



## Daily Current Affairs Prelims Quiz 07-10-2024 (Online Prelims Test)

1) NEO Surveyor, sometimes seen in the news recently, is an initiative of?

- a. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- b. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
- c. Indian Space Research Organisation
- d. China National Space Administration

Answer : a

### NEO Surveyor

- Near-Earth Object (NEO) Surveyor is the *first space telescope specifically designed to hunt asteroids and comets* that may be potential hazards to Earth.
- It was built on the success of NASA's NEOWISE space telescope.
- It will be the first spacecraft created specifically to find large numbers of asteroids and comets that are potentially hazardous to Earth.
- It scans the solar system and the *sensitive infrared detectors* will track the most elusive near-Earth objects.
- Dark asteroids and comets don't reflect much visible light and they will glow in the infrared spectrum as they're heated by sunlight.
- It will be able to find asteroids that approach Earth from the direction of the Sun, as well as ones both leading and trailing our planet's orbit, where they are typically obscured by the glare of sunlight.
- Objectives of the NEO Surveyor include:
  - Finding near-Earth objects is required by law.
  - To find asteroids and comets that other space missions cannot, filling a critical gap in humanity's ability to detect potentially hazardous near-Earth objects.
  - In addition to planetary defence, scientists will use data from NEO Surveyor for studies of near-Earth objects to learn more about the evolution of the solar system.

2) Consider the following statements with respect to Venture Capital Funds

1. They are pooled investment funds that manage the money of investors who seek private equity stakes in start-ups and small- to medium-sized enterprises.
2. These investments are generally characterized as very low-risk and high-return opportunities.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

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

Answer : a

## Venture Capital Funds

*The Union government has recently stated that it has earmarked Rs 1,000 crore for venture fund to space start-ups, an indication of high priority that the government gives to the space sector.*

- Venture capital funds are pooled investment funds that invest in start-ups and small to medium-sized enterprises with high growth potential.
- These investments are characterized as high-risk/high-return opportunities. (**Statement 2 is incorrect**)
- **Accessibility** - Traditionally limited to professional venture capitalists.
- Now more accessible to accredited investors, but still largely out of reach for ordinary investors.
- **Key Characteristics** - Focus on early-stage investments.
- Target companies with high-risk/high-return profiles.
- Take an active role in portfolio companies, often holding board seats.
- **Investment Strategy** - Often make small bets on many start-ups.
- Hope for at least one high-growth success to offset potential losses.
- **Investment Stages:**
  1. Seed capital
  2. Early-stage capital
  3. Expansion-stage financing
- **Fund Operation** - Raise money from outside investors.
- Review business plans to identify potential investments.
- Make investment decisions based on prospectus mandates and investor expectations.

3) Consider the following statements with respect to Marburg Virus

1. Marburg is a virus from the same family as Ebola.
2. According to the WHO, it causes a haemorrhagic fever and has an average fatality rate of 100%.
3. It can also spread between humans, through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : b

## Marburg Virus

*The World Health Organization recently stated that the risk of the outbreak is very high in Rwanda, high across the African region and low globally.*

- Marburg is a virus from the same family as Ebola.
- According to the WHO, it causes a haemorrhagic fever and has an **average fatality rate of 50%**, although rates have been as high as 88% in previous outbreaks. (**Statement 2 is incorrect**)
- It was *first identified in Marburg, Germany* and Belgrade, Serbia in 1967.
- **Symptoms** - Sudden high fever and extreme headache, as well as vomiting and diarrhoea,

following by uncontrolled bleeding.

- **Transmission** – Marburg spreads to humans from prolonged exposure to mines or caves where Rousettus fruit bats live.
- It can also spread between humans, through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, or with surfaces or materials contaminated with those fluids, such as blood.
- **Vaccine** – There are **no approved vaccines** or treatments for Marburg.
- The vaccine developed by non-profit organizations including the Sabin Vaccine Institute, which is yet to get approved from WHO.
- The team that developed the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine at Oxford University began a trial of its Marburg candidate this summer in the UK, using similar technology.

4) Consider the following statements:

1. Prakrit generally refers to a group of closely-related Indo-Aryan languages.
2. Ardhamagadhi language is prominently used by Jain scholars.
3. Pali is the language of the Theravada Buddhist canon.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None of the above

Answer : c

## Prakrit & Pali Languages

*Pali and Prakrit has been newly designated as Classical Languages.*

- Pali and Prakrit are at the root of India's culture and are languages of spirituality, wisdom and philosophy.

## Prakrit

- The term 'Prakrit' comes from '*prakriti*' meaning 'source' or 'origin'.
- Most scholars agree that this is to do with the Prakrits originating from Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas and later Hindu literature.
- There is no one Prakrit language.
- **Prakrit generally refers to a group of closely-related Indo-Aryan languages**, which may also have other names.
- Their defining feature is that they were much simpler than Sanskrit, and thus the *language used by the masses*.
- Prakrits were "much simpler than Sanskrit both in sound and grammar".
- *Most pre-Gupta inscriptions such as Ashokan edicts (dated to 3rd Century CE) were written in some form of Prakrit.*
- **Inscriptions** and **edicts** are meant for the public, rather than for a small group of elite intelligentsia (like Sanskrit texts).
- A number of languages and dialects can be referred to as Prakrit.
- Some notable forms of Prakrits include:
  - **Magadhi** – The official language of the Mauryan court, and the language of the people of Magadha (present-day Bihar).
  - The **Ashokan edicts** were composed in this language.
  - This language would find wide use in Eastern India, and later evolved into modern-day languages such as Bengali, Assamese, Odia, and the Bihari languages.

- **Ardhamagadhi** - Literally means “half-Magadhi” and was a later variation of the **Magadhi language prominently used by Jain scholars**.
- Most Prakrit courses today teach Ardhamagadhi.
- **Shauraseni** - Used in North and Central India.

## Pali

- Pali is the language of Buddhist canon.
- Pali, being a vernacular languages, were also the language of choice for heterodox religions like Jainism and Buddhism.
- It emerged as a challenge to the rigid social hierarchies and excessive ritualism of the Vedic tradition and sought to make religion more accessible to the masses.
- Apart from Ardhamagadhi, the language of the Jain agamas, the other language to emerge in this regard is **Pali, the language of the Theravada Buddhist canon**.
- Due to its significance to Buddhism, Pali is the variant of Prakrit that is most studied at present.
- The Pali Canon falls into 3 general categories or *pitaka* (basket).
- Together, it is thus known as *Tipitaka* (“three baskets”), which include:
  1. **Vinaya Pitaka (Discipline Basket)** - It deals with rules or discipline of the Buddhist sangha (monastic order).
  2. **Sutta Pitaka (Sayings Basket)** - The largest basket comprising discourses and sermons of the Buddha himself, as well as some religious poetry.
  3. **Abhidhamma Pitaka** - The basket that further elaborates on Buddhist philosophy.
- After Theravada Buddhism declined in India, Pali survived as an ecclesiastical language in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, where this Buddhist school continued to prosper.
- Pali has traditionally been identified with Magadhi Prakrit, with the word ‘*pali*’ meaning “lines or series”, a reference to Pali being the language of the series of Buddhist texts.

5) Consider the following statements with respect to Caracal

1. It is an elusive medium-sized species of small wild cats.
2. In India, it is endemic to Western Ghats.
3. It has strong hind legs that allow them to jump 6 feet in the air.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All three
- d. None of the above

Answer : b

## Caracal (*Caracal caracal schmitzi*)

*To encourage Caracal breeding and conservation, the Gujarat government has recently allocated 10 crore rupees.*

- The Caracal or Asiatic caracal (*Caracal caracal schmitzi*) is an elusive medium-sized and locally threatened felid (cat) species.
- Caracals live on rocky hills or grasslands in the Middle East, Africa, and south Asia.
- The animal is one of more than 30 species of small wild cats.
- **Features** - Most caracals grow about three feet long and can weigh over 40 pounds.
- The body of a caracal is built for sneak attacks.

- The animals' **strong hind legs** allow them to jump **6 feet** in the air which is the height of a tall adult human.
- **Range** - Historically, the caracal was found all across Central India and the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- Caracals live on rocky hills or grasslands in the Middle East, Africa, and south Asia.
- In India, the most significant potential habitat for caracals include:
  - Rajasthan
  - Gujarat
  - Madhya Pradesh
  - Haryana
  - Uttar Pradesh
  - Maharashtra
- The most suitable habitat for caracals in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh is located in Kutch, the Malwa Plateau, the Aravalli hill range and the Bundelkhand region.
- **It is not endemic to Western Ghats in India. (Statement 2 is incorrect)**
- **Protection** - The species is included in the **Schedule-I category** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is listed under '**least concern**' under the IUCN Red List.
- **Reasons for the decline** - Large-scale hunting, illegal trading and loss of natural habitats are considered significant threats to the species.





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