



EXCEL CIVILS ACADEMY

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 19-10-2020

EXPLANATION

1. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

Bogibeel, India's longest rail-and-road bridge throughout the Brahmaputra, had in December 2018 introduced the 2 banks of Assam nearer by greater than seven hours. A 'zero Rajdhani' train via this 4.94 km bridge has now brought the people of the 2 banks closer to New Delhi by more than 100 km. The 02505/02506 between New Delhi and Dibrugarh on October 12 is technically not a Rajdhani, a superfast train whose number starts with 2 while those of mail express trains start with 1. The zero makes it a special train, the likes of which are operated temporarily. Railway officials said the special 'Rajdhani' could be the first of its kind, deviating from the definition of such trains – connecting the national capital with the capitals or nearest largest city of the States. The train bypasses Guwahati, Assam's principal city and the original terminal for the Rajdhani, by some 50 km.

2. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

The World Health Organization (WHO) made available interim results from the Solidarity Therapeutics Trial. The findings put a dampener on expectations from these therapies — including remdesivir, once seen as promising. Solidarity Trial is the world's "largest" multinational human trials on Covid-19 therapeutics. It was initiated by WHO and its partners in March to help find an effective treatment for Covid-19. It covers four repurposed drugs or drug combinations — remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon (in combination with rotinavir and lopinavir). The main aim was to help determine whether any of these repurposed therapies could at least moderately affect in-hospital mortality, and whether any effects differed between moderate and severe disease, said Dr Sheela Godbole, national coordinator of the Solidarity Trial in India. The initiative included 26 trials in parts of India with a high burden of cases. Drugs like hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir, in fact, had already been dropped over the course of the last six months for not showing much promise.

3. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

C Rangarajan (former Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council) has argued that there is an urgent need to reach young people both for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms. This is because Fertility has been declining in India for some time now.

The Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report (2018) estimated the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the number of children a mother would have at the current pattern of fertility during her lifetime, as 2.2 in the year 2018. Fertility is likely to continue to decline and it is estimated that replacement TFR of 2.1 would soon be, if not already, reached for India as a whole. But the most troubling statistics in the SRS report are for sex ratio at birth. Biologically normal sex ratio at birth is 1,050 males to 1,000 females or 950 females to 1,000 males. The SRS reports show that sex ratio at birth in India, measured as the number of females per 1,000 males, declined marginally from 906 in 2011 to 899 in 2018. There is considerable son preference in all states, except possibly in Kerala and Chhattisgarh. The UNFPA State of World Population 2020 estimated the sex ratio at birth in India as 910, lower than all the countries in the world except China.

4. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Former Chief Economist of the World Bank Kaushik Basu has said that the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) latest projection of Bangladesh's real per capita GDP surpassing India's real per capita GDP, after India had a lead of 25 per cent five years ago, is shocking, and calls for "bold fiscal/monetary policy". In its latest World Economic Outlook released this week, the IMF has projected the Indian economy to contract 10.3 per cent in 2020-21, a deeper hit than the June estimate of 4.5 per cent contraction in the wake of the economic slump due to Covid-19 pandemic. India's per capita GDP, in nominal US dollar terms, is projected to be \$1,876.53 in 2020, lower than \$1,887.97 projected for Bangladesh. On average, India's per capita GDP has been 24 per cent higher than Bangladesh's during the last five years, IMF data show. After a blip however, India's per capita GDP is expected to overtake Bangladesh's per capita GDP in 2021, with the IMF projecting it to be \$2,030.62 as against \$1,989.85 of the latter. However, the trend is not expected to sustain for long as India's per capita GDP is then again expected to slip below Bangladesh's per capita GDP in 2024 to \$2,544.26 as against \$2,544.32. In 2025, India's per capita GDP is projected to be \$2,729.24, again lower than Bangladesh's projected per capita GDP of \$2,756.10, the IMF said. India's per capita GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms in 2020 was estimated by the IMF at \$6,284, compared with \$5,139 per capita GDP (PPP) of Bangladesh for 2020, the report said.

5. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the demise of Dr Joseph Mar Thoma, the spiritual head of the Marthoma Christian community. The Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church is often shortened to Mar Thoma Church and is also known also as the Reformed Syrian Church and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar. It is an autonomous Reformed Oriental church based in Kerala, India.

While continuing many of the Syriac high church practices, the church is reformed in its theology and doctrines. The Mar Thoma Church sees itself as continuation of the Saint Thomas Christians, a community traditionally believed to have been founded in the first century by Thomas the Apostle, who is known as Mar Thoma (Saint Thomas) in Syriac. According to the 2011 Census of Kerala it was the sixth largest Christian church in the state.

6. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

Reserve Bank of India will conduct its first-ever Open Market Operation (OMO) purchase of State Developments Loans (SDLs) on 22nd October. The OMOs worth ten thousand crore rupees will be conducted as a special case during the current financial year with an aim to improve liquidity and facilitate efficient pricing. The RBI will purchase the SDLs through a multi-security auction using the multiple price method. The result of the auction will be announced on the same day. At present, SDLs are eligible collateral for the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) along with T-bills, dated government securities and oil bonds. The OMOs will be conducted for a basket of SDLs comprising securities issued by states. State Development Loans (SDLs) are dated securities issued by states for meeting their market borrowings requirements. In effect, the SDL are similar to the dated securities issued by the central government. Purpose of issuing State Development Loans is to meet the budgetary needs of state governments. Each state can borrow upto a set limit through State Development Loans.

7. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

India ranked 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020 and continues to be in the “serious” hunger category, though it has made some progress, particularly since the enactment of National Food Security Act. Last year, India’s rank was 102 out of 117 countries. The neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan too were in the “serious” category but ranked higher than India in this year’s index as has been the trend for several years. While Bangladesh ranked 75, Myanmar and Pakistan were in the 78th and 88th position respectively. Nepal and Sri Lanka were in 73rd and 64th position and were in the “moderate” hunger category. India’s score has decreased consistently, a positive sign in this ranking, from 32.2 in 2010 to 31.1 in 2018 and last year the score was 30.3. In the 2020 report, India’s score stood at 27.2. Going by this pace of progress, it is likely to take some more years for India to be in the “moderate” category. Countries that have scores between 10 and 19.9 are categorised as moderate ones. The report said 14% of India’s population was undernourished and the country recorded a 37.4% stunting rate among children under five and a wasting rate of 17.3%. The under-five mortality rate stood at 3.7%. The GHI is calculated by using a three-step process and the indicators used are percentage of undernourished population, percentage of children under five years

suffering from wasting and stunting, and child mortality.

8. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

The third World Statistics Day will be celebrated around the globe on 20 October 2020 with the theme “Connecting the world with data we can trust.” The celebration of World Statistics Day 2020 is a global collaborative endeavour, organized under the guidance of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs is the global coordinator of the campaign. At its 41st Session in February 2010, the United Nations Statistical Commission proposed celebrating 20 October 2010 as World Statistics Day (Decision 41/109). The General Assembly adopted on 3 June 2010 resolution 64/267, which officially designated 20 October 2010 as the first ever World Statistics Day under the general theme “Celebrating the many achievements of official statistics.”

In 2015, with resolution 96/282, the General Assembly decided to designate 20 October 2015 as the second World Statistics Day under the general theme “Better data, better lives,” as well as to celebrate World Statistics Day every five years on 20 October.

9. Ans) (c)

Explanation:

US Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, who is widely expected to be confirmed by Republican lawmakers before the November 3 election, has described “originalism” as her legal philosophy. Originalism means interpreting the country’s Constitution as per the intentions of its 18th-century founding leaders. In legal philosophy, this theory prescribes that while resolving disputes, judges should interpret the constitution as it was understood at the time it was ratified, irrespective of whether they personally agree or disagree with the outcome of a case decided this way. According to originalists, the meaning of the constitution is fixed at the time of its framing, either in the form of the meaning of the words used, or the intentions of the drafters. The job of the court is to stick to this original meaning.

The word ‘originalism’ was coined in the 1980s, and has since been popular among US conservatives, who have sought to promote judicial restraint on the country’s federal courts. The legal philosophy which is said to be the opposite of originalism is ‘living constitution’ or ‘modernism’. This theory, espoused by likes of the late Justice Ginsburg, believes that the constitution should be updated with times to encompass changing societal needs.

10. Ans) (a)

Explanation:

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern’s Labour Party has won over 49 per cent votes in the general elections. At 26.9 percent of the votes, the National Party is in second place. Ardern’s party has won a

majority, the biggest victory for the Labour Party in over 50 years. This will also be the first time that a party will be governing alone since New Zealand moved to the MMP (mixed-member proportional representation) electoral system in 1996. With nearly 50 per cent of the vote, the party will get more than the 61 seats required for a parliamentary majority. Jacinda Ardern: Ardern, who has been hailed for her 'compassionate' leadership, became the 40th prime minister of New Zealand in 2017 and has been the leader of the Labour Party since then. She is one of the few Prime Ministers to have given birth while in office.