

14 Jan 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS 1 Related

ART AND CULTURE

1. [Inscriptions confirm presence of two medieval monasteries at Moghalmari](#)

B. GS 2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [Govt. launches road accident database](#)
2. [SC not to review Sabarimala case, to examine 'larger issues'](#)

C. GS 3 Related

ECONOMY

1. [Retail inflation at 5-year high of 7.3% in December](#)
2. [Govt. gets cracking on GST evaders with data analytics](#)

INTERNAL SECURITY

1. [Apache, Chinook helicopters to make debut at R-Day parade](#)
2. [India starts voluntary disclosure scheme for persons flying non-compliant drones](#)

D. GS 4 Related

E. Editorials

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [In the name of self-defence](#)
2. [Vote for status quo](#)
3. [Reshaping the Gulf](#)

F. Tidbits

1. [Slowing economy hitting payroll creation, says SBI report](#)
2. [Railways invites RFQ from private train operators](#)
3. [Five countries to discuss action against Iran](#)

G. Prelims Facts

1. [Lava gushes from Philippine volcano as ash spreads to Manila](#)

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS 1 Related

Category: ART AND CULTURE

1. [Inscriptions confirm presence of two medieval monasteries at Moghalmari](#)

Context:

A study of inscriptions on clay tablets recovered from recent excavations at Moghalmari, a Buddhist monastic site of the early medieval period in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district, have confirmed the presence of two monasteries — Mugalayikaviharika and Yajñapindikamahavihara.

Details:

- The presence of two monasteries dating to the same period within a single compound is unique in eastern India. Earlier excavations had indicated the presence of two monasteries on the basis of the structural plan.
- The monasteries at Moghalmari date from 6th century CE and were functional till the 12th century CE.

- Six tiny fragments of inscribed seals were found during excavations. Each of them contained a set of letters accompanied by the deer-dharmachakra symbols.
- The inscriptions are in Sanskrit and the script is a transitional phase between later north Indian Brahmi and early Siddhamatrika.
- The first name Yajñapindikamahavihara, implying etymologically ‘a place of sacrificial offering’ is of special significance.
- The second name on the seals, Mugalayikaviharika, bears a phonetic resemblance to the modern name of the site, Moghalmari.

In Xuanzang’s travels:

- Archaeologists and historians point out that famous Chinese traveller Xuanzang (more widely identified as Huen Tsang), who visited India in the 7th century CE, referred to the existence of ‘ten monasteries’ within the limits of Tamralipta (modern day Tamluk in adjoining Purba Medinipur district). However, he did not refer to any specific name or location.
- With the discovery of the site and the deciphering of the inscriptions, at least two of these monasteries are now identified.
- It is known from Buddhist texts that Buddhist monasteries have a definite hierarchy — Mahavihara, Vihara and Viharika — which is reflected in the inscriptions found.
- The study provides the only contextual epigraphical proof for the existence of a viharika (Mugalayikaviharika in this case) as early as the 6th century in this part of the subcontinent.
- The study of the inscribed seals suggests that the monastery was called Mugalayikaviharika.
- It is believed that the name Mugalayika suggests a fair connection to the modern place-name Moghalmari.
- In his paper, Prof. Sanyal refers to L.S.S. O’Malley’s gazetteer of 1911, where the name Moghalmari is said to trace its name to a medieval battle between the Mughals and Pathans, sometime in the 16th or early 17th century.

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Govt. launches road accident database

Context:

The government has launched a central accident database management system that will help in analysing causes of road crashes and in devising safety interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.

Issue:

- India sees the largest number of road fatalities in the world.
- More than 1.5 lakh people lost their lives in road crashes in the country in 2018, according to government data. Of the total people killed in road crashes in 2018, 48% were between 18 years and 35 years old, and more than 60% of such fatalities were due to overspeeding.

Details:

- The IT tool, known as the **Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD)**, has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M).
- It will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre.
- The project costs Rs.258 crore and is being supported by the World Bank.

- The system will be first piloted in the six States with highest fatalities from road crashes — Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- The IRAD will be improved on the basis of the learnings from the trial, following which it will be rolled out across the country.

How does it works?

- The IRAD mobile application will enable police personnel to enter details about a road accident, along with photos and videos, following which a unique ID will be created for the incident.
- Subsequently, an engineer from the Public Works Department or the local body will receive an alert on his mobile device.
- He or she will then visit the accident site, examine it, and feed the required details, such as the road design.
- Data thus collected will be analysed by a team at IIT-M, which will then suggest if corrective measures in road design need to be taken.
- Road users will also be able to upload data on road accidents on a separate mobile application.

2. SC not to review Sabarimala case, to examine 'larger issues'

Context:

A nine-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde have said that its objective was not to review the Sabarimala women entry case but examine “larger issues” of law arising from practices.

Background:

- In November 2019, the five-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, instead of deciding the Sabarimala review entrusted to it, sought an “authoritative pronouncement” on the Court’s power to decide the essentiality of religious practices.
- Framing seven questions, the Bench referred them to a seven-judge Bench.
 - These referral questions included whether “essential religious practices” be afforded constitutional protection under Article 26 (freedom to manage religious affairs).
- Chief Justice Bobde, who succeeded Justice Gogoi, formed a Bench of nine, rather than seven judges, to examine these questions which concern multiple faiths.

Points to ponder

Seven issues were framed by the five-judge Review Bench for the larger Bench. They form the crux but may be re-framed for future hearing before the nine-judge Bench. The 'broad' issues are:



Not restricting itself to the Sabarimala case, the Bench will examine larger issues of law.

- What should be the interplay between freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26 and the right to equality under Article 14?
- Right to practice religion is subject to 'public order, morality and health' under Article 25(1). What do these terms actually mean?
- Is constitutional morality the over-arching morality in reference to the Preamble or limited to religious beliefs or faith?
- Should and, if so, how far can a court enquire into whether a

religious practice is essential to a particular faith?

- What is the meaning of the expression 'sections of Hindus' appearing in Article 25(2)(b) of the Constitution?
- Whether 'essential religious practices' deserve constitutional protection under Article 26?
- What is the extent to which courts should entertain PILs questioning religious practices filed by a third person who is not a member of that faith?

Details:

- The nine judge bench has set an objective of examining "larger issues" of law arising from practices such as:
 - The prohibition of women from entering mosques and temples
 - Female genital mutilation among Dawoodi Bohras
 - The ban on Parsi women who married inter-faith from entering the fire temple.
- CJI has said that the nine-judge Bench was only examining propositions of law raised about religious practices believed to be essential to various religions. The Bench would not go into the individual facts of the various petitions before it.
- The Bench, clarified that it would not go into the legality of issues such as the practice of polygamy and 'nikah-halala' in Islam.

For more on the Sabarimala Case, watch [Explained: Sabarimala Case and the Review Petition.](#)

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Retail inflation at 5-year high of 7.3% in December

Context:

Retail inflation has surged to over 5-year high of 7.35% in December 2019.

Details:

- Retail inflation soared to a five-and-a-half year high of 7.35% in December 2019, significantly breaching the upper limit of 6%, set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
 - The Centre has mandated the Reserve Bank of India to keep inflation in the range of 2-6%.

- According to information released by the National Statistical Office on Monday, retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index was only 2.11% in December 2018 and 5.54% in November 2019.

What is Retail Inflation?

- Inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) captures retail inflation.
- In India, retail inflation is linked to Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is released by the Central Statistics Office of the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.
- CPI numbers are widely used as a macroeconomic indicator of inflation, as a tool by governments and central banks.

2. Govt. gets cracking on GST evaders with data analytics

Context:

The Department of Revenue has identified as many as 931 cases of fraudulent GST (Goods and Services Tax) refund claims through data analytics and has now tasked the GST data analytics wing to scrutinise all past and pending refund claims filed all over the country for inverted duty structure.

Issue:

- The highest number of such fraud cases have been booked in the Kolkata zone, followed by Delhi, Jaipur and Panchkula (Haryana).
- Investigators in Delhi had cracked, through data analytics — a significant fraud case wherein fraudsters created a network of over 500 entities comprising fake billing entities, intermediary dealers, distributors and bogus manufacturers of 'hawaii' chappals for availing and encashing fake ITC credits.
- Through meticulous cyber-planning, fraudsters had created over Rs. 600 crore of 'fake credit' which they would have continued to encash had it not been busted.
- It was also through data analytics that recently, GST formations had identified a few exporters with 'star' status who were fraudulently availing Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) refund and were untraceable at their registered addresses.

Way forward:

- Fake claims of input tax credit and tax evasion at the retail level are two major areas of revenue leakage.
- The GST data analytics wing has been able to identify many cases involving fake invoicing and fraudulent tax credits, which have been encashed through the facility of IGST refunds
- The sources said to curb input tax credit (ITC) frauds, data analytics is to be done on all refunds since 2017, keeping an eye on the modus operandi of unscrupulous refund claimants or fly-by-night or shell business entities for availing fake ITC.

Category: INTERNAL SECURITY

1. Apache, Chinook helicopters to make debut at R-Day parade

Context:

Apache attack helicopters and Chinook heavy lift helicopters, which were recently inducted into the Indian Air Force (IAF), will make their debut over Rajpath during the Republic Day flypast on January 26, 2020.

Details:

- India has contracted 22 Apache helicopters and 15 Chinook helicopters from Boeing through the Foreign Military Sales programme of the U.S. government in September 2015 under a \$3 bn deal.
- So far, 17 Apache and 10 Chinook helicopters have been delivered.

Chinook:

- Chinook is a heavy lift helicopter that was formally inducted into its inventory at Air Force Station – Chandigarh by IAF.
- These helicopters will be deployed in the Northern and Eastern regions of India.

Read more about [Chinook Helicopters](#).

Apache:

- Apache is highly agile, survivable against battle damage and is easily maintainable even in field conditions.
- The helicopter has been customised to suit IAF's future requirements and would have significant capability in mountainous terrain.
- The helicopter has the capability to carry out precision attacks at standoff ranges and operate in hostile airspace with threats from the ground.
- The ability of the helicopters to transmit and receive the battlefield picture to and from the weapon systems makes them a lethal acquisition.

2. India starts voluntary disclosure scheme for persons flying non-compliant drones

What's in News?

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has asked all drone owners to voluntarily register their drones before January 31 2019.

Details:

- As per the rules framed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), all drones in India must be registered on the Digital Sky portal and must have a unique identification number.
- All drone operators must also have an Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP). Both came into effect from December 1, 2018.
- According to a DGCA official, there are a total of seven drone manufacturers registered with it, whereas there is no data is available for the number of drones registered.

Penalty:

- The penalty for non-registration would be a prison sentence of up to two years or a fine of 10 lakh.
- According to the rules, if a person operates a drone without registering it, he or she may be booked for endangering someone's life or for negligence with respect to machinery- both of which are crimes under the Indian penal code and carry a punishment of up to six months.
- The person can also face a penalty under the Aircraft Act, 1936, which provides for a punishment of up to two years and a fine of up to 10 lakh.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. In the name of self-defence

Context:

The killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani.

Background:

- The U.S. forces targeted and killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in drone strikes near Baghdad.
- Following the killing of General Soleimani, in a move aimed at deterring any reprisal attacks by Iran, the U.S. President had threatened to attack cultural sites in Iran in the event of any retaliatory attacks by Iran.
- Iran has retaliated by carrying out missile attacks on two facilities housing U.S. troops in Iraq.

Details:

- There are some important legal questions like whether the U.S. attack on Soleimani is legally justified or not and can cultural sites be attacked in any armed response.

UN charter:

- **Article 2(4) of the UN charter lays a general prohibition on the use of force.** The Article forbids any use of force by members **against the “territorial integrity or political independence” of a state.**
- The charter also provides for **two limited exceptions** to the use of force.
 - A state can exercise the use of force as a part of its **right to self-defence.**
 - The states are also allowed to use force if it is carried out with the **prior authorisation of the UN Security Council (UNSC)** and act in accordance to the Council’s prerogative **to maintain or restore international peace and security.**

The killing of Soleimani:

- The U.S. had no authorization from the UNSC.
- Notably, the **S. targeted Soleimani in Baghdad** and had no prior consent from Iraq as well. **This constitutes a violation of the territorial integrity of Iraq.**
- The U.S. can justify its use of force as being lawful only if it is able to show that it was an exercise of its right to self-defence.
- The U.S. administration claimed that Soleimani was planning attacks against U.S. diplomats and personnel in the region and the killing was thus an exercise of its right to **“anticipatory” self-defence.**

Self-defence:

- **Article 51 of the UN Charter** recognises the **right of every state to use force in self-defence, only “if an armed attack occurs”**.
- However, unlike an “armed attack”, which is an objective standard, an **“anticipated” armed attack is subjective** and remains controversial and contested.
- There are both legal and policy arguments against recognising a right to anticipatory self-defence. Given the subjectivity of the provision of “anticipated” armed attack, **it is vulnerable to abuse by states**.

Need for anticipatory self-defence:

- Given **the rise of terrorism and the advancement in weapons technology**, there might be the need for a right to anticipatory self-defence.

The threat to cultural sites:

- The U.S. president’s threat to target cultural sites in Iran was in **breach of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property during armed conflict**.
- In the context of the Islamic State (IS) invasion in Iraq and Syria and their acts of destruction of the cultural sites, the current U.S. administration had sponsored a **UNSC Council Resolution 2347** which declares that destruction of cultural property would constitute “war crimes”. Ironically, the threat by the U.S. president constitutes a violation of the same resolution.

Way forward:

- The objective of the general prohibition on the use of force as propounded in the U.N. charter is to **minimise the chances of unilateral use of force**. To ensure this objective a stricter and **restricted notion of the right to self-defence** is perhaps more appropriate.
- The **threat of an armed attack must be so imminent that the need to act in self-defence should be “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment of deliberation”**.
- To hold the countries responsible for their acts, the legality of any act of self-defence will depend on the **subsequent disclosure of facts to prove the imminence of a planned attack**. The country will have to justify that its action was proportional to the planned attack.
- In the current case, the U.S. administration will also have to justify its use of force in Iraqi territory and prove that Iraq was either unable or unwilling to prevent the imminent attack. The U.S. will also have to provide an explanation for its use of drones during peacetime, which resulted in collateral casualties.

2. Vote for status quo

Context:

Taiwan’s pro-democracy President Tsai Ing-wen’s re-election.

Background:

China-Taiwan Ties:

- China and Taiwan follow a **one-country two-systems policy**.
- While **Taiwan thrives on its market economy and democratic freedoms**, China has adopted the **model of state-sponsored capitalism and one-party rule**.

- The recent Hong Kong protests have only served to bring into sharp relief the consolidation of democracy and sovereignty in Taiwan. The protest in Hong Kong seems to be spreading to Taiwan too.

U.S.-China relations:

- There is the emergence of an assertive China on the global stage with the U.S. trying to challenge the rise of China.
- China has leveraged its **economic clout** to influence much of Africa and Latin America to **withhold recognition to Taiwan as a sovereign state**.
- The U.S. has repeatedly **used Taipei as a bargaining chip with China**. The U.S. has come out with **a legislation to promote Taipei relations**.

Concerns:

Straining of ties:

- Ms Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has always opposed Beijing's one-country two-systems policy and demands formal recognition to the **island nation's official name, the Republic of China**. These have been DPP's conditions for initiating dialogue with Beijing.
- Beijing has always defended the one-country two-systems policy and has threatened the possibility of **use of force to unify Taiwan with the mainland**.
- Given the re-election, the increased rhetoric by Taipei and Beijing is more likely now. The ruling party's win in Taiwan could **further strain ties with China and make the dispute with China more difficult to resolve**.

The U.S. angle:

- There are concerns that the U.S. is trying to leverage the situation by its undue interference in China and Taiwan relations. This would only **complicate the delicate balance of relations between the two**.

Way forward:

- **A constructive and democratic international response** would be for the big powers to desist from exploiting the situation to promote their own interests. They should aid the dialogue between the two to ensure there is a solution to the dispute.
- China and Taiwan should work towards the establishment of a **system built on the mutual interest on either side** to maintain the operation of market forces.

3. Reshaping the Gulf

Context:

Heightened fears of war in West Asia.

Concerns:

- The tensions between the US and Iran peaked following the killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, in a drone attack in Iraq and have heightened the **fears of war in West Asia**.

Regional geopolitics:

- If **Iran has regional proxies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon**, the **US has strong allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia in the region**, in addition to its many bases and carrier forces. The U.S. Iran face-off would affect the whole **West Asian region**.
- An armed confrontation between Iran and the US would only **deepen the faultlines between the Shias, Sunnis and Kurds and worsen the fragility in Iraq and West Asia**.

World geopolitics:

- **Russia and China have been supportive of Iran**. Russia condemned the US attack as a violation of international norms and China has called it dangerous military adventurism.
- China remains Iran's biggest oil market, an arms supplier and a top trade partner. Iran and Russia share similar interests in Syria.
- Pakistan would more likely gravitate towards any emerging grouping between Russia, China and Iran.
- Russia, China and Iran have come together for a four-day trilateral naval exercise in the Gulf of Oman, intending to send a strong message to the US that Iran was not isolated.
- This development is concerning given that it would only lead to the **formation of Power blocs in the region and world**.

Indian Concerns:

- **Given India shares a good relation with both U.S. and Iran and the importance of the bilateral relations, India cannot afford to take sides**.
- India- U.S. ties have only strengthened over time with India moving closer towards the U.S. as a strategic partner.
- **Energy supplies and the safety and security of its vast diaspora in the Gulf** are of utmost importance to India. An increase in one dollar per barrel can result in a magnified surge in **India's import bill** by about \$1.6 billion.
- **India houses a substantial Shia population**, with sympathy for Iran.

Details:

- The U.S. attack on General Soleimani was followed by retaliatory missile attacks by Iran on U.S. bases in Iraq. Iraq claimed that it had undertaken the missile attacks as part of its proportionate measures in self-defence.

Efforts towards De-escalation:

- Iran despite having a range of options at its disposal, stopped at retaliatory strikes on US bases in Iraq.
- The U.S. has decided against further attacks claiming that the Iran missile attacks had not caused any American casualties.
- With both **Iran and U.S. not seeking an escalation**, the chances of war have diminished. This is a good development not only for the countries concerned but also the west Asian region and the world at large.

Nuclear weapon:

- For the U.S. the development of Nuclear weapon by Iran is a major concern.
- **Iran** when it publicly declared its intention to walk away from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in the aftermath of Soleimani's killing, it was careful to **reassure the international community of its continued commitment to the NPT and IAEA inspections**.

Way forward:

Iran-Saudi Arabia relations:

- There has been a historical rivalry between the two countries for leadership in the Islamic world. There have been drone attacks on two Aramco oil facilities in September 2019 which was on blamed Iran.
- **Saudi Arabia has been trying for a military victory in Yemen.** Given Iran's influence in Yemen, Saudi Arabia may be willing to explore a back channel deal with Iran that permits a face-saving retreat for it from Yemen.

Regional security:

- Proposals for regional security like **Iran's Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE)**, the **US's International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC)** and Russia's proposal for collective security in the Persian Gulf need renewed attention.

India's role:

- Given **India's goodwill in the region and the large stakes in the extended neighbourhood**, it is in India's interest to **activate its regional diplomacy in order to de-escalate the tensions and encourage dialogue.**

For more information on this issue: [Click Here](#)

F. Tidbits

1. Slowing economy hitting payroll creation, says SBI report

What's in News?

"The slow economic growth is having a visible impact on payroll creation. In FY19, India had created 89.7 lakh new payrolls, as per Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) data. In FY20, as per current projections, this number could be at least 15.8 lakh lower," State Bank of India's (SBI) group chief economic adviser has said in a report.

- In the previous financial year, the country had created 89.7 lakh new payrolls, as per EPFO data.
- The EPFO data primarily covers low-paid jobs as the salary is capped at 15,000 per month.
- Government jobs and private jobs are not within its ambit as such data had moved to the National Pension System (NPS) beginning 2004.
- Even in the NPS category, State and central governments are [expected] to create close to 39,000 jobs less in FY20, as per current trends. Hence, the number of new payrolls created in FY20 could be at least 16 lakh lower than in FY19.
- The country's growth rate is expected to fall to an 11-year low of 5% for the current financial year, the government said last week.
- The SBI report noted that the extent of formalization had declined steadily and is now currently at 9.5% of overall payroll creation versus 11% in FY19. Hence Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections may stay below the Rs. 1.1 lakh crore per month mark the Centre is hoping to exceed.
- The prospect of lower payroll creation in government shows it was not recruiting afresh in lieu of retiring staff, the report added.

2. Railways invites RFQ from private train operators

What's in News?

Indian Railways has invited interested parties to submit a Request for Qualification (RFQ) document for selection of private parties to operate 150 passenger trains on 100 routes.

Details:

- As per the draft proposal, the Ministry has grouped routes into 12 clusters that are to be operated through Public Private Partnership (PPP) on design, build, finance and operate basis, with a concession period of 35 years.
- Railways will adopt a 2-stage bidding process for selecting bidders. The first stage involves qualification.
- Short-listed applicants will be eligible to take part in the second stage comprising Request for Proposals.
 - Each bidder is entitled to bid for a maximum of three clusters.
 - Selection would be based on highest revenue share.
 - The project work broadly includes designing, procurement, financing and operation and maintenance of passenger trains comprising a minimum of 16 coaches with the right to collect market-linked fares.
- Mumbai-New Delhi, Chennai-Okhla, Howrah-Chennai, New Delhi-Howrah, Shalimar-Pune and New Delhi-Patna are some of the routes on which private trains will operate.

3. Five countries to discuss action against Iran

What's in News?

176 people on board Ukrainian International Airlines died in the crash, minutes after the plane took off from Tehran airport. After days of denials, Iran said that its military had shot down the plane in a “disastrous mistake”. Iran defended its actions stating that the plane was downed as it flew near a sensitive military base during a time of heightened tensions.

- Five nations whose citizens died when an airliner was shot down by Iran will meet in London on to discuss possible legal action, Ukraine's Foreign Minister has said.
- Many on board were Iranians with dual citizenship.

G. Prelims Facts

1. Lava gushes from Philippine volcano as ash spreads to Manila

What's in News?

A volcano near Manila spewed a massive cloud of ash that drifted across the Philippine. Authorities said there was a risk that an eruption could cause a tsunami in the lake.

- Taal is one of the world's smallest active volcanoes.
- It is the second most active volcano in the Philippines.
- The lake partially fills Taal Caldera, which was formed by prehistoric eruptions.
- The volcano has had several violent eruptions in the past, causing loss of life on the island and the populated areas surrounding the lake, with the death toll estimated at about 6,000. Because of its proximity to populated areas and its eruptive history, the volcano was designated a Decade Volcano, worthy of close study to prevent future natural disasters.
- All volcanoes of the Philippines are part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- It sits in the middle of a lake about 70 km south of the centre of the capital, Manila.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Volcano Taal:

1. It is one of the world's smallest active volcanoes.
2. It lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire".

Which of the given statement/ s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Explanation:

Both the statements are correct. Taal is one of the world's smallest active volcanoes. It is the second most active volcano in the Philippines. It lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire".

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Input Tax Credit (ITC):

1. ITC is the tax that a business pays on a purchase that can be used to reduce the tax liability when it makes a sale.
2. ITC is not available for goods or services exclusively used for personal use.
3. Only a business under composition scheme can avail ITC.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Explanation:

The meaning of ITC can be easily understood with the words 'input' and 'tax credit'. Inputs are materials or services that a manufacturer purchase in order to manufacture his product or services which is his output. Tax credit means the tax a producer was able to reduce while paying his tax on output. Input tax credit means that when a manufacturer pays the tax on his output, he can deduct the tax he previously paid on the input he purchased. Here, while paying the tax on his output, he can deduct or take credit for the tax he paid while purchasing inputs.

- ITC can be claimed only for business purposes.
- ITC will not be available for goods or services exclusively used for: Personal use; Exempt supplies; Supplies for which ITC is specifically not available.
- A business under composition scheme cannot avail of input tax credit.

Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Raisina Dialogue:

1. The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference held bi-annually in India.
2. The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community. Every year, global leaders in policy, business, media and civil society are hosted in New Delhi to discuss cooperation on a wide range of pertinent international policy matters. The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of India. It is a multilateral conference held annually.

Q4. Consumer Price Index (CPI) is released by:

- a. Reserve Bank of India
- b. Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation
- c. Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- d. Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), Department of Agriculture and Co-operation

Answer: b

Explanation:

Consumer Price Index (CPI) is released by the Central Statistics Office of the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the backdrop of the killing of General Soleimani in a drone strike by the U.S., discuss the concerns being raised that the U.S. actions and its subsequent justification of self-defence are exploiting the loopholes in the UN charter. Suggest suitable safeguards in this regard. (10 marks, 150 words)
 2. Given the risks posed by deterioration of ties between Iran and the U.S. to the region and the world at large, suggest necessary steps to de-escalate the tensions. Discuss India's role in this regard. (10 marks, 150 words)
-

Read previous [CNA](#).