PARAGRAPH HEADING 2

Questions 1 - 6

The reading passage has six paragraphs, A-F.
Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.
Write the correct number, i-x, as your answer to each question.

- Lamaism (i)
- First account of almases (ii)
- Missing link (iii)
- Lost evidence (iv)
- Borrowed tales from Tibet? (v)
- Living in Mongolia (vi)
- Possible ancestors of humans (vii)
- Funding expeditions (viii)
- New discoveries support a theory (ix)
- Mysterious mountain men (x)

1. Paragraph A
2. Paragraph B
3. Paragraph C
4. Paragraph D
5. Paragraph E
6. Paragraph F

Almas: The Mongolian Man-Beast

A. Mongolia usually evokes images of nomadic herdsmen riding across vast grasslands, but along the western border with Russia, the Altai Mountains stretch for over a thousand kilometres, their permanently ice-capped peaks rising above 4000 mE=s From these mountains have long come reports of a mysterious human-like creature called an almas. Sightings have become increasingly rare over the past hundred years but according to old accounts, almas are described as being similar in height to that of modern Mongolians, hairy, having massive jaws, receding chins and prominent eyebrow ridges. They are thought to be mainly nocturnal, are unaggressive and usually avoid contact with humans.

B. The earliest description of an almas appears in the memoirs of a Bavarian noblema Hans Schiltberger, who was taken prisoner by the Turks in the early 1400s SAT general training in Bardoli and sent eastward to serve a Mongol prince. "In the mountains live wild people who have nothing in common with other human beings. A pelit covers the entire body of these creatures. Only the hands and face are free of hair" Giving his seemingly incredible account some credibility is the fact that he also mentions the Przewais horse (Equus ferus przewalskii), the last remaining wild species of horse which was unknown in Europe until centuries later.

C. A few scientists such as Myra Shackley, however, have suggested that the almas is (or at least was) a real creature, and that it could be a remnant population of hominids either homo erectus or Neanderthals. Neanderthals - mankind's closest cousins - lived in Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe, and are thought to have died out 25000- 30000 years ago. Over the decades there has been the occasional "find" (hair, skull droppings) but tests have shown them to be either of human origin or from known Animals.

D. Many accounts of almases seem to be tied up with Mongolia's pre-communist Buddhism. In 1837 a pilgrim called Luvsandonoi (Mongolians typically use just a single name) found the body of a dead male almas in the Gobi Desert. He reportedly gave the skin, head, and limbs to the Galbyn Ulaan Sahius monastery. Lamas stuffed the skin. The stuffed almas was said to be hairy but with some human-like features. There are various other descriptions of monasteries with almas artefacts, even one with a complete stuffed almas. Unfortunately, communist purges in the 1930s led to the destruction of all but one of the country's more than 500 monasteries, and these artefacts were destroyed or disappeared. An interesting re-occurring element of almas stories is the use of bile (a

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digestive juice produced by the liver) from the gallbladder as a medicine. It was highly prized and used by lama doctors to treat a variety of disorders. Interestingly, bile from the gall bladder of black bears has long has long been used in traditional Chinese medicine.

E. One possible explanation for the almas is that it is folklore imported alongside Tibetan Buddhism from the Himalayas. From medieval times until the early twentieth century, Buddhism dominated religious, cultural and educational lite in Mongolia. There were important ties with Tibet, and it was not uncommon for the religious leaders and devout followers to make the pilgrimage to the holy city of Lhasa where they would have heard the tales of the yetis, and seen various supposed yeti artefacts in monasteries. Currently, the weight of scientific opinion is that the Yeti is a mythical creature born of a combination of bear sightings and folklore.

F. Two recent scientific bombshells give the remnant hominid theory a boost, First, the discovery of a new human species Homo floresiensis (nicknamed the Hobbit) and the startling fact that it occupied the Indonesian island of Flores until perhaps as recently as 12,000 years ago. Even more relevant to the almas mystery is the 2008 discovery of a female finger bone in a cave in the Siberian section of the Altai Mountains. An international team of scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany have worked on the mitochondrial DNA from the finger bone. They announced in 2010 that it was from a previously unknown hominid species that lived in the Altai Mountains about 35,000 years ago.

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