



# EXCEL CIVILS ACADEMY

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 19-12-2020

### EXPLANATION

1. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

The Human Freedom Index 2020, a worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, released recently placed India at the 111th spot out of 162 countries. India ranked 94 on the index in 2019. India's scored 6.30 out of 10 in personal freedom and 6.56 in economic freedom. The country's overall human freedom score was 6.43. New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong bagged the first three spots. The United States and United Kingdom are tied at the 17th spot on the index. War-torn Syria ranked the last on the list. The index put China at 129 rank, Bangladesh at 139 and Pakistan at 140. The index was published by American think tank Cato Institute and Fraser Institute in Canada. Fred McMahon and Ian Vásquez are the authors of the report. It takes into account 76 indicators of personal, civil, and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries from 2008 to 2018. The institutes noted that the world has seen a notable decline in personal freedom since 2008.

2. Ans) (b)

Explanation:

The 'SolarWinds hack', a cyberattack recently discovered in the United States, has emerged as one of the biggest ever targeted against the US government, its agencies and several other private companies. In fact, it is likely a global cyberattack. This is being called a 'Supply Chain' attack: Instead of directly attacking the federal government or a private organisation's network, the hackers target a third-party vendor, which supplies software to them. In this case, the target was an IT management software called Orion, supplied by the Texas-based company SolarWinds. Orion has been a dominant software from SolarWinds with clients, which include over 33,000 companies. SolarWinds says 18,000 of its clients have been impacted. The hackers gained "access to victims via trojanized updates to SolarWinds' Orion IT monitoring and management software. Once installed, the malware gave a backdoor entry to the hackers to the systems and networks of SolarWinds' customers.

3. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Reliance Industries Ltd and BP (British Petroleum) have announced the start of gas production from the R cluster, the deepest off-shore gas field in Asia. The field (R cluster) is located about 60 kilometers from the existing KG D6 Control & Riser Platform (CRP) off the Kakinada coast and comprises a subsea

production system tied back to CRP via a subsea pipeline. The field is the first of three Deepwater gas projects in the KGD6 block jointly developed by RIL and BP to come onstream. RIL has a participating interest of 66.7% in the KG-D6 block and BP has a participating interest of 33.3% in the block. The R cluster, along with the Satellite Cluster and MJ gas fields in the Krishna Godavari Basin are expected to produce around 30 MMSCMD (Million standard cubic metres per day) of natural gas or about 15% of India's projected demand for natural gas by 2023. The R cluster field alone is expected to have a peak production of 12.9 MMSCMSD or about 10% of India's current natural gas output.

4. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

This week, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs referred to as GalSafe pigs. Genetically modified (GM) pigs have been approved for food and medical use in the US, drawing mixed reactions. The pigs are only the second GM animal to be approved for food after GM salmon in 2015. The US FDA this week approved the GM pigs, which have been engineered to eliminate alpha-gal, a sugar found in pigs that can cause allergic reactions. The FDA said it was the first time it had approved a GM animal for human food and medical use. The FDA said it had determined that the food from the GM pigs, known as GalSafe pigs, is "safe for the general population to eat", and suggested the meat might be sold by mail order. Intentional genomic alteration in animals means making specific changes to the genome of the organism using modern molecular technologies that are popularly referred to as "genome editing" or "genetic engineering". However, there are other technologies that can be used to make IGAs in animals. Such changes in the DNA sequence of an animal may be carried out for research purposes, to produce healthier meat for human consumption and to study disease resistance in animals among other reasons.

5. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

After nearly 400 years, Saturn and Jupiter will be brought closest in the night sky by an astronomical event called the "great conjunction" and popularly referred to as the "Christmas Star". On December 21, almost all the viewers across the world will be able to see the two gas giants very close to each other, while they will still be hundreds of millions of miles apart in space. A conjunction is not unique to Saturn and Jupiter however, it is the name given to any event where planets or asteroids appear to be very close together in the sky when viewed from the Earth. Astronomers use the word "great" for the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn because of the planets' sizes. The "Great Conjunction" happens once in about 20 years because of the time each of the planets take to orbit around the Sun. Jupiter takes roughly 12 years to complete one lap around the Sun and Saturn takes 30 years. This year, however, the event is rare because the planets will come the closest to each other in nearly four centuries.

6. Ans) (b)

Explanation

National Hydrology Project was started in 2016 as a Central Sector Scheme with 100% grant to implementing agencies on pan India basis. It aims: To improve the extent, reliability and accessibility of water resources information. To strengthen the capacity of targeted water resource management institutions in India. To facilitate acquisition of reliable information efficiently which would pave the way for an effective water resource development and management. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Jal Shakti and supported by the World Bank.

7. Ans) (a)

Explanation

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of Rs. 6,700 crore for the North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP). This is a major step towards economic development of the North Eastern Region through strengthening of Intra - State Transmission and Distribution systems. The North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project was initially approved in December 2014 as a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Power. It receives assistance from the World Bank fund and by the Government of India through the Budget support of the Ministry of Power on 50:50 basis except for the capacity building component for Rs. 89 crore, which will be entirely funded by the Government of India.

8. Ans) (b)

Explanation

Government has recently announced a 1 billion USD loan pact with New Development Bank (NDB) to boost rural employment and infrastructure. New Development Bank is a multilateral development bank jointly founded by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) at the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil in 2014. It was formed to support infrastructure and sustainable development efforts in BRICS and other underserved, emerging economies for faster development through innovation and cutting-edge technology. It's ownership structure is unique, as the BRICS countries have an equal share and no country has any veto power. In 2018, the NDB received observer status in the United Nations General Assembly, establishing a firm basis for active and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations. Hence, statement 2 is correct.

Read more...

9. Ans) (a)

Explanation

The summoning of Parliament is specified in Article 85 of the Constitution. The power to convene a session of Parliament rests with the Government. Hence, statement 1 is correct. The decision is taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs which is formalised by the President, in whose name MPs are summoned to meet for a session. India does not have a fixed parliamentary calendar. By convention (i.e. not provided by the Constitution), Parliament meets for three sessions in a year. Hence, statement 2 is not correct. The longest, Budget Session (1st session), starts towards the end of January, and concludes by the end of April or first week of May. The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals. The second session is the three-week Monsoon Session, which usually begins in July and finishes in August. Winter Session (3rd session), is held from November to December.

10. Ans) (b)

Explanation

A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur is among the seven winners of the prestigious “Young Champions of the Earth” 2020 prize given by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges. Introduced in 2017, Young Champions of the Earth aims to celebrate and support individuals aged between 18 and 30 who have outstanding potential to create a positive environmental impact. Hence, statement 1 is not correct. The UNEP established Champions of the Earth in 2005. The UNEP was established in 1972 to guide and coordinate environmental activities within the United Nations (UN) system. Hence, statement 2 is correct. UNEP is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Major Reports released by UNEP: Emission Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.