

12 Feb 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Quad meet focuses on Indo-Pacific ties

Syllabus: *Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.*

Prelims: QUAD

Mains: *Initiatives taken up by Quad grouping; Significance of the grouping for India.*

Context: The Quad held their fourth Quad Ministerial meeting in Melbourne.

About the Fourth Quad Ministerial meeting:

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ([Quad](#)) is a partnership of Australia, India, Japan and the US.
- Australia hosted India, Japan and the United States for the fourth Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Melbourne.
- This is the first time Quad Foreign Ministers are meeting since the two Quad Summits.

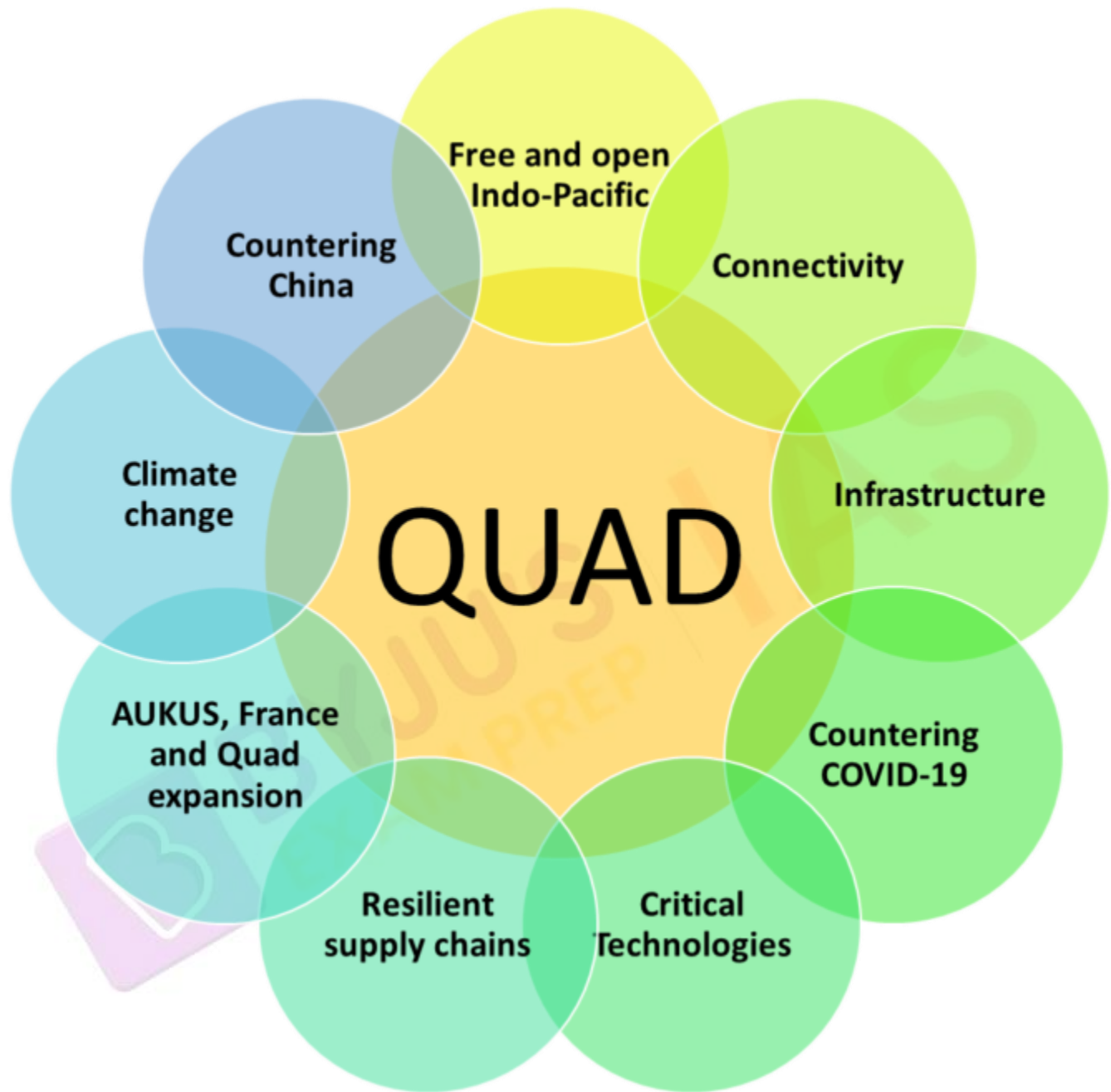
Highlights of fourth Quad Ministerial meeting:

- Quad reiterated condemnation of terrorist attacks in India, including the 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks.
- Quad resolved to speed up the delivery of more than a billion COVID-19 vaccines to be manufactured in India.
- The Quad reaffirmed a commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific in which states strive to protect the interests of their people, free from coercion.
- Quad aims to hold a special meeting on climate change in 2022 and to step up efforts to ensure maritime security in the region.

What is the Significance of the 4th Quad Ministerial meeting for India?

- **Technology:**
 - India will be benefited from Quad's work on 5G and Vendor Diversification to maintain a diverse, open and interoperable telecommunication ecosystem.
- **Climate Change:**
 - The Quad WG on Climate Change is working on strengthening climate actions through mitigation, adaptation, resilience, technology, capacity-building, and climate finance. This will help India on three pillars-
 - Climate Ambition;
 - Clean Energy Innovation and Deployment;
 - Adaptation, Resilience and Preparedness
 - One of the most promising areas Quad is working on is the Quad Green Shipping Network. It will be significant in greening and decarbonizing the shipping value chain.

- Quad is also looking at establishing two to three Quad low-emission or zero-emission shipping corridors by 2030.



- **Infrastructure:**
 - Quad partners have provided more than USD 48 billion in official finance for infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - The Quad Infrastructure Coordination Group (QICG) announced by the Leaders is meeting regularly to share assessments of regional infrastructure.
- **Space:**

- The Quad Space Working Group is discussing the exchange of Earth observation satellite data and analysis to help Indo-Pacific countries for the sustainable use of outer space.
- **Cyber Security:**
 - The Quad Senior Cyber Officials group is exchanging best practices that will benefit India to secure critical cyber infrastructure and build resilience against cyber threats.
- **Disaster Management:**
 - With the High availability disaster recovery (HADR), Quad countries have responded to many natural disasters in the region.
 - India has proposed strengthening cooperation in this area to deliver timely and effective relief and assistance during disasters such as the recent volcano in Tonga and the [COVID pandemic](#).
- **Education:**
 - India has proposed Quad cooperation in the field of higher education to discuss opportunities for student exchanges, joint research.
 - The Quad STEM Fellowships provide 25 graduate/doctoral students from STEM fields from each Quad country with scholarships to study in leading US universities.

Concerns with Quad:

- Quad countries are divided in their stand on global developments such as [Russia-NATO tensions over Ukraine](#) and sanctions against Myanmar's military.
- India is concerned with respect to the policy of national sanctions.
- India is "troubled" by the situation in Myanmar post-coup which is guided by cross-border concerns.

Nut Graf

Quad is betting on increased cooperation among the member countries and a peaceful Indo-Pacific region amid global challenges emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese interventions and the Ukraine crisis.

2. India, Australia edge closer to final 'interim deal'

Syllabus: Bilateral agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Prelims: FTAs, Early Harvest Agreement, Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)

Mains: Significance of Early Harvest Agreement and FTAs for India.

Context:

India and Australia will have the final "interim agreement" ready in 30 days.

Background:

- India and Australia expressed confidence about signing a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement — Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- The countries argued that the "interim agreement" is an "early harvest deal" aimed at boosting bilateral trade before the completion of the negotiations on the final CECA.

- Indian farmers' unions have been keeping a close watch on the ongoing negotiations about the interim agreement ahead of the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- Australia assured an understanding of India's economic and socio-political concerns regarding dairy and agricultural items.

Also read: [India – Australia Relations](#)

Significant Trade Agreements:

- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):** The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) is a free trade agreement between two or more countries to strengthen bilateral trade.
- **Early Harvest Agreement:** Early harvest agreements are used to open up bilateral trade between two countries on a restricted list of goods and services, primarily as a frontrunner to clinching a more comprehensive FTA. **Know more about the [Early Harvest Agreement](#) in CNA dated Nov 28, 2021.**
- **Free Trade Agreement (FTAs):** A free trade agreement (FTA) is a treaty between two or more countries that aims to facilitate trade and eliminate trade barriers. **Know more about the [FTAs](#) in CNA dated Feb 3, 2022.**

Nut Graf

The India-Australia interim agreement will mark the beginning of a phase of FTAs that India is aiming to achieve in the coming year. India is in talks to conclude similar FTAs and early harvest deals with Israel, Canada, the European Union and the United Arab Emirates.

Category: **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

1. Do not spread things to a larger level, SC observes on hijab row

Syllabus: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims: Fundamental Rights on Freedom of Religion

Mains: Religious practices impacting the education system in the state

Context:

In the context of the hijab ban in Karnataka classrooms, the [Supreme Court](#) said it will protect the constitutional rights of petitioners and intervene at an “appropriate time”.

Background:

- The Karnataka High Court uploaded the interim order passed in the petitions challenging the Hijab ban in colleges in the state.
- In a related development, some of the petitioners before the High Court have approached the Supreme Court challenging the interim order. They contend that it amounts to an effective suspension of their fundamental right to practice religion.
- The CJI said that the Supreme Court will consider the matter at the “appropriate time” as the High Court is already seized of the case.

- Know more about the Hijab Controversy: [CNA 07 Feb 2022](#)

Nut Graf

The Supreme Court should intervene in this matter which is becoming increasingly communal and political. It should come to a decision that doesn't violate any citizen's fundamental rights, and also keep this issue from spreading into different parts of the country.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

1. '133 drones sighted along Pak. border in 2 years'

Syllabus: Security challenges and their management in border areas

Prelims: India's Anti-drone System

Mains: Concerns with increased drone sightings for India

Context: Punjab government informed a Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs that drones have been sighted near the Pakistan border over 133 times in the last two years.

Drones: 'Drone' is the common name for an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) which includes a ground-based controller and a communication system.

Punjab Border with Pakistan:

- The total length of Punjab's border with Pakistan is 553 kilometres.
- The International Border with Pakistan is guarded by the Border Security Force (BSF).
 - BSF is a Central Armed Police Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

What are the concerns with increased drone sightings for India?

- **Drone Attacks:**
 - The major concern is drone attacks as India has seen drones dropping weapons, ammunition and drugs.
 - The BSF detected weapons dropped by a suspected Pakistan drone in Jammu.
 - In 2020, the BSF shot down a drone in Hiranagar, Jammu.
 - Lack of Effective Technology:
 - There is no effective anti-drone technology available in the country.
 - No Specific Drone Legislation:
 - Punjab has not drafted or articulated a separate police drone policy and specific area-based mechanisms for the detection and neutralization of threats of drones.

What are the Challenges of the Drone attack for India?

- Large borders: Larger areas like borders are a challenge to avoid drone attacks.
- Drone Swarms: There is the problem of swarm drones, where scores of drones overwhelm and confuse detection systems, resulting in some of the drones sneaking through.

- Loop-holes in the Laws: There are loopholes in the drone legislation with respect to implementation, training and cost which worsen the threat of drone attacks.
- Logistics Challenges: The major challenge before the law enforcement agencies for countering the drone threat is its detection, identification and safe neutralization.

India's Anti-drone System:

- Defense Research and Development Organization (**DRDO**) has now developed a counter-drone system for detection, deterrence and destruction of incoming drones.
- The newly developed counter-drone system will enable mitigation of the impact of drones posing a threat to national security.

Know more about the **Rising Drone Threat for India** in Sansad TV Perspective.

Anand Sharma Report on 'Police – Training, Modernisation, Reforms':

- The committee headed by Anand Sharma recommended that MHA create a Central pool of anti-drone technology to deal with the menace of illicit use of drones.
- It asked that participation of the private sector may be explored.
- It asked the MHA to coordinate with Ministries and States concerned to create a standard operating procedure for the steps to be taken in case of a drone attack.

Nut Graf

The increased drone sightings at Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir have become a critical threat to security, privacy and cyber-security in India. Building capabilities to deter, detect and neutralize such aerial threats with the help of anti-drone technology is an urgent requirement.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials**Category: SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT****1. Taking a byte out of cyber threats**

Syllabus: Basics of cyber security

Mains: Concerns with Emerging Cyber Threats and possible solutions

Context: This article examines the criticality of cyber attacks and solutions needed to implement.

What are Cyberthreats?

- A cyber or cybersecurity threat is a malicious act that includes threats like computer viruses, data breaches, and Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.
- A cyber threat damages data, steals data, or disrupts digital life in general.

Global Examples of Cyber Attacks:

- The advent of the Stuxnet Worm in 2010 resulted in large-scale damage to Iran's centrifuge capabilities.
- In 2012, data from Saudi Aramco Oil Company computers were wiped out by Iranian operatives by employing malware.
- The ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline in 2021 was the largest cyberattack on an oil infrastructure.

Indian Examples of Cyber Attacks:

- The data from an exam for the recruitment of police officers in 2019 in India was hacked which resulted in a leak of sensitive information of all the participants.
- In 2021, a huge leak of customer data was experienced by the famous pizza brand namely, Dominos, India.
- In 2021, the records of over 10 crore users were leaked from India-based digital payment company MobiKwik.

Concerns with Emerging Cyber Threats:

- **Wide Coverage:** Cyber threat is likely to be among concerns for both companies and governments across the globe.
- **Targeted Sectors:** Among the most targeted sectors in the coming period are likely to be: health care, education and research, communications and governments.
- **Health-care ransomware:** The ransomware attacks have led to longer stays in hospitals, apart from delays in procedures and tests, resulting in an increase in patient mortality.
- **Ransomware as a Service (RaaS):** Talk of the emergence of 'Ransomware as a Service' (RaaS) — a business model for ransomware developers — is no mere idle threat.
- **Work From Home:** The huge security impact of working from home is likely to further accelerate the pace of cyberattacks.
- **Cloud Storage:** A tendency seen more recently to put everything on the Cloud could backfire, causing many security holes, challenges, misconfigurations and outages.
- **Dark Web:** The dark web is a subset of deep websites that can only be accessed by encryption software. The dark web is vulnerable to abuse by malicious actors as part of cyber threats.
- **Lack of Implementation:** Many companies fail to realize that inadequate corporate protection and defense could have huge external costs for national security.

Way Forward:

- To tackle the increasing cyber threats, preventive and reactive cyber security strategies are needed.
- There is a need for clarity to ensure protection from all-encompassing cyber attacks.

- Every enterprise should incorporate **Secure Access Service Edge (SASE)** to reduce the risk of cyberattacks.
- Cloud Access Security Broker (CASB) and Secure Web Gateway (SWG) – aimed at limiting the risks to users from web-based threats.
- The Zero Trust Model and Micro Segmentation as a means to limit cyberattacks can again be self-limiting.
- Nations and institutions should actively prepare for cyberattacks by prioritizing the defense of data.
- The law enforcement agencies would need to play a vital role in providing an effective defense against cyber attacks.
- There is a need to prioritize resilience through decentralized and dense networks, hybrid cloud structures, redundant applications and backup processes.

There is a need to prioritize building trust in systems and creating backup plans including 'strategic decisions about what should be online or digital and what needs to stay analogue or physical.

Nut Graf

In the Information Age, data is gold. Failure to build cybersecurity resilience will mean that the cycle of cyber attacks will continue to threaten the foundations of a democratic society.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Clearing the airways

Syllabus: Relating to growth, development and employment.

Mains: Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism and ways for Restoring Confidence in Tourism.

Context: _____

The Government has allowed fully vaccinated passengers from 82 countries to skip the mandatory quarantine period.

Impact of Pandemic on Indian Tourism:

- As per a report by the [UN World Tourism Organization](#), India was 96 per cent below its pre-pandemic numbers till June 2021.
- In 2019-2020, the tourism sector is estimated to have directly contributed 2.7 per cent to the GDP and 6.7 per cent to the employment of the country.
- Currently, India has air bubble agreements with 35 countries.



Source: Ibef.org

Know more about the [Travel Bubble](#).

Ways for Restoring Confidence in Tourism:

- Leveraging technology and applications for more convenient travel will help in further scaling up this traction.
- Bringing in additional such ideas to action may restore traveller confidence considerably.
- Technologically superior technology players can enter the market and offer customized solutions to the people involved in the travel and tourism industry.
- Firms with resources can help create a unified platform for the travel requirements of agents, as well as end consumers.
- Authorities should invest in educating the stakeholders, training service providers, and cautioning all travellers about safe practices to be followed.

Know more about the [Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Tourism & Hospitality Industry](#).

Conclusion:

While the revival of the tourism industry must be made into a prime concern for the GOI, it is also essential that post-COVID-19, the Indian tourism industry makes a move towards adopting a more sustainable, hygienic, and responsible form of tourism. The normalizing of air travel implies that the world must learn to prioritize equitable health care and improve hygiene and repair the social and economic remnants of the pre-pandemic period.

Nut Graf

The outbreak of the pandemic brought the entire world to a complete stand-still and created major disruptions in the lives of people globally. It also adversely affected Indian Tourism resulting in large scale job losses.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Navy's Milan to bring together 46 countries

Syllabus: GS3: Defense: Military Exercise

Prelims: Milan Exercise 2022

Context:

The Indian Navy will host the largest multilateral exercise, Milan 2022.

Milan Exercise 2022:

- **About Milan:** 'Milan' is a biennial multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy.
- **Background:**
 - The Milan exercise has been held since 1995 at Andaman and Nicobar Command.
 - For the first time, the exercise is being held in Visakhapatnam.
- **Participation:** It will see the participation of all major Navies including Quad countries, Russia and from West Asia amid tensions in Ukraine and developments in West Asia.
- **Theme:** The theme of the Milan exercise is 'Camaraderie–Cohesion–Collaboration'.
- **Aims and Objective:**
 - To promote collective responsibilities of maritime security for ensuring safe and secure seas.
 - To imbibe best practices and procedures and enable doctrinal learning in the maritime domain through professional interaction between friendly navies.

2. Habeas corpus plea by children of Pak. national

Syllabus: Polity and Governance: Constitution of India — Significant provisions and basic structure.

Prelims: Habeas corpus

Context:

The Supreme Court had decided to examine a habeas corpus plea made by the children of a Pakistan national who they believe has been unlawfully detained for seven years.

Habeas Corpus:

- Habeas Corpus literally means 'to have the body of'.
- It is an order issued by the court to a person who has detained another person, to produce the body of the latter before it.
- The court then examines the cause and legality of detention.
- Know more about [Habeas Corpus](#).

G. Tidbits

1. Will continue to support India's rise and regional leadership: U.S.

- The Biden administration announced its long-awaited Indo-Pacific strategy which focuses on building collective capacity to deal with challenges in the region.
- The policies include a focus on challenges from China and supporting its role as a net security provider in the region.
- The U.S. will “continue to support India’s rise and regional leadership,” working with India bilaterally and through groups on a range of issues.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Koalas:

1. It is an arboreal herbivorous marsupial native to Australia.
2. Its IUCN status is Critically Endangered.
3. Koalas are mostly nocturnal.

Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Koalas are arboreal (tree-dwelling) mammals found in higher densities where food trees are growing on more fertile soils and along watercourses. They are found in the wild in the southeast and eastern sides of Australia. **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- Its IUCN status is **Vulnerable (NOT Critically Endangered)**. **Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**
- Koalas are mostly active at night (nocturnal) and around dawn and dusk. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**

Q2. With respect to Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is calculated and published by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) every three months.
2. The CSO has revised the base year of the IIP from 2012 to 2016.

Options:

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both
- d. None

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index that indicates the performance of various industrial sectors of the Indian economy.
- It is calculated and published by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) **every month. Hence Statement 1 is not correct.**
- The previous base year was 2004 – 05. The new and current base year for IIP is 2011 – 12. **Hence Statement 2 is not correct.**

Q3. Which amongst the following statements is the best description of Exercise Milan?

- a. Naval exercise in the Indo-Pacific region by India, Japan and USA
- b. India, Thailand and Singapore annual trilateral exercise
- c. Naval exercise between India and Oman
- d. Multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy

Answer: d

Explanation:

- 'Milan' is a biennial multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy.
- It will see the participation of all major Navies including Quad countries, Russia and from West Asia amid tensions in Ukraine and developments in West Asia.
- **Hence, Option D is correct.**

Q4. River Sal flows through the state of

- a. Sikkim
- b. Manipur
- c. Goa
- d. Tripura

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Sal is an important river of South Goa.
- It rises near Verna and flows for 35 km parallel to the coast where it meets the sea at Betul.

Q5. In the context of India's preparation for Climate-smart Agriculture, consider the following statements:[PYQ 2021]

1. The 'Climate-Smart village' approach in India is a part of a project led by climate change, Agriculture and food security (CCAFS), an international research programme.
2. The project of CCAFS is carried out under Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) headquartered in France.
3. The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India is one of the CGIAR'S research centres.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Climate-Smart Village project in India is a program of CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). **Hence Statement 1 is correct.**
- CCFAS is carried out under CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research) which is a global partnership that unites international organizations engaged in research about food security. **Hence Statement 2 is correct.**
- International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political public international research organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. **Hence Statement 3 is correct.**

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The essential practices test is antithetical to the individualistic conception of rights. Analyze. (10 Marks, 150 Words)[GS-2, Policy and Government]
2. Explain the meaning of Cyber Attack with relevant examples and discuss Cyber security solutions to reduce the risk of such attacks. (15 Marks, 250 Words)[GS-3, Cyber Security]