

Meghalaya Soil Lake Inauguration

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma inaugurated the newly developed Soil Lake at Williamnagar in the East Garo Hills on December 2025. This initiative is an eco-tourism project aimed at environmental conservation, water body rejuvenation, and boosting sustainable tourism in the region.

Key Points:

- **Location:** The lake is located in Williamnagar, in the East Garo Hills district of Meghalaya.
- **Project Context:** It was developed under the Nengsang River Valley Project (RVP) as a joint initiative by the Meghalaya government and the Soil & Water Conservation Department.
- **Primary Goal:** The main goal is to revive a declining water source, enhance soil health, mitigate the impact of floods and droughts, and ensure water availability in an area facing increasing climate stress.
- **Dual Purpose:** It serves as both an ecological resource for water conservation and an economic asset through the promotion of sustainable eco-tourism.
- **Physical Features:** The water body spans 0.5 hectares and has a water storage capacity of nearly 10,000 cubic metres.
- **Government Strategy:** The project is part of a broader, state-wide climate-adaptive water harvesting program which includes building 533 similar structures to improve groundwater recharge and manage water sources.
- **Community Impact:** The project aims to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities and highlights the importance of community participation in conserving water bodies, as many of the state's natural springs are under threat.

Practice Questions:

1. With reference to the recent inauguration of the 'Soil Lake' in Meghalaya and the state's environmental challenges, consider the following statements:

- I. The term "Soil Lake" refers to a natural, pristine water body in the region, conserved for its unique high-nutrient alluvial soil composition
- II. The project is a conservation initiative under the Nengsang River Valley Project (RVP), aimed at rejuvenating a declining water body and promoting eco-tourism
- III. Meghalaya predominantly has black soil in its hill regions, which contributes to the high fertility of such lakes
- IV. Acid mine drainage (AMD) from unregulated coal mining is a prevalent environmental hazard contaminating water bodies in parts of the state

How many of the statements given above are correct?

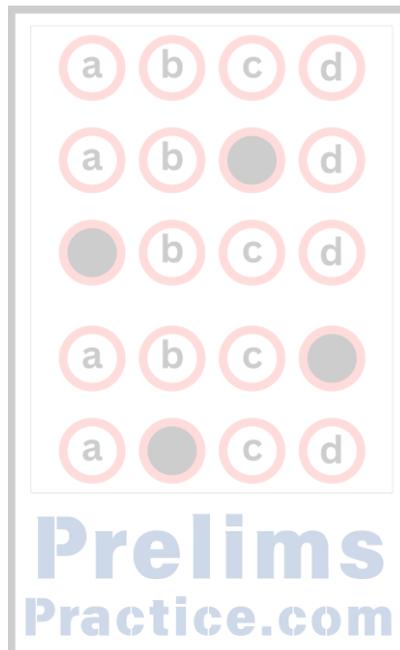
- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: b

Explanation: Statement I is Incorrect: The "Soil Lake" in Williamnagar was a declining water body that has been restored as a conservation and eco-tourism initiative; it was not a pristine, high-nutrient lake. The soil in tropical rainforest regions like Meghalaya is often poor in nutrients due to heavy rainfall and leaching, typically laterite soil, not rich alluvial soil. **Statement II is Correct:** The lake was recently inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Meghalaya as a restored and rejuvenated water body under the Nengsang River Valley Project (RVP) to promote eco-tourism and water conservation efforts. **Statement III is Incorrect:** Laterite soil, high in iron and aluminum content, is the predominant soil type found in the hill regions of Meghalaya, not black soil (which is typically found in the Deccan trap region). **Statement IV is Correct:** Acid mine drainage is a significant and prevalent environmental hazard resulting from unregulated "rat-hole" coal mining in the East Jaintia Hills and other mining areas of Meghalaya, which contaminates local waterways.

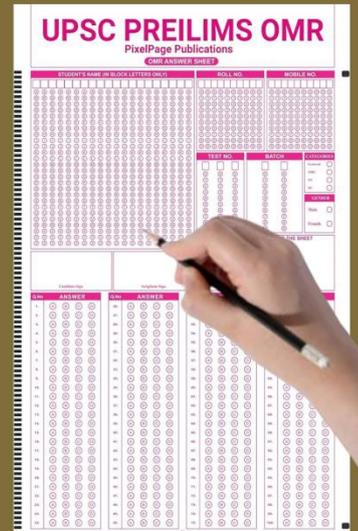
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