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## Passage No. 117

**Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:**

Over the last few days, Delhi residents have been protesting against the government's approval for felling over 14,000 trees in south Delhi. Faced with severe criticism, the National Buildings Construction Corporation, tasked with redeveloping half a dozen south Delhi colonies, on Monday assured the Delhi High Court that no trees would be cut for the project till July 4, which is temporary relief. Many of the trees proposed to be felled are mature, local, fruit-bearing ones that provide clean air, shade and water recharge to humans and are homes to many birds. These areas of Delhi have served as the "lungs" of the city. However, the project reports overlook these qualities.

Large constructions have been difficult to manage in India. The sector has systematically lobbied to be excluded from the environmental norms of the country and has been successful in carving out special privileges for itself in the environment clearance process. From 2006, most construction projects have been approved based on an application form instead of detailed assessment reports. In 2014, schools, colleges and hostels for educational institutions were exempted from taking environment clearances as long as they followed specific sustainability parameters. In 2016, projects with areas of less than 20,000 sq m were permitted to proceed as long as they submitted a self-declaration ensuring adherence to environmental norms. As a result of these privileges, construction projects contribute significantly to urban air and noise pollution and high water consumption in cities. Compensatory afforestation taken up in lieu of trees felled by projects is a failure due to poor survival rates of saplings and no monitoring. Yet all regulatory bodies treat large constructions with kid gloves.

The Minister for Urban Development has stated that this public campaign is "misinformed". But that is far from the truth. In a literate, urban society that has high access to the Internet, the lack of official information on urban development and its impacts can only be understood as an indirect form of public silencing. There are no public hearings held for urban construction projects, and governments assume that citizens have nothing to say about them. Since Delhi is ruled by so many agencies, you can run from pillar to post and still not have a clue about who is in charge of what. The residents are now appealing to the government to embrace inclusive ways of redesigning the city. The governments could join hands by committing to review these projects.

## Questions:

**1. Which of the following, if true, would strengthen the claim that compensatory afforestation has been a failure?**

- I. Saplings planted have a poor survival rate.
- II. There is inadequate monitoring of the afforestation done.
- III. The funds provided are adequate to cover the areas as well as look after them.

- A. Only III                      B. Only I and III                      C. Only I and II                      D. Only II and III  
E. All of the above

**2. Which of the following statements, if true, strengthen the claim that the large construction sector has managed to get itself special privileges when it comes to environmental norms of the country?**

- I. The projects were designed by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and approved by the Union Cabinet in 2017.
- II. The projects have been declared “smart” and “green” despite their ecological impacts such as high water usage and tree loss.
- III. About 5 projects have been given environment clearances after they were cleared by the National Green Tribunal.

- A. Only I                      B. Only II                      C. Only I and III                      D. Only II and III  
E. None of the above

**3. What is meant by the phrase- ‘indirect form of public silencing’?**

- I. Lack of open access to the internet.
- II. Lack of official information on development related issues.
- III. Actively misinforming the public with blatant lies and false reports.

- A. Only I                      B. Only I and III                      C. Only II                      D. Only II and III  
E. None of the above

**4. What qualities are being discussed in the line- ‘However, the project reports overlook these qualities’?**

- A. The enthusiasm of people to save their environment.      B. The laidback approach of the Judiciary.  
C. The destruction and noise pollution accompanying the projects.  
D. The importance of trees in the environment and for people.  
E. None of the above

**5. Which of the following is/are true as per the passage?**

- I. The project mentioned has been postponed indefinitely after public protests.
- II. From 2006, most construction projects have been approved based on an application form instead of detailed assessment reports.
- III. Multiple agencies in charge can create a lot of confusion.

- A. Only II                      B. Only I and II                      C. Only III                      D. Only II and III  
E. All of the above

**Correct Answers:**

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
C	B	C	D	D



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## Explanations:

1. Statement III is opposite of what is needed.

Statements I and II are correct and indicate towards reasons for compensatory afforestation failing.

Hence, option C is correct.

2. Statement I is incorrect as it merely mentions who designed and approved the projects.

Statement III is incorrect as it shows that the projects were given clearance by a tribunal and does not indicate any foul play.

Statement II is correct clearly.

Hence, option B is correct.

3. Refer to: ‘. In a literate, urban society that has high access to the Internet, the lack of official information on urban development and its impacts can only be understood as an indirect form of public silencing.’

I is opposite to what is in the passage while III has not been mentioned anywhere. II is correct as can be seen from the highlighted fragment.

Hence, option C is correct.

4. Refer to: ‘Many of the trees proposed to be felled are mature, local, fruit-bearing ones that provide clean air, shade and water recharge to humans and are homes to many birds. These areas of Delhi have served as the “lungs” of the city. However, the project reports overlook these qualities.’

As per the highlighted fragment, these qualities pertain to the important place that trees hold in our environment.

Hence, option D is correct.

5. Refer to:

‘The National Buildings Construction Corporation, tasked with redeveloping half a dozen south Delhi colonies, on Monday assured the Delhi High Court that no trees would be cut for the project till July 4, which is temporary relief.’

I is incorrect.

‘From 2006, most construction projects have been approved based on an application form instead of detailed assessment reports. In 2014, schools, colleges and hostels for educational institutions were exempted from taking environment clearances as long as they followed specific sustainability parameters.’

II is correct.

‘Since Delhi is ruled by so many agencies, you can run from pillar to post and still not have a clue about who is in charge of what.’

III is correct.

Hence, option D is correct.

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