

08 Jul 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

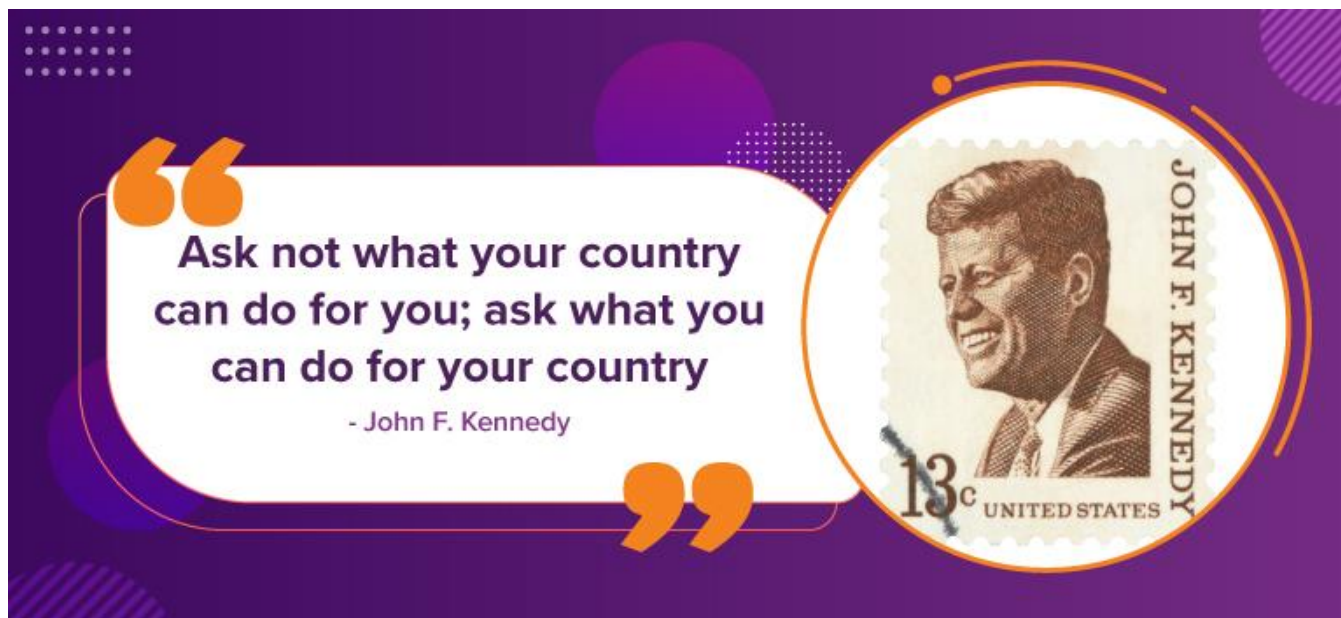


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Category: ECONOMY

1. The proposal for an India-specific norm for assessing vehicular safety in collision

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth and development.

Mains: Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP) and its significance to the automobile sector.

Context

The Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways approved a Draft of general statutory rules (GSR) to introduce the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP).

Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP)

- The New Car Assessment Program would assess vehicles and their performance in crash tests and accord star rating
- Bharat-NCAP aims:
 - To improve the export-worthiness of vehicles manufactured in India
 - Bring about a sense of competition on safety parameters among the manufacturers
 - Help in instilling consumer confidence in their safety.

Need for a New Car Assessment Program (NCAP)

- New Car Assessment Programs (NCAPs) give highly dependable details about car safety standards as it assesses the vehicle based on certain common criteria and procedures.

- These criteria and conditions are different from country-specific vehicle standards as the country-specific norms are limited to assessing the vehicle's roadworthiness and do not generally cover the safety aspect during a collision.
- Global NCAP acts as a platform for cooperation among NCPs worldwide and promotes the universal adoption of motor vehicle safety standards.
- NCAP helps in making vehicles attractive in the international markets.

The process of evaluation of vehicles

- The Bharat New Car Assessment Programs would rate the vehicles between one and five stars after assessing key parameters like Adult Occupant Protection (AOP), Child Occupant Protection (COP) and Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).
- The procedure of the programme includes the study of a frontal impact, side impact and the possibility of a door opening after a crash and the magnitude of the impact is studied with the help of dummies placed inside the cars.
- The car is made to crash into a deformable barrier made of aluminium which mimics an opposing force similar to that in a car crash situation, with about 40% overlap.
- Bharat NCAP would conduct its frontal offset crash test at 64 kmph instead of the existing 56 kmph test.
 - Offset crash refers to a collision where just one side of the vehicle's front (not the full width) hits the barrier.
- After the crash test, the dummy placed in the car would be assessed for any injuries in the head, neck, chest, knee, pelvis, lower leg, foot and ankle regions.
 - In the case of child protection, the NCAP would evaluate the impact on a child restraint system (CRS) and airbag safety.
- Bharat NCAP accords higher ratings to vehicles that have a permanent warning label on frontal airbags and the vehicles must be equipped with manual switches to disable airbags that should not be within the child's reach.

The impact of Bharat NCAP on road safety and the automobile industry

- It promotes a "zero tolerance" approach towards road accidents and helps in reducing about 50% of road accidents by 2025.
- Bharat NCAP is also said to play an important role in boosting the automobile industry in India and help make India a global hub for automobile manufacturing.
- Industry experts opine that the NCAP regime will improve the safety features of the vehicles but the prices of the vehicles will be increased.
 - In the market, customers may prefer a car with reduced safety features if the car is affordable to them.
 - The NCAP regime might impact this price sensitive lower compact segment

- Bharat NCAP will also play a crucial role in the domestic automotive industry in terms of advancing the product, technology and safety features.

Nut graf: *Bharat NCAP is expected to be a significant step in the Indian automobile sector as it not just ensures structural safety of the passengers but also boosts the export-worthiness of vehicles made in India which is in line with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.*

Category: ENVIRONMENT

1. Monsoon getting hotter than summer: study

Syllabus: *Environmental pollution and degradation*

Mains: *Details about the increasing temperature in India and its consequences*

Context

This article talks about the increasing temperature in the monsoon months in India.

Increase in the temperature in India

- According to a study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the monsoon months of June to September are witnessing an increase in the temperature.
- The average temperature during the monsoon season across the country is about 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer temperatures (March to May) when compared from 1951 to 1980.
- In the decade 2012-2021, this anomaly has increased to 0.4 degrees Celsius.
- As per the [India Meteorological Department's \(IMD\)](#) data, the country's average temperature has increased by about 0.62 degrees Celsius between 1901 to 2020.
- CSE study highlights that the summer temperatures are increasing slower than the monsoon, post-monsoon (October-December) and winter (January and February) temperatures.
- India experienced record level pre-monsoon temperatures in northern and western regions due to the absence of rain.
- The average daily maximum temperature for March and April for Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand was seen to be about 4 degrees Celsius more than the normal temperatures. (compared to its baseline of 1981-2010).

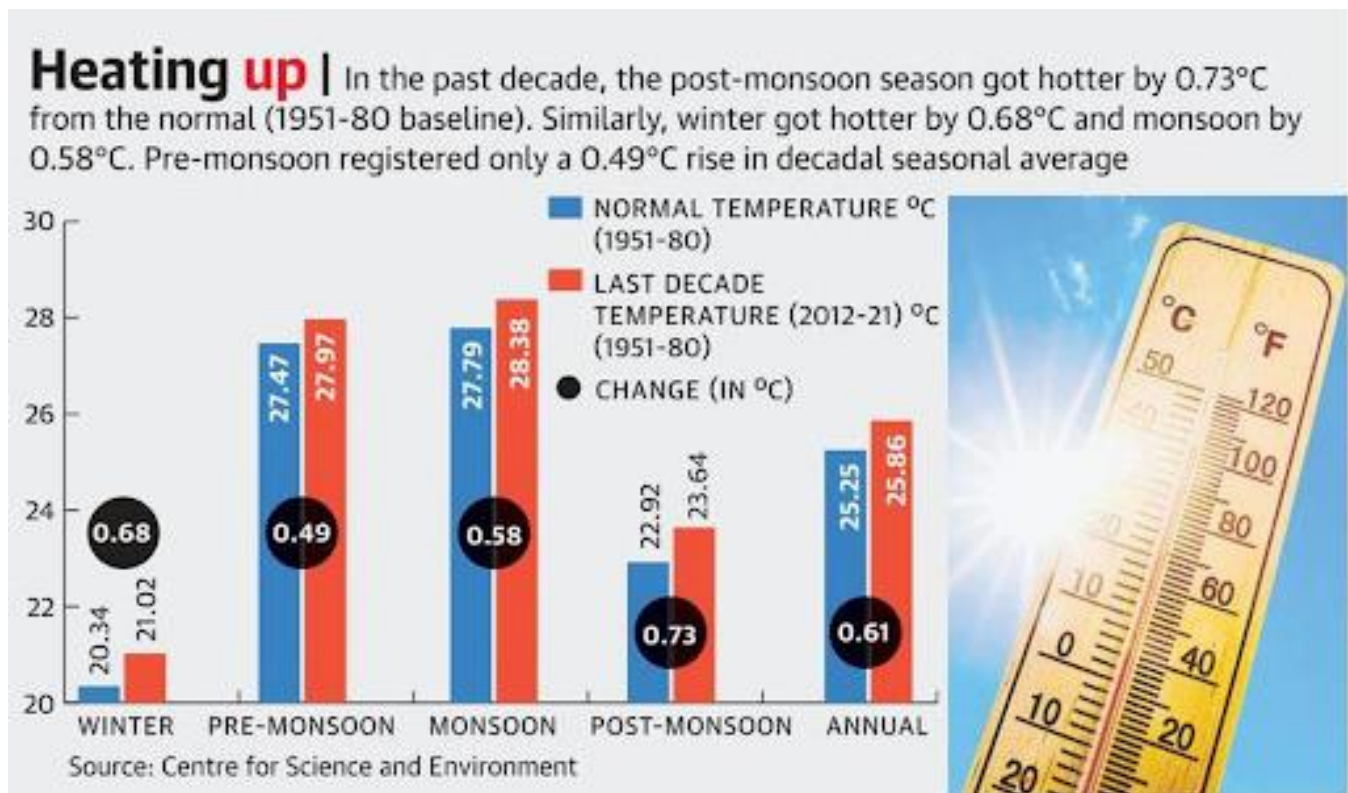


Image source: The Hindu

Fatalities due to increased temperature

- Between 2015 and 2020, about 2,137 deaths were reported due to heat stroke in the northwestern States of India.
- In the same period, nearly 2,444 deaths were reported due to excessive environmental heat in the southern peninsula region.
 - Andhra Pradesh alone accounted for nearly 50% of the reported casualties.
- Further, most of such deaths have been reported among working age men (30-60 years).

Know more about - [Heat waves](#)

Nut graf: As the rise in the temperature triggered due to climate change has severe geographical, social and economical implications on the country and its population, it is important to study the changes in the temperature patterns across the country and undertake appropriate mitigation measures.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. A community and a health issue of concern

Syllabus: Vulnerable sections of the population and mechanisms constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Prelims: Various judgements regarding the rights of LGBTQIA++ community in India

Mains: the rights of the LGBTQIA++ community members in India, key challenges faced by them and various recommendations.

Context

This article discusses various challenges faced by LGBTQIA++ communities in India.

LGBTQIA++ communities

- The LGBTQIA+ community is a diverse group with varying sexual orientations and gender identities which includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other identities individuals.

Evolution of LGBTQIA++ rights in India

- **Naz Foundation v/s Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009) judgement:** the Delhi High Court said that [Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code](#) and other legal restrictions on adult, consensual, and non-commercial same-sex conduct is a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India.
- **Suresh Kumar Koushal v/s Naz foundation (2013):** in this judgement, the Supreme Court overruled the 2009 Delhi High court ruling and held Section 377 of IPC legal.
- **National Legal Services Authority v/s Union of India case (2014):** this judgement is considered to be a milestone as the SC recognised transgender individuals as the “third gender”.
 - The apex court further held that the fundamental rights granted under the Constitution will be equally applicable to them, and gave them the right to self-identification of their gender as male, female or third gender.
 - The court directed the Union and State Governments to introduce various social welfare schemes to the community and treat them as socially and economically backward classes thereby extending reservations to them in educational institutions and for public appointments.

- **Navtej Singh Johar v, Union of India (2018) judgement:** in this landmark judgement, the Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality by ruling that Section 377's application to acts of homosexuality between consenting adults was unconstitutional.

Key challenges faced by the members of LGBTQIA++ communities in India

- **Social stigma:** The individuals of the community often experience life-long dissonance from the family members, deep-rooted stigma, discrimination and abuse.
 - This causes distress, self-hate and suffering to these individuals.
- **Mental illness:** Reports suggest that LGBTQIA++ individuals suffer about 1.75 times more anxiety and depression compared to the rest of society.
 - Further, individuals in the transgender community suffer from nearly 2.4 times higher anxiety and depression.
 - This is mainly because society marginalises these individuals irrespective of their accomplishments.
- **Inadequate health services:** A study by the Raahat Project points out that a significant number of LGBT individuals preferred to pay and seek help in private hospitals/clinics rather than availing government healthcare facilities due to the fear of harassment and stigma.
 - Also, many psychiatrists in the country still consider diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as a disorder and they prescribe "correctional therapies".

Way forward

- **Spread awareness** - It is important to pursue country wide awareness and capacity building campaigns to bring about a behaviour change among these individuals and a change in the attitude of the general public.
- **Comprehensive strategy** - there is a need to formulate a holistic healthcare strategy that includes aspects such as mental illness and mental health.
- **Community building** - also a key role in bettering the mental health of LGBTQIA++ members.
- **Multiple stakeholder approach** - all the stakeholders which include educational institutions, communities, healthcare professionals, mental health experts, police, etc. must be consulted before undertaking any important interventions.

***Nut graf:** Despite the rapid transformation of LGBT rights in India in recent years, the members of the community still face serious challenges and remain at risk of life-long mental illnesses. There is an immediate need for interventions by the concerned authorities and organisations to address these challenges faced by LGBT individuals.*

Category: ECONOMY

1. Making sense of the rupee slump

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Mains: Factors responsible for the depreciation of the rupee and its impact on the economy

Background

For detailed background about the issue refer to the following article

[UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis dated 01 Jul 2022](#)

Factors responsible for the depreciation of the rupee

- **Massive outflow of Foreign Portfolio Investors**
 - The investors have withdrawn from emerging markets like India and opted for safe haven assets as the central bank of the US increased the interest rate to counter high inflation.
 - Investors have sold Indian equities worth about \$29.01 billion in 2022.

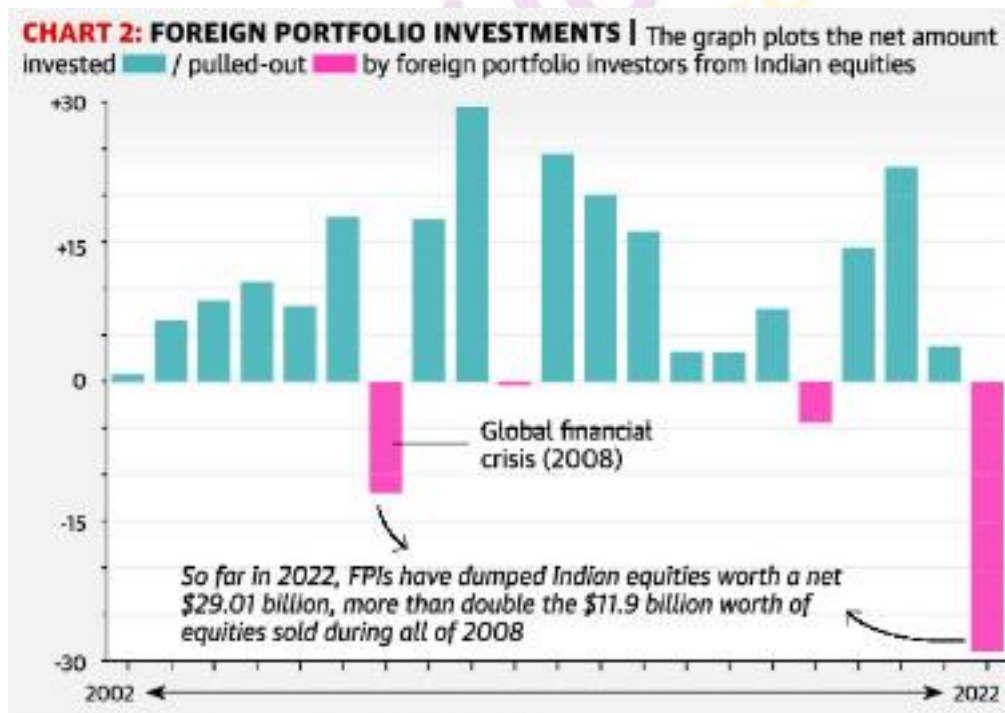


Image Source: The Hindu

- **Drop in the forex reserves of the country**

- Due to the increased demand for the dollar and corresponding excess supply of the rupee, the value of the rupee has depreciated.
- RBI has looked to sell dollars in the forex markets from its reserves to cushion the fall of the rupee and prevent excess volatility.
- This has resulted in a \$49 billion dent in the forex reserves of India.

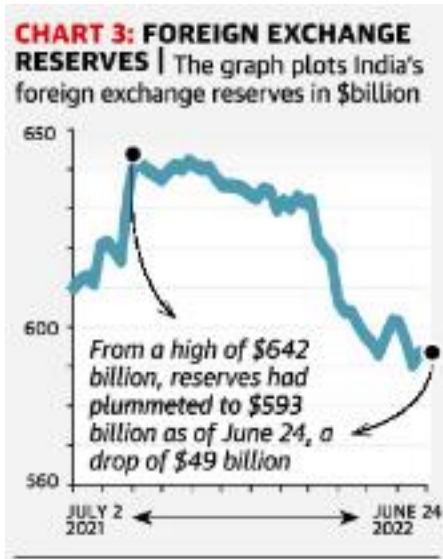


Image Source: The Hindu

- **Widening trade deficit**
 - In FY22, India incurred a current account deficit (CAD) of \$38.7 billion.
 - This means that India is spending more on its imports rather than exporting or earning through remittances, which again increases the demand for dollars.

CHART 4: CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT | The graph plots India's current account deficit every quarter between Q1FY20 and Q4FY22 in \$ billion

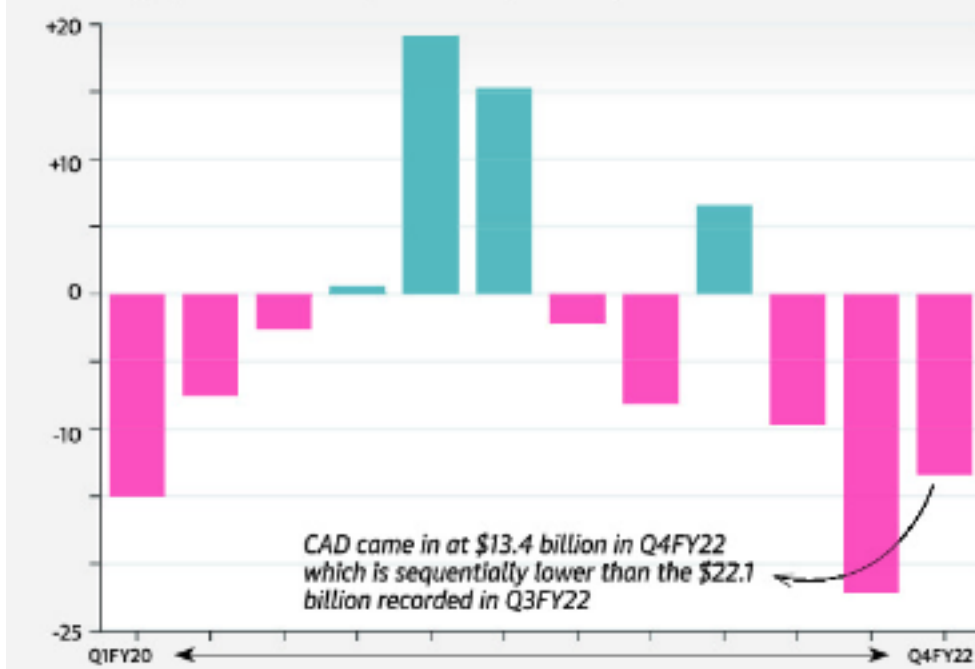


Image Source : The Hindu

- **Increased import of gold**

- In FY22, India imported gold worth \$46.17 billion, which is 33% more compared to FY21.
- This has put increased pressure on India's CAD

Nut graf: The factors responsible for the fall in the value of the rupee must be analysed and studied quickly and efforts must be undertaken to reverse this trend at the earliest as the depreciation of the rupee is detrimental to the overall health of the economy.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Dragon Fruit

Syllabus: GS-3; Agriculture; Marketing of agricultural produce

Prelims: About Dragon Fruit

Context

The Centre has decided to promote the cultivation of dragon fruit.

Dragon Fruit



Image Source: DownToEarth

- The fruit which is also known as Pitaya, Pitahaya, strawberry pear, noblewoman and queen of the night belongs to the Cactaceae family.
- The fruit is indigenous to America.
- Dragon fruit is cultivated extensively throughout tropical and subtropical regions of the world and in countries like Peru, Mexico, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, the United States, the Caribbean, Australia, etc.
- The fruit is also known as a “super fruit” for its health benefits.
 - The fruit is considered good for patients with diabetes as the fruit is low in calories and high in nutrients like iron, calcium, potassium and zinc.
- The low maintenance and high profitability of the fruit have attracted the farming community throughout India.
- The fruit can grow in diverse climatic conditions and requires slightly acidic soil.
- It is now being cultivated in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Gujarat and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

G. Tidbits

1. ‘RBI moves to stabilise rupee may face economic hurdles’

- RBI’s efforts to liberalise foreign exchange inflows are said to be unlikely to provide immediate support to the depreciation of the rupee due to high inflation and increasing current account deficit.

- RBI announced various measures such as allowing overseas investors to buy short-term corporate debt and opening more government securities under the fully accessible route in order to cushion the fall of rupee.
- The inflation is expected to pressurise RBI to raise rates, which will make the foreign investors employ a wait-and-watch approach before reinvesting in Indian markets.
- Experts opine that the measures to liberalise FX flows and boost capital account are helpful, but they may not have a material impact on flows

2. Trends show 27% dip in paddy sowing

- Factors like water scarcity in Punjab and increase in fertilizer prices are said to be the reasons for a 27% decrease in paddy sowing till July 1 during this kharif season 2022.
- Farmers' organisations have said that the situation is concerning as many farmers have decided not to sow paddy due to unavailability and high prices of essential fertilizers.
- The farmers have raised concerns about the inadequate supply and high prices of diammonium phosphate (DAP), muriate of potash (MOP) and nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) which are used in paddy cultivation.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with regards to the Central Information

Commission: (Level – Easy)

1. It is a constitutional body that came into being in 2005.
2. They are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Lok Sabha speaker and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.
3. The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are not eligible for reappointment.

Choose the incorrect code:

- a. 1 & 2 only
- b. 2 & 3 only
- c. 1 & 3 only
- d. All of the above

Answer: a

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is not correct**, Central Information Commission was established in 2005, as a **statutory body** under the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- **Statement 2 is not correct**, The commissioners are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of:
 - The **Prime Minister** as Chairperson
 - The **Leader of Opposition** in the Lok Sabha
 - A **Union Cabinet Minister** nominated by the Prime Minister.
- **Statement 3 is correct**, The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners are not eligible for reappointment.

Q2. 'Derecho', recently seen in the news can be best defined as which of the following natural phenomenon: (Level – Difficult)

- a. Storm
- b. Flashfloods
- c. Landslides
- d. Tsunamis

Answer: a

Explanation:

- A derecho is “a widespread, long-lived, straight-line **windstorm**”.
- Derecho is associated with a “band of rapidly moving showers or thunderstorms”.

Q3. The drug sabizabulin, that is showing positive results in severe Covid 19 patients, was initially created to fight against which of the following diseases? (Level – Difficult)

- a. Malaria
- b. AIDS
- c. Cancer
- d. Tuberculosis

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Sabizabulin is a drug which was initially developed to fight against **Cancer**.
- New reports have shown that Sabizabulin drug cuts risk of death in patients hospitalized with moderate to severe Covid-19.

Q4. Which of the following fruits was recently renamed to ‘Kamlam’ by the Gujarat government? (Level – Easy)

- a. Rambutan
- b. Dragon fruit
- c. Mangosteen
- d. Durian

Answer: b

Explanation:

- In 2021, Gujarat government renamed the dragon fruit as “**Kamalam**” as the fruit resembles a lotus.
- The fruit is also known as Pitaya, Pitahaya, strawberry pear, noblewoman and queen of the night belongs to the Cactaceae family.

Q5. “Leaf litter decomposes faster than in any other biome and as a result the soil surface is often almost bare. Apart from trees, the vegetation is largely composed of plant forms that reach up into the canopy vicariously, by climbing the trees or growing as epiphytes, rooted on the upper branches of trees.” This is the most likely description of (Level – Medium) PYQ (2021)

- a. Coniferous forest
- b. Dry deciduous forest
- c. Mangrove forest
- d. Tropical rain forest

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The hot and humid conditions make **tropical rainforests** an ideal environment for bacteria and other microorganisms. Because these organisms remain active throughout the year, they quickly decompose matter on the forest floor.
- In the tropical rainforest, plants grow so fast that they rapidly consume the nutrients from the decomposed leaf litter.

Hence **option d** is correct.

1. Despite the landmark judgments of the Supreme Court in the NALSA case and Navtej Singh Johar case, the LGBTQIA++ community continue to face several challenges in India. Critically examine. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II - Social Justice)
2. Evaluate the domestic and global factors pushing the fall of Indian rupee. How does this affect the Indian economy? (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III - Economy)

