

**SOCIAL ISSUE****Permanent Forum of People of African Descent**

Recently, the United Nations General Assembly has approved a resolution establishing a Permanent Forum of People of African Descent. The Forum focuses on the themes of recognition, justice and development.

**Key Points****About the Forum:**

- The forum will provide expert advice on addressing the challenges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.
- It will serve as “a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent” and their full inclusion in the societies where they live.
- It was given a series of mandates. They include helping to ensure “the full political, economic and social inclusion of people of African descent,” and providing recommendations on addressing racism to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council, the General Assembly’s main committees and UN agencies.
- **The forum will consist of 10 members:**
  1. five elected by the General Assembly from all regions.
  2. five appointed by the Human Rights Council following consultations with regional groups and organizations of people of African descent.
- The resolution calls for the forum’s first session to take place in 2022.

**People of African Descent:**

- **About:** There are around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent.
- **Issues:**
  1. Whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, they constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups.
  2. They still have limited access to quality education, health services, housing and social security.
  3. They all too often experience discrimination in their access to justice, and face alarmingly high rates of police violence, together with racial profiling.
  4. Furthermore, their degree of political participation is often low, both in voting and in occupying political positions.
- **Related Initiative:**
  1. **Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001):** It acknowledged that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, and continue to be victims of their consequences. It raised the visibility of them and contributed to a substantive advancement in the promotion and protection of their rights as a result of concrete actions taken by States, the United Nations, other international and regional bodies and civil society.
  2. In 2014, the General Assembly officially launched the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024).

**Racism****About:**

- Racism, also called racialism is the belief that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called “races”; that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioral features; and that some races are innately superior to others.
- The term is also applied to political, economic, or legal institutions and systems that engage in or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race or otherwise reinforce racial inequalities in wealth and income, education, health care, civil rights, and other areas.
  1. Xenophobia and Racism mostly overlap, but the stark difference is racism is discrimination based on physical characteristics whereas xenophobia is discrimination based on the perception that someone is foreign or originating from another community or nation. The word Xenophobia originates from the Greek word Xeno.
- Racial discrimination is there in the Indian society.

**Initiatives Against Racism:**

- Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001): Adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.
- Every year, 21st March, is observed as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) actions against racism through education, the sciences, culture, and communication offer an example of a way forward.

- Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination 2021: UNESCO's headquarters in Paris hosted it in partnership with the Republic of Korea.
- In January 2021, the World Economic Forum launched a coalition of organizations committed to improving racial and ethnic justice in the workplace.
- The 'Black Lives Matter' protests gained momentum in not only the United States but the whole world. People, as well as many governments across different countries, came forth against the prevalence of racial discrimination worldwide.

**Provisions Against Racial Discrimination in India:**

- Article 15, Article 16 and Article 29 of the Constitution of India prohibit discrimination on grounds of "race".
- Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) also refers to "race".
- India also ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 1968.

**Way Forward**

- Through new approaches to intercultural dialogue and learning, youth and communities can be equipped with skills to eradicate harmful stereotypes and foster tolerance.
- Recent and new manifestations of racism and discrimination call for renewed commitments to mobilise for equality. Racism will not be overcome with mere professions of good faith but must be combatted with anti-racist action. The use of new technologies and artificial intelligence in security raise the spectre of 'techno-racism', as facial recognition programmes can misidentify and target racialized communities.
- A global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination should be built first and foremost in the minds of women and men.

**POLITY**

**Supreme Court Rules on Future Retail Vs Amazon**

Recently, the Supreme Court upheld the enforcement of an order by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)'s emergency arbitrator that puts on hold the Future Group's deal with Reliance Industries Limited.

**Singapore International Arbitration Centre**

- It is a not-for-profit international arbitration organisation based in Singapore, which administers arbitrations under its own rules of arbitration and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Arbitration Rules.

**Key Points**

**Background:**

- In August 2020, Future Retail Limited (FRL) had announced that it would sell its retail and wholesale business to Reliance Retail.
- Before the deal could be executed, Amazon objected to it, alleging a breach of contract it had with Future Coupons (the promoter firm of Future Retail). Amazon said that its agreement with Future Coupons had given it a "call" option, which enabled it to exercise the option of acquiring all or part of Future Retail's shareholding in the company, within three to 10 years of the agreement.
- Subsequently, Amazon took Future Retail into Emergency Arbitration before the SIAC, where an emergency arbitrator barred the latter from proceeding with the deal. Emergency arbitration is a mechanism which "allows a disputing party to apply for urgent interim relief before an arbitration tribunal has been formally constituted".

**Significance of Supreme Court's Order:**

- Dismissed FRL's argument that the "Emergency Arbitrator is not an arbitral tribunal" under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996.
- It upheld the validity of the EA award. The judgment laid down that the award is "exactly like an order of an arbitral tribunal" contemplated under Section 17 of the 1996 Act. Hence, an award by the EA was like an order under Section 17(1) (interim measures ordered by an arbitral tribunal) of the Act. Section 17 of the Act prescribes the mechanism for parties to an arbitration to seek interim reliefs from the arbitral tribunal during the pendency of the arbitral proceedings.
- The EA orders were "an important step in aid of decongesting the civil courts and affording expeditious interim relief to the parties".
- The court pointed out a recommendation that a High-Level Committee constituted by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Justice B N Srikrishna (retired) to review the institutionalisation of the arbitration mechanism in India and look into the provisions of the Arbitration Act after the 2015 Amendment Act, gave in its 2017 report. It said that "given that international practice is in favour of enforcing emergency awards (Singapore, Hong Kong and the

United Kingdom all permit enforcement of emergency awards), it is time that India permitted the enforcement of emergency awards in all arbitral proceedings”.

- The judgment would serve as a reminder to the parties to carefully agree to the terms and conditions of the arbitration.
- No appeal would lie under Section 37 of the Arbitration Act against an order of enforcement of an Emergency Arbitrator’s order made under Section 17(2) of the Act. Section 37 of the Arbitration Act, prescribes for appeals against certain identified orders of the court and/or arbitral tribunal (as the case may be). However, Section 37 (unlike Section 34) of the Act is silent on the limitation period for filing an appeal.

**Arbitration**

**About:** It is a process in which disputes are resolved between the parties by appointing an independent third party who is an impartial and neutral person called arbitrator. Arbitrators hear both the parties before arriving at a solution to their dispute.

**Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2021:** It amends the Arbitration and Conciliation Act (A&C Act 1996) so as to (i) enable automatic stay on awards in certain cases and (ii) specify by regulations the qualifications, experience and norms for accreditation of arbitrators. A&C Act 1996 is an act to amend and consolidate a law related to domestic arbitration, international commercial arbitration and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards as also to define the law relating to conciliation and for matters connected therewith or incidental therewith.

**Features of the Act:**

- **Qualifications of Arbitrators:** It does away with the qualifications of the arbitrators under 8th Schedule of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 which specified that the arbitrator must be: An advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961 with 10 years of experience, or An officer of the Indian Legal Service.
- **Unconditional Stay on Awards:** If the Award is being given on the basis of a fraudulent agreement or corruption, then the court can grant an unconditional stay as long as an appeal under Section 34 of the arbitration law is pending.

**Benefits:**

- Would bring about parity among all the stakeholders in the arbitration process.
- Checking misuse of the provisions under Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 would save the taxpayers money by holding those accountable who siphoned off of them unlawfully.

**Drawbacks:**

- India already lags behind when it comes to the enforcement of international contracts and agreements. The Act can further hamper the spirit of Make in India campaign and deteriorate rankings in Ease of Doing Business Index.
- India aims to become a hub of domestic and international arbitration. Through the implementation of these legislative changes, resolution of commercial disputes could take longer duration now onwards.

**2. Sorry State of Tribunals**

Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) expressed displeasure against the Central government by asking whether it intends to “close” tribunals across the country by not filling up vacancies that have been pending for years.

**Key Points**

**About Tribunals:**

- Tribunal is a quasi-judicial institution that is set up to deal with problems such as resolving administrative or tax-related disputes.
- It performs a number of functions like adjudicating disputes, determining rights between contesting parties, making an administrative decision, reviewing an existing administrative decision and so forth.
- Tribunals were not part of the original constitution, it was incorporated in the Indian Constitution by 42nd Amendment Act, 1976.
- 2. Article 323-A deals with Administrative Tribunals.
- 3. Article 323-B deals with tribunals for other matters.
- The Tribunals were set up to reduce the workload of courts, to expedite decisions and to provide a forum which would be manned by lawyers and experts in the areas falling under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal.

**Issues Concerning Tribunals:**

- **Persisting Vacancies:** The SC noted that, the vacancies of 20 presiding officers, 110 judicial members and 111 technical members were pending across the country in various tribunals.

1. For example, in the National Green Tribunal, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Central Administrative Tribunal.
2. These persisting vacancies make them redundant.
  - Ignoring Recommendations: Recommendations of names by the selection committees led by sitting Supreme Court judges to fill up the vacancies have been largely ignored by the government.
  - Denying Right of the People to Access Justice: The Court pointed out that with tribunals defunct and High Courts having no jurisdiction over the areas of law wielded by tribunals, litigants have nowhere to go for justice.
  - Problem of Non-Uniformity: Added to this is the problem of non-uniformity across tribunals with respect to service conditions, tenure of members, varying nodal ministries in charge of different tribunals. These factors contribute significantly to malfunctioning in the managing and administration of tribunals.

**Related Development:**

- The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2021 has been introduced in Lok Sabha.
- The Bill dissolves certain existing appellate bodies and transfers their functions to other existing judicial bodies.
- The term of office for the Chairperson and members of a Tribunals will be four years, subject to an upper age limit of seventy years for the Chairperson, and sixty-seven years for other members.
- The Bill specifies that a person should be at least 50 years of age to be eligible for appointment as a Chairperson or member.

**Way Forward**

- Reforming the tribunals system in India may as well be one of the keys to remedy the age-old problem that still cripples the Indian judicial system – the problem of judicial delay and backlog.
- To regulate the matters of tribunals without compromising their independence is the establishment of the National Tribunals Commission (NTC).

**ECONOMY****Doing Away With Retrospective Taxation**

Recently, the Government of India has introduced The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Lok Sabha. The bill seeks to withdraw tax demands made using a 2012 retrospective legislation to tax the indirect transfer of Indian assets.

**Key Points****Background:**

- The retrospective tax law was passed in 2012 following a Supreme Court verdict in favour of US-based Vodafone. The Dutch arm of Vodafone Group bought a Cayman Islands-based company in 2007, which indirectly held a majority stake in Indian firm Hutchison Essar Ltd—later renamed Vodafone India—for \$11 billion.
- It was introduced after an amendment to the Finance Act enabled the tax department to impose retrospective capital gains tax for deals — involving the transfer of shares in foreign entities located in India — after 1962.
- While the amendment was aimed at penalising Vodafone, many other companies got caught in the crossfire and have created a host of problems for India over the years. It remains one of the most contentious amendments to the income tax law.
- Last year, India lost a case in international arbitral tribunal at The Hague against taxing Cairn Energy Plc and Cairn UK holdings Ltd on alleged capital gains the company made when in 2006 it reorganised its business in the country before listing the local unit.

**Proposed Changes in Bill:**

- Amendments to the Income-tax Act and Finance Act, 2012 to effectively state that no tax demand shall be raised for any indirect transfer of Indian assets if the transaction was undertaken before 28th May 2012.
- Tax raised for the indirect transfer of Indian assets before May 2012 would be "nullified on fulfillment of specified conditions" such as the withdrawal of pending litigation and an undertaking that no damages claims would be filed.
- It also proposes to refund the amount paid by companies facing trail in these cases without interest thereon.

**Significance of the Bill:**

- The bill marks a step in the direction of addressing the long-pending demand of foreign investors seeking the removal of retrospective tax for the sake of better tax clarity.

- This would help in establishing an investment-friendly business environment, which can increase economic activity and help raise more revenue over time for the government.
- This could help restore India's reputation and improve ease of doing business.

**Retrospective Taxation**

- It allows a country to pass a rule on taxing certain products, items or services and deals and charge companies from a time behind the date on which the law is passed.
- Countries use this route to correct any anomalies in their taxation policies that have, in the past, allowed companies to take advantage of such loopholes.
- Retrospective Taxation hurts companies that had knowingly or unknowingly interpreted the tax rules differently.
- Apart from India, many countries including the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Australia and Italy have retrospectively taxed companies.

**Capital Gain**

- This gain or profit comes under the category of 'income'.
  - Hence, the capital gain tax will be required to be paid for that amount in the year in which the transfer of the capital asset takes place. This is called the capital gains tax, which can be both short-term or long-term.
1. Long-term Capital Gains Tax: It is a levy on the profits from the sale of assets held for more than a year. The rates are 0%, 15%, or 20%, depending on the tax bracket.
  2. Short-term Capital Gains Tax: It applies to assets held for a year or less and is taxed as ordinary income.
- Capital gains can be reduced by deducting the capital losses that occur when a taxable asset is sold for less than the original purchase price. The total of capital gains minus any capital losses is known as the "net capital gains".
  - Capital assets are significant pieces of property such as homes, cars, investment properties, stocks, bonds, and even collectibles or art.

**Way Forward**

- India needs to craft meaningful and clear dispute resolution mechanisms in cross-border transactions to prevent the disputes from going to international courts, and save the cost and time expenditure.
- Improving the arbitration ecosystem will have a positive impact on the ease of doing business.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATION****Collaboration of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives on Security**

Recently in a Deputy National Security Adviser-level meeting hosted by Sri Lanka, India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have agreed to work on "four pillars" of security cooperation. The four areas covers marine security, human trafficking, counter-terrorism, and cyber security. The meeting which was held under the Colombo Security Conclave, saw Bangladesh, Seychelles and Mauritius participating in the role of observers.

**Key Points****Background:**

- Soon after the NSA (National Security Adviser) Trilateral meeting on Maritime Security in November 2020 in Colombo, this grouping was renamed as 'Colombo Security Conclave'. A secretariat has also been established in the capital city of Sri Lanka (Colombo).
- This Trilateral framework was established back in 2011.
- The aim of the establishment of the Conclave was to forge closer cooperation on maritime and security matters among the three Indian Ocean countries.
- The initiative, grounded in military and security collaboration, assumes significance in the region, in the wake of the current geostrategic dynamic that India shares with Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

**Current Geostrategic Dynamic:**

- **Sri Lanka:** Earlier this year, India aired security concerns over China being awarded development projects in an island off Sri Lanka's northern province, close to India's southern border.
- The Maldives's engagement with members of the India-United States-Japan-Australia grouping, known as the 'Quad', has been growing over the last year, especially in the area of defence cooperation.

**Highlights of the Latest Meeting:**

- The aim of the Meeting was to establish a maritime security mechanism for Indian Ocean Region (IOR) including the Bay of Bengal amid China's growing presence in the area.

- With the six countries attending the meeting, the focus areas were expanded and now it covers weapons and human trafficking, countering terrorism and violent extremism, protection of maritime environment, capacity building, transnational crimes including narcotics, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), etc.
- More cooperation through joint exercises of the navies and coast guards to further strengthen maritime safety and security in IOR.
- As has been reported earlier, there have been pollution accidents in the IOR. MV Xpress Pearl, MT New Diamond and MV Wakashio had accidents in the region and this impacted the marine environment. The members discussed ways of combating the pollution in the waters.
- Later this year, the three observer countries have been invited to be full members at the next NSA level meeting. This meeting will take place in Maldives.

**Significance:**

- The widening of thematic areas of cooperation and expansion of membership to Bangladesh, Mauritius and Seychelles indicate growing convergence among the Indian Ocean Region countries to work together in a common platform and to deepen the spheres of engagement under a regional framework.
- The coming together of the 6 Indian Ocean region countries in India's immediate neighbourhood on a common maritime and security platform is significant in a wider global context as well.
- It highlights India's desire to play a leading security role in the neighbourhood.

**Concerns:**

- The progress of the NSA-level trilateral meeting was affected when Delhi's ties with Male deteriorated under Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen.
- Subregional cooperation cannot be insulated from bilateral political relations and, hence, maintaining good bilateral relations with individual countries and responding to the growing aspirations of smaller neighbours would be crucial.
- Most of the smaller neighbours are more comfortable cooperating in non-traditional security than entering into hard military cooperation with India at the subregional level.

**Way Forward**

- A subregional approach to building security cooperation has been gaining salience in India's neighbourhood policy in recent years. The revival of the NSA-level trilateral India-Sri Lanka-Maldives dialogue on maritime security cooperation underscores this policy approach.
- Drawing a clear boundary of the subregion will continue to remain a challenge as cooperation will not always be driven by the proximity factor but also by the nature of the issue itself. Having said that, some clarity on the boundary issue may help in better framing the objectives of subregional security cooperation and avoid overlapping or duplication of activities.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM****Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**

Recently, the Prime Minister renamed the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sporting honour, after hockey wizard Major Dhyan Chand. This came a day after the Indian men's hockey team won the bronze medal in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics and hours after the women's team finished fourth.

**Key Points****About:**

- The Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award will hereby be called the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award. The now renamed Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award comes with a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh.
- Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award is the highest sporting award given by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four years. The award comprises a medallion, a certificate, and a cash prize of Rs 7.5 lakh.
- The Khel Ratna award was instituted in 1991-1992 and the first recipient was Chess legend Viswanathan Anand. Among the other winners were Leander Paes, Sachin Tendulkar, Dhanraj Pillay, Pullela Gopichand, Abhinav Bindra, Anju Bobby George, Mary Kom and Rani Rampal in 2020.

**Major Dhyan Chand:**

- Known as The Wizard, Major Dhyan Chand, a field hockey player, played international hockey from 1926 to 1949, scoring over 400 goals in his career.
- Dhyan Chand, born in Allahabad, was part of the Olympic team that won gold medals in 1928, 1932 and 1936.

- Apart from the Khel Ratna award, the country's highest award for lifetime achievement in sports is known as the Dhyan Chand Award. It was instituted in 2002.
- The National Stadium in New Delhi was also renamed as the Dhyan Chand National Stadium in 2002.
- The National Sports Day is observed every year across India on 29th August to mark the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand who was born on 29th August 1905. The President of India on this occasion honours the eminent athletes from various sports with the prestigious Khel Ratna, Arjuna Awards, Dronacharya Awards, and Dhyan Chand Award.

### DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Qns. Explain the policy challenges faced by India with respect to crude oil import and utilisation. (250 words)**

**Ans:**

#### Introduction

The spread and speed of the destruction caused by climate change presents the dilemma of how to redefine the supply-side priorities in the face of the imperatives of Aatmanirbharta (self Sufficiency) when about 85% fossil fuels are still imported.

#### Body

##### Issues Related to Crude Oil Management

- **Balancing Environment with Extraction:** Indian oil and gas industry leaders are faced with the twin challenge of responding to the changing environment, while sticking to the commitment of reduction of fossil fuel consumption.
- **Import Dependent:** The Indian economy is dependent on fossil fuels and there is no discernible end in sight to this dependence.
  1. India imports approximately 85% of its crude oil requirements and is exposed to the volatility of the international oil market.
  2. Moreover, a major chunk comes from the Middle East, predominantly Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran, which faces deep political and social fault lines and there is no knowing when our supply lines might get ruptured.
- **Issues with Exploration:** There have been few substantive commercial discoveries in recent years, in large part because the bulk of the reserves are in complex geological structures and harsh terrain (Himalayan foothills or deep waters offshore). They are difficult to find but even when found, the costs incurred are often so high that except in market conditions of high prices, the discovery is not commercially viable.
- **Structural Challenges:** In 2021 structural changes are brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Some are
  1. Refining operation and inventory management: Dual shock from both demand and supply
  2. Uncertain consumer behaviour- new normal- Micro marketing maybe a choice
  3. Pressure on margin shareholders' different expectation: price sensitivity and societal pressure.
  4. Limited crude price stability: Geo politics, cut in E&P investment, US sanctions etc.
  5. Talent and people health management: Mental health of people, keeping them energised

##### Way Forward

- **Rationalise Domestic Exploration:** India should scale up the harnessing of its indigenous petroleum resources by intensifying exploration, but resources indulged in it should be properly managed. As the exploration has its own challenges, after rationalisation the resources earmarked for exploration can be deployed more productively elsewhere.
- **Improving the Productivity and Efficiency:** Companies such as ONGC should allocate increasing resources to improving the productivity of its producing fields. The average oil recovery rate in India is around 28%. That is, for every 100 molecules discovered, only 28 are monetised.
  1. The global average is around 45% for fields of comparable geology.
  2. The recovery rate may be better today but if there is still a wide gap, the application of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) technology offers a relatively low-risk avenue for increasing domestic production.
- **Need for a Contingency Plan:** India currently has strategic reserves equivalent to 12 days of imports. The government has approved plans to increase this buffer to 25 days.
  1. By comparison, China, the EU, South Korea and Japan hold between 70-100 days of reserves.
  2. This should be done by constructing a cavern in Jamnagar, the entrepot that receives approximately 60% of our crude oil imports and is well connected through tanks and pipelines to the hinterland refineries.

- **Restructure and Reorganise Public Sector Petroleum Companies:**The upstream assets should be consolidated under ONGC (the upstream assets of BPCL, IOC, HPCL, and GAIL should pass onto ONGC) and GAIL should be changed into a public utility gas pipeline company. This restructuring will help cut back the “avoidable” costs of intra-public sector competition, reduce the inefficiencies of “sub scale” operations and provide a focused platform for balancing the shorter-term need to provide secure and affordable hydrocarbons with the medium and longer-term imperative of developing clean energy.
- **Search for Alternatives:**These companies should be encouraged to look beyond hydrocarbons to build a “Green energy” enterprise. Looking for other alternatives such as methanol-based economy and biomass.

**Conclusion**

Thus, all stakeholders should not work through the siloed prism of oil and natural gas. They should broaden the aperture and become the progenitor of the energy transition. The dilemma referred to in the opening sentence will be easier to resolve if priorities are developed within the framework of clean energy.

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. Consider the following pairs:

1. Remission: Reducing the period of sentence
2. Respite: Awarding a lesser sentence in place of originally awarded due to some special facts
3. Reprieve: Stay of the execution of sentence

Which of the given above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the ‘Deep Ocean Mission’:

1. It is an Indian initiative to undertake the deep ocean exploration.
2. It consists of manned and unmanned submersibles exploring the sea bed.
3. Its primary aim is to explore and extract polymetallic nodules.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q3. Consider the following statements about ‘Minervarya Pentali’:

1. It is endemic to the southern Western Ghats.
2. It is one of the basic ingredients used in South Indian Cuisine.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q4. ‘United for Biodiversity’ coalition, recently seen in news is the initiative of

- a. UN Environment
- b. World Bank
- c. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- d. European Commission**

Q5. Which of the following rivers flows into Caspian Sea.

1. Volga River
2. Danube River
3. Ural River

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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