



EXCEL CIVILS ACADEMY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 17-05-2021

EXPLANATION

1. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

The Culture Ministry has informed that reprinting of about 100 sets of sacred Mongolian Kanjur will be completed by next year for distribution in the main centres of Buddhism in Mongolia.

What is Mongolian Kanjur?

In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular.

It is held in high esteem by Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual. The Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan.

The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian. Historical connection between India and Mongolia:

Historical interaction between India and Mongolia goes back centuries. Buddhism was carried to Mongolia by Indian cultural and religious ambassadors during the early Christian era. As a result, today, Buddhists form the single largest religious denomination in Mongolia. India established formal diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955.

Background:

India possesses an estimate of ten million manuscripts, probably the largest collection in the world. These cover a variety of themes, textures and aesthetics, scripts, languages, calligraphies, illuminations and illustrations.

2. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Basava Jayanti marks the birth anniversary of Lord Basavanna, the 12th-century poet-philosopher, and the founding saint of the Lingayat faith. This year it falls on 14th May 2021.

About Basavanna, his thoughts and contributions:

Basavanna was a philosopher, statesman, Kannada poet and a social reformer during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka. Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Basavanna rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals. He introduced new public institutions such as the Anubhava Mantapa (or, the "hall of spiritual experience"), which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, in open. As a leader, he developed and inspired a new devotional movement named Virashaivas, or "ardent, heroic worshippers of Shiva". This movement shared its roots in the ongoing Tamil Bhakti movement, particularly the Shaiva Nayanars traditions, over the 7th- to 11th-century.

Basava championed devotional worship that rejected temple worship and rituals led by Brahmins, and replaced it with personalized direct worship of Shiva through practices such as individually worn icons and symbols like a small linga. The Sharana movement he presided over attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement, produced a corpus of literature, the vachanas, that unveiled the spiritual universe of the Veerashaiva saints. The egalitarianism of Basavanna's Sharana movement was too radical for its times.

3. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

Cyclone Tauktae, currently centered over Lakshadweep, has intensified into a cyclonic storm. It is likely to intensify further into a severe cyclonic storm in the next 24 hours. It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and reach near Gujarat coast by May 18. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) maintains rotating lists of names. The word Tauktae has been suggested by Myanmar, which means 'gecko', a distinctively vocal lizard, in the Burmese language. The name is the fourth from a new list of 169 names released by the IMD last year.

How are cyclones named?

A WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Panel on Tropical Cyclones agreed in principle to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea during its 27th session held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, in 2000. The naming of the tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004, with names provided by eight members, starting with Bangladesh, followed by India. Since then, another five countries have joined the Panel. The Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC), New Delhi is responsible for naming the cyclonic storms formed over the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea when they reach the relevant intensity. There are six RSMCs in the world, including the IMD and five Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres.

4. Ans) (d)

Explanation:

Centre's Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) has completed its first residential project. The residential project — Rivali Park in suburban Mumbai — is the first housing project in India to have received funding under the SWAMIH Fund.

About SWAMIH Fund:

The SWAMIH Fund was launched by Sitharaman in November 2019. SWAMIH Investment Fund has been formed to complete construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects which are stuck due to paucity of funds. The fund was set up as a Category-II AIF (Alternate Investment Fund) debt fund registered with SEBI. The Investment Manager of the Fund is

SBICAP Ventures, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI Capital Markets, which in turn is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India. The Sponsor of the Fund is the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. Who will be the investors of the fund?

AIFs created/funded under the Special Window would solicit investment into the fund from the Government and other private investors including cash-rich financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, public and private banks, domestic pension and provident funds, global pension funds and other institutional investors.

5. Ans) (b)

Explanation:

The eighth instalment of minimum financial benefit under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme has been released. This was the first instalment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi for the financial year 2021-22.

About PM-Kisan scheme:

It is a central sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the Government of India. The scheme was launched in December 2018. Under the scheme, income support of ₹6,000 per year in three equal installments of ₹2000 is provided to small and marginal farmers having a combined land holding of up to two hectares. The state governments and Union Territory administration identify the farmers who are eligible for the scheme and share the list with the Centre.

Ambit:

The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares. Its ambit was later expanded w.e.f. 01.06.2019 to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

Exceptions:

Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme such as Income Tax payers in last assessment year, professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants etc and pensioners pensioners drawing at least Rs.10,000/- per month (excluding MTS/Class IV/Group D employees).

6. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

As per the World Malaria Report 2020, India has been the only high endemic country that reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 compared to previous years. It is also listed among the countries most affected by the disease.

7. Ans) (d)

Explanation:

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched a hub to create an open and inclusive platform to promote strategic policy dialogue, improve knowledge sharing and strengthen coordination on tax policy and administration among ADB members and development partners.

8. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

1st BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting was held recently at New Delhi in virtual format. India has assumed BRICS Presidency this year. The prime agenda for the discussions were:

Promoting Social Security Agreements amongst BRICS Nations, Formalization of labour markets, Participation of women in labour force and Gig and platform workers – Role in labour market.

Outcomes of the meeting:

On the issue of Social Security Agreement (SSA), the Member Nations resolved to enter into dialogue and discussion with each other and take it forward towards signing of the agreements. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA) on their part, expressed willingness to provide technical support in facilitating conclusion of such agreements.

What are SSAs?

SSA is a bilateral agreement between India and a foreign country designed to protect the interests of cross border workers. The agreement provides for avoidance of ‘double coverage’ and ensures equality of treatment to workers of both countries from a social security perspective.

9. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

The Supreme Court has thrown open the door to the legislature to “ponder” over the idea of placing convicts under house arrest to avoid overcrowding of prisons. A Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and K.M. Joseph, in a judgment, highlighted the “alarming” statistics of prisons. The suggestion is relevant considering the spread of COVID-19. A few days ago, a Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, issued a series of directions, including the grant of interim bail and parole to prisoners to decongest prisons. The occupancy rate in prisons had climbed to 118.5% in 2019. National Crime Records Bureau’s figures of 2019 show that 18,86,092 inmates were admitted in jails. The number of undertrial prisoners in 2019 was 3,30,487, which, in fact, constituted 69.05% of the total number of prisoners. Secondly, a very large sum (₹6818.1 crore) was the budget for prisons. The “tremendous” overcrowding of prisons and the huge budget were both relevant in the context of the possibilities that house arrest offers.

10. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Indian Researchers have sequenced 624 pangolin scales, thereby categorising the Indian and Chinese pangolins. Despite being listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 continue to be the world's most trafficked mammal. The primary demand for its scales in the making of traditional East Asian medicines has led to an estimated illegal trade worth \$2.5 billion every year. To enforce the appropriate national and international laws and to track the decline of the species, researchers of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, have now developed tools to tell apart the scales of Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) and Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*). They characterised the morphological features and investigated genetic variations between the two species by sequencing 624 scales of pangolins and comparing the sequences with all eight pangolin species. Based on the size, shape, weight and ridge counts on the scales, the team was able to categorise the two species of Indian and Chinese pangolins. Though the Chinese pangolin is distributed mostly in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, the north-eastern part of India is also its home.