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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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SOURCES



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## GS II

### 1. Why an accused in jail can contest, but cannot vote in an election

Source: IE, Page 14

Prelims: Various Judgements related to News, RPA Acts

Mains: Salient Features of the Representation of People's Act.

News: A candidate for the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat, who is currently in jail, is contesting for Lok Sabha Elections.

#### Voting and Electing Rights

- **Statutory Rights:**
  - In *Indira Gandhi v Raj Narain (1975)*, the Supreme Court held that free and fair elections are part of the Constitution's basic structure.
  - The right to vote and the right to be elected are statutory rights, not fundamental rights, as stated in *Kuldip Nayar v Union of India (2006)*.
- **Disqualification Under RPA:**
  - Section 62(5) of the RPA states that individuals in prison or police custody cannot vote, except those in preventive detention. In 1997, the Supreme Court upheld this provision, stating that prisoners' conduct justifies restrictions on their voting rights to keep individuals with criminal backgrounds away from elections. This ruling was reaffirmed in subsequent cases by the Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court.
  - Section 8 of the RPA disqualifies individuals from contesting elections if convicted of certain offenses. This disqualification lasts from the date of conviction until six years after the end of the sentence. The disqualification does not apply if a person is only charged but not convicted.

#### Recent Legal Challenges and Amendments

- **Challenges to Section 8:**
  - In 2011, a petition argued for the disqualification of individuals with criminal charges or false affidavits, but the Supreme Court held that only the legislature could amend the RPA.
  - In 2016, a petition sought permanent disqualification for convicted persons. The Supreme Court has asked High Courts to expedite criminal cases against MPs and MLAs, with many cases still pending.
- **Exceptions to Disqualification:**
  - The Election Commission of India (ECI) can reduce the period of disqualification under Section 11 of the RPA. This was applied in the case of Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang.
  - If a conviction is stayed on appeal, the disqualification does not remain in effect..



## GS III

### 2. On fire safety regulations in India

**Source:** The Hindu, Page 10

**Prelims:** Laws and Judgements related to Fire Safety

**Mains:** Disaster and Disaster Management.

**News:** A fire at a gaming center in Rajkot, Gujarat on May 25 killed at least 32 people. Another fire on May 25 in a newborn hospital in Delhi's Vivek Vihar resulted in the death of seven babies and the arrest of the hospital owner and the doctor on duty.

#### Related Laws

- The Model Building Bye-Laws, 2016 and Chapter 11 on "Fire Protection and Fire Safety Requirements" provide the framework for fire safety.
- National Building Code (NBC) Part 4 outlines fire safety norms and standards.
- Gujarat's Comprehensive Development Control Regulations 2017 require the Chief Fire Officer's opinion for all structures, including temporary ones.
- The Fire Prevention and Life Safety Measures Act, 2013 mandates fire prevention and safety provisions for all structures.
- The Gujarat Regularisation of Unauthorised Development Act, 2022 allows unauthorised structures to apply for regularisation.

#### Judicial and Executive Interventions:

- The Gujarat High Court's suo motu action after the Rajkot fire led to scrutiny of fire and building law enforcement and identification of unauthorised venues.
- The court noted non-compliance with its earlier orders and took action to enforce fire safety laws in the wake of repeated fire incidents in the state.
- The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation reported the use of the Gujarat Regularisation of Unauthorised Development Act, 2022 by an unauthorised game zone for regularisation.

#### Suggestions

- Ensure strict enforcement of the Comprehensive Development Control Regulations and fire NOCs.
- Conduct periodic checks under the Fire Safety Act and issue licenses in compliance with relevant Acts.
- Address practical difficulties and lack of trained manpower and infrastructure to achieve full compliance in fire safety regulations.
- Tighten regulations for temporary and ramshackle structures to prevent deadly fires and protect unwary leisure seekers.
- Hold state and enforcement agencies fully accountable for implementing and enforcing fire safety provisions and building codes.



### 3. The Heat Stress

Source: IE, Page 12

Prelims: NDMA, Heat Action Plans

Mains: Disaster and Disaster Management.

News: There are multifaceted causes of heat stress in urban India, the rising temperatures alone do not account for the extreme discomfort during summer months.

#### Causes of Urban Heat Stress

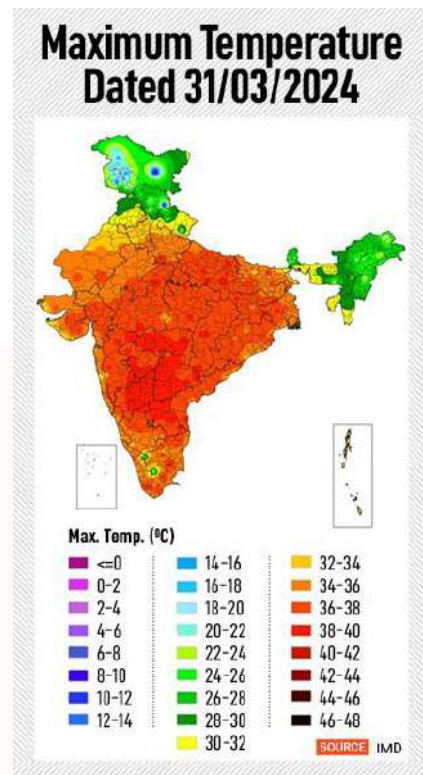
- Multifactorial Causes: Rising air temperatures, land surface temperature, and relative humidity.
- Urbanisation: Rapid increase in built-up areas and concretization.
- Urban Heat Island Effect: Dense concentration of buildings, roads, and materials like concrete, glass, and steel trap heat, leading to higher temperatures in city centres.

#### Impact

- Vulnerable Populations At Risk: Elderly, babies, pregnant women, slum dwellers, and outdoor workers.
- Health Risks: Increased risk of heat-related illnesses and deaths due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures and inadequate cooling during nights.

#### Mitigation Measures and Challenges

- Heat Action Plans (HAPs): Over 20 states have developed HAPs with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- Implementation Issues: HAPs face challenges such as lack of funding, detailed planning, and sustainable vision.
- Effective Responses: City-specific management plans that consider local factors are recommended. These plans should include:
  - Green Spaces and Water Bodies: To cool down urban areas.
  - Targeting Heat Generators: Addressing vehicles, industries, and concrete surfaces.
  - Examples: Ahmedabad's Cool Roofs programme, which provides affordable solutions to mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- Long-Term Strategies
  - Emergency Steps: Measures to be implemented during heat events.
  - Long-Term Planning: Strategies to prevent cities from heating up excessively, focusing on sustainable urban planning and development.





## 4. Danger from landslides

Source: IE, Page 14

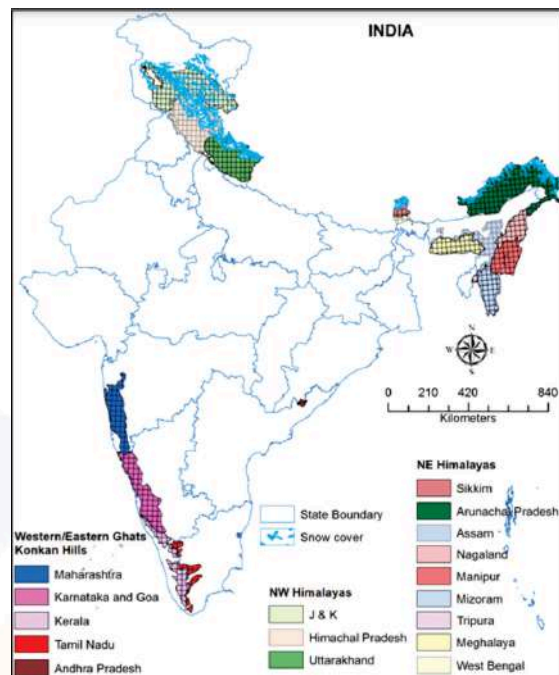
Prelims: National Landslide Risk Management Strategy

Mains: Disaster and Disaster Management.

Cyclone Remal triggered landslides in Northeast India, resulting in 30 deaths, including 14 from a stone quarry collapse in Mizoram, leading to multi-hazardous effects of Cyclone.

### Multi-Hazard Disasters and Vulnerability

- **Cascade Effects:** One disaster event can trigger another, leading to multiple simultaneous disasters (e.g., heavy rainfall causing flash floods and landslides).
- **Landslide Prone Areas:** Northeast India, Sikkim, and northern West Bengal are highly susceptible to landslides.
- **Preparedness and Response:** While India has improved preparedness for cyclones, landslide management remains a challenge.



### Landslide Vulnerability and Management

- **Geographical Spread:** 0.42 million square km of India is prone to landslides, 42% of which is in the Northeast.
- **Historical Data:** Between 2015 and 2022, the Northeastern states recorded 378 major landslides; Kerala experienced the highest number of post-2018 floods.
- **NDMA Initiatives:** National Landslide Risk Management Strategy includes vulnerability mapping, early warning systems, and mountain zone regulations.
- **Current Deployments:** Systems are being installed in Nagaland, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Kerala by CBRI, IIT Roorkee, and IIT Mandi.

### Challenges

- **Development and Deployment:** Early warning systems linked to IMD's rainfall forecasts are being tested in select locations.
- **Rainfall vs. Earthquake:** Most landslides are caused by rainfall, not earthquakes; hence, rainfall-based warnings are more effective.

### Way Forward

- **Carrying Capacity:** Overdevelopment in hilly areas increases landslide risk due to the terrain's limited load-bearing capacity.
- **Regulation Needs:** Effective implementation of building regulations and zoning laws is crucial to mitigate landslide risk.
- **Sustainable Development:** Balancing infrastructure development with environmental sustainability is essential to prevent exacerbating landslide vulnerabilities.



## Editorials, Opinions and Ideas

### 5. Still no sign of the language of equity and inclusion

Source: The Hindu, Page 8

The article discusses challenges faced by Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) in India

#### Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) People and their Vulnerability

- Population Statistics:
  - According to the 2011 Census, there are five million hearing-impaired people in India.
  - The National Association of the Deaf counts 18 million.
  - The World Health Organization estimates nearly 63 million Indians have significant hearing impairment.
- Challenges in Education:
  - Only 5% of deaf children attend school.
  - Oralist course structures cause delayed graduation for deaf students.
- Employment Struggles:
  - Government initiatives for employing the deaf often favor those with less than 40% hearing impairment.
  - Common job opportunities are limited to housekeeping, wait staff, and data entry.
- Lack of Accessibility:
  - Public transport, TV shows, and helplines lack accessible features.
  - Only Doordarshan offers a weekly news segment in Indian Sign Language (ISL).



#### Steps Taken

- National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness: Focuses on preventing and treating hearing impairment and providing medical rehabilitation.
- ISL Research and Training Centre: Established by the Social Justice Ministry in 2015 to promote ISL.
- National Education Policy 2020: Recommends standardized teaching of ISL across schools.
- Legislation and Policies: Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPDA), 2016 aims to preserve and advance the language.



## Challenges

- **Lack of Recognition and Implementation:** ISL is not officially recognized as a language. There is sparse use of ISL in educational systems.
- **Educational System Focus:** Emphasis on oralism over sign language, marginalizing deaf students.
- **Employment Issues:** Government sector progress in accessibility and inclusion is minimal. Private sector initiatives are limited to specific roles and sectors.
- **Healthcare Accessibility:** Most hospitals lack interpreters, complicating access to health care. Mental healthcare access is hindered by a lack of ISL-trained professionals.

## Suggestions

- **Official Recognition of ISL:**
  - Recognize ISL as an official language.
  - Integrate ISL naturally in schools and colleges for all students.
- **Training and Employment:**
  - Employ DHH individuals to teach ISL, enhancing their employment opportunities.
  - Encourage the hearing population to practice ISL to achieve fluency.
- **Healthcare System Updates:**
  - Ensure easy and accessible communication in health care for DHH patients.
  - Overcome regulatory barriers for DHH individuals aspiring to health-care professions.
- **Media and Government Accessibility:**
  - Mandate ISL interpretation across media channels and government announcements.
  - Ensure live ISL interpreters at government events, similar to practices in other countries.

## 6. An outdated nuclear debate

**Source: IE, Page 13**

The article talks about the recent debate on Pakistan and nuclear weapons in Indian elections and highlights Delhi's emerging nuclear challenges.

### Nuclear Situation in Different Countries

- **Europe:** The Ukraine war and Russian nuclear threats are pushing the West to strengthen NATO's nuclear and conventional forces. France and Britain are exploring greater collaboration and the possibility of an independent Eurodeterrent.
- **North East Asia:** Japan and South Korea are negotiating steps to strengthen the American nuclear umbrella, but may consider national nuclear arsenals if Donald Trump wins the US presidency again.
- **Middle East:** Fears of Iran becoming a nuclear power are driving Arab countries to seek expanded atomic capabilities, with civil nuclear cooperation as part of a US-Saudi security pact.
- **Global Concerns:** The rise of AI and robotic weapons raises concerns about automating nuclear decision-making. The US has urged China and Russia to ensure only humans make decisions on nuclear weapons use. Russia is suspected of deploying anti-satellite nuclear weapons.





### India and Pakistan Case

- Since acquiring nuclear weapons in the late 1980s, Pakistan has used its nuclear arsenal to shield cross-border terrorism.
- The Modi government has tried to limit Pakistan's nuclear impunity and enhance India's deterrence, but the problem persists.
- As Pakistan's power declines relative to India, it may strengthen its nuclear program to counter perceived Indian hegemony.
- Pakistan's strategic partnership with China supports its nuclear capabilities.

### India and China Case

- China is expanding its nuclear arsenal, with projections of having 1,000 nuclear weapons by 2030 and 1,500 by 2035.
- Chinese leader Xi Jinping views the expanded arsenal as a means to balance power against the US and increase geopolitical leverage.
- Xi is influenced by Russia's prioritization of nuclear development despite economic decline.
- China's growing nuclear arsenal aims to counter US strategies in Asia.
- India needs to prioritize building deterrent capabilities against China's expanding nuclear arsenal.

### Way Forward

- The next Indian government must comprehensively review the changing global nuclear dynamics and regional challenges.
- India should modernize its atomic arsenal and doctrine, focusing on practical capabilities rather than symbolic ones.
- Accelerating India's civilian nuclear energy program is essential. Despite early advancements, India lags behind China and South Korea.
- Overhauling legal and institutional frameworks governing atomic energy development is necessary for India to catch up in nuclear energy production.



## InBrief

### 7. Meitei civil society organisations raise questions over 'targeted attacks' in Manipur

Source: The Hindu, Page 4

#### Meitei Community

- The Meitei ethnic group represents about 53% of Manipur's population.
- They are primarily settled in the Imphal Valley region in modern-day Manipur, though a sizable population has settled in the other Indian states of Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram.
- A majority of Meitei people follow Hinduism.
- Yaoshang Festival is celebrated by the Meitei people at the same time as Holi and is known as 'Manipur's version of Holi'.
- They are divided into clans, the members of which do not intermarry.

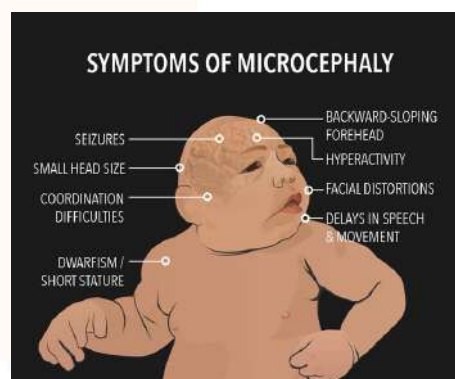
### 8. An altered protein and fussy neurons conspire to cause microcephaly

Source: The Hindu, Page 7

It has been discovered that a gene known as SASS6 (Spindle Assembly Abnormal Protein 6) and its variations are essential to a developmental process that results in "microcephaly."

#### Microcephaly

- An infant with microcephaly has a much smaller-than-normal head.
- It is linked to intellectual difficulties, atypical facial traits, poor motor skills, bad speech, and a smaller brain.
- Developmental Origins: It is thought that the illness begins in the embryo during the most advanced stage of brain development. Neuron-destined cells are unable to divide regularly.
- Diagnosis: MRI and foetal ultrasound can be used to identify microcephaly prior to delivery.
- When researchers suppressed the SASS6 gene in *C. elegans* embryos, they found that the cells failed to assemble new centrioles, resulting in arrested development.
- After studying a family of which four members had microcephaly, researchers found the mutation correlated with microcephaly. The amino acid isoleucine in the SASS6 gene had been replaced by threonine. Thus it is named Ile62Thr.



## 9. DG NCC flags-off mountaineering expedition to Mt Kang Yatse-II in Ladakh region

Source: PIB

### Mount Kang Yatse

- Kang Yatse is a mountain located at the end of the Markha valley in the Himalayas in the Ladakh region of northwest India.
- It is located in the Hemis National Park.
- The mountain has two main summits, the lower western peak (Kang Yatse II) is easier and more frequently climbed, although lower at about 6200m.
- The higher eastern peak is the true summit (Kang Yatse I) although less frequently climbed as it is across a technically difficult knife-edge traverse.

## 10. RBI launches retail direct mobile app, fintech repository

Source: IE, Page 11

RBI launched three major initiatives - PRAVAAH portal, the retail direct mobile app and a fintech repository.

### The Three Initiatives

- PRAVAAH is a secure and centralised web-based portal for any individual or entity to seek authorisation, license or regulatory approval on any reference made by it to the RBI.
- The retail direct mobile app will provide retail investors a seamless and convenient access to the retail direct platform and provide ease of transacting in government securities (G-Secs).
- The fintech repository will contain information on Indian fintech firms for a better understanding of the sector from a regulatory perspective and facilitate in designing appropriate policy approaches.





## Daily Quiz

1. Consider the following statements regarding the Representation of the People Act (RPA) in India:

1. According to RPA, individuals in prison or police custody cannot vote, except those in preventive detention.
2. RPA disqualifies individuals from contesting elections if convicted of certain offenses.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

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

2. Which of the following statements about dry chemical fire extinguishers is incorrect?

- A. They extinguish fires primarily by interrupting the chain reaction mechanism.
- B. The extinguishing agent can leave a residue that may be corrosive to electrical equipment.
- C. They are suitable for use on Class A fires involving ordinary combustibles.
- D. They are effective in oxygen-depleted environments due to the release of inert gases.

3. In the context of mitigating urban heat island effects, which of the following statements about Heat Action Plans (HAPs) is most accurate?

- A. All Indian states with HAPs have successfully implemented them with minimal funding requirements.
- B. While city-specific management plans are recommended, detailed planning is unnecessary for effective HAPs.
- C. The primary focus of HAPs should be on emergency measures during heatwaves, neglecting long-term urban development strategies.
- D. Effective HAPs consider local factors and incorporate strategies to address heat generators.

4. The National Landslide Risk Management Strategy emphasizes a multi-pronged approach. Which of the following components is not a part of India's National Landslide Risk Management Strategy?

- A. Development of early warning systems
- B. Landslide mapping and hazard assessment
- C. Community awareness and education programs
- D. Promotion of monoculture plantations in landslide-prone areas



5. Consider the following objectives:

1. Early identification and diagnosis of hearing impairment
2. Capacity building and training of medical personnel
3. Universal free hearing aids for all age groups
4. Awareness generation and community involvement

How many of the above objectives are a part of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness (NPPCD) in India?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Only 3
- D. All are correct.

6. Which of the following countries is the only one to have voluntarily dismantled its entire nuclear arsenal and renounced nuclear weapons?

- A. South Africa
- B. Ukraine
- C. Kazakhstan
- D. Belarus

7. Which of the following statements accurately describes the Meitei community?

1. The Meitei community is predominantly found in the Indian state of Manipur.
2. They primarily follow Buddhism as their religion.
3. Meitei dance forms include the Ras Lila and Dhol Cholom.
4. The Meitei script is derived from the Brahmi script.

Select the correct option using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 1, 3, and 4 only
- D. 2, 3, and 4 only

8. Sometimes mentioned in the news, Protein 'SASS6' is related to which of the following diseases?

- A. Microcephaly
- B. Down syndrome
- C. Meningitis
- D. Encephalitis

9. Recently seen in the news, 'Mount Kang Yatse' is located in which of the following National parks?

- A. Valley of Flowers National Park
- B. Great Himalayan National Park
- C. Hemis National Park
- D. Pin Valley National Park

10. What is the primary objective of the recently launched "PRAVAAH portal" by the Reserve Bank of India?

- A. Facilitate online transactions in government securities for retail investors.
- B. Provide a platform for banks to access real-time financial data.
- C. Streamline the application process for regulatory approvals from the RBI.
- D. Enhance public awareness about RBI's monetary policy decisions.



## Solutions

**Answer 1: C**

**Solution:**

- Statement 1 is correct: Section 62(5) of the RPA indeed states that individuals in prison or police custody cannot vote, except those in preventive detention.
- Statement 2 is correct: Section 8 of the RPA disqualifies individuals from contesting elections if convicted of certain offenses, and this disqualification lasts from the date of conviction until six years after the end of the sentence.

Hence, Option C is correct.

**Answer 2: D**

**Solution:**

- Dry chemical fire extinguishers work by smothering the fire and interrupting the chemical chain reaction. The extinguishing agent, a fine powder, disrupts the heat, fuel, and oxygen triangle needed for combustion. While the powder residue can be corrosive, option (b) is true. Dry chemical extinguishers are effective on Class A fires (ordinary combustibles) due to their smothering effect, as stated in (c). However, dry chemical agents are not effective in oxygen-depleted environments because they rely on smothering the fire, not displacing oxygen. In such environments, a Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) extinguisher would be a better choice, as CO<sub>2</sub> displaces oxygen and extinguishes the fire.

Hence, Option D is correct.

**Answer 3: D**

**Solution:**

- Option D accurately reflects the key aspects of effective HAPs i.e. local

considerations, addressing heat generators (e.g., Cool Roofs programme), and a combination of emergency and long-term strategies.

Hence, Option D is correct.

**Answer 4: D**

**Solution:**

- Promotion of monoculture plantations in landslide-prone areas is not part of the strategy; in fact, such practices can often exacerbate the risk of landslides by reducing biodiversity and soil stability.

Hence, option D is correct.

**Answer 5: C**

**Solution:**

- The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness (NPPCD) aims to address the issue of hearing impairment in India through several key objectives.
- These include the early identification and diagnosis of hearing impairment to ensure timely intervention, capacity building and training of medical personnel to enhance their skills in managing hearing-related issues, and awareness generation and community involvement to educate the public about hearing health and the prevention of deafness.
- However, providing universal free hearing aids for all age groups is not an objective of the NPPCD. The program focuses on providing hearing aids to those in need, particularly in marginalized and vulnerable populations, rather than universally to all age groups.

Hence, Option C is correct.





**Answer 6: A**

**Solution:**

- South Africa is the only country to have developed nuclear weapons and then voluntarily dismantled its entire arsenal.
- During the 1980s, South Africa developed a small number of nuclear weapons but chose to dismantle them in the early 1990s before joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear-weapon state in 1991.

Hence, option A is correct.

**Answer 7: B**

**Solution:**

- Statement 1 is correct: The Meitei community is predominantly found in the Indian state of Manipur.
- Statement 2 is incorrect: While the Meitei community practices Hinduism, Sanamahism, and some aspects of Vaishnavism, Buddhism is not their predominant religion.
- Statement 3 is correct: Meitei dance forms include the Ras Lila (a classical dance depicting the love between Radha and Krishna) and Dhol Cholom (a drum dance performed during religious and cultural festivals).
- Statement 4 is incorrect: The Meitei script, known as Meitei Mayek, is not derived from the Brahmi script; it has its

own distinct origin and is used for writing the Meitei language.

Hence, Option B is correct.

**Answer 8: A**

**Solution:**

- SASS6 (Spindle Assembly Abnormal Protein 6) and its variations are essential to a developmental process that results in "microcephaly."
- An infant with microcephaly has a much smaller-than-normal head.
- It is linked to intellectual difficulties, atypical facial traits, poor motor skills, bad speech, and a smaller brain.

Hence, Option A is correct.

**Answer 9: C**

**Solution:**

- Kang Yatze is a mountain located at the end of the Markha valley in the Himalayas in the Ladakh region of northwest India.
- It is located in the Hemis National Park.

Hence, optional C is correct.

**Answer 10: C**

**Solution:**

- PRAVAAH is a secure and centralised web-based portal for any individual or entity to seek authorisation, license or regulatory approval on any reference made by it to the RBI.

Hence, option C is correct.





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