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Q92

The word 'Denisovan' is sometimes mentioned in media in reference to (a) fossils of a kind of dinosaurs (b) an early human species (c) a cave system found in North-East India (d) a geological period in the history of Indian subcontinent Official key: B.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2019 · General Studies · 2 marks · Current Affairs and GK
Current events, government schemes, miscellaneous GK - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation

(a)

(a) Fossils of a kind of dinosaurs. Denisovans are hominins, not dinosaurs. Not the key.

(b) Official key

(b) An early human species (Denisova hominins), known from **Denisova Cave** in the Altai and later from the **Tibetan Plateau**. That is the official key.

(c)

(c) A cave system in North-East India is not what the word denotes. Not the key.

(d)

(d) A geological period of the Indian subcontinent is not the meaning. Not the key.

Summary

Official key is (b). Denisovans are an extinct archaic human population, sister to **Neanderthals**, identified from DNA and sparse fossils. They are not dinosaurs, not an NE Indian cave name, and not a geological age. Honour (b).

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Denisova Cave

Altai Mountains, Siberia; type site

Xiahe mandible

Tibetan Plateau; Denisovan presence ~160,000 years ago

Neanderthals

Sister group; interbreeding with both Denisovans and modern humans

Papuan / Melanesian DNA

Higher Denisovan ancestry in some living populations

Homo sapiens

Anatomically modern humans; overlapping in time

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