the "nuclear umbrella" of the US.
  - NATO has only once invoked Article 5, on 12th September, 2001, following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US.
- NATO's protection **does not extend to members' civil wars or internal coups. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

204. Ans: A

Exp:

- ASEAN** was established with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (**Bangkok Declaration**) by its founding fathers. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Founding Fathers of ASEAN are: **Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The **European Union is the largest provider of development assistance to the ASEAN** region, and has committed millions of euros to various environmental programs. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- The EU has earmarked millions of euros for supporting climate friendly development in Southeast Asia.
  - This includes 5 million Euros to the ASEAN Smart Green Cities initiative and another 5 million Euros towards a new means of preventing deforestation, called the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade in ASEAN.

205. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is a permanent, intergovernmental organization, created at the **Baghdad Conference** in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**



- ◆ It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.
- ◆ OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.

- As of April 2020, **OPEC has a total of 13 Member Countries** viz. Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, **Algeria, Libya, Nigeria**, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Angola, and **Venezuela** are members of OPEC. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
- The non-OPEC countries which export crude oil are termed as OPEC + countries. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **OPEC + countries** include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

206. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **E9 Partnership** was first established in 1993, formed to achieve the goals of UNESCO's Education For All (EFA). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- A group of E9 countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, **India**, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan) aims at strengthening political will and collective effort to ensure quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- E9 Partnership is working for the achievement of SDG4 – Education 2030.
- The Education for All initiative first launched at the **World Conference on Education for All** by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, **UNICEF** and the World Bank in Thailand in 1990. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

207. Ans: D

Exp:

- Diplomatic ties of India were established with Seychelles after its independence in 1976.
- When Seychelles attained freedom, a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, took part in the Independence Day celebrations.
  - ◆ Since then the tradition of Indian military participation at the Seychelles National Day celebrations has continued till date.
- India is a reliable and trusted partner to Seychelles.
- Recently, India has been accepted as an observer of the **Indian Ocean Commission**, of which Seychelles is a member. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- With the ratification of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** Framework Agreement in September 2017, **Seychelles has officially become one of the Founding Members of ISA.**

- ◆ ISA is an Indian Initiative. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

208. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS)** is an international treaty that provides a regulatory framework for the use of the world's seas and oceans.

- ◆ It lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources.
- ◆ It enshrines the notion that all problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole.

- The Convention was opened for signature in December 1982 in **Montego Bay, Jamaica.**

- ◆ The Convention entered into force in accordance with its article 308 in November 1994, 12 months after the date of deposit of the sixtieth instrument of ratification or accession.

- Today, it is the globally recognized regime dealing with all matters relating to the law of the sea.

- ◆ The convention has been ratified by 168 parties, which includes 167 states (**164 United Nations (UN) member states** plus the UN Observer state Palestine, as well as the Cook Islands and Niue) and the European Union.

- An additional **14 UN member states have signed, but not ratified the convention.** **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- ◆ While India ratified UN Law of the Seas in 1995, the **US has failed to do it so far.**

- **Exclusive Economic Zone:**

- ◆ According to UNCLOS, the EEZ is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention.

- ◆ It is defined as generally **extending 200 nautical miles from shore**, within which the coastal state has the right to explore and exploit, and the **responsibility to conserve and manage, both living and non-living resources.** **Hence, statement 2 and 3 are correct.**

209. Ans: A

Exp:

- To bring sustainable development in the mainstream, the United Nations (UN) member states, in 2015, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
  - ◆ There are 17 goals and 169 specific targets to be achieved by 2030.
  - ◆ SDGs are **not legally binding**. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.
- SDG-4 is to **ensure inclusive and equitable quality education** and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

210. Ans: A

Exp:

- The Indo-Dutch relations can be traced back to more than 400 years when the first Dutch EIC (East India Company) got established in India (in around 17th century AD).
  - ◆ The official relations between the two nations were established in the year 1947 which, since then, have been cordial and friendly.
- In 2017-18, the bilateral trade between India and the Netherlands was around **USD 8.77 billion**. In 2018-19, it was around **USD 12.87 billion**.
  - ◆ By 2025, it shall touch around **USD 18-23 billion**. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
  - ◆ The Netherlands was the third largest investor in India, after Mauritius and Singapore for Financial Year (FY) 2018-19.
  - ◆ The Netherlands was the second largest destination of foreign investment by Indian companies as of end-March 2018.
- The **Netherlands currently is home to the largest Indian community** on the European mainland. The growing Indian student and professional community in the Netherlands is making the cultural knot stronger and the technological partnership deeper. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

211. Ans: D

Exp:

- Kazakhstan lies to the northeast of the Caspian Sea, bordered by the Russian Federation to the north, China to the east, and Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to the south. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
  - ◆ Kazakhstan's geo-political existence between Russia and Asia, along with long borders with China, makes it a country of great strategic importance.

- Relations between India and Kazakhstan are ancient and historical going back to more than 2000 years.

- ◆ India was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan. Diplomatic relations were established in February 1992.
- ◆ India and Kazakhstan have been strategic partners since 2009.
- ◆ Kazakhstan is India's **largest trade and investment partner in Central Asia**. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- **KAZIND** is the Joint Military Exercise between India and Kazakhstan. Hence, statement 3 is correct.

- ◆ The latest edition of KAZIND (fourth edition) was conducted in 2019 in Uttarakhand, India.



212. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Multinational military exercise Shantir Ogroshena** was organised to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's Father of the Nation and celebrate the golden jubilee of the liberation of Bangladesh.
- It was held at Bangabandhu Senanibas (BBS), Bangladesh.
- 'Shantir Ogroshena' 2021 means "Front Runner of the Peace".
- The theme of this exercise was to strengthen defence ties and enhance interoperability amongst neighbourhood countries to ensure effective peacekeeping operations.
  - ◆ It was a **UN (United Nations)- mandated counterterrorism exercise**. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Troops from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka participated in the exercise with observers from the USA, UK, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.

213. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)** is a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between 11 countries around the Pacific Rim which are:
  - ◆ Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan.
  - ◆ **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is the **world's largest Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** and was **signed by all 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations** is a **regional organization (ASEAN)** members and key FTA partners including China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand at the 4th RCEP leaders' summit in November 2020. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **India did not join CPTPP** as it seeks to place greater labor and environmental standards on its other partners and CPTPP draft includes narrowly detailed qualifications on standards for investment protection, provisions to protect the host state's right to regulate, and the imposition of detailed transparency requirements. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

214. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **Vienna Convention on Consular Relations** is an **international treaty that defines consular relations between independent states.**
  - ◆ A consul (who is not a diplomat), is a representative of a foreign state in a host country, who works for the interests of his countrymen.
- **Article 36 of the Vienna Convention** states that foreign nationals who are arrested or detained in the host country must be given notice without delay of their right to have their embassy or consulate notified of that arrest.
- If the detained foreign national so requests, the police must fax that notice to the embassy or consulate, which can then verify the detained person.
  - ◆ The notice to the consulate can be as simple as a fax, giving the person's name, the place of arrest, and, if possible, something about the reason for the arrest or detention.
- India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access (provided through the Vienna Convention) to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence in the Kulbhushan Jadhav Case. **Hence, option D is correct.**

215. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)** is an international not for profit organization which was jointly initiated by 26 member states in 2001, the members have now increased to 29.
  - ◆ **India is also a member of the BFA. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Its **annual conference is held in Boao, Hainan province of China** on a regular basis. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The establishment of BFA is modelled on the lines of the World Economic Forum which bases its annual meeting in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. Thus earning the name of 'Davos of the East'.
- The founding purpose of BFA was to promote economic integration in Asia. Its mission now is to pool positive energy for the development of Asia and the world.
  - ◆ Its five focal areas include technology innovation, health, education, culture and media in response to the new economy

216. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Indian and French Navies** have been conducting **bilateral maritime exercises** since 1993. Since 2001, these exercises have been called '**VARUNA**'.
- These interactions further underscore the shared values as partner navies, in ensuring freedom of seas and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise '**VARUNA-2021**' is being conducted in the Arabian Sea.
  - ◆ This is the **first time that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is participating** in the Varuna maritime exercise.
- The '**Varuna**' joint exercise is **part of the French carrier strike group's 'CLEMENCEAU 21' deployment**, which the French Navy is conducting in the eastern Mediterranean, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea).
  - ◆ Its goal is to contribute to the stabilization of these strategic zones and strengthening cooperation with the navies of partner countries, in particular India for the Indian Ocean component.
- **Hence, option B is correct.**

217. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the US President officially recognised the mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915-16 as an act of genocide.
  - ◆ The Armenian diaspora marks 24th April as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.
  - ◆ The **Armenian Genocide is called the first genocide of the 20th century. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ It refers to the systematic annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1917.
- **India, that has not formally recognised the Armenian Genocide** has primarily adopted this stance in the interests of its wider foreign policy decisions and geopolitical interests in the region. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India does not have any domestic law on genocide, even though it has ratified the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

218. Ans: A

Exp:

- **Project DANTAK** was established on 24th April 1961. It is one of the oldest Projects of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) commemorating its Diamond Jubilee in Bhutan. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It was a result of the visionary leadership of the third King of Bhutan and then Prime Minister of India Jawahar Lal Nehru.
  - ◆ DANTAK was tasked to construct the pioneering motorable roads. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- BRO was conceived and raised in 1960 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for coordinating the speedy development of a network of roads in the North and the North Eastern border regions of the country.
  - ◆ It works under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Defence. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

219. Ans: B

Exp:

- The bilateral relationship between India and the United Kingdom was upgraded to a strategic partnership in 2004.
  - ◆ The UK has reaffirmed its support for India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council.
  - ◆ The UK is one of the largest investors in India, among the G20 countries.

- Defence Exercises of India and the UK:
  - ◆ Air Force Exercise 'Indradhanush'.
  - ◆ Navy Exercise Konkan.
  - ◆ Army Exercise: Ajeya Warrior. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- Recently, the British Government said that the UK Carrier Strike Group's "globe-spanning maiden deployment will feature visits to India, Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore".
  - ◆ It will be led by the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.
  - ◆ It will be a **global deployment, from the North Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

220. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, **Saudi Arabia launched Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative** to combat the threat of climate change. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Saudi Green Initiative:**
  - ◆ To raise the vegetation cover, reduce carbon emissions, combat pollution and land degradation, and preserve marine life.
- **Middle East Green Initiative**
  - ◆ It aims to preserve marine and coastal environments, increase the proportion of natural reserves and protected land, improve the regulation of oil production, **accelerate the transition to clean energy and boost the amount of energy generated by renewables.**
  - ◆ **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

221. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, **India, Japan and Australia** have formally launched the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** in a move to counter China's dominance of the supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region. **Hence, option A is correct.**
  - ◆ The SCRI aims to create a virtuous cycle of enhancing supply chain resilience with a view to eventually attaining strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth in the region.
- In 2020, **India and Japan signed a logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as the **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). Hence, option B is correct.**



- In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'.
- The **India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in **August 2011** covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues. **Hence, option C is not correct.**
- India and Japan defence forces organize a **series of bilateral exercises** namely, JIMEX (naval), **SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force)**, and Dharma Guardian (Army). Both countries also participate in Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise) with the USA. **Hence, option D is correct.**

222. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** aims to create a **virtuous cycle of enhancing supply chain resilience** with a view to eventually attaining strong, sustainable, balanced and **inclusive growth in the Indo-Pacific region**. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are correct.**
- The Trade Ministers of **India, Japan and Australia** have **formally launched** the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI). **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The trio (India, Japan and Australia) along with the US makes Quad grouping.

223. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the **United Nations and other agencies (like WHO and UNICEF)** have **launched the Immunisation Agenda 2030** (IA2030) during the World Immunisation Week. **hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ It sets an ambitious, overarching global vision and strategy for vaccines and immunization for the decade 2021–2030.
  - ◆ It will contribute to achieving the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goals specifically SDG 3 i.e. Good Health and Well being.
- The IA2030 is based on learnings from Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP). It aims to address the unmet targets of the GVAP that were initially to be fulfilled as part of the global immunisation strategy of the 'Decade of vaccines' (2011–2020).
  - ◆ GVAP was developed to help realize the vision of the Decade of Vaccines, that all individuals and communities enjoy lives free from vaccine preventable diseases.

- The IA2030 will focus on a **'bottoms-up' approach**, in contrast to the GVAP that followed a **'top-down' one**.

◆ It will **give priority to populations that are not currently being reached**, particularly the most marginalised communities, those living in fragile and conflict-affected settings and mobile populations, such as those moving across borders. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

224. Ans: C

Exp:

- The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** is a principal judicial organization of the United Nations (UN). It was established in 1945 by a UN Charter and began working in 1946 as the **successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- It settles legal disputes between member countries and gives advisory opinions to authorized UN Organs and Specialized Agencies.
- An Indian, Judge Dalveer Bhandari has been a member of the ICJ since April 2012.
- It is seated in the Peace Palace of Hague, Netherlands.
- The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are **elected for terms of office of nine years** by the **United Nations General Assembly** and the **Security Council**. These organs vote simultaneously but separately. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- In order to be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes in both bodies.
- In order to ensure a measure of continuity, one third of the Court is elected every three years and Judges are eligible for re-election.

225. Ans:A

Exp:

- The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended for the second year in the row to put India on a list (**'Countries of Particular Concern'** or CPCs) for the **worst violations of religious freedoms in 2020**. **Hence, option A is correct.**
- The Report's primary focus is on two groups of countries:
  - ◆ "Country of Particular Concern (CPC)" is a designation by the US Secretary of State of a nation engaged in severe violations of religious freedom under IRFA (International Religious Freedom Act of 1998).
  - ◆ A "Special Watch List" country is one that is deemed not to meet all of the CPC criteria but engages in or tolerates severe violations of religious freedom.

- The Report also includes USCIRF's recommendations of violent nonstate actors for designation by the US State Department as "entities of particular concern," or EPCs, under IRFA.

**226. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

- **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** is an intergovernmental body established **jointly by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)** in 1963, within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ The Secretariat of the CAC is hosted at FAO headquarters in Rome.
  - ◆ It was established to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.
  - ◆ It meets in regular session once a year alternating between Geneva and Rome.
- Currently, it has 189 Codex Members made up of 188 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (The European Union).
  - ◆ India is a member.
- The **Codex Alimentarius is a collection of international food standards** that have been adopted by the CAC. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ Codex Standards cover all the main foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw. In addition, materials used in the further processing of food products are included to the extent necessary for achieving the principal objectives of the code.
  - ◆ Codex provisions concern the hygienic and nutritional quality of food, including microbiological norms, food additives, pesticide and veterinary drug residues, contaminants, labelling and presentation, and methods of sampling and risk analysis.

**227. Ans: B**

**Exp:**

- India and Japan are members of a four nation alliance-QUAD (India, USA, Australia and Japan). **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely:
  - ◆ JIMEX (Naval),
  - ◆ SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force)
  - ◆ Dharma Guardian (Army).

- Samudra Shakti (naval) and SIAM BHARAT (air force) are the joint bilateral exercises of India-Indonesia and India-Singapore, respectively. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Recently, Japan has finalised a grant of 4.01 billion yen for a project for the improvement of power supply in strategically located Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
  - ◆ This grant is Japan's first ever Official Development Assistance (ODA) to a project in the A&N islands. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**228. Ans: A**

**Exp:**

- The **Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP)**, was founded in November, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.
  - ◆ It provides a platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region.
  - ◆ This platform was established to address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Heart of Asia comprises 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
  - ◆ India is a participating country. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Since its inception the process has become a cardinal element in regional cooperation and has created a platform for Afghanistan's near and extended neighbors, international supporters and organizations to engage in constructive dialogue and to address the existing and emerging regional challenges through regional cooperation with Afghanistan at its core.

**229. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

- Switzerland is a **landlocked**, mountainous country with its geographical position in central Europe.
  - ◆ The country is bordered by **France, Italy, Germany, Liechtenstein and Austria**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- Switzerland is renowned for its neutrality. **In 1783**, Switzerland was acknowledged as a neutral state in the **Treaty of Paris**. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The Treaty of Paris was signed in Paris by Great Britain and the United States of America and Canada on 3rd September, 1783, and it officially ended the American Revolutionary War.

◆ **Treaty of Versailles** was a peace document signed at the end of World War I by the Allied and associated powers and by Germany in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, France, on June 28, 1919; it took force on January 10, 1920.

- Since World War II, Switzerland has taken a more active role in international affairs by aiding humanitarian initiatives, but it remains fiercely neutral with regard to military affairs.

◆ It has **never joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** or the **European Union**, and only joined the United Nations in 2002. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**



230. Ans: C

Exp:

- **Switzerland** is renowned for its neutrality, but this should not be confused with pacifism. The country maintains an army, including obligatory conscription for men, and did so throughout both World Wars.
  - ◆ In 1783, Switzerland was acknowledged as a neutral state in the Treaty of Paris. (Switzerland is not a member of **Non-Aligned Movement**). **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **Non-Aligned Movement** is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. The group was started in **Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1961.**
  - ◆ The most important antecedent to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement was the Bandung Conference of 1955. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The **International Day of Neutrality** is a **United Nations recognized day** held on 12th December each year to raise public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

231. Ans: A

Exp:

- The USA is one of the few countries with which **India has a trade surplus. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ Trade surplus is a situation in which a country sells more to other countries than it buys from other countries : the amount of money by which a country's exports are greater than its imports.
  - ◆ India's trade surplus with the USA increased to USD 17.42 billion in 2019-20 from USD 16.86 billion in 2018-19.
- For the USA, **India was the sixth largest supplier of services imports. Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
  - ◆ India's large market, economic growth, and progress towards development make it an essential market for USA exporters.
- The **Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)** is a USA trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
  - ◆ Effective from June 2019, the **USA decided to withdraw duty-free benefits to Indian exporters** under the GSP programme. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

232. Ans: D

Exp:

- Ex Desert Flag is an **annual multinational** large force employment **warfare exercise** hosted by the **UAE Air Force. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ Ex Desert Flag-VI is about a three week long exercise scheduled from 3rd - 27th March 2021 at Al-Dhafra air base, UAE.
  - ◆ **For the first time, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating** in the Exercise Desert Flag-VI. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The air forces of the UAE, India, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain are participating in the exercise.
- The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 Globemasters and one IL-78 tanker aircraft.

233. Ans: B

Exp:

- **Better Than Cash Alliance (BTCA)** is a **partnership of governments, companies, and international organizations** that accelerates the transition from cash to responsible digital payments to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

- ◆ It was launched by the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United States Agency for International Development, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Citigroup, the Ford Foundation, the Omidyar Network, and Visa Inc.
  - It is based at the United Nations.
  - It was created in 2012.
- ◆ The Alliance has 75 members which are committed to digitizing payments in order to boost efficiency, transparency, women's economic participation and financial inclusion, helping build economies that are digital and inclusive.
  - **Members do not want to abolish physical cash** but rather want to provide responsible digital payment options that are "better than cash". **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - India **became a member of the Better Than Cash Alliance in 2015** to digitize payments to achieve financial inclusion and to share success stories from Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, the world's largest financial inclusion program. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

234. Ans: D

Exp:

- The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change.
  - ◆ The UNFCCC **secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany.** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ The Convention has near universal membership (197 Parties) and is the parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement and 1997 Kyoto Protocol. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Paris Agreement** (also known as the Conference of Parties 21 or COP 21) is a landmark environmental accord that was adopted in 2015 to address climate change and its negative impacts.
  - ◆ It **replaced the Kyoto Protocol** which was an earlier agreement to deal with climate change. It is a **legally binding international treaty** on climate change. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- It was adopted by 196 countries at Conference of the Parties COP 21 in Paris in December 2015.

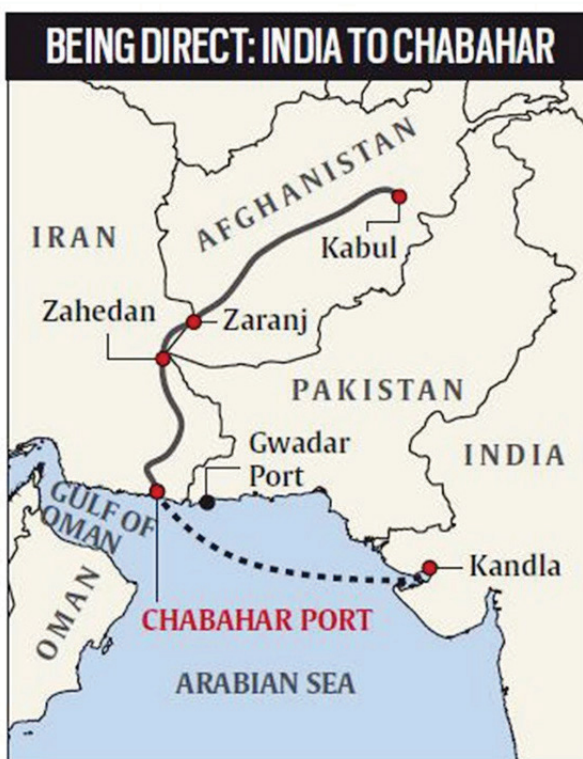
235. Ans: B

Exp:

- The Chabahar Port is located on the **Gulf of Oman** and is only 72 km away from the Gwadar port in Pakistan which has been developed by China. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- ◆ It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian ocean and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari.

- **Afghanistan, Iran and India** signed a tripartite agreement on developing Chabahar port and setting up a trilateral transport and transit corridor in 2016. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Chabahar Port is a key element in India's Indo-Pacific strategy that also includes Eurasia's connection with the Indian Ocean Region.
  - ◆ Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan view Chabahar Port as their gateway to the Indian Ocean Region.



236. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **Uighurs** are a predominantly Muslim minority Turkic ethnic group, whose **origins can be traced to Central and East Asia.**
  - ◆ The Uighurs speak their own language, similar to Turkish, and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.
  - ◆ The Uighurs are considered to be one of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minority communities in China.



- ◆ However, China recognises the community only as a regional minority and **rejects that they are an indigenous group. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Currently, the **largest population of the Uighur ethnic community lives in Xinjiang** region of China. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ A significant population of Uighurs also lives in the neighbouring Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.
  - ◆ **Xinjiang** is technically an autonomous region within China — its largest region, rich in minerals, and sharing borders with **eight** countries, including **India, Pakistan, Russia, Mongolia** and **Afghanistan. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**



237. Ans: A

Exp:

- Different from the usual taxes and duties like excise and personal income tax, a **Cess is imposed as an additional tax** besides the existing tax (tax on tax) with a purpose of **raising funds for a specific task. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The Union government is empowered to raise revenue through a gamut of levies, including taxes (both direct and indirect), surcharges, fees and cess.
  - ◆ A cess, generally paid by everyday public, is added to their basic tax liability paid as part of total tax paid.
  - ◆ **Article 270** of the Constitution allows cess to be excluded from the purview of the divisible pool of taxes that the Union government must share with the States. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
    - Article 250 mentions the power of Parliament to legislate with respect to any matter in the State List in case of emergency.
- Cess should be kept as a separate fund after allocating to Consolidated Fund of India and can be spent only for a specific purpose.

- A cess is meant to raise revenue and is therefore temporary in nature.
  - ◆ A particular cess continues to be levied till the time the government collects enough funds for the purpose that it was introduced for.

238. Ans: C

Exp:

- Recently, in response to the backsliding of LGBTIQ rights in some EU countries, notably Poland and Hungary, the **European Parliament has declared** the European Union an **“LGBTIQ Freedom Zone”.** **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Ireland** legalized same-sex marriage. The country, which had decriminalized homosexuality in 1993, became the **first country to allow same-sex marriage** at a national level by popular vote. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

239. Ans: B

Exp:

- **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)** is a special program of the United Nations (UN) devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and **general welfare of children. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- UNICEF was created in 1946 as the International Children’s Emergency Fund (ICEF) by the UN relief Rehabilitation Administration to help children affected by World War II.
- UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.
- It strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.
- It was awarded the **Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965** for “promotion of brotherhood among the nations”. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

240. Ans: A

Exp:

- The Indus Water Treaty, 1960 is a treaty **brokered by the World Bank** and signed by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan’s President Ayub Khan which administers how the waters of the Indus and its tributaries that flow in both the countries will be utilised. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- According to the treaty, waters of the eastern rivers — **Sutlej, Beas and Ravi** had been allocated to India, while the western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan.

◆ Under the treaty, **India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through a run of the river projects on the western rivers** subject to specific criteria for design and operation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

◆ India has cleared several hydropower projects in Ladakh: Darbuk Shyok (19 MW), Shankoo (18.5 MW), Nimu Chilling (24 MW), Rongdo (12 MW), Ratan Nag (10.5 MW) for Leh; and Mangdum Sangra (19 MW), Kargil Hunderman (25 MW) and Tamasha (12 MW) for Kargil.

● It also gives Pakistan the right to raise concerns on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.

● The Treaty also provides an arbitration mechanism to solve disputes amicably.

● There have been disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over dams. For eg. In 2010, Pakistan instituted international arbitration proceedings over India's 330-megawatt hydropower project on a small Indus tributary, the Kishenganga (known as Neelum in Pakistan).

◆ Though Indus originates from Tibet, **China has been kept out of the Treaty**. If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both India and Pakistan. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

**241. Ans: D**

**Exp:**

● India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, **JIMEX** (naval), **SHINYUU Maitri** (Air Force), and **Dharma Guardian** (Army).

● Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise** (Naval Exercise) with the USA (Malabar is **not a bilateral exercise**).

● **Hence, option D is correct.**

**242. Ans: A**

**Exp:**

● The 4th World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing, was one of the largest ever gatherings of the United Nations, and a critical turning point in the world's focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

◆ The **Beijing Declaration** is an agenda for **women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality**. **Hence, option A is correct.**

◆ It sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern like women and health, women in power and decision-making, the girl-child, women and the environment.

**243. Ans: B**

**Exp:**

Recently Indian Prime Minister held a Virtual Summit with the Prime Minister of Sweden to discuss bilateral issues and other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. In this summit they agreed to continue their outreach to expand the membership of the **Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT)**.

● The Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) gathers **countries and companies that are committed to action to achieve the Paris Agreement**.

● It was **launched by the governments of Sweden and India** at the **UN Climate Action Summit** in September 2019 and is supported by the **World Economic Forum**.

● LeadIT members subscribe to the notion that energy-intensive industry can and must progress on low-carbon pathways, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions **by 2050**. **Hence, option B is correct.**

**244. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

● The **IBSA Dialogue Forum** is a tripartite grouping (**India, Brazil, South Africa**) for promoting cooperation among these countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

● The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June **2003** and issued the **Brasilia Declaration**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

● **IBSA does not have a headquarters** or a permanent executive secretariat. At the highest level, it counts on the Summits of Heads of State and Government. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

◆ So far Five IBSA Leadership Summits have been held. The 5th IBSA Summit was held in Pretoria (South Africa) in 2011. The 6th IBSA Summit is to be hosted by India.

**245. Ans: D**

**Exp:**

● Hong Kong was **formerly a British colony** and was **handed over to mainland China in 1997**, becoming one of its Special Administrative Regions (SAR). **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

- It is governed by a **mini-constitution called the Basic Law**, which affirms the principle of “**one country, two systems**”. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- ◆ The constitutional document is a product of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, under which China promised to honour Hong Kong’s liberal policies, system of governance, independent judiciary, and individual freedoms for a period of 50 years from 1997.

- Recently, the UK has launched a special visa scheme that will allow the Hong Kong residents a chance to migrate and eventually apply for British citizenship.

- ◆ The move came months after China imposed the national security law over Hong Kong enabling it to curb the 2019 pro-democracy like protests in future and also to override the powers of the government in Hong Kong.

**246. Ans.A**

**Exp**

- Recently, the United States announced that it would rejoin the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council that it left in 2018.
- The USA will return to the Council as an observer with the aim of seeking election as a full member.
- It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are **elected** (not nominated) by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- The UNGA takes into account the candidate States’ contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and **are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

**247. Ans.B**

**Exp**

- Nigeria’s **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** was appointed as Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the leading international trade body.
- The WTO has 164 members (including European Union) and 23 observer governments (like Iran, Iraq, Bhutan, Libya etc). Whereas currently the UN has 193 member States. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Agreement Establishing the WTO, commonly known as the “**Marrakesh Agreement**”, was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco in 1994”. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

**248. Ans: C**

**Exp:**

**India-Maldives Relations:**

- Recently, India and the Maldives have signed a defence Line of Credit agreement worth USD 50 million.
  - ◆ The agreement was signed during the visit by the External Affairs Minister of India to Maldives.
- Besides, **Maldives and India** are the member nations of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- India has always rushed emergency assistance to the Maldives, whenever sought.
  - ◆ In 1988, when armed mercenaries attempted a coup against President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, India sent paratroopers and Navy vessels and restored the legitimate leadership under **Operation Cactus. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India and Maldives conduct the **joint military exercise ‘Ekuverin’**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**

**249. Ans: A**

**Exp:**

- The **Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards**, also known as the “**New York Arbitration Convention**” or the “**New York Convention**”, is one of the key instruments in international arbitration.
  - ◆ Arbitration is a procedure in which a dispute is submitted, by agreement of the parties, to one or more arbitrators (an independent person/body) who make a binding decision on the dispute. **Hence, option A is correct.**

**250. Ans.: C**

**Exp.:**

- Located in Iran’s central Isfahan province in Tehran, Natanz hosts the country’s main uranium enrichment facility. It is among the sites monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers i.e. the USA, UK, France, China, Russia, and Germany.
- Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP) is Iran’s second pilot enrichment plant.

251. Ans.: A

Exp.:

- An Anti-Dumping Duty (ADD) is a **customs duty** on imports providing a protection against the dumping of goods at prices substantially lower than the normal value whereas Countervailing duty is a **customs duty** on goods that have received government subsidies in the originating or exporting country. **Hence, statement 1 is correct and statement 3 is not correct.**
- The use of anti-dumping measures as an instrument of fair competition is permitted by the World Trade Organisation. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

252. Ans: C

Exp:

- According to provisional data from India's commerce ministry, **China regained** its position as **India's top trade partner in 2020** displacing the US despite high border tensions between the two countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- **Total imports from China at USD 58.7 billion** were more than India's combined purchases from the USA and the UAE, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

253. Ans: B

Exp:

- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 during the **G7 Summit** in Paris. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
  - ◆ The FATF assesses the strength of a country's anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing frameworks, however it does not go by individual cases.
- Its **Secretariat** is located at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** headquarters in Paris. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

254. Ans: C

Exp:

- International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) is the **international organization that brings together the world's securities regulators**, covering more than 95% of the world's securities markets, and is the global standard setter for the securities sector.

- ◆ It was founded in April, 1983.
- ◆ **Headquarters: Madrid, Spain hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- ◆ IOSCO Asia Pacific Hub is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** has become an **associate member** of the **International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)**.
  - ◆ **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** is an **ordinary member** of IOSCO. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

255. Ans: D

Exp:

- **International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace:**
  - ◆ India is signatory of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:
    - **United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)**
    - **UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)**
    - **UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)**
    - **UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000**
  - **Hence, option D is correct.**

256. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, the Gulf Countries signed a '**solidarity and stability**' deal at the 41st **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** summit held in **Al Ula, Saudi Arabia**. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Members of the GCC signed a **Solidarity and Stability Deal** to remove all the sanctions over Qatar and **re-open their land, sea and air borders to Qatar**. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
  - ◆ Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE are the members of GCC.
- The Persian Gulf is bordered on the north, northeast, and east by Iran; on the southeast and south by part of Oman and by the **United Arab Emirates**; on the southwest and west by **Qatar, Bahrain**, and Saudi Arabia; and on the northwest by Kuwait and Iraq. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**





257. Ans: A

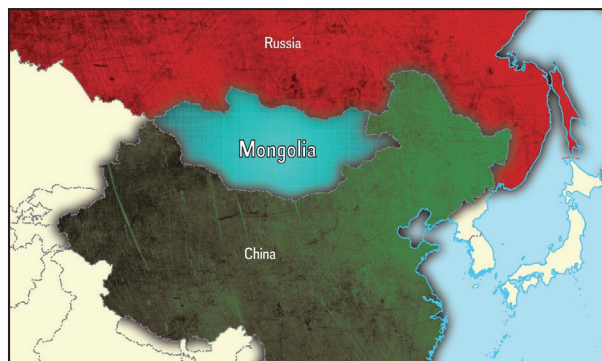
Exp:

- Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean region has been of strategic geopolitical relevance to several major powers.
- China is building state of the art gigantic modern ports all along the Indian Ocean and to the south of it, in Gwadar (Pakistan), Chittagong (Bangladesh), Kyauk Phru (Myanmar) and Hambantota (Sri Lanka). Thus, Sri Lanka is vital for China's String of Pearls strategy.
- Sri Lanka is a **member of regional groupings like BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) and SAARC** in which India plays a leading role.
- India and Sri Lanka conduct **joint Military (Mitra Shakti) and Naval (SLINEX) exercises.**
- Hence, option A is correct.

258. Ans: C

Exp:

- India and Mongolia have interacted through Buddhism throughout history.
- India is the first country outside the former Soviet bloc of nations to open diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955, has upgraded ties with Mongolia to a strategic partnership.
  - ◆ In 2015, Mongolia witnessed the first ever visit by the Prime Minister of India (a part of India's Act East policy).
- India and Mongolia share a **Joint defence exercise code-named Nomadic Elephant. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India is also an active participant in an annual week-long joint training exercise called the Khaan Quest, hosted by Mongolia.



- Hence, statement 1 is correct.

259. Ans.B

Exp

- India and Japan signed an agreement for a loan of up to 50 billion yen (about Rs. 3,550 crore) to back India's economic support programmes for the poor and vulnerable affected by the Covid-19 crisis.
- It is a part of **Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan**. ODA is defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries.
- The loan has an **interest rate of 0.65%** per annum and a repayment period of 15 years, including a five-year grace period. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- **The financial support aims to support the Indian government's programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), which aims to mitigate socio-economic impacts and strengthen socio-economic institutions. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

260. Ans.C

Exp

- China has held its third multilateral dialogue virtually with countries from South Asia to take forward closer cooperation on fighting Covid-19 and coordinating their economic agendas, reflecting a new approach in Beijing's outreach to the region.
- According to the American Enterprise Institute's China Global Investment Tracker, China has committed around 100 billion USD in the economies of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- China is now the largest overseas investor in the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- However, Bhutan does not have diplomatic relations with China. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

261. Ans: C

Exp:

- The United Nations Charter established six main organs of the United Nations, including the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.
- The UNSC has been given primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- Permanent and Non-Permanent Members:
  - ◆ The UNSC is composed of 15 members, 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
  - ◆ Five permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
  - ◆ Ten non-permanent members: Elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
- **Each year**, the General Assembly **elects five non-permanent members** (out of ten in total) for a two-year term. The ten non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
  - ◆ Five for African and Asian countries.
  - ◆ One for Eastern European countries.
  - ◆ Two for Latin American and Caribbean countries.
  - ◆ Two for Western European and other countries.
- As stipulated in rule 144 of the rules of procedure, a **retiring member is not eligible for immediate re-election.**
  - ◆ In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election is held by secret ballot and there are no nominations.
  - ◆ Under rule 83 of the rules of procedure, the non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected by a two-thirds majority.
- India, for the **eighth time**, has entered the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) **as a non-permanent member recently.**
  - ◆ Previously, it has been elected as a member for the period of 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992 and 2011-2012.
  - ◆ It will stay on the council for two years i.e 2021-22.
  - ◆ India **has served seven times** in the UN Security Council. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**

262. Ans: D

Exp:

India- Oman Relations:

- The two countries across the Arabian Sea are linked by geography, history and culture and enjoy warm and cordial relations, which are attributed to historical maritime trade linkages.
- While people-to-people contact between India and Oman can be traced back 5000 years, diplomatic relations were established in 1955 and the relationship was upgraded to Strategic partnership in 2008. Oman has been a key pillar of India's West Asia Policy.
- **Defence Cooperation:**
  - ◆ The Ministries of Defence of both countries review their relations annually under the aegis of Joint Military Cooperation Committee meeting.
  - ◆ India and Oman conduct regular biennial bilateral exercises between all three services.
    - Army exercise: Al Najah
    - Air Force exercise: Eastern Bridge
    - Naval Exercise: Naseem Al Bahr
    - Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- The three countries with which **Oman shares a land border** are the United Arab Emirates to the northwest, Yemen to the southwest, and Saudi Arabia to the west. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**



263. Ans.D

Exp

- Recently, Russia pulled out of the **Open Skies Treaty (OST)** citing earlier withdrawal of the USA from the treaty. This move was made after the USA pulled out of the Open Skies Treaty in November 2020, arguing that Russian violations made it untenable for the United States to remain a party.
- **Open Skies Treaty (OST)** allows a member State to undertake surveillance on any part of the host nation, with the latter's consent. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- **The Open Sky Agreements** are bilateral agreements that the two countries negotiate to provide rights for airlines to offer international passenger and cargo services. Recently, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has expressed interest to have an Open Sky Agreement with India. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**

264. Ans: C

Exp:

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) was established in 1974 **as per the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**. IEA is an autonomous intergovernmental organisation. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
  - ◆ It was established in the wake of the **oil crisis of 1973-1974**, to help its members respond to major disruptions in oil supply.
  - ◆ Over time, the mandate of the IEA has expanded to include tracking and analyzing key global energy trends, promoting sound energy policy and encouraging multinational energy technology cooperation.
  - ◆ Its mission is to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for its member countries and beyond.
- Area of focus: Its mission is guided by four main areas
  - ◆ Energy Security,
  - ◆ Economic Development,
  - ◆ Environmental Awareness and
  - ◆ Engagement Worldwide.
- **Headquarter: Paris, France**
- **The Clean Energy Transitions Programme (CETP)** was launched in November 2017 by the IEA. It is an effort to accelerate global clean energy transitions. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

265. Ans: D

Exp:

- Recently, Russia backed a Palestinian proposal for a **West Asia Peace Conference**. The Conference is intended to focus on a two-state solution, under which Israel and a future Palestinian state would coexist.
- Participants in the Conference: The 10 participants would include Israel, the **Palestinians**, the four members of the West Asia diplomatic quartet (**Russia**, the **United Nation**, the USA and the European Union), along with four Arab states — Bahrain, **Egypt**, Jordan and the UAE.

- The Abraham Accord between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain is mediated by the USA. It was the first Arab-Israeli peace deal in 26 years.

- ◆ Palestinians are worried about the impact of the Accords.

- **Hence, option D is correct.**

266. Ans: B

Exp:

- The **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)** is the annual flagship event of **The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI)**. It was earlier known as Delhi Sustainable Development Summit. Instituted in 200. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- It is the only Summit on global issues, taking place in the developing world.
- It has been conceptualized as a single platform to accelerate action towards sustainable development and climate change. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- It aims to bring together global leaders and thinkers in the fields of sustainable development, energy and environment sectors on a common platform.

267. Ans: C

Exp:

- **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** is a kind of **free trade pact which covers negotiation on the trade in services and investment**, and other areas of economic partnership.
  - ◆ It may even consider negotiation on areas such as trade facilitation and customs cooperation, competition, and **Intellectual Property Rights**.
  - ◆ Partnership agreements or **cooperation agreements are more comprehensive than Free Trade Agreements**. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- CEPA also **looks into the regulatory aspect of trade** and encompasses an agreement covering the regulatory issues. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India has signed **CEPAs with South Korea and Japan**.

268. Ans: B

Exp:

- Recently, the **Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Air Force of Oman** began a five-day bilateral exercise at the Jodhpur air force station. The exercise is named **Eastern Bridge VI, as is in its sixth edition**.
- The exercise seeks to promote professional interaction, exchange of experiences and enhancement of operational knowledge, besides strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

- The Exercise **Eastern Bridge V** was held in October 2019 at the Air Force Base Masirah, Oman.
- Oman is the **only country in the Gulf region** with which all **three services of the Indian armed forces** conduct regular bilateral exercises and staff talks, enabling close cooperation and trust at the professional level.

- ◆ **Naseem Al-Bahr** is the naval exercise conducted between both the countries.
- ◆ **AL Nagah** is the joint exercise between the armies of two countries.
- ◆ **Eastern Bridge** is the joint exercise between the air forces of two countries.

- Hence option B is correct.

269. Ans: D

Exp:

**G20 Countries:**

- It is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union (EU), with **representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank**. Hence, **statement 1 is correct**.
- It does not have a permanent secretariat or Headquarters.
- The membership comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 80% of global investment and over 75% of global trade.
- Its **members** are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, **Mexico**, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, **Turkey**, the United Kingdom, the United States and the EU. Hence, **statement 3 is correct**.
- Each **G20 country is represented by its Sherpa**; who plans, guides, implements, etc. on behalf of the leader of their respective country.
  - ◆ **Current Commerce and Industry Minister** is the current "G20 Sherpa" of India. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

270. Ans: D

Exp:

- Exercise **MILAN** is the mega multilateral naval exercise conducted by the Indian Navy.
- MILAN is a **biennial multilateral naval exercise** incepted by the Indian Navy in 1995 at Andaman and Nicobar Command.

- ◆ Starting with the participation of only four countries, viz **Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand**, in the 1995 edition, the exercise has since **transitioned leaps and bounds in terms of the number of participants and complexity of exercises**. Hence, **statement 1 is not correct**.

- The Exercise **MILAN 2022** is scheduled to commence from 25th Feb 2022 in the '**City of Destiny**', **Visakhapatnam**. Hence, **statement 2 is not correct**.

- ◆ MILAN 22 will witness its largest-ever participation, with more than 40 countries sending their warships/high-level delegations.
- ◆ This edition of MILAN will be larger in '**scope and complexity**' with focus on exercises at sea including exercises in surface, sub-surface and air domains and weapon firings.

- ◆ **Theme 2022:** 'Camaraderie - Cohesion - Collaboration'.

271. Ans: A

Exp:

- Every year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates 21st February as International Mother Language Day to promote mother tongue-based multilingual education.
  - ◆ It was declared so by UNESCO in 1999 and the World has been celebrating the day since 2000.
- The **UN has designated the period between 2022 and 2032** as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (**and not the decade 2011-21**).
  - ◆ Earlier, the United Nations General Assembly had proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL).
- The **Yuelu Proclamation was made by UNESCO** at Changsha (China) in 2018. It plays a central role in guiding the efforts of countries and regions around the world to protect linguistic resources and diversity. Hence, **option A is not correct**.

272. Ans: A

Exp:

**Evolution of G20:**

- The Global Financial Crisis (2007-08) cemented G20's reputation as the premier crisis management and coordination body.
  - ◆ The US, which held the G20 Presidency in 2008, elevated the meeting of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to Heads of State, resulting in the first G20 Summit.



- The Summits in Washington DC, London, and Pittsburgh set the scene for some of the most durable global reforms:

- ◆ G20 reinvented itself by widening its agenda to include issues such as climate change, jobs and social security issues, inequality, agriculture, migration, corruption, terror financing, drug trafficking, food security and nutrition, disruptive technologies, and meeting the sustainable development goals.

- In recent times, **G20 members have made commitments for economic development and cooperation in the post-pandemic period:**

- ◆ At the **Riyadh Summit in October 2020**, they prioritised four things: fighting the pandemic; safeguarding the global economy; addressing international trade disruptions; and enhancing global cooperation.

- Hence, option A is correct.

273. Ans: C

Exp:

- The OIC is the **second-largest intergovernmental organization** after the **United Nations** with a membership of 57 states.

- It is the **collective voice of the Muslim world.**

- ◆ It **endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world** in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

- The Organization of the Islamic Conference was established by the **First Islamic Summit Conference held in Morocco in September 1969**, to marshal the Islamic world after an act of arson at the **Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem** by a 28-year-old Australian in 1969. Hence, statement 1 is correct.

- Headquarters: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

274. Ans: C

Exp:

- Nord Stream, the **longest subsea pipeline**, is an export gas pipeline which runs under the **Baltic Sea carrying gas from Russia to Europe.**

- The Nord Stream crosses the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of several countries including Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, and the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark, and Germany.

- Hence, option C is correct.