

Q: Consider the following statement regarding AUKUS:

1. It was initially supposed to be a programme for developing a new class of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.
2. It looks at cooperation on artificial intelligence, undersea technologies, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic weaponry, and electronic and information warfare.
3. US announced, all Indo-Pacific countries could be part of AUKUS.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: a

Explanation:

- Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS was initially supposed to be a programme for developing a new class of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia. However, it has since expanded its scope to focus on security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- AUKUS also looks at cooperation on artificial intelligence, undersea technologies, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic weaponry, and electronic and information warfare.
- However, in September 2021, shortly after the AUKUS was announced, the US stated that no other country including India and Japan could be a part of the security pact.

Q: The Ministry of Education, Government of India has released All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021. Consider the following statement:

1. The total enrollment in higher education has decreased in 2020-21.
2. The Female enrolment has increased in 2019-20.
3. The enrolment of ST students has increased in 2020-21.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b

Explanation:

- The total enrollment in higher education has increased to nearly 4.14 crore in 2020-21 from 3.85 crore in 2019-20. Since 2014-15, there has been an increase of around 72 Lakh in the enrolment (21%).
- The Female enrolment has increased to 2.01 crore from 1.88 crore in 2019-20. There has been an increase of around 44 Lakh (28%) since 2014-15.
- The enrolment of SC students is 58.95 Lakh as compared to 56.57 Lakh in 2019-20 and 46.06 Lakh in 2014-15.
- The enrolment of ST students has increased to 24.1 Lakh in 2020-21 from 21.6 Lakh in 2019-20 and 16.41 Lakh in 2014-15.

Q: The Railways has initiated the construction of metal beam fencing for curbing the incidents of cattle runover in the busy Mumbai - Ahmedabad section. Consider the following statement:

1. The fencing is very robust as it consists of two W-beams.
2. A W-beam type stands for broad flanges, which are thicker, that aid in resisting bend stress.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) 1 and 2
- d) None of the above

Ans: c

Explanation:

- The Railways has initiated the construction of metal beam fencing for curbing the incidents of cattle runover in the busy Mumbai - Ahmedabad section.
- The fencing will be of guard rails made of metal.
- The fencing is very robust as it consists of two W-beams. A W-beam type stands for broad flanges, which are thicker, that aid in resisting bend stress.

- Such fencings are used in highways and expressways, especially accident-prone areas to provide protection to vehicles as well as pedestrians.

Q: Consider the following statement:

1. A Commanding Officer (CO) is a very coveted position in the Army.
2. In *Babita Puniya case*, the Supreme Court directed that women officers in the Army be granted PC as well as command postings in all services other than combat.
3. Supreme Court in *Lt. Col. Nitisha versus Union of India* held that the Army's selective evaluation process discriminated against and disproportionately affected women officers seeking PC.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: d

Explanation:

- A Commanding Officer (CO) is a very coveted position in the Army and therein lies its significance in it being opened up for women. In the past, women were recruited in various arms and services only as short service commissions, which meant they would have to leave service after 14 years, much short of the pensionable service of 20 years.
- In a landmark judgment in the *Babita Puniya case* in February 2020, the Supreme Court directed that women officers in the Army be granted PC as well as command postings in all services other than combat.
- Further, on March 25, 2021 the Supreme Court in *Lt. Col. Nitisha versus Union of India* held that the Army's selective evaluation process discriminated against and disproportionately affected women officers seeking PC.
- With reduction in the age profile of COs over the years, an officer now becomes a Colonel after about 16-18 years of service.

Q: Consider the following statement:

1. Tobacco taxes have not increased in India since the implementation of the GST over five years ago.
2. The current GST system for tobacco taxation in India has features that are hindering efforts in regulating consumption.
3. Tobacco use impacts GDP growth in a positive way.

Choose the correct option from the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 and 3
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: a

Explanation:

- Research in India and around the world supports the use of taxes to regulate tobacco consumption.
- However, in India, tobacco taxes have not increased significantly since the implementation of the Goods and Services Taxation (GST) over five years ago, making these products increasingly affordable, as recent studies show.
- Despite the government's goal of making India a \$5 trillion economy, the increasing affordability of tobacco poses a threat to this vision and could harm GDP growth.
- Tobacco use is also the cause for nearly 3,500 deaths in India every day, which impacts human capital and GDP growth in a negative way.
- The current GST system for tobacco taxation in India has features that are hindering efforts in regulating consumption. One issue is the overuse of ad valorem taxes, which are not effective in reducing consumption. Many countries use a specific or mixed tax system for harmful products.