



UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS 16-12-2023

1. Consider the following statements about Sovereign Gold Bonds:

1. The main purpose of this scheme is to monetize gold kept idle with the people of India.
2. The SGBs have to be purchased from the RBI like retail investments in Government bonds.
3. The interest earned under this scheme is not taxable under Income Tax Act, 1961.
4. These bonds can be used as collateral for loans.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) All three
- (D) None

Answer: (A)

Explanation:

The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme serves as an alternative avenue for individuals seeking ownership of gold. Its primary objective is to decrease the demand for physical gold, thereby regulating gold imports and optimizing resource utilization. Administered by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the scheme ensures transparency and fosters trust in gold ownership, providing individuals with a secure means to invest in gold without concerns about storage or safety. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.

Sovereign Gold Bonds are easily available to the public through post offices and banks, ensuring widespread access and convenient participation in the scheme. Hence statement 2 is incorrect. The scheme offers a fixed interest rate of 2.5% per annum, paid semi-annually. However, it's important to note that the interest earned on Gold Bonds is taxable under the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Hence statement 3 is incorrect.

Sovereign Gold Bonds offer dual benefits to investors. Firstly, bondholders can utilize them as collateral for obtaining loans. Additionally, individuals benefit from a capital gains tax exemption upon redeeming the bonds, whether at maturity or before, as redemption involves the issuer repurchasing the bond. Hence statement 4 is correct.



2. Which of the following statements about Neanderthals is correct?

- (A) Neanderthals are named after the Neandertal Valley in France where the first identified specimen was found.
- (B) It is a member of the genus Homo.
- (C) They were the first creatures to have an erect posture and walk bipedally.
- (D) Neanderthal DNA is not found in Modern Humans.

Answer: (B)

Explanation: Neanderthals derive their name from the Neandertal Valley, where the initial specimen was discovered. This valley, originally spelled Neanderthal in English and Neanderthaler in German until the 1901 spelling reform, is a modest, picturesque locale situated along the Düssel River in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Positioned approximately 12 km (7.5 mi) east of Düsseldorf, the capital city of North Rhine-Westphalia, this valley holds historical significance as the birthplace of the Neanderthal species. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.

Neanderthals, alternatively spelled as Neandertals, represent an extinct species or subspecies of ancient humans, formally classified as *Homo neanderthalensis* or *H. sapiens neanderthalensis*. They inhabited Eurasia until approximately 40,000 years in the past. Hence statement 2 is correct.

Homo erectus was the first creature to have an erect posture and walk bipedal. Its specimens are among the first recognizable members of the genus *Homo*. Hence statement 3 is incorrect. Modern humans who lived about 40,000 years ago have been found to have up to 6-9% Neanderthal DNA. They were adept at crafting tools, controlling fire, sheltering, making clothing, hunting large animals, eating plants and occasionally creating symbolic objects. Hence statement 4 is incorrect.

3. Consider the following statements about Maldives:

1. Maldives is an archipelagic state in the South-East Asia.
2. India and Maldives established diplomatic relations in 1996.
3. The Great Male connectivity project uses renewable energy to build a bridge and causeway link.

Which of the above statements are correct?



- (A) 1 and 2
- (B) 2 and 3
- (C) 3 only
- (D) 1 and 3

Answer: (C)

Explanation: The Maldives is an archipelagic state in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean. Positioned southwest of Sri Lanka and India, it is situated about 750 kilometers (470 miles; 400 nautical miles) from the mainland of the Asian continent. Hence statement 1 is incorrect.

Situated in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives is positioned to the south of India's Lakshadweep Islands. Diplomatic relations between the two nations were established shortly after Maldives gained independence from British rule in 1966, with India being among the first countries to recognize Maldives' independence. Over the years, India and Maldives have fostered strong ties in strategic, military, economic, and cultural domains. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.

The Greater Male Connectivity Project entails the construction of a 6.74 km-long bridge and causeway, connecting Male with the neighboring islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafushi. Notably, the project incorporates the use of renewable energy. Financed by a USD 100 million grant and a USD 400 million Line of Credit (LOC) from India, this initiative marks the largest project undertaken by India in the Maldives and stands as the most significant infrastructure endeavor in the Maldives to date. Hence statement 3 is correct.

4. Consider the following statements about National Food Security Act, 2013:

1. The legislation includes provisions for extending coverage to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population.
2. Pregnant and nursing mothers are eligible for maternity benefits of a minimum of Rs 6000, but the benefits are limited to two female children only.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 and 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



Answer: (A)

Explanation: The National Food Security Act, 2013, enacted on September 10, aims to ensure food and nutritional security throughout the human life cycle, providing access to quality food at affordable prices. The Act covers up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population under the Targeted Public Distribution System, benefiting about two-thirds of the total population. Hence statement 1 is correct.

Eligible individuals receive 5 kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidized prices. The Act prioritizes nutritional support for women and children, offering maternity benefits of at least Rs. 6,000 and nutritious meals for children up to 14 years. Pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals and maternity benefits of not less than Rs 6000. It is however restricted to two children only. Hence statement 2 is incorrect.

5. Consider the following water bodies:

1. Persian Gulf
2. Gulf of Aden
3. Arabian Sea
4. Strait of Hormuz
5. Red Sea

Which of the above water bodies form a boundary to Oman?

- (A) 1,2,3
(B) 1,3,4
(C) 2,4,5
(D) 2,3,4

Answer: (B)

Explanation:

Persian Gulf:

- Location: The Persian Gulf is to the northwest of Oman.
- Touches Oman: Yes, it touches the northern and northwestern parts of Oman.



Gulf of Aden:

- Location: The Gulf of Aden is to the southeast of Oman.
- Touches Oman: No, it does not touch Oman.

Arabian Sea:

- Location: The Arabian Sea is to the southwest of Oman.
- Touches Oman: Yes, it touches the southern and southwestern parts of Oman.

Strait of Hormuz:

- Location: The Strait of Hormuz is to the northeast of Oman.
- Touches Oman: Yes, it touches the northeastern part of Oman.

Red Sea:

- Location: The Red Sea is far to the northwest of Oman.
- Touches Oman: No, it does not touch Oman.