



EXCEL CIVILS ACADEMY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 20-10-2020

1. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

CSIR-IHBT makes history by introducing asafoetida (Heeng) cultivation in Indian Himalayan region. Due to efforts of CSIR constituent laboratory, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur, farmers of the Lahaul valley in Himachal Pradesh are taking up cultivation of asafoetida (Heeng). Asafoetida is one of the top condiments and is a high value spice crop in India. India imports about 1200 tonnes of raw asafoetida annually from Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan and spends approximately 100 million USD per year. CSIR-IHBT has now introduced six accessions of seeds from Iran through ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBPGR), New Delhi in October, 2018. In the past thirty years, this has been the first attempt for introduction of asafoetida (Ferula assafoetida) seeds in the country. Raw asafoetida is extracted from the fleshy roots of Ferula assafoetida as an oleo-gum resin. Although, there are about 130 species of Ferula found in the world, but only Ferula assafoetida is the economically important species used for the production of asafoetida. In India, we do not have Ferula assafoetida, but other species Ferula joeschkeana is reported from the western Himalaya (Chamba, HP), and Ferula narthex from Kashmir and Ladakh, which are not the species that yield asafoetida.

2. Ans) (b)

Explanation:

5th General Council meeting of Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE) was held under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways. Created in 1983, IAHE has been providing training to highway engineers and professionals working in Central Government, State Governments, PSUs, Local Bodies, Contractors, Consultants etc. Need was however felt to considerably expand and improve the activities of IAHE to better contribute to highway development programmes. Accordingly, Ministry constituted a committee under the chairmanship Shri Y. S. Malik, former Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) to give recommendations to transform IAHE into a world-class premier institute in highway sector. The council deliberated the recommendations of the Committee to enhance the scope of the IAHE to three distinct functions, namely Training, Applied Research and Development in the Highways and Public Transport Sector, and Road Safety and Regulation and decided to take further necessary action to transform IAHE into a world-class premier institute in highway sector.

3. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

In order to address societal challenges through digital innovation, NITI Aayog announced the establishment of a Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre, CIC with Amazon Web Services, AWS. It is the first of its kind in India. This CIC is part of the AWS CIC Global Programme which provides an opportunity for government agencies, non-profits and educational institutions, to come together on pressing challenges, apply design thinking, test new ideas, and access the technology expertise of AWS. The NITI Aayog Frontier Technologies CIC will be a great enabler to budding innovators and start-ups and help in piloting state-of-the-art, cloud-centric digital innovations by leveraging emerging technologies such as AI, IOT and robotics, blockchain.

4. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

The Centre on October 17 amended the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, to facilitate the setting up of District Development Councils (DDC), the members of which will be directly elected by voters in the Union Territory. The District Development Councils (DDCs) are set to become a new unit of governance in Jammu and Kashmir. A legislation to this effect was brought in by the Ministry of Home Affairs through an amendment to the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. This structure will include a DDC and a District Planning Committee (DPC). The J&K administration has also amended the J&K Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996, to provide for establishment of elected District Development Councils in J&K. This system effectively replaces the District Planning and Development Boards in all districts, and will prepare and approve district plans and capital expenditure. Their key feature, however, is that the DDCs will have elected representatives from each district. The term of the DDC will be five years, and the electoral process will allow for reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women. The Additional District Development Commissioner (or the Additional DC) of the district shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the District Development Council.

5. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

The first-ever SCO Startup Forum will be launched on 27th October 2020 ahead of the SCO trade ministers meeting on 28th October. The forum will lay the foundation for multilateral cooperation and engagement among the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States to develop and hone their startup ecosystems, collectively. The Forum shall identify areas of cooperation by launching multiple entrepreneurial activities like startup showcases through a dedicated virtual platform, mobilizing capital for startups, sharing of best practices, procuring social innovations etc. Innovation and Startups will be the key focus area of SCO Heads of Government meeting on 30th November 2020 to be hosted by

India. India is currently the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world with over 35,000 startups, close to 25% of which are core technology startups operating in areas of AI, Robotics, Cloud Computing, IoT, Digital Health, Financial & Education Technology. The 'Startup India' has launched 10 bilateral bridges since its inception and has helped many technology-based startups to expand their businesses to global markets.

6. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

Union Minister for Agriculture launched AYUSHMAN SAHAKAR, a unique scheme to assist cooperatives to play an important role in creation of healthcare infrastructure in the country. The scheme is formulated by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), the apex autonomous development finance institution under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. NCDC would extend term loans to prospective cooperatives to the tune of Rs.10,000 Crore in the coming years. There are about 52 hospitals across the country run by cooperatives. The NCDC fund would give a boost to provision of healthcare services by cooperatives. Ayushman Sahakar specifically covers establishment, modernization, expansion, repairs, renovation of hospital and healthcare and education infrastructure. Any Cooperative Society with suitable provision in its byelaws to undertake healthcare related activities would be able to access the NCDC fund. NCDC assistance will flow either through the State Governments/ UT Administrations or directly to the eligible cooperatives. NCDC was set up under an Act of Parliament in 1963 for promotion and development of cooperatives. Since 1963, it has extended around Rs.1.60 lakh crore as loans to cooperatives.

7. Ans) (d)

Explanation

The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) brought a study on skinks (a kind of lizard), titled Skinks of India. Skinks are non-venomous, highly alert, agile and fast moving and actively forage for a variety of insects and small invertebrates. It is found around homes, garages, and open spaces such as parks and school playgrounds, and around lakes. With 1,602 species of skinks across the world, It is the largest family of lizards. India is home to less than 4% of the skinks across the globe.

8. Ans) (b)

Explanation

BrahMos is a supersonic missile travelling at a speed of Mach 2.8 (nearly three times the speed of sound) whereas Hypersonic speed is above Mach 5. It is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO) and the NPOM of Russia. It operates on the "Fire and Forget" principle i.e it does not require further guidance after launch. Initially, the range of BrahMos

Missile was up to 290km. Its range has been recently enhanced from 300 Km to 450-600 Km. The increasing the missile's range became possible after India's induction into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in June 2016.

9. Ans) (d)

Explanation

According to a recent report, Chinese pink dolphins are making a comeback in the Pearl River Estuary (PRE). Pearl River Estuary includes Hong Kong, Macau as well as the mainland Chinese cities of Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Dongguan. Around 22 million people live in the area. The Pearl River Delta, the low-lying area surrounding the PRE where the Pearl River flows into the South China Sea, is one of the world's most densely urbanised, heavily industrialised and busiest shipping lanes on Earth.

10. Ans) (b)

Explanation

Ghar Tak Fibre Scheme aims to connect all 45,945 villages of Bihar with high-speed optical fibre internet by 31st March 2021. Under the scheme, Bihar has to provide at least five fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) connections per village and at least one WiFi hotspot per village. The Scheme will be implemented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The Scheme will lead digital services including e-Education, e-Agriculture, Tele-Medicine, Tele-law and other social security schemes in Bihar ensuring easy access to all state natives. It is also likely to boost the local employment generation with the implementation of Bharat Net initiative which will be done by recruiting local workers.