NEXT IAS

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

2nd April

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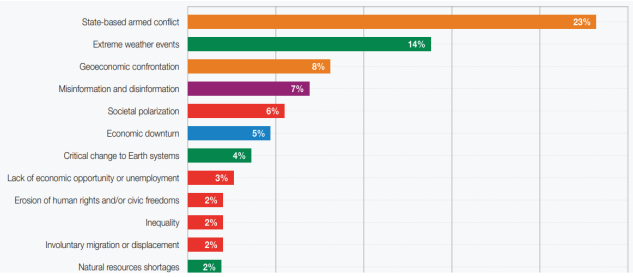
1. DISINFORMATION

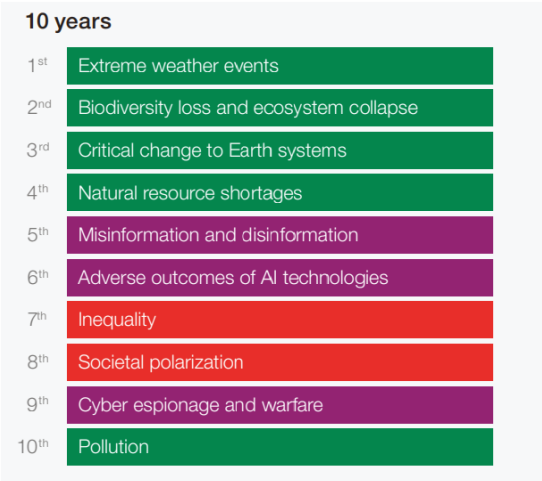
Backdrop: The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Risks Report 2025 underscores misinformation and disinformation as the highest ranked short-term global threat.

Relevance: GS II: Governance GS I: Society

About the Report:

The Global Risks Report 2025 presents the findings of the Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025 (GRPS), which captures insights from over 900 experts worldwide.





Disinformation a threat:

- The rapid rise of **AI-generated content, algorithmic biases, and deep societal divides** are making it harder than ever to separate facts from deception.
- with its diverse political and social landscape creating **fertile ground**
- **The crisis isn't just political**; it fuels consumer boycotts, economic conflicts, and international tensions
- **"Tech Oligarchy" - Joe Biden**
- **International Image and threats:** India has faced persistent Chinese disinformation threats since the 2017 Doklam standoff, prompting the ban of over 300 Chinese apps,including TikTok, to curb foreign interference.

Suggested Measures:

- **The Global Risks Report 2025 recommends Upskilling developers working with algorithms, improving public awareness and digital literacy, and ensuring accountability** through supervisory boards and AI councils to oversee Generative AI Practices.
- **Initiatives like Shakti** –India Election Fact-Checking Collective, and the Deepfake Analysis Unit, played a role in tackling disinformation during the 2024 general elections
- **Online ads** must disclose funding sources and target audiences to prevent malicious actors from spreading false narratives.
- **Expanding public awareness initiatives,** e.g. the Reserve Bank of India's Financial Literacy Campaign with Amitabh Bachchan, is essential for fostering critical thinking and societal resilience.
- **Collaboration among civil society groups,** fact-checkers, and regulators is crucial to create evidence-based policies for information integrity.
- **Regulatory bodies pushing big tech** towards positive policy changes to tackle disinformation, such as audits and transparency actions for Very Large Online Platforms with more than 45 million users, similar to the EU's Digital Services Act.
- **A support system for independent research on disinformation and FIMI(foreign information manipulation and interference)** is necessary, along with stronger laws to protect journalists.
- With the global nature of disinformation, **cross-border coalitions** must be established for a coordinated global response.

World Economic Forum:

- **The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.**

- **It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**
- **Klaus Schwab, a German professor with a background in mechanical engineering and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard, founded WEF in 1971, originally known as the European Management Forum.**

Major Reports By World Economic Forum

- **Global Risks Report:** An annual report that identifies and analyzes the most serious risks to the global economy
- **Global Gender Gap Report**: An annual report that measures gender parity in four key areas (RANK India 129th 2024)
- **Global Cooperation Barometer**: An annual report that assesses the state of international cooperation
- **Top 10 Emerging Technologies:** An annual report that highlights technologies that will positively impact society
- **Global Cybersecurity Outlook:** A report that examines cybersecurity trends that will affect economies and societies
- **Future of Jobs Report:** An annual report that explores how jobs and skills will change
- **Energy Transition Index:** A report that focuses on the transition to clean energy
- **Global Travel and Tourism Report:** A report that focuses on travel and tourism

Legal Provision Related to Misinformation

- **Section 353 of BNS :** Statements Conducing to Public Mischief
- This section criminalizes the making, publishing, o**r circulating of false information, rumours, or reports, including through electronic means, with the intent or likelihood of causing:**
  - Public alarm or fear,
  - Offences against the State
  - Disturbance of public tranquillity, or
  - Incitement of enmity or ill will among various groups based on religion, race, language, or region.
- **The section prescribes:**
  - Imprisonment of up to three years, a fine, or both, and
  - Imprisonment of up to five years and a fine if the offence occurs in places of worship or during religious ceremonies.

Case Name	Key Judgment
State of Karnataka v. Praveen Bhai Togadia (2004)	Highlighted the need to maintain public order; reinforced the government's duty to act against inflammatory statements often stemming from misinformation.
Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India (2014)	Addressed hate speech; noted that existing laws like Sections 153A and 295A of IPC could handle inflammatory statements; stressed precision in laws tackling misinformation.
Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)	Struck down Section 66A of the IT Act, 2000, as unconstitutional; emphasized protecting free speech while cautioning against overreach in curbing misinformation.
Amish Devgan v. Union of India (2020)	Involved a journalist making derogatory statements about a religious figure; upheld responsible journalism and cautioned against misinformation inciting communal enmity.

Q. The rapid rise of AI-generated content, algorithmic biases, and deep societal divides are making it harder than ever to separate facts from deception. Discuss the statement and suggest measures to tackle it.

15 Marks, 250 Words)

2. OFFSHORE MINING

Relevance: Distribution of Key Natural Resources across the world (GS 1), Indian & World Geography (Prelims).

Backdrop: No adverse impact on Kerala due to offshore mining: Union Minister.

In the news

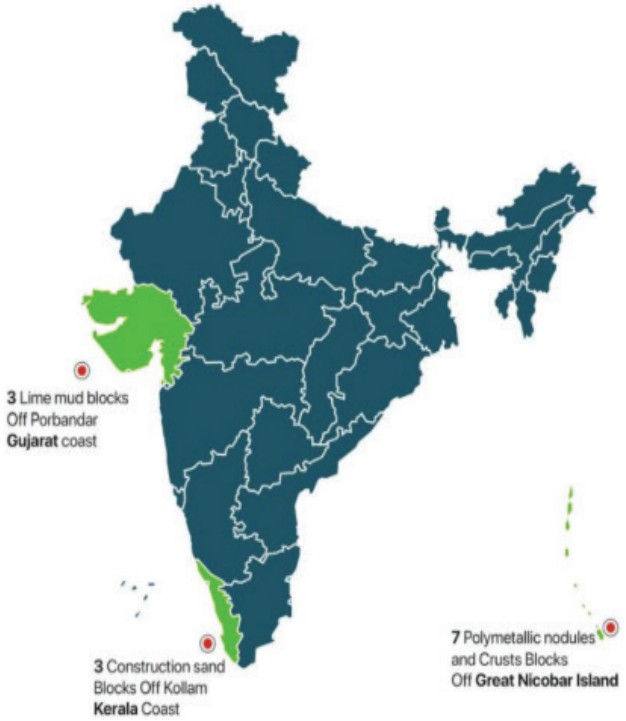
- Calling Attention Motion, moved by Congress MP, on the "hardships faced by the fishermen community".
- Indian fishermen contribute 1.24% of India's Gross Value Added (GVA) and 7.28% to agricultural GVA in 2018-19.
  - Our fish production is second in the world. First is China.
- Country's fish production has increased to 184.02 lakh tonnes from 95.7 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 and exports have also doubled to ₹60,523 crore in 2023-24 from ₹30,212 crore in 2013-14
- Offshore mining in the country was brought through framing of rules for the **Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002** in 2010.
- Till today no mining activity has been started off the coast of Kerala.
- There are 13 offshore blocks, only 3 are in Kerala and they are beyond 12 nautical miles, which comes under the exclusive economic zones.

India's Offshore Mining

- With over 7,500 kilometres of coastline and an EEZ spanning 2.3 million square kilometres,

India offers unparalleled opportunities for mineral exploration in the Indian Ocean, supporting both economic growth and sustainability goals.

- **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** provided in-depth technical insights into the geology and mineral potential of the identified offshore blocks.
- **13 offshore blocks**
  - 3 Blocks of Construction sand ,Off-Kerala.
  - 3 Blocks of Limemud, Off-Gujarat.
  - 7 Blocks of Polymetallic Nodules and Crusts, Off-Great Nicobar Island.

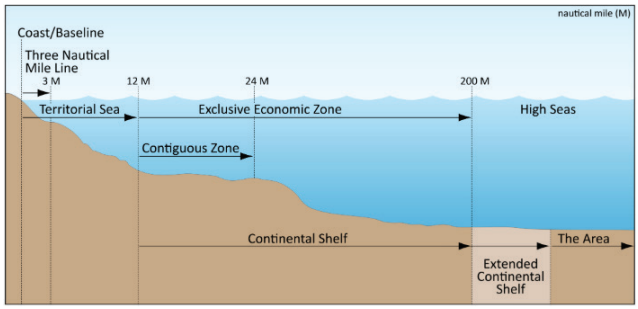


Impacts of Offshore mining

- Habitat Destruction in deep-sea ecosystems and water Pollution.
- It adversely affects the livelihood of fisherfolk dependent on marine resources.
- **Loud operations** of offshore mining disrupt marine animals, especially whales and dolphins, which rely on sonar for navigation.
- Offshore drilling increases the risk of **oil spills,** which have long-term effects on marine and coastal ecosystems.

Maritime Zones and Boundaries

- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, also known as Law of the Sea divides marine areas into five main zones - Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.



3. SABARMATI ASHRAM - GANDHI JI

Relevance: Freedom Struggle — it's important contributors (GS 1), Indian National Movement (Prelims)

Backdrop: SC refuses plea on Sabarmati Ashram, raising concerns over a project by the Gujarat government to renovate Sabarmati Ashram.

Sabarmati Ashram

- **Established:** 1917
- **Founder:** Mahatma Gandhi
- **Location:** Western bank of the Sabarmati River, near Juna Vadaj village, Ahmedabad
- Currently managed by the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT).
- Ashram was originally called **Satyagraha Ashram** owing to its association with Gandhi's passive resistance against British rule.
- Gandhiji launched the Champaran Satyagraha (1917), the Ahmedabad mills strike and Kheda Satyagraha (1918), the Khadi movement (1918), the Rowlatt Act and Khilafat Movements (1919), the Non-Cooperation movement (1920) and Dandi March (1930) while living in Sabarmati.
- Nai Talim was followed in this Ashram
- Fighting against untouchability Gandhi invited Harijans(Backward castes) in the Ashram.
- On July 31, 1933, Mahatma Gandhi left the Sabarmati Ashram forever. He vowed that he would not return to the Ashram until India won independence.
- Cottage at Sabarmati Ashram called **"Vinoba Kutir"**, where Vinoba Bhave lived.

Important settlements set up by Gandhi Ji

- Two in South Africa:
  - Phoenix Settlement in Natal in 1904.
  - Tolstoy Farm outside Johannesburg in 1910.

- Three in India.
  - First Ashram was established in the Kochrab area of Ahmedabad in 1915.
  - Sabarmati Ashram (Ahmedabad) in 1917.
  - Sevagram Ashram (in Wardha) in 1936.

4. MAHABODHI TEMPLE

Relevance: Architecture from ancient times (GS 1), History of India (Prelims)

Backdrop: Demonstrations across India led by All India Buddhist Forum (AIBF) demanding the control over Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, be handed over to Buddhists.

Mahabodhi Temple Complex

- **Significance**: One of the four most sacred Buddhist sites related to Buddha's Enlightenment. Other three are **Lumbini** (birthplace), **Sarnath** (first sermon) and **Kushinagar** (parinirvana (final passing)
- **Location**: Bodh Gaya, Bihar, on the banks of the **Niranjana River**.
- **Architecture**:
  - Built by Emperor Ashoka originally, in the 3rd century BCE.
  - Additional structures built during Sunga period (2nd and 1st BCE)
  - Current structure dates back to the 5th–6th centuries CE during reign of Guptas.
  - Palas (8th to 12th century) were the last patrons.
- Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2002.
- Shaivite monk Mahant Ghamandi Giri arrived in Gaya around 1590, and established Bodh Gaya Math, a Hindu monastery.
- Giri's descendants continue to control the Mahabodhi temple and treated Lord Buddha as the ninth reincarnation of Lord Vishnu.
- Calls for the temple to be handed over to the Buddhists can be traced to the late 19th century led by the Sri Lankan monk Anagarika Dhammapala.

Architectural Features

Architectural Features of the Mahabodhi Temple

- A 50-meter-high pyramidal shikhara adorned with intricate carvings and arch motifs.
- Four smaller towers, each crowned with an umbrella-shaped dome, encircle the main temple.
- The Sacred Bodhi Tree is seen as a descendant of the original **Bo tree** under which Buddha attained Enlightenment in 589 BCE.
- Vajrasana/stone slab (Diamond Throne) marking the exact location where Buddha meditated. (Built by Ashoka)
- Temple Shrine has a yellow sandstone statue of Buddha, enclosed in glass for preservation.
- Temple Complex of 4.8 hectares, includes both ancient shrines and modern Buddhist structures built by devotees.

Bodh Gaya Temple Act (BGTA), 1949

- It established a management committee to oversee the administration of the Mahabodhi Temple.
- Committee Structure:
  - Eight members with equal representation of Hindus and Buddhists nominated by the State Government.
  - District Magistrate (DM) serves as the ex-officio chairperson
- State Government shall nominate a Hindu as Chairman of the Committee for the period during which the district Magistrate of Gaya is non-Hindu".
- Complicated by the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which provides for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.
- 2013 Amendment: The Bihar government amended the rule, allowing the ex-officio chairman (DM) to be from any faith.

5. AQI

Backdrop :For over 56% of the past five years, Delhi's air quality index (AQI) remained in the 'poor' to 'severe' category, stresses the audit.

Relevance: GS I: Geography GS III Environment - Air Pollution

About the Report :

SOURCE: CAG REPORT

About AQI

Air Quality Index(AQI): The colour-coded AQI index was launched in India in 2014, and it helps the public and the government understand the condition of the air and what subsequent measures are to be taken to combat the situation, based on its severity.

AQI Category, Pollutants and Health Breakpoints

AQI Category (Range)	PM_{10} 24-hr	$PM_{2.5}$ 24-hr	NO_2 24-hr	O_3 8-hr	CO 8-hr (mg/m^3)	SO_2 24-hr	NH_3 24-hr	Pb 24-hr
Good (0-50)	0-50	0-30	0-40	0-50	0-1.0	0-40	0-200	0-0.5
Satisfactory (51-100)	51-100	31-60	41-80	51-100	1.1-2.0	41-80	201-400	0.5 – 1.0
Moderately polluted (101-200)	101-250	61-90	81-180	101-168	2.1- 10	81-380	401-800	1.1-2.0
Poor (201-300)	251-350	91-120	181-280	169-208	10-17	381-800	801-1200	2.1-3.0
Very poor (301-400)	351-430	121-250	281-400	209-748*	17-34	801-1600	1200-1800	3.1-3.5
Severe (401-500)	430 +	250+	400+	748+*	34+	1600+	1800+	3.5+

Standard	PM10 (24-hour) Safe Level (µg/m³)	PM2.5 (24-hour) Safe Level (µg/m³)
Indian CPCB	0 - 100	0 - 60
US EPA	0 - 54	0 - 12

Pollutant	Description	Sources	Related Effects
Particulate Matter (PM10 & PM2.5)	Tiny particles suspended in the air (PM10 ≤ 10µm, PM2.5 ≤ 2.5µm)	Construction, smoking, cleaning, demolitions, industries (brick kilns, paper & pulp), natural hazards (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions)	Respiratory issues (asthma, coughing, sneezing, throat irritation), eye irritation, links to diabetes
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Colorless gas interfering with oxygen transport in blood	Automobile emissions, fires, industrial processes, gas stoves, kitchen chimneys, generators, wood-burning	CO poisoning, chest pain, heart disease, reduced mental ability, vision problems, smog formation
Ozone (O3)	Composed of three oxygen atoms; protective in the upper atmosphere but harmful at ground level	Industrial emissions, automobiles, gasoline vapors, solvents, chemicals, electronic devices, NOx, and tVOCs	Reduced lung function, airway inflammation, eye/nose/throat irritation, plant respiration interference, increased environmental stress
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)	Highly reactive gas in the atmosphere	Vehicle emissions, electricity generation, fuel combustion, industrial processes	Lung absorption, airway inflammation, heart damage, smog formation, foliage damage
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)	Colorless gas with burnt odor, forms sulfuric acid in the air	Vehicle emissions, industries, fossil fuel combustion, power generation	Acid rain, haze, foliage damage, building corrosion, asthma, throat irritation, heart disease
Ammonia (NH3)	Colorless, reactive, alkaline gas with pungent odor	Agriculture, animal husbandry, fertilizers, industries, vehicle emissions, oceanic and soil volatilization	Eutrophication, climate change, PM formation, reduced visibility, eye/nose/throat irritation, lung damage, blindness

Pollutant	Description	Sources	Related Effects
Lead (Pb)	Blue-white heavy metal, corrosive but tarnishes in air	Metal processing, waste incineration, fossil fuel combustion, batteries, vehicle emissions	Neurotoxicity, nephrotoxicity, bone deformities, reproductive issues, learning disabilities, cardiovascular problems, biodiversity loss, soil/ water contamination

CPCB

- **Constitution:** A **statutory organisation, was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.** Further, **CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
- Functions:
  - to promote cleanliness of streams and wells in different areas of the States by prevention, control and abatement of water pollution.
  - to improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country.
- **National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP) (CPCB)**
  - to determine status and trends of ambient air quality
  - to ascertain whether the prescribed ambient air quality standards are violated
  - to Identify Non-attainment Cities
- **Covered Air pollutants(NAMP):**
  - At all Locations: Four - **Sulphur Dioxide (SO2), Oxides of Nitrogen as NO2, Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM / PM10) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)**
- **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Stations (CAAQMS): in real-time monitoring of the ambient air quality across the country through standalone remotely controlled equipment all around the nation.**

NOTE: National Ambient Air Quality Standards (CPCB 2009) are **notified for 12 parameters – PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3, Pb, Ni, As, Benzo(a) pyrene, and Benzene.**

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched the National **Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** in **January, 2019** with an aim to improve air quality in 131 cities (non-attainment cities and Million Plus Cities) in 24 States/UTs by engaging all stakeholders.
- Non-attainment cities : ambient air quality levels exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for 05 consecutive years(annually)
- The programme envisages **to achieve reductions up to 40%** or achievement of National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter10 (PM 10) concentrations **by 2025-26 in comparison to base year of 2017.**

About CAG

- **Article 148:** Provides for a CAG. She is the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department.
- She is the guardian of the public purse and controls the entire financial system of the country at both the levels–the Centre and the state.
- **Appointed** by the president of India by a warrant under his hand and seal.
- **Tenure:** 6 years or 65 Years whichever is earlier; can resign to President.
- **Removal:** By President (grounds same as SC Judges)
- **Duties and powers:** By The Parliament under Article 149
  - He audits the accounts related to all expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India or states or UTs.
  - The CAG submits three audit reports to the President–audit report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts, and audit report on public undertakings.

About PUC Certificate :

- **Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989,** says that every motor vehicle, including those conforming to BS-I, II, III, IV, VI and those running on CNG/ LPG is required to carry a valid certificate, after one year passes from the date of registration.
- **As per Rule 115(7) of the CMVR, 1989 "**After the expiry of a period of one year from the date on which the motor vehicle was first registered, every such vehicle shall carry a valid **"Pollution under Control"** certificate issued by an agency authorised for this purpose **by the State Government.**
- **The validity**: For BS IV and VI - 12 Months and rest 6 months (both have to carry it all the time)

What India Needs to Do ?

- To shift from intent to impact, India needs a phased, data-driven approach.
  - **Phase I:** build local emissions profiles to identify the biggest pollution sources;
  - **Phase II:** link funding directly to targeted actions based on that data;
  - **Phase III**: track reductions in emissions, not just pollution concentrations, to measure real
- India adopts more digital tools, it **must avoid falling into the "Western trap"**— overreliance on high-tech, urban-centric data and solutions without addressing basic pollution sources.
- **Smog towers, real-time apportionment, and AI dashboards** may appear innovative **but offer little value** if burning biomass and the use of old industrial processes and polluting vehicles go unchecked.
- **Cities like London and Los Angeles** rolled out advanced sophisticated **technologies only after decades of systemic reform.** India must sequence its strategies correctly
- While long-term innovation is important, policymakers need **short-term, scalable models they can act on.** India must create separate funding streams: one for research and another for immediate, on-ground interventions.

Global Practices

- Global examples offer guidance without imitation. **China closed coal plants. Brazil used community-led waste systems. California reinvested pollution revenue in poor communities**. **London banned coal-use before** launching sensors.
- India must do the same— innovate programmes which are federalism-friendly, subsidy-driven, and tailored to its informal economy.
- A World Bank report estimated that the cost of the health damage caused by air pollution amounts to $8.1 trillion a year, equivalent to 6.1% of global GDP.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. India's clean air future will be shaped not by dashboards but by people, partnerships, and purpose. Critically Examine.

(150 Words, 10 Marks)

DNA QUIZ

Q.1 Consider the following statement

1. The Future of Jobs Report is an annual report published by the World Bank that explores how jobs and skills will change.
2. International Monetery Fund's Global Risks Report 2025 underscores misinformation and disinformation as the highest ranked short-term global threat.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

1. The Global Ocean Commission grants licences for seabed exploration and mining in international waters.
2. India has received licences for seabed mineral exploration in international waters.
3. 'Rare earth minerals' are present on the seafloor in international waters.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. With reference to offshore mineral exploration in India, consider the following statements:

1. India has an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of approximately 2.3 million square kilometers, providing opportunities for deep-sea mining.
2. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified 13 offshore blocks for mineral exploration.
3. Polymetallic nodules and crusts have been identified primarily off the coast of Gujarat.
4. Construction sand deposits have been identified off the Kerala coast.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2, and 4 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Q4. Arrange the following Ashrams/Institutions founded by Gandhi in chronological order :

(a) Phoenix Settlement
(b) Kochrab Ashram
(c) Sevagram Ashram
(d) Tolstoy Farm

Select the correct answer from the options as given below :

Choose Your Answer:

(a) (a), (b), (c), (d)
(b) (a), (d), (b), (c)
(c) (d), (c), (b), (a)
(d) (a), (c), (d), (b)

Q5. Consider the following properties included in the World Heritage List released by UNESCO:

1. Shantiniketan
2. Rani-ki-Vav
3. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
4. Mahabodhi Bodhgaya Temple Complex at Bodhgaya

How many of the above properties were included in 2023?

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

Q6. Consider the following statements regarding the Mahabodhi Temple:

1. It is one of the four most sacred Buddhist sites associated with Buddha's life.
2. The temple was originally built by Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE.
3. The temple complex includes the Vajrasana (Diamond Throne), marking the exact location where Buddha attained enlightenment.
4. The temple has never been under the control of non-Buddhist groups in history.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1, 2, and 3 only
(c) 2, 3, and 4 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Q7. In the context of WHO Air Quality Guidelines, consider the following statements: [2022]

1. The 24-hour mean of PM2.5 should not exceed 15 μg/m3 and annual mean of PM2.5 should not exceed 5 μg/m3.
2. In a year, the highest levels of ozone pollution occur during the periods of inclement weather.
3. PM10 can penetrate the lung barrier and enter the bloodstream.
4. Excessive ozone in the air can trigger asthma.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1, 3 and 4
(b) 1 and 4 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4
(d) 1 and 2 only

Q8. In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of the Air Quality Index? (UPSC CSE 2016)

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide
4. Sulfur dioxide
5. Methane

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answers							
Q.1 (d)	Q.2 (b)	Q.3 (b)	Q.4 (b)	Q.5 (b)	Q.6 (b)	Q.7 (b)	Q.8 (b)