



# EXCEL CIVILS ACADEMY

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 16-12-2020

### EXPLANATION

1. Ans) (c)

The minimum or night time temperature in New Delhi dropped to 4.1 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, the lowest during the season this year. The dip was five degrees below the normal temperature for this time of the year, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). What is causing the dip in Delhi's temperature?

There has been a significant amount of snowfall over the past few days in states falling in the western Himalayan range — Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand — under the influence of a Western Disturbance. In winters, whenever an active Western Disturbance passes through the western Himalayan region, it leads to a dip in temperatures across northwest India. A Western Disturbance, labelled as an extra-tropical storm originating in the Mediterranean, is an area of low pressure that brings sudden showers, snow and fog in northwest India. The lack of cloud cover also leads to higher radiation from the Earth's surface into the atmosphere at night time, which also cools the ground. Moreover, under the influence of an active La Niña climate pattern, temperatures across the globe have been dipping. The maximum or day time temperature has also dipped in Delhi from 29 degrees Celsius on December 10 to 19.4 degrees Celsius on Monday. The IMD has forecast cold day and cold wave conditions in some parts of the city for the next three days. A cold day is when the maximum temperature dips 4.5 degrees Celsius below normal temperature — which has been set based on climatological data of 30 years between 1981 and 2010. Cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to 10 degrees Celsius or less and the departure from normal temperature is 4.5 degrees Celsius or lower.

2. Ans) (a)

A Himalayan serow has been sighted for the first time in the Himalayan cold desert region. The animal was spotted by locals and wildlife officials at a riverside rocky wall near Hurling village in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. This is the first recorded human sighting of the serow in Himachal Pradesh. The animal has been spotted a few times earlier in the state, but that has always been through camera traps. Spiti lies in the cold mountain desert region of the western Himalaya, and its valley floor has an average elevation of 4,270 metres above sea level. Serows are generally not found at this altitude, and never before has a serow been seen in the Himalayan cold desert. Wildlife officials believe this particular animal may have strayed into the Spiti valley from the Rupi Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary in adjoining Kinnaur. A biologist has described a Himalayan serow as resembling a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig. It's a medium-sized mammal with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair. There are several species of serows, and all of them are found in Asia. The Himalayan serow, or *Capricornis sumatraensis* thar, is restricted to the Himalayan region. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Himalayan serows have experienced significant declines in population size, range size and habitat in the last decade, and

this is expected to continue due to intensive human impact. Previously assessed as ‘near threatened’, the Himalayan serow is now been categorised as ‘vulnerable’ in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is listed under Schedule I of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which provides absolute protection.



3. Ans) (b)

What is strategic disinvestment or strategic sale?

When the government decides to transfer the ownership and control of a public sector entity to some other entity, either private or public, the process is called strategic disinvestment. What is the difference between strategic disinvestment/sale and disinvestment Selling minority shares of Public Enterprises, to another entity be it public or private is disinvestment. In this the government retains ownership of the enterprise. On the other hand, when the government sells majority shares in an enterprise that is strategic disinvestment/sale. Here, the government gives up the ownership of the entity as well.

4. Ans) (c)

The Geminids meteor showers are unique because their origin does not lie in a comet, but what is believed to be an asteroid or an extinct comet. The Geminids meteor shower, believed to be the strongest of the year, is active from December 4-December 20. Soon after the Geminids meteor shower, viewers in the northern hemisphere can expect to see the Ursids meteor shower. What are meteor showers? Meteors are bits of rock and ice that are ejected from comets as they manoeuvre around their orbits around the sun. For instance, the Orionids meteors emerge from the comet 1P/Halley and make their yearly presence in October. Meteor showers are witnessed when Earth passes through the trail of debris left behind by a comet or an asteroid. When a meteor reaches the Earth, it is called a meteorite and a series of meteorites, when encountered at once, is termed a meteor shower. According to NASA, over 30 meteor showers occur annually and are observable from the Earth. Meteors are best visible on a cloudless night and when the Moon is not extremely bright. Chances of a successful viewing are higher from locations far away from the lights of cities. Generally, pollution makes viewing meteor showers from India difficult to view.

5. Ans) (d)

Dormant “zombie fires” are scattered across the Arctic region. A zombie fire is a fire that continues to burn underground and then reignites on the surface after a period of time. Embers deep in organic soils such as peat lands can spark into flames weeks, months and even years later.

6. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

The United States has imposed sanctions on Turkey on Monday over its acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems. The S-400 Triumf, (NATO calls it SA-21 Growler), is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia. It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD). The system can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and ballistic and cruise missiles within the range of 400km, at an altitude of up to 30km. The system can track 100 airborne targets and engage six of them simultaneously. The S-400 Triumf air defence system integrates a multifunction radar, autonomous detection and targeting systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, launchers, and command and control centre. It is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered defence. Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) was passed unanimously by the US Congress and signed reluctantly by US President Donald Trump. Enacted on August 2, 2017, its core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures. Title II of the Act primarily deals with sanctions on Russian interests such as its oil and gas industry, defence and security sector, and financial institutions, in the backdrop of its military intervention in Ukraine and its alleged meddling in the 2016 US Presidential elections.

7. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Ten universities from across the country have announced that they will set up Kamdhenu Chairs in their respective institutions of higher learning. Over 500 vice-chancellors and officials of universities from across the country took part in an open house organized by Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) on Monday to promote the idea of setting up 'Kamdhenu Chairs' in universities. Now the Government has started to explore the Potentials of Cows and Panchgavya. There is need to bring forth the Science related to Indigenous Cows and our Education system should provide platform as well as push in Research on benefits mentioned about Cows with modern scientific and process oriented approach. Among other objectives of setting up the chairs, RKA has proposed setting up of certificate and diploma courses on cow-based entrepreneurship and sensitizing students about the scientific, economic, environmental and spiritual importance and impact of cow.

8. Ans) (d)

Explanation:

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the demise of Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Eswatini is officially known as the Kingdom of Eswatini, sometimes written in English as eSwatini, and formerly and still commonly known in English as Swaziland. Eswatini is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to its northeast and South Africa to its north, west, and south. The population is composed primarily of ethnic Swazis. The government is an absolute monarchy, ruled by King Mswati III since 1986. Elections are held every five years to determine the House of Assembly and the Senate majority.

9. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

India is celebrating Vijay Diwas on December 16 to mark victory of 1971 Bangladesh liberation war. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will light up 'Swarnim Vijay Mashaal and begin 50th anniversary celebrations of Indo-Pak War. In December 1971, the Indian Armed Forces secured a decisive and historic Victory over Pakistan Army, which led to creation of a Nation- Bangladesh and also resulted in the largest Military Surrender after the World War-II. Four Victory Mashaals will be lit from the Eternal Flame of National War Memorial. These Mashaals will be carried to various parts of the country including to villages of Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra Awardees of 1971 war. Soil from the villages of these Awardees and from areas where major battles were fought in 1971 is being brought to the memorial in New Delhi.

10. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

Department of Posts and India Post Payments Bank unveiled a new digital payment app Dak Pay. Dak Pay is a suite of digital financial and assisted banking services provided by India Post & IPPB through the trusted Postal ('Dak') network across the nation to cater to the financial needs ('Pay') of various sections of the society. DakPay UPI app allows users to create UPI ID and link multiple accounts across banks in a single mobile app. The app facilitates instant money transfers, QR based payments in merchant stores and online shopping on e-commerce websites. DakPay is not just a digital payment app but a suite of digital financial and assisted banking services provided by India Post and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) through the trusted Postal network across the nation to cater to the financial needs of various sections of the society.