

DAILY MCQs COMPILATION
with
EXPLANATIONS

FEBRUARY, 2026

NEXT IAS

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HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

1. With reference to Saint Guru Ravidas, consider the following statements:
1. He was a prominent saint of the Bhakti movement during the 15th–16th centuries and is regarded as the founder of the Ravidassia religion.
 2. His devotional compositions are included in the Guru Granth Sahib as well as in the Panch Vani of the Dadu Panthi tradition.
 3. He rejected the concept of karma and emphasized ritual purity as the basis of spiritual liberation.

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

2. With reference to the Buddhist Circuit, consider the following statements:
1. In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism announced the Buddhist Circuit as India's first transnational tourism circuit, covering sites in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
 2. The circuit aims to enable pilgrims and tourists to trace the life and teachings of Lord Buddha from his birth to Parinirvana.
 3. Kapilavastu and Lumbini are included in the Buddhist Circuit, both of which are located in India.

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

3. With reference to the Naïve painting practices of Kovačica (Serbia), consider the following statements:
1. The tradition originated in the 1930s in the town of Kovačica with a Slovak minority.
 2. Practitioners are formally trained artists who mainly use watercolours to depict rural life and history.
 3. It is recognised on the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

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

4. With reference to the National Integration Council (NIC), consider the following statements:
1. It was convened by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1961.
 2. It is a statutory body whose recommendations are binding on the government.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. The Devnimori relics, sometimes mentioned in the news, are best associated with which of the following?
- (a) Harappan urban settlement
 - (b) Early Jain cave architecture
 - (c) Buddhist stupa and monastic remains
 - (d) Gupta-period rock-cut temples
6. Consider the following statements with reference to the Hakki Pikki tribe:
1. It is a semi-nomadic tribe living in forested areas of western and southern India.
 2. It follows Hindu customs, celebrates all Hindu festivals, and is non-vegetarian.
 3. It practices monogamy, society is matriarchal and favors cross-cousin marriages.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
7. Bastar Pandum festival, recently seen in the news, is associated with:
- (a) Promotion of tribal culture and heritage in Chhattisgarh
 - (b) Celebration of classical dance forms of South India
 - (c) Agricultural harvest festival of Punjab
 - (d) Buddhist monastic traditions of Ladakh
8. He was known for propounding the philosophy of Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan). He also contributed to ideological journalism through publications such as Rashtra Dharma (monthly), Panchajanya (weekly), and Swadesh (daily).
Which of the following personalities has been described above?
- (a) Deendayal Upadhyaya
 - (b) Ram Manohar Lohia
 - (c) Vinayak Damodar Savarkar
 - (d) Jayaprakash Narayan
9. With reference to Vande Mataram, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. Vande Mataram was composed by Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali and first appeared in the novel Anandamath in 1882.
 2. During the Swadeshi Movement of 1905, Vande Mataram emerged as the anthem of civil resistance.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

- 10.** 'Herath festival' is celebrated in which of the following regions of India?
- (a) Madhya Pradesh
 - (b) Gujarat
 - (c) Jammu and Kashmir
 - (d) Bihar
- 11.** The Ol Chiki script, sometimes seen in the news, is primarily associated with which one of the following languages?
- (a) Santhali
 - (b) Konkani
 - (c) Sindhi
 - (d) Dogri
- 12.** With reference to the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) Revolt of 1946, consider the following statements:
1. The revolt began in Bombay as a hunger strike by naval ratings against racial discrimination and poor conditions.
 2. During the revolt, the naval ratings hoisted only the flag of the Indian National Congress on their ships.
 3. The revolt was called off after appeals by national political leaders.
- 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
- 13.** With reference to the Indus Valley Civilization, consider the following statements:
1. It flourished roughly between 2600 and 1900 BCE and is also known as the Harappan Civilization after the site of Harappa.
 2. It was primarily an Iron Age civilization.
 3. Its geographical extent included parts of present-day Pakistan and north-western India.
- 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
- 14.** With reference to the Hoysala temples of Karnataka, consider the following statements:
1. They were primarily constructed in the Vesara style of temple architecture.
 2. The temples exhibit only Dravidian architectural features without influence from northern traditions.
 3. Chloritic schist (soapstone) was commonly used as the building material.

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

15. With reference to the Hoysala Empire, consider the following statements:

1. The Hoysala Empire was a Kannadiga power that ruled between the 10th and 14th centuries.
2. The Hoysalas originated from the Malenadu region in the Western Ghats.
3. The capital of the Hoysalas remained at Belur throughout their rule.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

16. With reference to the Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. He is the first and only Indian Governor General of independent India.
2. In 1954 he was conferred with the Bharat Ratna for his contribution to Indian politics and literature.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

17. With reference to revolutionary activities in India, which of the following events is correctly matched with Chandrashekhar Azad?

- (a) Formation of Forward Bloc
- (b) Participation in Kakori Train Robbery
- (c) Presidency of the Indian National Congress at Lahore Session
- (d) Leadership of the Ghadar Movement

EXPLANATIONS

1. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: To mark the **649th birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas** the Adampur airport is renamed Sri Guru Ravidas Ji Airport, Adampur.

- Guru Ravidas is a revered saint of the **Bhakti movement** in the **15th and 16th centuries**, is known for his powerful message of unity, devotion, and service to humanity.
- He is considered the founder of the **Ravidassia religion**.
- His devotional verses were included in the **Sikh scriptures** known as **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- **The Panch Vani text** of the **Dadu Panthi tradition** within Hinduism also includes numerous poems of Saint Ravidas.

Statement 3 is not correct: **Guru Ravidas emphasized inner purity over rituals** ("Mann Changa to Kathauti Mein Ganga"), **upheld karma in a broad ethical sense, and worked for social equality.**

2. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism announced the **Buddhist Circuit as the country's first transnational tourism circuit**, covering sites in Nepal and Sri Lanka alongside those in India.

- The Buddhist Circuit seeks to **help tourists and pilgrims experience first-hand the teachings of Lord Buddha** and trace the footsteps of Buddha.
- **The main sites covered under the circuit span the life of Buddha** from his birth to his Parinirvana and comprise **Bodh Gaya, Vaishali, Rajgir, Kushinagar, Sarnath and Shravasti**, along with **Kapilavastu and Lumbini**.

Statement 3 is not correct: Kapilavastu and Lumbini are located in Nepal, not in India.

3. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The **naïve painting** practices of **Kovačica, Serbia** refer to the tradition of painting and decorating objects with representations of the **folk life, rural environment, history and everyday lives**.

- It originated in the **town of Kovačica in the 1930s** and spread to other towns with Slovak communities in Serbia over time.

Statement 2 is not correct: Practitioners are **self-taught**, they use **oil paint in bright hues** to depict **traditional culture, objects, history and values**.

- An identifying factor, the practice is a means of transmitting the cultural heritage and history of the **Slovak community in Serbia**.

Statement 3 is correct: UNESCO recognised the **Kovacica painters** on its **list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

4. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Recently, there was a demand for the revival of the **National Integration Council during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha**.

- Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, convened the **National Integration Conference in 1961**.
- **Objective:** To promote national integration, communal harmony, and unity in diversity, and to address issues that threaten the country's social cohesion.

Statement 2 is not correct: Nature: It is an **advisory body** (not statutory, not constitutional).

- **Its recommendations are non-binding.**
- **Meetings:** Not held regularly; convened as and when required depending on national circumstances.
 - The National Integration Council has not had a meeting since 2013.

5. (c)

The Exposition of the **Holy Devnimori Relics** was recently inaugurated at Gangaramaya Temple, marking an important cultural and spiritual event in **India–Sri Lanka Buddhist ties**.

About Devnimori Relics

- **Location:** Devnimori is a Buddhist archaeological site located near Shamlaji in Aravalli district of Gujarat.
- **Discovery & Excavation:** First explored in 1957 by archaeologist Prof. S. N. Chowdhry.
 - Excavations revealed significant evidence of early Buddhist worship and monastic traditions.
- **Key Archaeological Findings:** Sharira Stupa specifically meant for enshrining bodily relics (śarīra) of the Gautama Buddha or eminent monks.

- Relic Caskets containing sacred ashes, a copper box, gold and silver foil.
- **Chronology:** Dated to 3rd–4th Century CE, corresponding to the post-Mauryan / early Gupta period.

6. (d)

In News: The Embassy of India assisted Hakki-Pikki community members from Davangere, Shivamogga, and Chikkamagaluru districts, who were at risk of imprisonment in Chad.

Statements 1,2 and 3 are correct : The Hakki Pikki is a semi-nomadic tribe living in forested areas of western and southern India, originally from Gujarat and Rajasthan. Traditionally bird catchers and hunters, they follow Hindu customs, celebrate all Hindu festivals, and are non-vegetarian.

- Society is matriarchal, favors cross-cousin marriages, and practices monogamy. The eldest son keeps his hair uncut for easy identification. Typical marriage ages are 18 for women and 22 for men, and the groom pays dowry to the bride's family.

7. (a)

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the people of Chhattisgarh for the special celebration of '**Bastar Pandum**' festival.

About the Festival

- Bastar Pandum is a cultural festival celebrated in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh showcasing tribal heritage and cultural traditions.
- Held from **February 7 to 9**, the festival has emerged as a major cultural platform highlighting Bastar's tribal identity through **art, music, dance, handicrafts, and indigenous cuisine**.
- More than **700 artists from 84 teams** participated in divisional-level competitions across twelve cultural disciplines, including traditional tribal dances, folk music, handicrafts, indigenous musical instruments, and traditional cuisine.

8. (a)

Context: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay on his death anniversary (11 February).

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (1916–1968)

- Born on September 25, 1916, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya was a political thinker, economist, and founder of the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS)**.
- He studied in Kanpur and later joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), becoming a full-time *pracharak* in 1942.
- He was known for propounding the philosophy of **Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan)**, which emphasized harmony between material and spiritual development, decentralization, and a self-reliant village-based economy.
- He also contributed to ideological journalism through publications such as *Rashtra Dharma* (monthly), *Panchajanya* (weekly), and *Swadesh* (daily).

9. (b)

Context

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued guidelines directing that the national song Vande Mataram be sung/ played before the national anthem when both are played at official events.

About

- Vande Mataram was composed by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** in Sanskrit and first appeared in the novel **Anandamath in 1882**.

- Anandamath is set against the backdrop of the 1769–73 **Bengal famine** and the **Sanyasi Rebellion**.
- First sung by **Rabindranath Tagore at the 1896 Indian National Congress session** gave it national exposure.
- During the **Swadeshi Movement of 1905**, Vande Mataram emerged as the anthem of civil resistance.
 - Vande Mataram, as a political slogan, was first used on **7 August 1905**.

10. (c)

Herath festival holds deep religious and cultural significance for the **Kashmiri Hindu community**.

- The name Herath is derived from the **Sanskrit term Hararatri, meaning “The Night of Hara”, a reference to Lord Shiva and is local lexicon of Mahashivratri**.
- The festival is observed with a night of prayers, followed by a day of feasting and celebrations.
- **Key Rituals and Practices:**
 - **Vatuk Pooja:** Main worship using a Kalash filled with water and walnuts, symbolizing the four Vedas.
 - **Dooni-Mavas:** Walnuts are distributed as sacred offerings.
 - **Greetings: “Herath Poshte”** is used to wish others well.
 - **Food:** Fish and mutton are prepared and consumed, unlike other fasting traditions for Maha Shivratri.

11. (a)

Context: President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the centenary celebration of the Ol Chiki script in New Delhi, emphasising its importance in preserving Santhali heritage.

About

- Ol Chiki was developed in **1925** by **Pandit Raghunath Murmu** to provide a dedicated writing system for the Santhali language.
- It comprises **30 letters** designed to capture Santhali phonetics with precision, allowing systematic documentation of its vocabulary and grammar.
- Santhali, a member of the **Austroasiatic language family**, is spoken across **Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, and Bihar**.
 - It was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003.

12. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: February 18 marks the **80th anniversary** of the **Royal Indian Navy’s (RIN) revolt of 1946**.

- **The ‘mutiny’ started** when hundreds of members of the Royal Indian Navy at HMIS Talwar in Bombay went on a hunger strike.
 - As news of their strike spread, shore establishments across the castle and fort barracks, along with 22 ships anchored in the Bombay harbour, also refused to work.

Statement 2 is not correct: The naval ratings organised a procession in the city, carrying a portrait of Subhas Chandra Bose, and raised the flags of the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Communist Party on their ships.

Statement 3 is correct: The revolt ended on 23 February 1946 after appeals from political leaders.

13. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Harappan civilization is believed to be **one of the oldest world civilizations** that flourished roughly between 2600 and 1900 BC.

Statement 2 is not correct: It is identified as a **Bronze-age civilization** because many objects have been found that are made up of **copper based alloys**.

Statement 3 is correct: At its height, it covered vast areas of what is now Pakistan and north-west India.

14. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: In the rural parts of Hassan, Mandya and Mysuru in Karnataka, overlooked **Hoysala-era temples** reveal a thriving medieval kingdom's sculptural mastery.

- These were built between the 11th and 13th centuries.
- The Hoysala temples are constructed in the **Vesara style** of architecture.

Statement 2 is not correct: The temple has a Dravidian morphology along with substantial influences from the **Bhumija style** prevalent in Central India, **and the Nagara traditions** of northern and western India.

Statement 3 is correct: The material used in temple construction is chloritic schist also known as **soapstone**.

- The temple has a distinct style following a **stellate plan** built on a raised platform.

15. (a)

Context

- In the rural parts of Hassan, Mandya and Mysuru in Karnataka, overlooked **Hoysala-era temples** reveal a thriving medieval kingdom's sculptural mastery.
 - These were built between the 11th and 13th centuries.

Hoysala Empire

- The Hoysala Empire was a Kannadiga power that ruled most of what is now Karnataka, between the **10th and the 14th centuries**.
- The Hoysala rulers were originally from **Malenadu**, an elevated region in the Western Ghats.
- By the 13th century, they governed most of Karnataka, entire northwestern parts of Tamil Nadu and parts of western Andhra Pradesh in the Deccan Plateau.
- The capital of the Hoysalas was initially located at **Belur**, but was later moved to **Halebidu**.



16. (c)

Context

- The President of India, unveiled a bust of Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first and only Indian Governor General of independent India at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About C. Rajagopalachari

- **Early Life:** Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, popularly referred to as **Rajaji**, was born in **1878** in **Thorapalli, Tamil Nadu**.
 - His entry into public life was marked in 1917 when he became the chairperson of the municipality of Salem in 1917.
- **Role in India's Independence Movement:** Rajaji's meeting with Mahatma Gandhi in **1919** transformed his political trajectory, prompting him to give up his legal career for the freedom struggle.
 - He participated in agitations against the **Rowlatt Act, the Non-Cooperation movement, the Vaikom Satyagraha, and the Civil Disobedience Movement** and was jailed five times between 1912 and 1941.
- **Post-independence,** Rajaji served as the **last Governor-General of India till 1950**.
 - He briefly served as **Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister** between 1952 and 1954.
 - He founded the **Swatantra Party in 1959**, representing classical liberal economic ideas.
- **Literary Contribution:** His most popular works include a retelling of the **Mahabharata and Ramayana in English**, and **Ramayana – Chakravarti Thirumagan in Tamil**.
- **In 1954** he was conferred with the **Bharat Ratna** for his contribution to Indian politics and literature.

17. (b)

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the revolutionary **Chandrashekhar Azad** marking his Martyrdom Day.

About Chandrashekhar Azad

- Chandrashekhar Azad was a **great Indian freedom fighter** and he was born on July 23, 1906 in Badarka village of Unnao district in Uttar Pradesh.
- He actively participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22)** launched by Mahatma Gandhi.
- When produced before a magistrate, he **declared his name as "Azad," father's name as "Swatantra,"** and residence as "Jail." After being publicly flogged, he adopted the title Azad, meaning "Free," as his permanent identity.
- After the **Chauri Chaura incident (1922)** and the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, he shifted towards revolutionary activities.
- On 27 February 1931, Azad was surrounded by police at **Alfred Park in Allahabad (now Chandrashekhar Azad Park)**. After a gunfight in which he enabled his associate Sukhdev Raj to escape, he shot himself with his last bullet to avoid capture

Key Contributions

- **Kakori Train Robbery (1925):** As a leader in the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) with Ram Prasad Bismil, Azad helped rob a train to fund arms for independence. He escaped capture while others were jailed.
- **Lahore Assassination (1928):** Aided Bhagat Singh and Rajguru in killing British officer John Saunders, avenging Lala Lajpat Rai's death during a protest.
- **HSRA Formation:** He reorganised the Hindustan Republican Association under the new name of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) after the death of its founder Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil. He was the chief strategist of the HSRA.



ECONOMY

1. With reference to the 'Union Budget of India', consider the following statements:
 1. It requires approval from the President before being presented in Parliament.
 2. The Demands for Grants are discussed and voted only in the Lok Sabha.
 3. An Appropriation Bill authorizes the government to withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund.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
2. With reference to coconut cultivation, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Coconut is a monocotyledonous perennial plantation crop belonging to the family Arecaceae.
 2. Coconut grows best in temperate climates with low rainfall.Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to the Union Budget 2026–27, consider the following sources of government receipts:
 1. Income Tax contributes a higher share than Corporation Tax.
 2. Borrowings and Other Liabilities form the single largest source of receipts.
 3. Customs duties contribute more than Union Excise Duties.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1, 2 and 3
 - (d) 2 and 3 only
4. Bharat-VISTAAR is best described as which one of the following?
 - (a) A government-owned proprietary AI platform
 - (b) A centralized e-governance portal for farmers
 - (c) An open and federated Digital Public Infrastructure for agriculture
 - (d) A private agri-tech marketplace for advisory services

5. Which of the following correctly distinguishes the Debt-to-GDP ratio from the fiscal deficit?
- Debt-to-GDP is a flow variable, fiscal deficit is a stock variable
 - Debt-to-GDP measures total outstanding liabilities, fiscal deficit measures annual gap
 - Both measure the same concept but in different units
 - Fiscal deficit includes private sector debt, Debt-to-GDP does not
6. With reference to Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), consider the following statements:
- It is a central sector scheme which was launched in the Union Budget 2024-25.
 - It aims to mobilize medium and long-term debt financing for post-harvest management infrastructure.
 - Under AIF, banks and financial institutions provide loans with 3% per annum interest subvention by Government of India.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
7. Consider the following statements regarding eligibility under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Incentive Scheme:
- Only greenfield investments are eligible.
 - Brownfield investments are also eligible for incentives.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
8. With reference to Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), consider the following statements:
- The concept of D-SIBs was introduced in India after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis.
 - D-SIBs are required to maintain additional Common Equity Tier-1 (CET-1) capital depending on the bucket they are placed in.
 - The Reserve Bank of India identifies D-SIBs based on parameters such as size, interconnectedness, substitutability, and complexity.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
9. With reference to the 'capital expenditure in India', consider the following statements:
- It includes expenditure on the creation of physical and financial assets by the government.
 - Loans and advances given by the Central Government to State Governments are treated as capital expenditure.
 - Expenditure on subsidies is classified as capital expenditure if it leads to asset creation.

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

10. What is meant by Strategic Disinvestment of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)?

- (a) Sale of minority shares without management transfer
- (b) Sale of shares only to retail investors
- (c) Sale of government shareholding with transfer of management control
- (d) Buyback of shares by the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs)

11. With reference to the 'Fiscal Policy in India', consider the following statements:

1. It is formulated and implemented by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
2. Both Union and State governments have independent fiscal powers under the Constitution of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

12. Consider the following statements with reference to Vizhinjam port.

1. It is a strategic maritime project which is situated in Andhra Pradesh.
2. It is India's First deep water container transshipment port.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

13. What is the Repo Rate?

- (a) The rate at which banks lend to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- (b) The rate at which RBI lends short-term money to commercial banks
- (c) The interest rate paid on savings accounts by banks
- (d) The rate at which banks borrow from each other overnight

14. With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The MPC is a constitutional body established under Article 269 of the Constitution of India.
2. The MPC is responsible for fixing the repo rate to maintain price stability.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

15. Consider the following committees:

1. Malegam Committee (2011)
2. R Gandhi Committee (2015)
3. Vishwanathan Committee (2021)

Which of the above are aimed to reform cooperative banks in India?

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

16. With reference to Gold Exchange Traded Funds (Gold ETFs) and Digital Gold, consider the following statements:

1. Gold ETFs invest in physical gold bullion and aim to track the price of gold.
2. Gold ETFs can be purchased without a demat account, similar to Digital Gold.
3. Gold ETFs are regulated by SEBI, whereas Digital Gold is not regulated by any financial market regulator.

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

17. With reference to Integrated Farming Systems (IFS), consider the following statements:

1. IFS is based on the principle of minimum competition and maximum complementarity among different farm enterprises.
2. One of the objectives of IFS is to ensure that waste from one subsystem becomes an input for another subsystem.
3. IFS promotes monocropping to maximize productivity from a single enterprise.

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

18. With reference to India's tea export, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. India's tea exports crossed 280 million kg for the first time in 2025.
2. Black tea accounts for more than 90% of India's tea exports.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

19. With reference to the removal of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The Speaker can be removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the then members of the House.

2. The motion for removal requires at least 14 days' prior notice.
3. During the discussion on the removal motion, the Speaker can preside over the proceedings of the House.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

20. With reference to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. CPI measures the average change over time in prices paid by consumers for a basket of goods and services and reflects retail inflation.
2. The CPI is released monthly by the National Statistical Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
3. The recent revision of the CPI base year from 2012 to 2024 involves updating the item basket and weights using the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES).

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

21. The Gadgil Study Group and the Nariman Committee are associated with which of the following initiatives in India?

- (a) Establishment of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)
- (b) Formation of Small Finance Banks
- (c) Nationalisation of commercial banks
- (d) Introduction of the Lead Bank Scheme for district-level credit planning

22. Singapore recently announced plans to regulate the sale of "blind box" products. What are "blind box" products?

- (a) Digital coupons offering random cashback rewards
- (b) Sealed products whose contents are unknown to the buyer until after purchase
- (c) Online subscription boxes delivered at fixed intervals
- (d) Products sold through auction-based pricing systems

23. With reference to Municipal Bonds in India, consider the following statements:

1. They are marketable debt instruments issued by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
2. They can be issued directly by ULBs or through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).
3. They are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
4. They can be used to finance capital projects of ULBs.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

24. With reference to Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), consider the following statements:

1. ETFs are investment funds traded on stock exchanges.
2. ETFs can hold assets such as stocks, bonds, or commodities.
3. The price of an ETF remains fixed throughout the trading day.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

25. With reference to the, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. CSR expenditure is mandatory for all profit-making companies.
2. CSR spending is required to be at least 2% of the average net profits of the preceding three financial years.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

26. Which of the following sectors are prohibited for FDI in India?

1. Lottery business
2. Gambling and betting
3. Chit funds
4. Nidhi companies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

27. Which of the following statements are correct about Nammo Bharat?

- (a) It is India's first bullet train project running between Mumbai to Ahmedabad.
- (b) It is India's first Regional Rail connecting urban nodes across the National Capital Region.
- (c) It is India's first underground metro railway system established in Kolkata.
- (d) It is India's first private railway which was constructed without any financial grant from the Government.

28. With reference to the Chicory, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Chicory is derived from the roasted root of Cichorium intybus, a herbaceous plant belonging to the daisy family.
2. It naturally contains caffeine in small amounts.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

29. With reference to the calculation and features of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), consider the following statements:
1. India's GDP is calculated using both the factor cost method and the expenditure method.
 2. Under the factor cost method, performance is evaluated across eight core industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and financial services.
 3. The expenditure method measures GDP by examining components such as household consumption and government expenditure.
- 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
30. With reference to the concept of Base Year in economic statistics, consider the following statements:
1. A base year is a benchmark year used for comparison in economic and statistical calculations.
 2. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates base year in India has been upgraded to 2020-21 from the previous 2011-12.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
31. With reference to Most Favoured Nation status, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. Granting MFN status implies automatic duty-free access to all goods.
 2. MFN status prohibits countries from entering into Free Trade Agreements.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)

In News: Recently, the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026-2027 in Parliament.

Statement 1 is not correct: The Union Budget is presented in **Parliament of India** by the Finance Minister. **Prior approval of the President is not required** before presentation.

- However, **the President's recommendation is required** for the introduction of certain financial bills **after** the Budget is presented.

Statement 2 is correct: Demands for Grants relate to government expenditure. They are **discussed and voted only in the Lok Sabha**.

- The Rajya Sabha can **discuss** but **cannot vote** on them.

Statement 3 is correct: After Demands for Grants are passed, the **Appropriation Bill** is introduced. Once enacted, it **authorizes withdrawal of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India** for government spending.

2. (a)

Context

- The Union Budget 2026–27 places renewed emphasis on high-value agriculture, with targeted support for **coconut, cashew, cocoa, sandalwood**, and select nut crops to enhance farmer incomes and export competitiveness.

Coconut Production

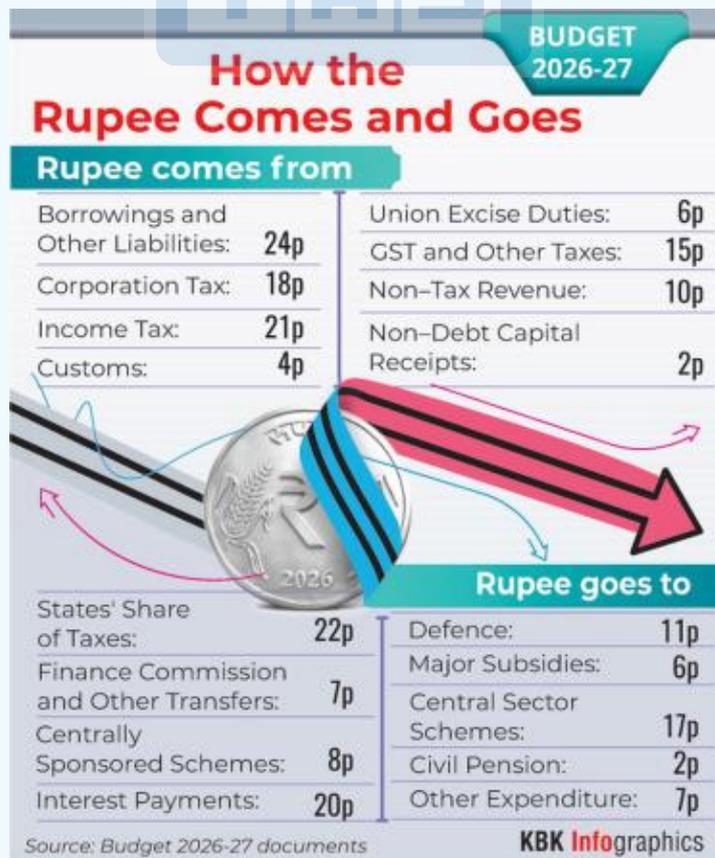
- **Type of Plant:** Coconut is a perennial plantation crop and a **monocotyledonous palm** belonging to the family **Areaceae**.
 - Coconut is native to the **Indo-Pacific region**, with its origin commonly traced to **Southeast Asia**.
- **Climatic Requirements:** Coconut requires a warm and humid tropical climate for optimal growth. It grows best in regions with temperatures ranging between 25°C and 30°C and requires high and evenly distributed rainfall.
- **Soil Requirements:** Coconut thrives in **well-drained sandy loam, alluvial, laterite**, and coastal soils.
- **Distribution in India:** It predominantly grows in **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, and West Bengal**.
 - **India is the world’s largest producer of coconuts**, supporting livelihoods of nearly **30 million** people, including around **10 million** farmers.

3. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Income Tax contributes 21 paise, while Corporation Tax contributes 18 paise to every rupee of government receipts. Hence, Income Tax has a higher share.

Statement 2 is correct: Borrowings and Other Liabilities account for 24 paise, which is the largest single source of government receipts.

Statement 3 is not correct: Customs duties contribute 4 paise, whereas Union Excise Duties contribute 6 paise. Therefore, Customs duties do not contribute more than Union Excise Duties.



4. (c)

Bharat-VISTAAR is designed as an open, interoperable, and federated DPI that enables multiple stakeholders—government, startups, private players, and institutions—to build and deliver agriculture-related services at scale. It's not a single app, portal, or private platform, but a shared digital backbone for India's agri ecosystem.

5. (b)

Fiscal Deficit: It represents the difference between the government's total expenditure and its total receipts (excluding borrowings) during a single financial year. It indicates how much the government needs to borrow this year to meet its expenses.

6. (b)

In News: Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) has sanctioned ₹80,224.15 crore in loans for over 1.5 lakh projects, mobilising investments of ₹1.27 lakh crore Since 2020

Statements 1 is not correct : Agriculture Infra Fund (AIF) is a financing facility launched on **8th July 2020** under the visionary guidance of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, for creation of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farm assets.

Statements 2 and 3 are correct : Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) is a Central Sector Scheme to **mobilize medium and long-term debt financing for the development** of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets.

- It focuses on strengthening agri-logistics, reducing post-harvest losses, promoting modern storage, processing and value-addition facilities and improving farm-gate level infrastructure for efficient supply chains.
- Under the scheme, banks and financial institutions provide loans with 3% per annum interest subvention by Government of India.
- Credit guarantee coverage for loans up to ₹2 crore is also supported under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) and NABSanrakshan.

7. (b)

The Electronics Component Manufacturing Incentive Scheme, implemented by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), allows both greenfield and brownfield investments to avail incentives.

- Greenfield investments refer to new manufacturing facilities set up from scratch.
- Brownfield investments involve expansion, modernization or upgradation of existing manufacturing units.

The inclusion of brownfield projects is aimed at quickly scaling domestic electronics manufacturing capacity, leveraging existing infrastructure and integrating Indian firms into global value chains. Hence, the statement that only greenfield investments are eligible is incorrect, while the statement regarding eligibility of brownfield investments is correct.

8. (d)

About D-SIBs

- D-SIBs are banks considered **“too big to fail.”**
- Their collapse can trigger system-wide financial instability, so they are placed under special regulation and higher supervision.
- Concept introduced globally after the **2008 Global Financial Crisis.**
- **Based on Basel-III guidelines,** RBI released the D-SIB framework in 2014, it identifies banks based on: Size (Total exposures), interconnectedness, substitutability (difficulty of replacing services) & complexity.

- Banks are placed in different buckets (0 to 4) depending on systemic importance.
- Higher the bucket means higher **additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET-1) capital requirement**.

9. (a)

In News: The Union Budget 2026-27 has estimated ₹12.2 lakh crore for public capital expenditure, from ₹2.63 lakh crore in FY18.

Statement 1 is correct: Capital expenditure includes spending on **creation of physical assets** (roads, railways, machinery) and **financial assets** (equity, loans).

Statement 2 is correct: **Loans and advances** given by the Central Government to State Governments are treated as **capital expenditure**.

Statement 3 is not correct: **Subsidies are generally classified as revenue expenditure**, even if they indirectly lead to asset creation, because they do not create assets owned by the government.

10. (c)

Context

- The Union Budget 2026–27 reiterates the government’s preference for growth-led fiscal consolidation, balancing deficit reduction with sustained capital expenditure, and disinvestment.

About

- Economic growth has been prioritised over fiscal deficit reduction to sustain demand and investment.
- **Capital expenditure and infrastructure spending** have been protected due to their high growth multiplier effects.
- The fiscal deficit is projected at **4.4% of GDP in FY26** and **4.3% in FY27**, reflecting gradual consolidation.

What is PSU Disinvestment?

- PSU disinvestment refers to the process by which the **government reduces its ownership stake** in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).
- It can involve **partial sale, strategic sale, or increase in public shareholding**, while retaining or transferring management control.
- Disinvestment is **distinct from privatisation**, as ownership and control may still remain with the government.
- **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM):**
 - DIPAM is a Department under the **Ministry of Finance**.
 - It deals with all matters relating to management of Central Government investments in equity including disinvestment of equity in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE’s).

Modes of Disinvestment of CPSEs

- **Strategic Disinvestment:** It implies the entire or substantial sale of Government shareholding of a CPSE along with **transfer of management control**.
- **Minority Stake Sale:** Minority stake sale in certain CPSEs are carried out without transfer of management control through various SEBI-approved methods like **Initial Public Offer (IPO), Offer for Sale (OFS) and Buyback of shares etc.**

11. (b)

In News: In the **Union Budget 2026-27**, the government has placed greater emphasis on the **debt-to-GDP ratio**, instead of focusing narrowly on the annual fiscal deficit.

Statement 1 is not correct: Fiscal policy is framed by the **Government of India (Ministry of Finance)**; RBI is responsible for **monetary policy**, not fiscal policy.

- Fiscal policy includes **both government revenue (tax and non-tax)** and **government expenditure**, including subsidies, welfare spending, and capital investment.

Statement 2 is correct: India follows **fiscal federalism**; both **Union and State governments** have independent fiscal powers under the Constitution.

12. (b)

In News: Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala has risen to the 83rd position globally in container handling, reflecting the rapid scale-up of India's newest deep water transshipment hub.

Statement 1 is not correct: Vizhinjam Port is a strategic maritime project near Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala.

- It is expected to significantly reduce India's reliance on foreign ports for trans-shipment, which previously accounted for 75% of such operations, thereby retaining revenue within the country and creating new economic opportunities for Kerala and its people.

Statement 2 is correct: Vizhinjam Port is India's first dedicated container trans-shipment port.

- It is strategically located near one of the world's busiest sea trade routes.
- It boasts a natural deep draft of nearly 20 meters, enabling it to accommodate some of the world's largest cargo ships.

13. (b)

Context

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at **5.25%**.

What is the Repo Rate?

- The repo rate is the **rate at which the RBI lends short-term money** to commercial banks. **It is the key policy tool** used by the RBI to control liquidity, inflation, and economic growth.
- **A lower repo rate** means banks can borrow from the RBI at cheaper rates. This encourages banks to lower lending rates, leading to:
 - Easier access to credit for consumers and businesses
 - Boost in investment, consumption, and economic activity
 - Increased liquidity and money supply
 - This can stimulate growth, especially during economic slowdowns.

14. (b)

Context

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at **5.25%**.

What is the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)?

- The MPC is a **statutory body** established under the **RBI Act, 1934** (amended in 2016).
- It is responsible for **fixing the benchmark interest rate** (repo rate) to maintain price stability while keeping growth in mind.
- **It consists of 6 members:**
 - 3 from the RBI (including the Governor as Chairperson),
 - 3 external members appointed by the Government.
- Decisions are made by majority, and each member has one vote. In case of a tie, the **RBI Governor has the casting vote**.

15. (d)

In News: Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released a discussion paper seeking public comments on **issuing new licences for cooperative banks**. It revived a **long-standing debate** on whether cooperative banks can be effectively regulated within India's modern banking framework.

- **Malegam Committee (2011):** It primarily focused on **financial sector reforms** and institutional structures, **recommended permitting the issue of new licences to Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)**, subject to **strict eligibility and prudential conditions**.
- **R. Gandhi Committee (2015):** It is formally known as the **Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion**. It examined the **structure, regulation, and challenges of cooperative banks**, especially urban cooperative banks, and suggested reforms.
- **Vishwanathan Committee (2021):** It was specifically constituted to **review the regulatory framework for Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs)** and recommend measures to strengthen governance, supervision, and financial soundness.

16. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: A gold ETF is a **fund that invests in gold bullion** and aims to track the performance of the price of gold.

Statement 2 is not correct: Gold ETFs require a demat and trading account; Digital Gold does not.

Statement 3 is correct: Gold ETFs are regulated by SEBI, whereas Digital Gold is not regulated by any financial market regulator.

17. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: **Integrated farming systems (IFS)** is a positive interaction between two or more components — such as horticulture crops, livestock, aquaculture, poultry/ducks, apiculture, and mushroom cultivation.

- It uses the principles of minimum competition and maximum complementarity with **advanced agronomic management tools**.
- One of the objectives of the system is **to minimize the waste** from various subsystems of the farm by expanding the symbiotic systems so that the waste of one process becomes the input for other operations.

Statement 3 is not correct: IFS discourages monocropping and instead promotes diversification and intercropping.

18. (c)

Context

- India recorded its highest-ever tea exports in 2025, touching 280.40 million kg during January–December 2025, marking a significant increase from 256.17 million kg in 2024.

About Tea

- India is the **second largest tea exporter in the world**.
- **Types of tea exported:** Primarily black tea (96%), with small quantities of regular, green, herbal, masala, and lemon tea.
- **Key driver:** Significant rise in shipments to West Asia, especially **Iraq, UAE and Iran**, now accounting for 20% of India's tea exports.
 - Exports to China surged to **16.13 million kg** in 2025, compared to just 6.24 million kg in 2024.
- **India's Export destinations:** Over 25 countries, including UAE, Iraq, Iran, Russia, US, and UK.
- **Prominent tea regions:** Assam (Assam Valley, Cachar) and West Bengal (Dooars, Terai, Darjeeling).
- **Global reputation:** Indian teas, especially Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri, are renowned for their quality.
 - **China** is the largest tea producing country in the world **followed by India**.

19. (a)

Context: A no-confidence motion (resolution for removal) has been submitted against the Lok Sabha Speaker under **Article 94(c)** of the Constitution of India.

Removal of the Speaker

- **Article 94(c):** The Speaker may be removed by a **resolution of the Lok Sabha** passed by a **majority of all the then members** of the House.
 - This is known as an **effective majority** (majority of the total effective strength, excluding vacancies).
 - If the motion is passed, the **Speaker is removed immediately** but **continues as an MP**.
- **Notice Requirement:** At least **14 days** written notice must be given before moving the resolution.
- **Minimum Support for Admission:** The motion must be supported by **at least 50** members to be admitted for discussion.
- **During the Pendency of Motion:**
 - The Speaker **cannot preside** over the House during the discussion of the motion.
 - The Deputy Speaker or another member presides.
 - The Speaker has the **right to participate and defend himself**.

20. (d)

All three statements are correct: CPI measures the **average change in prices** paid by **consumers for a basket of goods and services** over time i.e., it tracks retail inflation.

- It is published **monthly**, the **earlier base year: 2012** which is revised to 2024.
- **Released By:** NSO, MoSPI.
- **The base updation exercise** mainly involves revising the CPI item basket and updating item weights based on the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES).

21. (d)

In News: The RBI's proposed guidelines aim to strengthen and streamline the Lead Bank Scheme by clearly defining the structure, membership, and roles of various committees.

Lead Bank Scheme (LBS)

- The Lead Bank Scheme (LBS) originated from the 1969 Gadgil Study Group, which highlighted the inadequate rural presence and orientation of commercial banks and recommended an "Area Approach" for developing rural banking and credit structures.
- This was endorsed by the Nariman Committee, which proposed that each public sector bank act as a "Lead Bank" in specific districts to fulfill social responsibilities.
- Based on these recommendations, the RBI introduced the LBS in December 1969 to coordinate banks and development agencies at the district level.
- It aims to enhance credit flow to priority and rural sectors, and promote overall rural development through designated Lead Banks.

22. (b)

Context: Singapore is now planning to regulate the sale of "blind box" products after concerns that this marketing strategy may encourage gambling-like behaviour.

About

- Blind boxes are sealed products, usually toys or collectibles, where buyers discover the item only after purchase. The attraction lies in the chance of getting a rare or high-value item.
- Psychologists explain that this works on a variable reward system, the same principle used in gambling. Uncertainty, occasional rewards, and fear of missing out trigger dopamine release, encouraging repeated purchases.
- Regulators are especially concerned about minors, as the system blurs the line between shopping and gambling. The government is considering rules that may require companies to disclose the probability of receiving specific items.

23. (b)

India's municipal bonds are marketable debt instruments issued by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) like municipal corporations to fund infrastructure such as water supply or roads. They can be issued directly by ULBs or through intermediaries like Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) or corporate municipal entities, as per SEBI guidelines.

The regulation falls under SEBI's Issue and Listing of Municipal Debt Securities Regulations, 2015 (amended), not RBI, which handles broader monetary policy. These bonds primarily finance capital projects, refinance loans, or meet working capital needs.

24. (a)

In News: According to data from the World Gold Council, India's gold ETFs bought a record 15.52 tonne of gold in January, almost equal to the demand seen in the previous three months combined.

ETFs (Exchange-Traded Funds)

- They are investment funds traded on stock exchanges that hold a mix of assets like stocks, bonds, or commodities.
- They let investors easily buy a diversified portfolio, track a specific index or sector, and offer cost-effective exposure to various markets, with prices fluctuating throughout the trading day.

25. (b)

Context

- The Vice President of India, stated that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has moved from being a peripheral activity to becoming central to national progress, at the National CSR Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

What Is Corporate Social Responsibility?

- It is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.
- **Types of Corporate Social Responsibility:**
- **Environmental responsibility:** Sustainability, climate action, waste management, and conservation.
- **Ethical responsibility:** Fair business practices, transparency, and governance.
- **Philanthropic responsibility:** Donations, education, healthcare, and community welfare.
- **Economic responsibility:** Long-term value creation while supporting social objectives.

CSR Applicability in India

- The CSR in India is **statutory obligation** and is governed by **Section 135** of the **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - It encourages companies to spend **2%** of their average net profit in the previous three years on CSR activities.
- The provisions of CSR applies to every **company fulfilling** any of the following conditions in the preceding financial year:
 - Net worth of more than **Rs.500 crore**,
 - Turnover of more than **Rs.1000 crore**,
 - Net profit of more than **Rs.5 crore**.

26. (a)

Recent data released by the Reserve Bank of India indicates that net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India **remained negative for the fourth consecutive month** in December 2025, primarily driven by a sharp rise in repatriation.

What is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) ?

- It refers to **investments made by foreign entities** (individuals or companies) in the business interests of another country, typically in the form of **ownership or control of enterprises**.
- At present, **FDI is prohibited** in lottery, gambling and betting, chit funds, Nidhi company, real estate business, and manufacturing of cigars, cheroots, cigarillos and cigarettes using tobacco.

Routes for FDI in India

- **Automatic Route:** No prior approval is required.
 - Investors need to inform the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after making the investment.
 - Most sectors, such as manufacturing and software, fall under this route.
- **Government Approval Route:** Requires prior approval from the concerned Ministry or Department.
 - Sectors such as telecom, media, pharmaceuticals, and insurance fall under this route.

27. (b)

In News : The Prime Minister inaugurated India's first Namu Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) and dedicated the 82-km Delhi-Meerut Namu Bharat Corridor to the nation.

Namu Bharat is India's first Regional Rail connecting key urban nodes across the National Capital Region via high-speed rail corridors.

- It is a rail-based, high-speed, high-frequency and sustainable transit system with a design speed of 180 Kmph and an average speed of 100 Kmph which aims at bringing people and places closer to NCR.
- NCRTC, the implementing agency, has adopted several new-age technologies to make Namu Bharat one of the most commuter-centric transit systems.

28. (a)**Context**

- India's food regulator, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**, has mandated new labelling rules for **coffee-chicory mixtures** to ensure transparency and prevent misleading practices in the packaged food sector.

What Is Chicory?

- Chicory is derived from the roasted root of **Cichorium intybus**, a herbaceous plant belonging to the **daisy family**.
- It has a coffee-like flavour but contains **no caffeine**. When blended with coffee, it **enhances colour, thickness, foam, and aroma**.
 - Although safe for consumption, a higher proportion of chicory reduces caffeine content and alters the characteristic taste of coffee.
- Chicory is **native to Europe and Asia** and is now cultivated in several parts of the world, including India.
- **The root contains inulin**, a starchy soluble fibre with **prebiotic properties** that supports gut health. It has a mild laxative effect and helps reduce inflammation. Chicory is also a rich source of beta-carotene.

29. (d)

All three statements are correct: India's GDP is calculated using two methods: the factor cost method and the expenditure method.

- **The factor cost method evaluates** performance across eight industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and financial services.

- The **expenditure method examines** spending in areas like household consumption and government costs to assess economic performance.

30. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: A base year is a **benchmark year** used for **comparison in economic and statistical calculations**.

- It provides a **reference point** against which **current values of indicators like GDP, CPI, and IIP are measured** to track real changes over time.
- **Significance:**
 - It allows us to **remove the effect of inflation** and see real growth.
 - Ensures that the **data reflects the current structure of the economy**, consumption patterns, and prices.

Statement 2 is not correct: **Base year for GDP Estimates** has been revised from **2011–12 to 2022–23** to better reflect India's evolving economic structure.

31. (d)

Context

- India and the European Union are set to grant each other '**Most Favoured Nation**' status for five years from the date the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) comes into effect.

What is 'Most Favoured Nation' status?

- According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the MFN principle guarantees **non-discriminatory trade** by requiring countries to treat all trading partners equally.
- **Core Principle:**
 - If a country grants a special favour such as a lower customs duty to one trading partner, it must extend the same benefit to all other WTO members.
 - **Countries cannot normally discriminate** between their trading partners.
 - MFN ensures **equality, predictability, and transparency** in international trade.
- The MFN principle is foundational to the multilateral trading system and is embedded in key WTO agreements:
 - MFN is enshrined in Article 1 of the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**.
 - MFN is a priority principle under Article 2 of the **General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)**.
 - MFN is reflected in Article 4 of the **Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)** Agreement.

■■■■

INDIAN POLITY & CONSTITUTION

1. With reference to the Finance Commission of India, consider the following statements:
 1. It is an ad-hoc body, constituted every five years or earlier if required.
 2. The recommendations are legally binding on the Government of India.
 3. It decides the distribution of taxes between the Centre and States, and among States.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

2. With reference to the 'capital punishment in India', consider the following statements:
 1. Every capital punishment needs to be confirmed by the High Court before it can be executed.
 2. Mercy petitions are an executive function, decided by the Governor of State or President of India.
 3. The Governor of a State can pardon a death sentence.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

3. With reference to the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), consider the following statements:
 1. MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme launched in 1993.
 2. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is responsible for issuing guidelines for MPLADS.
 3. The objective of MPLADS is to create durable community assets based on locally felt needs.Which of the statements given above are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

4. S. R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994), a case often seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
 - (a) Power of Parliament to amend the Constitution.
 - (b) Judicial review of the President's Rule under Article 356.
 - (c) Appointment and removal of State Governors.
 - (d) Disqualification of legislators under the Tenth Schedule.

5. The demand for a separate administrative arrangement for Eastern Nagaland, which led to the creation of FNTA, was primarily raised by:
- Naga Hoho
 - National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)
 - Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation
 - Tribal Councils of Manipur
6. With reference to the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA), which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It was created through a tripartite agreement involving the Union Government, the Government of Nagaland, and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO).
 - It grants full statehood to six eastern districts of Nagaland.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to ad hoc judges in High Courts, consider the following statements:
- Article 224A of the Constitution provides for the appointment of retired High Court judges as ad hoc judges.
 - Ad hoc judges exercise the same judicial powers as sitting High Court judges.
 - Appointment of ad hoc judges affects the seniority of sitting High Court judges for elevation to higher courts.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
8. With reference to the Finance Commission of India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It is a constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Constitution of India.
 - It recommends the distribution of tax revenues between the Centre and the States.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
9. With reference to the Motion of Thanks in the Indian Parliament, consider the following statements:
- It is moved in both Houses of Parliament after the President's Address under Article 87 of the Constitution.
 - The President's Address outlines the policies and programmes of the government.
 - Failure to pass the Motion of Thanks amounts to a defeat of the government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- 10.** Which of the following best describes the Right to be Forgotten (RTBF) in India?
- (a) It enables individuals to receive compensation from platforms for storing data.
 - (b) It allows a person to seek deletion of private information from the Internet
 - (c) It enables a person the right to publish private information without consent.
 - (d) It allows citizens to access government records to ensure transparency.
- 11.** Form 7, recently seen in the news in the context of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, is used for:
- (a) Registration of new voters in the electoral roll
 - (b) Transfer of voters between constituencies
 - (c) Objection to or deletion of a name from the electoral roll
 - (d) Issuance of voter identity cards
- 12.** The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 was enacted to give effect to which of the following Articles of the Constitution of India?
- (a) Article 14
 - (b) Article 15
 - (c) Article 21
 - (d) Article 23
- 13.** With reference to the Supreme Court's 2024 Constitution Bench judgment in State of Punjab vs Davinder Singh, consider the following statements:
1. The Court held that Scheduled Castes constitute a homogeneous class.
 2. The Court permitted sub-classification within Scheduled Castes for equitable distribution of reservation.
 3. The judgment overruled the 2004 decision in EV Chinniah vs State of Andhra Pradesh.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 14.** With reference to Bonded Labour in India, consider the following statements:
1. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act was enacted to give effect to Article 23 of the Constitution of India.
 2. Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, bonded labourers are freed but their outstanding debts remain legally enforceable.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

- 15.** With reference to the financial relations between the Centre and the States in India, consider the following statements:
1. Article 280 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of a Finance Commission.
 2. The recommendations of the Finance Commission are legally binding on the Union government.
 3. Article 282 allows the Union government to provide grants to states for any public purpose.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 16.** With reference to the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, consider the following statements:
1. The Act applies only to government offices and public sector undertakings.
 2. An Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) must be constituted at every office or branch employing 10 or more employees.
 3. Conciliation between the complainant and respondent may include monetary settlement as a basis of resolution.
- Which of the statements given above are not correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 17.** With reference to the revised definition of 'wage' under India's Labour Codes, consider the following statements:
1. Wages need to constitute at least 50% of total remuneration.
 2. The reform increases employer contributions toward provident fund and gratuity.
 3. The reform reduces long-term pension benefits for employees.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 18.** Which of the following ministries is APEDA directly under?
- (a) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
 - (b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 - (c) Ministry of Food Processing Industries
 - (d) Ministry of Rural Development
- 19.** With reference to the Private Member's Bill in the Indian Parliament, consider the following statements:
1. A Private Member's Bill is a proposal introduced by MPs who are not ministers.
 2. The purpose of a Private Member's Bill is to draw the government's attention to issues that require legislation.
 3. A Private Member's Bill can be introduced only with the prior approval of the President.

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

20. With reference to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, consider the following statements:

1. The amendment to the Right to Information Act removes the public interest override in matters relating to personal information.
2. It allows Public Information Officers (PIOs) to balance privacy against larger public interest before disclosure.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

21. With reference to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It investigates civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents to determine causes and recommend safety measures.
2. AAIB functions under the Ministry of Defence.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

22. With reference to the Food Corporation of India (FCI), consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body established under the Food Corporations Act, 1964.
2. It functions under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

23. Which of the following are components of the differentiated urban grant structure introduced by the 16th Finance Commission?

1. Basic Grants
2. Performance Grants
3. Special Infrastructure Grants
4. Urbanisation Premium

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

24. The Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990) is related to:
- Police reforms in India
 - Electoral reforms
 - Environmental conservation
 - Panchayati Raj institutions
25. With reference to 'obscene content' under Indian law, consider the following statements:
- Section 67A of the IT Act specifically deals with sexually explicit acts in electronic form.
 - Freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a) is absolute in matters of artistic expression, including digital content.
 - The ground of 'decency or morality' under Article 19(2) can justify restrictions on obscene content.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
26. Which of the following statements are correct about Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) Cardholders ?
- The OCI Cardholder is entitled to vote and can be a member of the Legislative Assembly.
 - OCI Cardholders can hold Constitutional posts such as President and Judge of the Supreme Court.
 - The OCI Cardholder can acquire agricultural land and plantation properties in India.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All the three
 - None
27. With reference to the constitutional provisions relating to the renaming of a State in India, consider the following statements:
- Article 3 empowers Parliament to alter the name of any State.
 - A Bill for altering the name of a State can be introduced in Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President.
 - The President is bound by the views expressed by the concerned State Legislature on such a Bill.
 - A law altering the name of a State requires a Constitutional Amendment under Article 368.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 1, 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 4 only
 - 1, 3 and 4 only
28. With reference to the NOTA (None of the Above) option in Indian elections, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- NOTA was introduced following the judgment in *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India* delivered by the Supreme Court of India in 2013.

2. If NOTA secures the highest number of votes in a constituency, the election is cancelled and fresh polling is conducted.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

29. With reference to the Food Corporation of India (FCI), consider the following statements:

1. FCI was established under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.
2. It operates under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
3. One of its primary functions is maintaining buffer stocks of food grains.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

In News: Recently, the Report of the **16th Finance Commission**, Chaired by Dr Arvind Panagariya, was tabled in Parliament for the **five-year period between 2026-27 and 2030-31**.

Statement 1 is correct: The Finance Commission is **not a permanent body**. It is constituted by the President of India **every five years** under **Article 280 of the Constitution**, or even earlier if needed.

Statement 2 is not correct: The recommendations are **advisory in nature, not legally binding**. However, **by convention**, the Government generally accepts and implements them, especially regarding tax devolution.

Statement 3 is correct: The Finance Commission recommends:

- **Vertical devolution:** sharing of taxes between Centre and States;
- **Horizontal devolution:** distribution of States' share among individual States.

2. (a)

In News: According to an **annual report on capital punishment** published by Square Circle Clinic at NALSAR University of Law, the **Supreme Court of India** has not **confirmed a single death sentence** in the past three years, reflecting a highly restrictive approach toward capital punishment.

Statement 1 is correct: A death sentence passed by a Sessions Court must be **confirmed by the High Court** before execution.

Statement 2 is correct: Mercy petitions are exercised under **Article 72** (President of India) and **Article 161** (Governor of a State). These are **executive powers**.

Statement 3 is not correct: The Governor **cannot pardon** a death sentence. Only the **President of India** can grant a **pardon** in death penalty cases.

- The Governor may **commute, reprieve or remit**, but **not pardon** a death sentence (as clarified in cases like *Maru Ram* and *Kehar Singh*).

3. (b)

About MPLADS

- **Brief:** The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is a Central Sector Scheme launched in 1993, administered by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Objective:** To enable Members of Parliament (MPs) to recommend works for the creation of durable community assets based on locally felt needs such as drinking water, sanitation, roads, public health infrastructure.
- **Implementing Mechanism:** MPs only recommend works and have no role in execution. Projects are implemented by government departments, trusts or cooperatives, selected by the Implementing District Authority (IDA), usually the District Collector, ensuring executive control.
- **Funds allotted:** Each MP is entitled to ₹5 crore per year under MPLADS. The funds are intended to supplement existing development schemes and address local gaps.
 - It requires MPs to recommend at least 15% of funds for SC-inhabited areas and 7.5% for ST-inhabited areas annually.
- **Non Lapsable Fund:** MPLADS funds are non-lapsable, meaning unutilised funds are carried forward to subsequent years, ensuring continuity of projects.
- **Geographical coverage:** Lok Sabha MPs can recommend works within their constituencies, Rajya Sabha MPs within their state of election, and nominated MPs anywhere in the country.
- **Exceptions:** MPs may recommend up to ₹25 lakh per year outside their constituency/state, and up to ₹1 crore for an affected district during natural calamities.

4. (b)

The Supreme Court, in the landmark **S R Bommai v. The Union of India** case placed restrictions on the misuse of **Article 356**.

- The judgment established that;
 - The President's decision is subject to **judicial review**.
 - Courts can strike down the imposition if found illegal, mala fide, or based on extraneous considerations.
 - The state legislature alone would be suspended, and the executive and other arms of governance would continue unless Parliament ratified the proclamation within two months.

5. (c)

The Government of India, the Government of Nagaland, and representatives of the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) have signed a historic agreement for the **creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)**.

About Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority

- FNTA will cover six districts—Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator inhabited by eight major Naga tribes represented by ENPO.
- The agreement provides for **devolution of powers over 46 subjects to FNTA**, enhancing administrative and developmental autonomy.
- A **Mini-Secretariat**, headed by an Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary-level officer, will be established to ensure effective governance.
- FNTA aims to promote balanced regional development, financial autonomy, and participatory decision-making in a historically underdeveloped region.

6. (a)

Context

- On February 5 2026, the Union Government signed a **tripartite agreement** with the Government of Nagaland and the Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) to create the **Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)**.

About

- The ENPO had demanded a separate State, “**Frontier Nagaland**”, since **2010**.
- The demand stems from **colonial-era policies** that treated the **eastern hills as a minimally administered frontier**.
- After **Nagaland was carved out of Assam as a State in 1963**, eastern tribes felt politically and economically marginalised compared to western Nagaland.
 - The eight tribes inhabiting the region argued that development gaps widened due to **limited infrastructure, poor connectivity, and weaker political representation**.

Key Features of the FNTA

- The FNTA grants **semi-autonomous governance** to **six eastern districts** of Nagaland, allowing local administration to function with reduced dependence on the State capital.
- **Districts Covered Under FNTA:** Mon, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire, Noklak and Shamator.
- **A mini-Secretariat** will be established within the region, headed by a senior officer, to improve administrative efficiency.
- The authority will exercise legislative and executive powers over **46 subjects**, enabling local leaders to make decisions on matters such as:
 - Land use and management
 - Agriculture and allied activities
 - Rural development
 - Infrastructure and local planning
 - Welfare schemes suited to tribal needs
- **Development funds** will be allocated proportionally **based on population and geographical area**.
- The FNTA arrangement **does not alter Article 371(A)** of the Constitution, thereby **preserving Naga customary laws, traditional institutions, and social practices**.

7. (a)

Context: The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the appointment of five former judges as **ad hoc judges** in the Allahabad High Court.

About Ad Hoc Judges

- **Article 224A** of the Indian Constitution provides for the appointment of retired High Court judges as ad hoc judges to address issues such as case pendency and judicial vacancies. However, this provision has been invoked only rarely.
- Ad hoc judges are appointed for a limited period, generally ranging from two to three years, and their appointment does not affect the seniority of High Court judges for elevation as Chief Justices or to the Supreme Court.
- The mechanism is relatively simpler than fresh judicial appointments, as background verification is generally not required for retired judges who have already served on the bench.
- Ad hoc judges exercise the same judicial powers and receive pay and allowances equivalent to permanent High Court judges, excluding pension benefits.

Apex Court’s Guidelines for the Appointment of Ad hoc Judges

- If a high court has vacancies that are **more than 20%** of its sanctioned strength;
- If over **10% of the high court’s** cases are pending for more than five years;
- If the rate of disposal of cases is lower than the rate of institution of cases (‘case clearance rate’).

Do You Know?

- Article 127 of the Constitution deals with the appointment of ad hoc judges in the Supreme Court.

8. (c)**Context**

- The 16th Finance Commission chaired by Arvind Panagariya, recommended ₹7,91,493 crore in grants to rural and urban local bodies along with structural reforms to strengthen local governance.

What is the Finance Commission?

- The Finance Commission is a **constitutional body** constituted by the **President of India** under **Article 280**, that recommends how tax revenues collected by the Central government should be distributed among the Centre and various States in the country.
- The Commission is **reconstituted every five years** and usually takes a couple of years to make its recommendations to the Centre.
- The Centre is **not legally bound** to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.

Tax Devolution

- The Finance Commission decides what proportion of the Centre's net tax revenue goes to the **States overall (vertical devolution)** and how this share for the States is distributed among various **States (horizontal devolution)**.
- **The horizontal devolution** of funds between States is usually decided based on a formula created by the Commission that takes into account a **State's population, fertility level, income level, geography**, etc.
- The Centre also aids States through **additional grants for certain schemes** that are jointly funded by the Centre and the States.

9. (d)

Context: The Rajya Sabha adopted the Motion of Thanks to President Droupadi Murmu for her Address to the Joint Session of Parliament.

Motion of Thanks

- **Article 87** of the Indian Constitution mandates a **"Special Address"** by the President to both Houses of Parliament assembled together at the commencement of the **first session after each general election** and at the **start of the first session of each year**.
 - In this address, the **president outlines the policies and programmes of the government** in the preceding year and ensuing year.
- This address of the president, which corresponds to the **'speech from the Throne in Britain'**, is discussed in both the Houses of Parliament on a motion called the 'Motion of Thanks'.
- At the end of the discussion, **the motion is put to vote** and it must be passed in the House. Otherwise, it amounts to the defeat of the government.

10. (b)

In News : The Supreme Court issued notice on a plea challenging a December 2025 Delhi High Court ruling that ordered the removal of past news reports about a banker discharged in a money laundering case, raising questions on the scope of the "right to be forgotten" (RTBF).

- The "Right to be Forgotten" is the right to remove or erase content so that it's not accessible to the public at large.
- It empowers an individual to have information in the form of news, video, or photographs deleted from internet records so it doesn't show up through search engines, like Google in the present case.

11. (c)

Context: The bulk submission of Form 7 applications by anonymous or fraudulent actors during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has triggered controversy over possible misuse of the voter deletion process.

What is Form 7?

- Form 7 is used to **object to the inclusion of a name in the electoral roll**, including one's own name.
- Grounds for objection include: death of the voter, duplicate entry, shifting of residence, ineligibility due to age, citizenship, or misrepresentation.
- **Legal Basis:** Governed by Section 13(2) of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, framed under the Representation of the People Act, 1950.
 - An objection must be filed by a person whose name is already included in the electoral roll.
 - **Booth Level Agents (BLAs)** are also permitted to file objections.
- **Recent Change:** In **2022**, the Election Commission amended Form 7 rules to allow **any voter within a constituency** to file objections, instead of restricting it to voters from the same polling booth, thereby widening its scope.
- **Verification Process:** After submission, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) conduct physical verification.
 - **In case of death:** Death certificate and confirmation by three neighbours are required.
 - **If the voter is absent:** BLO must make three visits to verify shifting of residence.
 - The concerned voter is issued a notice and given an opportunity for hearing.
 - Appeals against the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)'s decision can be filed before the District Magistrate within 15 days.

12. (d)

Context: February 9, 1976, marked an important milestone in equality in Indian society with the enactment of the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act (BLSA)**.

About

- **Bonded labour (or debt bondage)** is defined as a **condition** where money is lent in such a way that the debtor is forced to **pay back through labour instead of money**.
- BLSA is enacted to give effect to **Article 23 of the Constitution** (prohibition of trafficking and forced labour).
- **Bonded labour was deeply entrenched** due to poverty, caste hierarchies, landlessness, and indebtedness.
- **India ratified ILO Convention No. 29** (Forced Labour) in 1954, strengthening the legal obligation.
- **Objectives:**
 - Abolish the bonded labour system.
 - Free bonded labourers and extinguish their debts.
 - Prevent economic and social exploitation.
 - Provide a legal framework for rehabilitation.

13. (b)

In News: Recently, the Supreme Court directed the Union Government to submit an affidavit along with an **Action Taken Report** detailing steps taken to implement its **August 1, 2024 Constitution Bench judgment** permitting **sub-classification** within Scheduled Castes (SCs) for reservation purposes and **extending the creamy layer principle** to SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Statement 1 is not correct

- The Supreme Court **did not hold** that Scheduled Castes (SCs) are a *homogeneous* class. On the contrary, the Court recognised **internal social and educational backwardness among different SC groups**.

Statement 2 is correct

- The Court **permitted sub-classification within Scheduled Castes** to ensure **equitable distribution of reservation benefits**, allowing the State to give preference to the most backward among SCs.

Statement 3 is correct

- The 2024 Constitution Bench **expressly overruled** the **2004 judgment in EV Chinniah vs State of Andhra Pradesh**, which had earlier barred sub-classification within SCs.

14. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Bonded labour (or debt bondage) is defined as a **condition** where money is lent in such a way that the debtor is forced to **pay back through labour instead of money**.

- BLSA is enacted to give effect to **Article 23 of the Constitution** (prohibition of trafficking and forced labour).

Statement 2 is not correct: The Act extinguishes bonded debts and renders them legally unenforceable.

15. (b)

Context

- The finance minister has said the Union government transferred 41% of the divisible pool to the states and the share of no state has been reduced.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Centre State Financial Relations

- **Articles 202 to 206** deal with the financial administration of states, including provisions related to their budget, expenditure, borrowing, and taxation powers.
- **Articles 268 to 272** outline the distribution of revenues between the Union and the states.
- **Article 280** provides for the establishment of a Finance Commission every five years (or as specified by the President).
 - The Centre is **not legally bound** to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.
- **Article 282** allows the Union government to provide financial assistance to states for any public purpose.

16. (c)

Statement 1 is not correct: Definition of Sexual Harassment includes physical contact, demands for sexual favors, making sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.

- **Applies to all workplaces in India**, including the private sector, government offices, NGOs, educational institutions, and the unorganized sector.

Statement 2 is correct: Constitution of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC): Employers are required to constitute an ICC at each office or branch with **10 or more employees**.

- It has to be **headed by a woman**, have at least two women employees, another employee, and a third party such as an NGO worker with five years of experience.

Statement 3 is not correct: There are two ways to resolve the issue by the committee- **through conciliation** between the complainant and the respondent (**which cannot be a financial settlement**), or committees could **initiate an inquiry**, taking appropriate action based on what it finds.

17. (a)

In News: The implementation of **India's labour codes** marks a decisive shift towards **greater financial inclusion** of the workforce by embedding **social security, income protection, and long-term financial safeguards** into the employment relationship.

Statement 1 is correct: Under the revised definition of 'wage' in India's Labour Codes, **wages must constitute at least 50% of the total remuneration**. Allowances exceeding 50% are treated as wages for calculating statutory benefits.

Statement 2 is correct: Since provident fund (PF) and gratuity are calculated as a percentage of wages, **raising the wage component increases employer contributions** toward PF and gratuity.

Statement 3 is not correct: The reform **does not reduce long-term pension benefits**. In fact, by increasing the wage base, it generally **enhances long-term social security benefits** such as pension and gratuity.

18. (b)

APEDA is a statutory body established under the APEDA Act, 1985. It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. APEDA acts as the Secretariat to the National Accreditation Board for implementation of accreditation of Certification Bodies under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP). BHARATI (2025) is an initiative of APEDA aimed at empowering agri-food and agri-tech startups to boost agricultural exports.

19. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: A Private Member's Bill is a proposal introduced by **MPs who are not ministers**.

- The main purpose is to highlight issues requiring **parliamentary attention**. Very few such Bills get passed.

Statement 3 is not correct: A Private Member's Bill does not require prior approval of the President (unless it involves certain financial matters).

20. (a)

In News: Recently, the **three PILs** challenging the constitutionality of the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act)** have been admitted by the Supreme Court, and **issued notice to the Centre** and referred the matter to a **five-judge Constitution Bench** for hearing in March, 2026.

Statement 1 is correct

- The DPDP Act amends Section 8(1)(j) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, effectively removing the earlier public interest override.

Statement 2 is not correct

- The amendment removes the discretion earlier available to Public Information Officers (PIOs).

21. (a)

Context

- The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau recovered the black boxes from the Learjet 45 aircraft that crashed in Baramati, killing five people on board.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)

- **Established:** In 2012 under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- **Mandate:** Investigates civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents to determine causes and recommend safety measures (as per Annex 13 of ICAO).
- **Legal Backing:** Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017.

22. (a)

In News: The **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** and the **World Food Programme (WFP)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the supply of rice in support of global humanitarian operations aimed at combating hunger.

About Food Corporation of India (FCI)

- FCI is a **statutory body** established under the Food Corporations Act, 1964 and functioning under **India's Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.
- Its core genesis stems from the need to manage food shortages, particularly wheat, by implementing effective price support for farmers through **Minimum Support Prices (MSP)**.
- It ensures national food security via procurement, storage, distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS), and buffer stock management for contingencies like droughts or floods.
- **Headquartered** in New Delhi.

23. (d)

In News: The **16th Finance Commission (FC)** marks a significant shift in India's fiscal architecture by substantially increasing financial devolution to **Urban Local Governments (ULGs)**.

- The 16th FC has introduced a more structured and diversified urban grant framework, consisting of:
 - **Basic Grants:** ₹2.32 trillion
 - **Performance Grants:** ₹54,032 crore
 - **Special Infrastructure Grants:** ₹56,100 crore
 - **Urbanisation Premium:** ₹10,000 crore
- It balances unconditional support with performance-linked incentives and infrastructure-specific assistance.

Do You Know?

- **Basic Grants:** Provide foundational support for routine municipal functions.
- **Performance Grants:** Reward good governance practices and administrative efficiency.
- **Special Infrastructure Grants:** Address city-specific infrastructure gaps.
- **Urbanisation Premium:** Recognises pressures from rapid urban growth.

24. (b)

Context

- Recent controversies surrounding electoral rolls, appointment procedures, and institutional autonomy have raised concerns about the functioning of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Major committees on electoral reforms

- **Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990):** It recommended stringent steps to curb booth capturing, including deployment of central forces and provision for re-polls where malpractice occurred.
- **Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998):** It examined the growing role of money power in elections and concluded that state funding was necessary to ensure a level playing field but such funding should be provided in kind rather than cash to prevent misuse.
 - The committee also suggested that only **recognised national and state parties** should be eligible for such support.
- **Law Commission of India:** It recommended that candidates should not be allowed to **contest from more than one constituency** to avoid unnecessary by-elections and public expenditure.
 - The report also **emphasised the need for internal democracy** within **political parties**, **transparency in political funding**, and **reforms to reduce defections** and instability in coalition politics.

25. (c)

In News: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has ordered the blocking of five OTT platforms like **MoodXVIP, Koyal Playpro, Digi Movieplex, Feel and Jugnu** for streaming obscene and pornographic content.

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Section 67A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 specifically penalizes publishing or transmitting *sexually explicit acts or conduct* in electronic form.
- **Statement 2 is not correct:** Freedom of speech under **Article 19(1)(a)** is **not absolute**. It is subject to reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(2)**, including on grounds of decency and morality.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** 'Decency or morality' is explicitly mentioned in **Article 19(2)** as a valid ground to restrict obscene content.

26. (d)

Recently, The Supreme Court dismissed a plea filed by an overseas citizen of India (OCI) seeking to be treated at par with NRIs for the purpose of practising law and obtaining state bar council membership.

All the statements are incorrect : The Constitution of India does not permit dual citizenship, but under the Citizenship Act, 1955, certain Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) can register as Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cardholders. Applications for OCI registration can be made online, and applicants must follow prescribed instructions and submit supporting documents for verification.

- OCI cardholders are entitled to multiple-entry lifelong visas to India, exemption from registration with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer, parity with Indian citizens in domestic airfares and entry fees to national monuments and parks, and parity with Non-Resident Indians in matters such as adoption, admission to certain exams for NRI/supernumerary seats, property transactions (excluding agricultural land), and professional practice in fields like medicine, law, architecture, and accountancy.
- They are also eligible for teaching positions in premier institutions like IITs, NITs, IIMs, IISERs, IISC, Central Universities, and AIIMS under PMSSY. However, OCI **cardholders cannot vote, hold public office, occupy constitutional posts, or acquire agricultural or plantation properties.**
- Their OCI registration booklet serves as identification for services, and after five years of registration and twelve months of ordinary residence in India, they may apply for Indian citizenship, with possible relaxation by the Central Government in special circumstances.

27. (a)

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to rename Kerala as Keralam.

Process to rename a state in India

- **Article 3** authorizes the Parliament to:
 - form a new state by separation of territory from any state or by uniting two or more states or parts of states or by uniting any territory to a part of any state;
 - increase the area of any state;
 - diminish the area of any state;
 - alter the boundaries of any state; and
 - alter the name of any state.
- However, **Article 3** lays down two conditions in this regard: a bill contemplating the above changes can be introduced in the Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President; and before recommending the bill, the President has to refer the same to the state legislature concerned for expressing its views within a specified period.
- The **President (or Parliament) is not bound** by the views of the state legislature and may either accept or reject them.
- Moreover, the **Indian Constitution (Article 4)** itself declares that laws made for alteration of names of existing states (under Articles 3) are not to be considered as amendments of the Constitution under **Article 368**. such laws can be passed by a simple majority and by the ordinary legislative process.

28. (a)

Context

- The Supreme Court of India, while hearing petitions challenging **Section 53(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**, orally observed that a “**compulsory mechanism**” may be needed to ensure voter participation.

About

- **Section 53(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951** says that if the number of candidates is equal to the number of seats to be filled, the returning officer should declare all such candidates to be duly elected to fill those seats.
- The petitioners demanded that **there should be elections** even if there is only one candidate, so that voters can use the ‘**None Of The Above**’ (NOTA) option if they want to.

About NOTA

- The Election Commission of India had introduced ‘**NOTA**’ – ‘**None of the Above**’ option on ballot papers displayed on EVMs and all other ballot papers with effect from 11th October, 2013.
 - It was introduced following the 2013 judgment in **People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) v. Union of India**.
- **The main objective** of the ‘NOTA’ option is to enable electors who do not wish to vote for any of the candidates to exercise their right not to vote for any candidate without violation of the secrecy of their decision.
- The symbol for ‘**None of the Above (NOTA)**’ option has been designed by National Institute of Design (NID) Ahmedabad.
- Even if **NOTA secures the highest number of votes** in a constituency, the election is not cancelled; instead, the candidate with the next highest number of votes is declared the winner.

29. (b)

In News: After the six decades of establishment of the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**, India’s agricultural landscape has transformed, from scarcity to surplus, while food security remains non-negotiable, **calling for a strategic recalibration of FCI’s role** to ensure **fiscal prudence, efficiency, and sustainability**.

Statement 1 is not correct: FCI was established under the **Food Corporations Act, 1964**.

Statement 2 is not correct: FCI operates under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.

Statement 3 is correct: Maintaining buffer stock to ensure food security and stabilize prices is a core objective of FCI.



GEOGRAPHY

1. The Rafah border crossing, recently seen in the news, is located between which of the following?
 - (a) Egypt and Gaza
 - (b) Jordan and Gaza
 - (c) Lebanon and Gaza
 - (d) Israel and Gaza
2. Lake Urmia, recently seen in the news, is best described as:
 - (a) A freshwater lake in Central Asia
 - (b) A highly saline lake and the largest lake in the Middle East
 - (c) A glacial lake located in the Caucasus region
 - (d) A man-made reservoir located in Africa
3. The strategic importance of Eritrea in global geopolitics is mainly due to its proximity to:
 - (a) Strait of Hormuz
 - (b) Suez Canal
 - (c) Bab el-Mandeb Strait
 - (d) Strait of Malacca
4. With reference to the Thwaites Glacier (the 'Doomsday Glacier'), consider the following statements:
 1. Thwaites Glacier is an outflow glacier of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet that drains into the Amundsen Sea.
 2. The West Antarctic Ice Sheet is recognised as one of the climate tipping elements of the Earth system.
 3. Thwaites Glacier is called the 'Doomsday Glacier' because its complete collapse could lead to a significant global sea-level rise.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
5. Sardinia, recently seen in the news, is located in which of the following regions?
 - (a) Adriatic Sea
 - (b) Red Sea
 - (c) Black Sea
 - (d) Mediterranean Sea
6. With reference to India's tsunami monitoring and warning system, consider the following statements:

1. India is working towards setting up a Regional Service Centre (RSC) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to strengthen tsunami early warning capabilities.
2. The present Indian tsunami warning system is capable of detecting tsunamis triggered by both seismic and non-seismic causes.
3. Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) is the nodal agency operating the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC).

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

7. With reference to the Seychelles, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is an archipelago nation located in the western Indian Ocean.
2. It is the largest country in Africa in terms of land area.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

8. Which of the following Indian States share a land border with Bangladesh?

1. West Bengal
2. Assam
3. Meghalaya
4. Nagaland
5. Tripura

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

9. India's first underwater twin-tube road-cum-rail tunnel will be constructed under which river?

- (a) Ganga
- (b) Tungabhadra
- (c) Brahmaputra
- (d) Godavari

10. With reference to the Subansiri River, consider the following statements:

1. It is a tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
2. It originates in Arunachal Pradesh.
3. It joins the Brahmaputra in Assam.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

11. Lake Suwa, recently seen in the news in the context of the “Miwatari” phenomenon, is located in which of the following places?
- South Korea
 - China
 - Mongolia
 - Japan
12. With reference to the Ravi River, consider the following statements:
- It is one of the eastern rivers under the Indus Waters Treaty.
 - It flows only through India.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
13. The Snowball Earth events are primarily associated with which of the following geological periods?
- Cambrian Period
 - Jurassic Period
 - Cryogenian Period
 - Devonian Period
14. With reference to the Strait of Hormuz, consider the following statements:
- It connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
 - It lies between Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south.
 - Nearly half of India’s crude oil imports pass through it.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
15. The Druzhba Oil Pipeline originates from which of the following locations?
- Baku (Azerbaijan)
 - Almetyevsk (Tatarstan, Russia)
 - Novorossiysk (Russia)
 - Minsk (Belarus)
16. Consider the following pairs:
- | Boundary Line | Countries Separated |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Durand Line | Pakistan – Afghanistan |
| 2. Radcliffe Line | India – Pakistan |
| 3. McMahon Line | India – China |
- Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 only
 - 1, 2 and 3

EXPLANATIONS

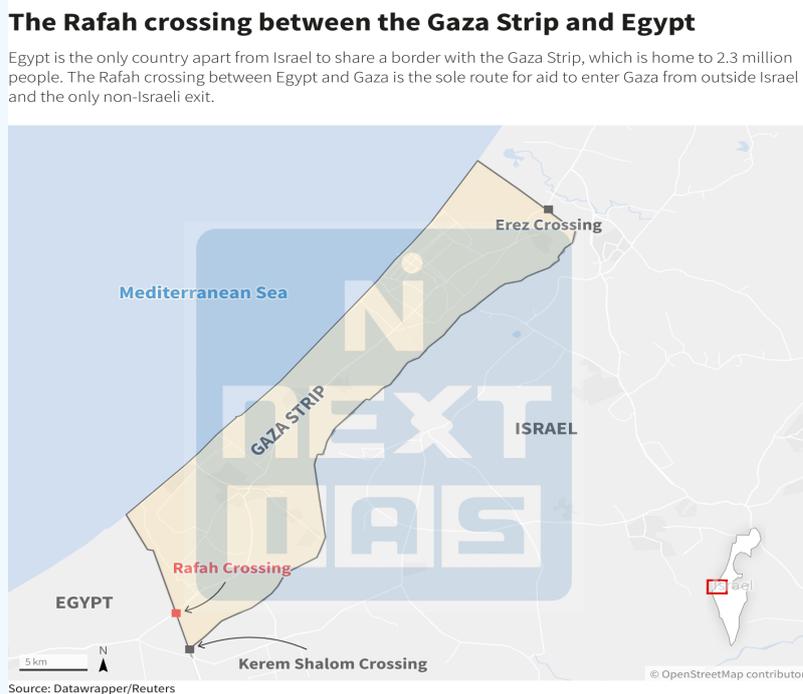
1. (a)

News

- Israel has reopened the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt for limited civilian movement after months of closure.
 - The crossing has largely been closed since the Gazan side was captured by Israeli forces in **May 2024**.

Why is Rafah important to Gaza?

- **Location:** Rafah border is located on the Gaza–Egypt border, which was recognized by the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty.
- **Significance:** The Rafah Border Crossing or Rafah Crossing Point is the sole crossing point between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.



2. (b)

In News: Iranian authorities have resorted to cloud seeding to induce artificial rainfall over the Lake Urmia basin amid Iran’s worst drought in decades.

About Lake Urmia

- It is situated in the Azerbaijan region of northwestern Iran and lies between East Azerbaijan and West Azerbaijan provinces.
- High evaporation rates make it extremely saline.
- It is the largest lake in the **Middle East**.
- Designated a Ramsar wetland and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the lake has shrunk dramatically since the 1990s.

3. (c)

Eritrea’s strategic importance stems from its position along the western coast of the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**, a critical chokepoint linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. This proximity controls access for global oil trade (about 30% of shipments) and trade routes to the Suez Canal, drawing geopolitical focus from powers monitoring Red Sea security.



Why Not Others?

- **Strait of Hormuz:** Lies near Persian Gulf, involving Iran and Oman—far from the Horn of Africa.
- **Suez Canal:** Located in Egypt, not bordering Eritrea.
- **Strait of Malacca:** Southeast Asia, between Indonesia and Malaysia—unrelated to Eritrea’s Red Sea coastline.

4. (d)

All three statements are correct: Thwaites Glacier is an outflow glacier of the **West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS)**, flowing into the **Amundsen Sea**.

- The West Antarctic Ice Sheet is **one of the 16 climate tipping elements on the planet**.
- It is nicknamed ‘**Doomsday Glacier**’ due to its **potential to cause major sea-level rise**.
 - It is one of the most important places on the earth **for those trying to understand how sea levels will rise in future**.
- If Thwaites were to collapse completely over a long period, it **could cause global sea levels to rise by around half a meter**.
 - Higher sea levels will cause coasts to flood more easily, worsen erosion, increase storm surges, and threaten cities, low-lying islands, and ports.
 - While Thwaites is far from most lived areas, how it changes will affect people worldwide.

5. (d)

In News: The Italian government is planning to concentrate around 750 inmates under the strict “41bis” anti-mafia regime in a few facilities in Sardinia.

Sardinia

- It is situated in Italy and lies in the western Mediterranean, near Corsica and north of Africa.
- It features mountainous terrain of granite and schist, with Mount La Marmora as its highest point, and enjoys a subtropical Mediterranean climate.
- Its economy relies on agriculture, particularly sheep and goat farming, and the island is renowned for its cultural traditions, annual festivals, and distinctive code of honor.
- In Nuoro, a remote city in Sardinia, a high-security prison historically held top mafia bosses and terrorists.

6. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: India is working towards setting up a **Regional Service Centre (RSC)** in the **Andaman and Nicobar islands**, aiming to strengthen its existing tsunami monitoring and warning system.

Statement 2 is not correct: Present System: The current system is designed to **mainly detect tsunamis triggered by earthquakes**.

- **India is now working to expand detection to non-seismic causes.**

Statement 3 is correct: **INCOIS** is the nodal agency operating the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC).

7. (a)

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a \$175 million Special Economic Package for Seychelles during the visit of Seychelles President Dr. Patrick Herminie to India.

About Seychelles

- **Seychelles** is an archipelago nation of **115 islands** in the **western Indian Ocean**, northeast of **Madagascar**, known as **Africa's smallest** and least populous country.
 - **Its capital** is Victoria on **Mahé island**.
- **Biodiversity:** It is known for rare species like the **Coco de Mer**, the **Aldabra giant tortoise**, and the **rare black parrot**.

8. (b)

Context: The US has signed a **new trade pact with Bangladesh**.

About

- Under the US–Bangladesh pact, American tariffs on Bangladeshi exports have been **reduced to 19% from 20%**, significantly lower than the 37% rate imposed in 2025.
 - The agreement offers **zero-duty access for certain apparel products**, provided they are manufactured **using US-origin cotton and man-made fibres**.

Do you know?

- India shares a 4096.7 km long land border with Bangladesh, which is the longest land border India shares with any of its neighbouring countries. The Indian States sharing a border with Bangladesh are **West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura**, and Mizoram.

9. (c)

The Centre has approved the construction of the country's first underwater twin tube road-cum-rail tunnel project that will be built under the **Brahmaputra River in Assam**.

- It is a around 34 kilometre-long four-lane access-controlled Greenfield connectivity project.
- It will include twin tube tunnel under the river and will be developed for 18,662 crore rupees in Engineering procurement Construction (EPC) mode
- It will feature two parallel tunnels, designed to facilitate smooth and high-capacity movement of both road and rail traffic.

10. (a)

In News: The Kamala Hydroelectric Project is a major 1,720 MW storage-based initiative proposed by NHPC Ltd. in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Subansiri District, recently recommended for environmental clearance by the MoEFCC's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC). It is located on the Kamla River, a key right-bank tributary of Subansiri.

Statement 1 is correct: Subansiri is the Brahmaputra's largest tributary by flow contribution (~8%), entering at Jamurighat in Assam's Lakhimpur district.

Statement 2 is correct: It originates from the Tibetan Plateau (near Mount Porom/Kangir glacier at 5,000m), enters India via Arunachal Pradesh (Taksing/Napo area).

Statement 3 is correct: It flows through Arunachal (Miri Hills) before joining Brahmaputra plains in Assam (Dhemaji/Lakhimpur).

11. (d)

Context

- A centuries-old winter phenomenon known as **"Miwatari" (God's Crossing)** at Lake Suwa has failed to appear for several consecutive years, signalling the growing impact of climate change in East Asia.

What is "Miwatari"?

- "Miwatari" refers to a **natural ice ridge** that forms **when the entire surface of Lake Suwa freezes**. It occurs after several days of temperatures **below -10°C** .
- **Thermal expansion** and **contraction of the frozen surface** creates cracks; newly formed ice shards push upward, forming a raised ridge.
- Traditionally, it is believed to mark the path of a deity crossing the lake to visit his consort.

12. (d)

Statement 1 is not correct: The Ravi River is one of the eastern rivers (along with Sutlej and Beas) under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, giving India primary control over its waters.

Statement 2 is not correct: The river flows through India and Pakistan, entering Pakistan near Lahore after traversing Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, so it does not flow only through India.

13. (c)

Context

- Recently scientists studied rocks on the Garvellach Islands in Scotland to understand the **Snowball Earth period**.

What is Snowball Earth?

- Snowball Earth refers to **episodes when Earth's surface was almost entirely covered by ice**, including oceans and tropical regions. It occurred mainly during the **Cryogenian Period (720-635 million years ago)**.
- **It was triggered by** feedback mechanisms such as **increased ice cover raising Earth's albedo (reflectivity)** and **reduced solar heat absorption**, causing further cooling.
- **The possible causes include** continental configurations near the equator, reduced greenhouse gases, and volcanic activity patterns.

14. (d)

In News

- Iran temporarily closed parts of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about **20% of the world's oil passes**, during live-fire drills as tensions with the US escalated amid nuclear talks in Geneva.

About the Strait of Hormuz

- The Strait of Hormuz lies between **Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south**, linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- At its narrowest point it is about **33 kilometres** wide, with shipping lanes just a few kilometres across in either direction.

- Nearly half of India's crude oil and around 60 per cent of its natural gas imports pass through the strait.



15. (b)

The Druzhba Oil Pipeline (also called the Friendship Pipeline) is one of the world's longest and largest crude-oil pipeline systems, built during the Soviet era to supply Russian and Kazakh oil to Central and Eastern Europe. It has historically served as the main artery for delivering cheap, land-based oil to former Soviet-bloc countries, reinforcing both their energy security and Moscow's geopolitical leverage.

Origin: The network starts around Almet'yevsk, Tatarstan (Russia), where it gathers oil from Western Siberia, the Urals, and nearby fields.

- It runs west into Belarus, then splits into two main branches: One branch goes north-west through Poland toward eastern Germany.
- The other branch goes south-west through Ukraine, feeding refineries in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.

16. (d)

Pair 1 is correct: The Durand Line separates Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Pair 2 is correct, with the Radcliffe Line dividing India and Pakistan since 1947.

Pair 3 is correct: The McMahon Line separates India (Arunachal Pradesh) from China.



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/ INITIATIVES

1. With reference to Gyan Bharatam Mission, consider the following statements:
1. It was announced in the Union Budget 2020–21 and is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture.
 2. It is a national initiative to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India’s vast manuscript heritage.
 3. It focuses only on two verticals namely Survey and Translation.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
2. With reference to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), consider the following statements:
1. It was launched in 2011 by the Union Ministry of Rural Development
 2. Its central objective is to organise rural poor women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to enable access to credit and sustainable livelihoods.
 3. NRLM 2.0 refers to the next phase of the mission covering the period 2026–27 to 2030–31.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 1, 2 and 3
 - (d) 2 and 3 only
3. ‘Bharat-VISTAAR’, proposed in the Union Budget 2026–27, is best described as:
- (a) A digital payment platform for direct farm subsidies
 - (b) An insurance scheme to cover climate-related crop losses
 - (c) A national portal for agricultural commodity exports
 - (d) A multilingual AI platform offering customised advisory support to farmers
4. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS), often mentioned in news, consider the following statements:
1. It is a Central Sector Scheme which is being implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
 2. It only focuses on socio-economic empowerment of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists through Skilling and Training.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only

- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. With reference to Bharat Taxi, recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:
1. It is India's first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
 2. The platform operates on a zero-commission and surge-free pricing model.
 3. Drivers operating under Bharat Taxi are not allowed to work on other ride-hailing platforms.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
6. Consider the following statements with reference to Jiyo Parsi scheme:
1. It is a Central sponsored Scheme aimed at reversing the declining Parsi population in India by implementing scientific protocols.
 2. It was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. With reference to certain public funds in India, consider the following statements:
1. PM CARES Fund was set up in 2020 as a public charitable trust to deal with national emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
 2. PM CARES Fund, PM National Relief Fund (PMNRF) and National Defence Fund (NDF) all draw their corpus from allocations made from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. With reference to the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of India, consider the following statements:
1. It allows all resident individuals, including minors, to remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year.
 2. The scheme is available to corporates and partnership firms for overseas investments.
 3. It covers both current account and capital account transactions.
 4. Remittances for gambling and lottery are permitted under the scheme.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 4 only
 - (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

9. With reference to the Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) Programme, consider the following statements:
1. It was first proposed under the National Perspective Plan of 1980.
 2. It consists of both Himalayan and Peninsular components.
 3. It is implemented by the National Water Development Agency (NWDA).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
10. With reference to The Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) consider the following statements:
1. It was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2020 to effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic effects.
 2. It enables Indian residents to remit funds up to 1 lakh rupees for various purposes including medical treatment.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
11. With reference to the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme, consider the following statements:
1. Under the scheme, every eligible road accident victim is entitled to cashless treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh for a maximum period of seven days from the date of accident.
 2. Stabilization treatment is provided for up to 48 hours in all cases, irrespective of severity.
 3. Reimbursement to hospitals under the scheme is made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAFF).
- 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
12. With reference to the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It is a 10-digit alphanumeric identification number assigned to land parcels.
 2. It is a part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
13. With reference to the Khelo India Mission announced in the Union Budget 2026–27, consider the following statements:
1. It marks a shift towards a long-term mission-mode approach for sports development.
 2. It aims to create a seamless pipeline from grassroots participation to elite performance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

14. Bharat GI initiative is primarily aimed at:

- (a) Providing subsidies to GI product manufacturers
- (b) Ensuring compulsory GI tagging of all agricultural products
- (c) Promoting Indian GI products on international platforms
- (d) Regulating intellectual property disputes related to patents

15. The Bio-RIDE scheme, often seen in news, is associated with:

- (a) Promotion of renewable energy technologies
- (b) Reforming Industrial Digital Enterprises
- (c) Biotechnology research, innovation and entrepreneurship
- (d) River interlinking projects

16. With reference to the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to facilitate easy access to export credit and provide cross-border factoring support.
2. It seeks to assist MSMEs in addressing non-tariff measures in overseas markets.
3. It is jointly driven by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the Ministry of Finance.

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

17. The SANKALP Scheme, recently seen in the news, is related to which of the following?

- (a) Collateral-free higher education loans
- (b) Skill development & vocational training
- (c) Agricultural market reforms
- (d) Financial inclusion

18. With reference to the Biopharma Shakti initiative announced in the Union Budget 2026–27, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to boost domestic production of biologics and biosimilars.
2. It seeks to reduce India's dependence on imported high-value biopharmaceutical products.
3. The initiative aligns with the aim of transforming India into a leading global biopharma industry and capturing 5% of the global biopharmaceutical market share.

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

19. With reference to the PRASAD Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. It was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2014–15.
3. It aims at the development of pilgrimage destinations across India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

20. With reference to PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, consider the following statements:

1. It is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative which provides households with free electricity.
2. It offers households a subsidy covering up to 40% of the cost of installing rooftop solar panels.
3. It provides easy financing through collateral-free loans up to ₹2 lakh at a subsidized 6.75% interest rate.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All the three
- (d) None

21. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Rah-Veer' scheme:

1. Anyone who ensures an accident victim receives medical care within the Golden Hour is entitled to a 2 Lakh reward under the scheme.
2. It is aligned with the Good Samaritan Rules under the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

22. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban was launched in 2015 with the objective of achieving "Housing for All".
2. Under PMAY, house ownership is mandatory in the name of the eldest male member of the household.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- 23.** With reference to the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme, consider the following statements:
1. It is a World Bank supported Central Sector Scheme implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
 2. One of its objectives is to strengthen Centre–State collaboration in MSME promotion and development.
 3. It seeks to enhance the effectiveness of the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).

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

- 24.** With reference to Him-CONNECT, consider the following statements:

1. It is organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
2. It aims to connect researchers from the Indian Himalayan Region with start-ups, investors and policymakers.
3. It focuses exclusively on wildlife conservation projects in the Himalayan region.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

- 25.** The SUJVIKA Portal, recently seen in the news, is related to:

- (a) Income tax compliance monitoring
- (b) Biotechnology product import data and indigenisation efforts
- (c) Agricultural crop insurance
- (d) Skill development in the IT sector

- 26.** With reference to the State Innovation Mission (SIM), consider the following statements:

1. It has been launched under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog.
2. It is designed as a short-term scheme to provide direct financial grants to startups.
3. It aims to strengthen state-level innovation ecosystems through institutional and policy support.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



EXPLANATIONS

1. (a)

In News : Over 7.5 lakh manuscripts have been digitized under Gyan Bharatam, of which 1.29 lakh manuscripts are accessible on the Gyan Bharatam Portal.

Statements 1 and 3 are not correct : **Gyan Bharatam** was announced during Union Budget 2025-26, is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India .

- It is aimed at unearthing, safeguarding and preserving India's vast manuscript heritage.
- It is aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and seeks to harmonize cultural preservation with human capital development, ensuring that India's ancient wisdom continues to inspire generations to come.
- It focuses on five verticals namely (i) Survey and Cataloguing (ii) Conservation and Capacity Building (iii) Technology and Digitization (iv) Linguistics and Translation (v) Research, Publication, and Outreach.

Statement 2 is correct : Gyan Bharatam Mission is a national initiative to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage, integrating tradition with technology for future generations. The Mission has been allocated Rs. 482.85 crore (2024–31), with over 44.07 lakh manuscripts already documented in the Kriti Sampada digital repository.

2. (c)

Context: The **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY NRLM)** is transitioning into a new phase, often referred to as **NRLM 2.0**, and prepares for the **next five-year cycle (2026–27 to 2030–31)**.

About DAY NRLM

- It is a flagship poverty alleviation and women empowerment programme, launched in **2011** by the **Union Ministry of Rural Development**.
- It aims to reduce rural poverty by enabling poor households, especially women to access sustainable livelihoods through strong, community-based institutions.

Core Objective of DAY NRLM

- The central goal of DAY NRLM is to **organise rural poor women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and build their capacities so they can:
 - access affordable credit;
 - start and expand livelihood activities;
 - improve incomes and social status;
 - participate actively in local governance and decision-making.

3. (d)

Context: The Union budget 2026-27 has proposed '**Bharat-VISTAAR**' (**Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources**).

About

- It is a **multilingual AI tool** that aims to **provide information to farmers** in their own language on crop planning, packages of practices and pests, weather forecasts, markets, scheme information, eligibility, application, and grievance.
- The first version of Bharat VISTAAR will be launched in **Hindi and English** and will gradually become **capable of responding in regional languages**.
- It shall integrate the **AgriStack portals** and the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) package** on agricultural practices with AI systems.

- This will enhance **farm productivity**, will lead to better farmer decision making and reduce risk through customized advisory support for the farmer.
- **The Finance Minister allocated Rs 150 crore** for the Bharat-VISTAAR for the next financial year (2026-27).

4. (d)

In News : PM VIKAS has allocated targets to train about 1.51 lakh beneficiaries through Project Implementing Agencies across States and UTs.

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct : **PM VIKAS** is a Central Sector Scheme which is being implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

- It focusing on socio-economic empowerment of six notified minority communities through the following:
 - Skilling and Training (Non-traditional and traditional)
 - Women Leadership and Entrepreneurship
 - Education (through National Institute of Open Schooling)
 - Infrastructure Development (through Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram)
- Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

5. (a)

Context: Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation launched *Bharat Taxi*, India's first cooperative-based ride-hailing platform.

About Bharat Taxi

- Bharat Taxi is a **cooperative-led mobility platform** registered under the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**, and was established on June 6, 2025.
- The initiative aims to transform the mobility sector by placing drivers, referred to as *sarathis*, at the centre of ownership, operations, and value creation, offering an alternative to aggregator-based models.
 - Drivers are also free to operate on other platforms without exclusivity clauses.
- The platform operates on a **zero-commission and surge-free pricing model**, with profits directly shared with drivers.
- It prioritises driver welfare through social security measures such as health insurance, accident insurance, retirement savings, and dedicated support systems.
- With over three lakh drivers and more than one lakh users already registered, Bharat Taxi aims to expand to **all States and cities across India within the next two years**.

6. (d)

In News : the Jiyo Parsi Scheme has supported the birth of over 490 Parsi children and provided ₹35.05 crore in financial assistance to Parsi couples

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct : **The Jiyo Parsi scheme** is a unique **Central Sector Scheme** for arresting the population decline of the Parsi Community. The scheme was launched in 2013-14 under the **Ministry of Minority Affairs**.

- The objective of the scheme is to reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions, stabilize their population and to increase the population of Parsis in India.

7. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: **PM CARES** is a public charitable trust set up to **raise funds for national emergencies such as Covid**.

- It was set up in **2020**, following the Covid outbreak.
- The fund was registered as a Public Charitable Trust and its trust deed has been registered under the Registration Act, 1908.

Statement 2 is not correct: The corpus of these funds is formed through voluntary public contributions, **not from the Consolidated Fund of India.**

8. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: LRS permits resident individuals, including minors (via guardian on Form A2), to remit up to USD 250,000 per financial year (April-March).

Statement 2 is not correct: LRS applies only to resident individuals; corporates, partnership firms, HUFs, etc., require separate RBI approvals for overseas investments.

Statement 3 is correct: The scheme covers permissible current account (e.g., education, travel, gifts) and capital account transactions (e.g., investments, property abroad).

Statement 4 is not correct: Prohibited purposes include lottery winnings, banned magazines, football/gambling, and real estate (except one residential unit), with strict RBI enforcement.

9. (d)

Statement 1 is correct: The **Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) Programme** was first proposed under the **National Perspective Plan (NPP) of 1980**, prepared by the then Ministry of Irrigation.

Statement 2 is correct: The ILR Programme consists of **two major components**:

- Himalayan Rivers Development Component;
- Peninsular Rivers Development Component;

Statement 3 is correct: The programme is implemented by the **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)**, which functions under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

10. (d)

In News: During the Union Budget 2026-27, the Finance Minister announced that the Tax Collected at Source (TCS) under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) for education and medical expenses abroad will be reduced from 5% to 2%.

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct: **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** was introduced on February 4, 2004, with a limit of USD 25,000 by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The LRS limit has been revised in stages consistent with prevailing macro and micro economic conditions.

- At present, Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme, resident individuals, including minors, can freely remit up to **\$2,50,000 per financial year** for permissible current or capital account transactions or a combination of both
 - These transactions include education, medical treatment abroad, purchase of property, and investments in foreign stocks.

11. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Prime Minister Modi has approved the launch of the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme.

- **Every eligible road accident victim** on any category of road will be entitled to cashless treatment up to **one lakh 50 thousand per victim**, for a **period of seven days** from the date of accident.

Statement 2 is not correct: **Stabilization treatment** will be provided for up to 24 hours in non-life-threatening cases and up to 48 hours in life-threatening cases, subject to police authentication on an integrated digital system.

Statement 3 is correct: **Reimbursement to hospitals** will be made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAFF).

12. (b)

Context

- The Government of Delhi has initiated the assignment of a **14-digit Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)**, popularly termed '**Bhu-Aadhaar**', to every land parcel in the Capital.

What is ULPIN (Bhu-Aadhaar)?

- Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) is part of the **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)**.
- It is a **14-digit identification number** accorded to a land parcel based on the **longitude and latitude coordinates** of the land parcel and depends on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps.
 - The system integrates GIS mapping, drone surveys, and Ortho Rectified Images (ORI) for accuracy.
- It functions as a **digital land identity**, similar in concept to Aadhaar for individuals.

13. (c)

In News: The **Union Budget 2026–27** laid significant emphasis on the transformation of India's sports landscape, envisioning a **long-term mission-driven approach** to elevate the nation's sporting ecosystem.

Statement 1 is correct: The Khelo India Mission marks a shift from a scheme-based approach to a **long-term mission-mode framework**, focusing on structured and sustained sports development over the next decade.

Statement 2 is correct: One of the core objectives of the Mission is to establish a **seamless pipeline from grassroots participation to elite performance**, ensuring systematic talent identification, nurturing, and international-level preparation.

14. (c)

Bharat GI initiative unveiled at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 by DPIIT, serves as a national brand to showcase India's 600+ GI-tagged products globally via digital platforms and AI-driven traceability. This enhances market access, premium positioning, and direct artisan-buyer links, not subsidies, compulsory tagging, or patent regulation.

15. (c)

Dr. Jitendra Singh, India's Science and Technology Minister, announced plans to establish Bio-AI Mulankur hubs during recent events tied to the India AI Impact Summit.

About

- These hubs create closed-loop platforms integrating AI predictions with lab validation and data analytics.
- They target genomics diagnostics, biomolecular design, synthetic biology, and Ayurveda research to drive scalable biotech solutions.
- The initiative supports the BioE3 Policy, promoting biotechnology for environment, economy, and employment through high-performance biomanufacturing.
- It builds on DBT's Bio-RIDE scheme, emphasizing AI-biotech convergence for health, agriculture, and environmental gains.

16. (d)

All three statements are correct: In the **Union Budget for 2025-26**, the Finance Minister announced an Export Promotion Mission.

- It would facilitate easy access to export credit, cross-border factoring support, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets.
- **Ministries: Ministries:** Driven jointly by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the Ministry of Finance.
- **Under EPM, priority support** will be extended to sectors impacted by recent global tariff escalations, such as textiles, leather, gems & jewellery, engineering goods, and marine products.
- **The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** will act as the implementing agency, with all processes from application to disbursal.
 - It will be managed through a dedicated digital platform integrated with existing trade systems.

17. (b)

Context: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament criticised the government for implementation of the **Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) scheme**.

- The panel was examining a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report that highlighted significant delays and shortfalls in both financial and physical progress under the scheme.

SANKALP Scheme

- It is a flagship programme of the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**.
- It was launched in **2018**, SANKALP was originally scheduled for completion by **2023 but was later extended to 2024**.
- It was designed to strengthen **short-term skill training** through better institutional frameworks, enhanced industry linkages, and targeted inclusion of marginalised communities.
- **Funding:** The scheme was slated to be financed through a World Bank loan of ₹3,300 crore, State leverage of ₹660 crore, and industry leverage of ₹495 crore.

18. (d)

All three statements are correct: India announced a massive investment of ₹10,000 crore in the Union Budget **2026-27 for the biotechnology sector**.

- The aim is to focus on boosting the production of biologics and biosimilars through a **new initiative called the Biopharma Shakti**.
- The initiative aligns with the **aim of transforming India into a leading global biopharma industry** and capturing **5% of the global biopharmaceutical market share**.
 - **The National Biopharma Mission and other schemes** launched over the past few years are working towards the same goal.
- **The initiative is designed to** support domestic development and manufacturing of high-value biopharmaceutical products and medicines, **reduce import dependence**, and enhance India's competitiveness in global biologics supply chains.

19. (a)

In News: Union Civil Aviation Minister announced plans to enhance pilgrimage tourism in Andhra Pradesh under the **PRASHAD scheme**.

Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) Scheme

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme launched in 2014–2015** by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
 - A Central Sector Scheme (CS) is an initiative fully funded and implemented by the Union Government.
- It focuses on **developing and identifying pilgrimage sites across India** to enrich the religious tourism experience.

- It improved **infrastructure in tourism areas**—roads, transport, sanitation, and utilities—and enhanced both residents' quality of life and the overall experience for tourists.

20. (c)

In News : Recently, The Prime Minister praised 30 lakh households adopting rooftop solar under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, marking a key clean energy milestone

Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct : The Government of India launched PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG: MBY) in February, 2024. The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative, is transforming India's energy landscape

- It aiming to achieve rooftop solar (RTS) installations in one crore households in the residential sector by FY 2026-27 with an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore
- The scheme allows eligible households to install solar panels via a national portal, promoting affordable clean energy.
- The scheme's easy financing options, including collateral-free loans up to ₹2 lakh at a 6.75% subsidized interest rate through 12 Public Sector Banks, have further accelerated adoption. Under the scheme, households will be provided with a subsidy to install solar panels on their roofs. The subsidy will cover up to 40% of the cost of the solar panels.

21. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct: The Delhi government will implement the Centre's 'Rah-Veer' scheme to motivate citizens to assist seriously injured road accidents.

- Under the scheme, anyone who helps an accident victim receive medical attention within the Golden Hour is eligible for a ₹25,000 reward
- The scheme is aligned with the Good Samaritan Rules under the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019.

22. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) was launched in **2015**, carrying with it a bold "Housing for All".

- **It has two components:**
 - PMAY–Urban (PMAY-U).
 - PMAY–Gramin (PMAY-G).

Statement 2 is not correct: Provide pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries.

- Ensure basic amenities: electricity, water supply, sanitation, LPG connection, etc.
- **Promote women ownership (house ownership in the name of female members or joint ownership).**
- Encourage use of eco-friendly and sustainable construction technologies.

23. (d)

All three statements are correct: RAMP is a World Bank supported **Central Sector Scheme** aimed at improving access of MSMEs to market, finance and technology upgradation by enhancing the outreach of existing MoMSME schemes.

- **Objective:**
 - **Accelerating Centre- State collaboration in MSME promotion and development.**
 - Enhancing effectiveness of existing MoMSME schemes for technology upgradation.
 - Strengthening Receivable Financing Market for MSMEs.
 - Enhancing **effectiveness of Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)**, and promoting guarantee for greening initiatives of MSEs, and women owned MSEs.
 - Reducing incidence of delayed payments to MSEs.

24. (a)

Context: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is organising **Him-CONNECT** in New Delhi as part of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS).

About

- 'Him-CONNECT' links researchers from the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) with start-ups, investors and policymakers.
- It will showcase more than 24 technologies and innovations developed under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS).
- The platform aims to facilitate commercialisation, on-ground deployment and wider adoption of Himalayan-focused solutions.

25. (b)

Context: On the 40th Foundation Day of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), "**SUJVIKA**", an **AI-driven Biotech Product Data Portal**, was launched highlighting biotechnology as a key driver of India's future economic growth.

About SUJVIKA Portal

- SUJVIKA is a **Trade Statistics Digital Intelligence Platform** that presents **authenticated biotechnology** product import data in a structured and accessible format.
- The portal provides **sector-wise insights** into biochemical products, industrial enzymes, and other biotechnology imports.
- It **enables researchers, startups, and industry to identify high-value and high-volume imports**, assess import dependency and prioritise indigenisation and R&D efforts.
 - The portal also **supports evidence-based planning and promotes public-private partnerships** for strengthening domestic biomanufacturing.

26. (a)

Context: Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog, launched the first **State Innovation Mission (SIM)** in Tripura.

About

- SIM anchored under AIM 2.0, serves as a long-term institutional mechanism to strengthen state innovation ecosystems through policy support, capacity building, partnerships, and context-driven interventions, advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat through innovation-led development.
- Under this initiative, key interventions include institutionalising SIM under Tripura Institution for Transformation (TIFT), inauguration of T-NEST (Tripura – Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Startups) as a dedicated incubation facility, launch of a District Innovator Fellowship to scale grassroots innovation, and support for transforming Agartala into an AI-enabled city.



DEFENSE/ INTERNAL SECURITY

1. SFDR technology provides a significant advantage over conventional rocket propulsion mainly because it:
 - (a) Eliminates the need for a booster stage
 - (b) Allows controlled and sustained combustion at supersonic speeds
 - (c) Uses liquid fuel instead of solid fuel
 - (d) Operates effectively at subsonic speeds
2. Exercise KHANJAR is a joint military exercise conducted between India and which of the following countries?
 - (a) Kazakhstan
 - (b) Kyrgyzstan
 - (c) Kenya
 - (d) Tajikistan
3. Consider the following statements with reference to Agni-III intermediate-range ballistic missile.
 1. It is a two-stage, solid-fuelled ballistic missile with a strike range exceeding 30000 kilometres.
 2. It is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads and has been inducted into the Strategic Forces Command since 2011.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. With reference to Assam Rifles, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), primarily guarding India's Indo-Myanmar border.
 2. It has participated in both the World Wars, as well as the 1962 Sino-Indian War.Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. The term "three-stream technology" in next-generation fighter engines refers to:
 - (a) Use of three different fuel types simultaneously
 - (b) Integration of turbofan, ramjet and scramjet systems
 - (c) Addition of a third airflow stream for adaptive performance and cooling
 - (d) Three independent engines in a single aircraft

6. Exercises “Shakti” and “Varuna”, recently seen in the news, are conducted between India and which one of the following countries?
- United States
 - France
 - Russia
 - United Kingdom
7. With reference to the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), consider the following statements:
- It is a treaty-based military alliance of Indian Ocean countries.
 - It was established in 2008 on the initiative of the Indian Navy.
 - Its membership is limited to QUAD countries.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 2 only
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
8. Exercise Dharma Guardian is a joint military exercise conducted between India and which of the following countries?
- United States
 - Japan
 - Australia
 - France
9. With reference to INS Anjadip, recently commissioned into the Indian Navy, consider the following statements:
- It is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC).
 - It has been indigenously built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.
 - It is designed primarily for operations in deep ocean blue waters.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3

EXPLANATIONS

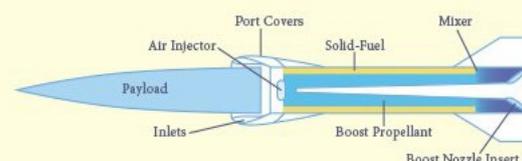
1. (b)

What is Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)?

SFDR is a missile propulsion system that uses a ramjet engine to provide sustained thrust. Unlike traditional rockets, it is an air-breathing system, meaning it does not carry an onboard oxidizer, using atmospheric oxygen instead.

Since ramjets only function at high speeds, the missile is first launched using a nozzle-less solid booster to reach supersonic speeds (Mach 2+).

Anatomy of a Solid-Fuel Ramjet (SFRJ)



Strengths of SFRJ

- | | |
|---|--|
| Least complex mechanically = greater reliability | Does not store oxidizer—draws in oxygen during flight |
| Lowest unit cost compared to other types of ramjets | Range is 3x further than a standard solid rocket motor |
| Stores more fuel | Maintains supersonic speed during high-altitude cruise |

2. (b)

Context

The 13th edition of the India–Kyrgyzstan joint military exercise **KHANJAR** has begun in Sonitpur district of Assam.

About

Exercise KHANJAR is an annual training event conducted alternatively between India and Kyrgyzstan since 2011.

The previous edition was held in Kyrgyzstan in March 2025.

The 14-day-long military exercise aims to enhance interoperability between the Special Forces of both nations, with a focus on joint operations in **urban warfare** and **counter-terrorism scenarios** under the **United Nations mandate**.

3. (b)

In News : India successfully test-fired the Agni-III intermediate-range ballistic missile from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.

Statements 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct : Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, the Agni-Three is a two-stage, solid-fuelled ballistic missile with a strike **range exceeding three thousand kilometres**. The missile is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. A key component of India's credible minimum deterrence strategy, the Agni-III has been inducted into the Strategic Forces Command since 2011. The successful test underscores India's continued focus on strengthening its strategic deterrence and maintaining high levels of operational readiness.

4. (c)

Context

The **Assam Rifles** is inducting two native Indian dog breeds, the **Tangkhu Hui (Haofa)** and the **Kombai**, into its specialized dog squad.

The induction is being managed by the **Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre (ARDTC)** in **Jorhat, Assam**.

Assam Rifles

The Assam Rifles came into being in **1835**, as a militia called the **'Cachar Levy'**.

After distinguished service in **World War I**, it was officially renamed the **"Assam Rifles"**.

World War Participation: It is the only paramilitary force to have participated in both World Wars, as well as the **1962 Sino-Indian War**.

The force is **headquartered in Shillong, Meghalaya**, and currently consists of **46 battalions**.

It is one of the **seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**, primarily guarding India's Indo-Myanmar border, focusing on border security, counter-insurgency, and law & order in Northeast India.

Dual Control Structure:

Administrative Control (MHA): The Ministry of Home Affairs manages salaries, recruitment, infrastructure, and retirement policies.

Operational Control (Ministry of Defence/Indian Army): The Indian Army decides on deployment, transfers, and strategic direction during operations.

5. (c)

In News: The Defence Minister of India has asked DRDO scientists to develop an indigenous 6th generation aero engine within 5–7 years.

A 6th generation aero engine is a next-generation propulsion system developed for future stealth fighter aircraft.

Unlike conventional engines that function in a single operating mode, it can adapt its performance during flight according to mission requirements. Beyond generating thrust, it also serves as an integrated power and thermal management system, supporting advanced AI systems, sophisticated radars, and emerging directed-energy weapons such as lasers.

Key Features of 6th Gen Engines

Adaptive Cycle (Three-Stream Technology): Three-stream technology” enhances next-generation fighter engines (e.g., NGAD, AMCA) by introducing a third airflow path alongside the core (through combustor) and bypass streams in turbofans, enabling variable cycle operation for optimal thrust, fuel efficiency, and cooling.

6. (b)

Context: The French President arrived on a **three-day official visit to India to participate in the AI Impact Summit.**

Major Highlights of the India-France Relations

India–France Strategic Partnership: It was launched on 26 January 1998 and is India’s first-ever Strategic Partnership.

Defence Cooperation: It is reviewed via the Annual Defence Dialogue (Minister-level) and High Committee on Defence Cooperation (HCDC) (Secretary-level).

Rafale Fighter Jets: India procured 36 Rafales from Dassault Aviation.

Scorpene Submarines (Project P-75): Collaboration with France’s Naval Group, 6 submarines built in India; latest is INS Vaghsheer.

Combat Aircraft Engine Development: HAL and France’s Safran Helicopter Engines signed an agreement under the IMRH programme to co-develop engines.

Recently both nations formally concluded an **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) to procure 26 Rafale-M fighter jets for the Indian Navy.**

Future plans: Co-development of next-gen fighter jet engines.

Joint Exercises: Shakti, Varuna, FRINJEX-23.

7. (a)

About Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

It is a **voluntary naval forum** launched by the **Indian Navy in 2008** to boost maritime cooperation among littoral states of the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**

IONS promotes **mutual understanding** among navies through biennial conclaves of chiefs, working groups, and activities like workshops and exercises.

Key focus areas include maritime security (anti-piracy), Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), and capacity building to address regional threats collaboratively.

It features a rotating chairmanship (India held it multiple times) and divides 25 member states into four sub-regions: South Asian (e.g., India, Bangladesh, Maldives), West Asian, Southeast Asian/Australian, and East African. Nine observers participate; no fixed headquarters exists.

8. (b)

Context: The 7th edition of the annual India–Japan joint military exercise *Dharma Guardian* commenced at the Foreign Training Node in Chaubattia, Uttarakhand.

About

Exercise *Dharma Guardian* was initiated in **2018**. It is conducted annually and held alternately in India and Japan.

The primary objective of the exercise is to strengthen military collaboration and enhance the combined operational capabilities of both forces to undertake joint operations in a **semi-urban environment**.

9. (a)

In News: INS Anjadip was formally commissioned into the **Indian Navy**.

INS Anjadip

'Anjadip', the **third of eight ASW SWC (Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft)**, indigenously designed and built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.

The ASW-SWC corvettes are being built indigenously to replace the Navy's aging Abhay-class vessels.

It is engineered to act as a **'Dolphin Hunter'**, focused on detection, tracking, and neutralisation of enemy submarines.

It is a state-of-the-art vessel specifically designed to address the challenges of the littoral combat environment, the coastal and shallow waters vital for the nation's security.

■■■■



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. In the context of West Asia geography, the Rafah Border Crossing is closest to which of the following regions?
 - (a) Golan Heights
 - (b) Sinai Peninsula
 - (c) West Bank
 - (d) Negev Desert
2. With reference to India–Arab League engagement, consider the following statements:
 1. The League of Arab States was established in Cairo in 1945 with seven founding members.
 2. At present, the Arab League consists of 22 member states from West Asia and North Africa.Which of the statements given above are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. The New START treaty, often seen in news recently, is primarily concerned with:
 - (a) Climate change and renewable energy cooperation between India and France.
 - (b) Cybersecurity and artificial intelligence collaboration between China and Japan
 - (c) Limiting and verifying strategic nuclear weapons between the US and Russia
 - (d) Comprehensive free trade agreement between Ukraine and Germany
4. The Forum on Resource, Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE) is best described as:
 - (a) A multilateral treaty for mining of polymetallic nodules
 - (b) A US-led forum for policy and project-level cooperation on critical minerals
 - (c) A WTO mechanism to resolve disputes in mineral trade
 - (d) A UN body for environmental regulation of mining activities
5. With reference to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), consider the following statements:
 1. The GCC is a regional political and economic union established in 1981.
 2. Its member countries include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.
 3. The headquarters of the GCC is located in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

6. With reference to the *New START Treaty*, consider the following statements:
1. It was signed between the US and the former USSR in 1991.
 2. It completely bans nuclear weapons and mandates total disarmament.
 3. It places restrictions on tactical (non-strategic) nuclear weapons.
- Which of the statements given above are **not correct**?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
7. With reference to the Kimberley Process (KP), consider the following statements:
1. India has assumed the chair of the Kimberley Process for the year 2026.
 2. The Kimberley Process was initiated in 2000 to curb the trade of rough diamonds used by rebel or insurgent groups.
 3. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is a legally binding international treaty enforced centrally by the United Nations.
- 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
8. With reference to the African Union (AU), consider the following statements:
1. The African Union was launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).
 2. The headquarters of the African Union is located in Nairobi, Kenya.
 3. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is an initiative of the AU aimed at creating a single market for goods and services across Africa.
- 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
9. With reference to Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It is a formal military grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan.
 2. It was established in 2001, aimed at cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. With reference to the Panchsheel Agreement, consider the following statements:
1. It was signed between India and Pakistan after the 1971 war to promote peaceful relations between the two countries.

2. The agreement laid down five principles including mutual non-aggression and peaceful co-existence.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

11. With reference to the India–AI Impact Summit 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It is being hosted by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
2. It was announced by the Prime Minister at the AI Action Summit in France.
3. It will be the first-ever global Artificial Intelligence (AI) summit hosted in the Global South.

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

12. With reference to the “Board of Peace” established in 2026, consider the following statements:

1. It originated from the U.S. President’s 20-point peace plan for Gaza.
2. It was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 2803.
3. Its objective includes transforming Gaza into a demilitarized and economically stable territory.
4. It is a permanent organ of the United Nations established under the UN Charter.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

13. With reference to the International Solar Alliance (ISA), consider the following statements:

1. It was launched jointly by India and France at COP21 in Paris.
2. It aims to promote solar energy as part of the global transition to clean energy.
3. Only African countries are eligible for membership in ISA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

14. With reference to the recently launched *Pax Silica initiative*, consider the following statements:

1. It seeks to reduce over-concentration of critical mineral supply chains and counter economic coercion.
2. It includes every G20 country as automatic members.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

15. With reference to the International Energy Agency (IEA), consider the following statements:
1. It was established in 1974 in response to the global oil crisis caused by supply disruptions from major oil-exporting countries.
 2. Membership of the IEA is open to all member countries of the United Nations.
 3. India became a full member of IEA in 2015.

Which of the statements given above are **not** correct?

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

16. With reference to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), consider the following statements:

1. It was established in 1961 as a successor to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).
2. Its headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland.
3. India is currently a member of the OECD.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

17. The *International Climate Initiative (IKI)*, recently seen in the news, is:

- (a) Germany's funding mechanism for supporting international climate and biodiversity projects
- (b) A United Nations agency regulating global carbon markets
- (c) A European Union programme for industrial decarbonisation
- (d) India's national mission on climate adaptation

18. The principle of "One Country, Two Systems", often seen in the news, is primarily associated with which of the following?

- (a) Granting special autonomous status to regions with distinct legal and economic systems under Chinese sovereignty.
- (b) Creation of federal provinces within China with independent constitutions.
- (c) Merger of capitalist and socialist economies into a single unified economic model.
- (d) Establishment of military-administrative zones under direct central control.

19. The proposed Hexagon Alliance, recently seen in the news, is primarily related to:

- (a) A new geopolitical and security grouping involving India and Israel
- (b) A United Nations climate finance mechanism
- (c) A regional trade agreement in Southeast Asia
- (d) An economic reform initiative of the European Union

EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)

Rafah Border Crossing lies directly on Gaza Strip's southern edge, adjacent to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula across the Philadelphi Corridor.

Sinai Peninsula: Immediate neighbor; Rafah connects Gaza to Sinai's northeastern tip near Al-Arish (~40 km away), serving as the sole non-Israeli exit.

Golan Heights: ~250 km north near Syria-Israel border; irrelevant to southern Gaza.

West Bank: Separated by Israel (~100+ km northeast); no direct border.

Negev Desert: Israeli territory east/north of Rafah (~20-50 km), but crossing itself borders Egyptian Sinai, not Negev.



2. (c)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: The Arab League, officially known as the **League of Arab States** was established in **Cairo in 1945** initially with **seven members**.

- **Currently it has 22 member states.**

- **The India–Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting** is the **highest institutional mechanism** guiding India's engagement with the Arab League.

3. (c)

In News : A senior Russian official warned that the expiry of the New START treaty could create a “dangerous” phase with no limits on their arsenals.

- The term START originates from the “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty,” with the first agreement, START-I, signed between the US and the former USSR in 1991 and coming into force in 1994.
- It was succeeded by the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, also called the Treaty of Moscow) and later by the New START treaty.
- The New START, formally titled the “Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms,” entered into force on February 5, 2011, establishing new verifiable limits on intercontinental nuclear weapons.
- The treaty imposes limits on strategic nuclear weapons, which are designed to target an opponent's key political, military, and industrial centers in the event of a nuclear conflict.
- It caps the number of deployed strategic warheads at 1,550 on each side, with no more than 700 deployed ground- or submarine-launched missiles and bomber planes, and 800 launchers.

4. (b)

India has expressed support for the **FORGE Initiative** at the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial hosted by the United States in Washington DC.

What is the FORGE Initiative?

- FORGE is a **multilateral international cooperation framework** aimed at de-risking global critical mineral supply chains by bringing together like-minded countries.
 - It has been created as a successor to the **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)**.
- Core Idea is to reduce over-dependence on a few dominant suppliers, build trusted, transparent and resilient critical mineral ecosystems.

5. (a)

Context

- India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have signed the Terms of Reference for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in New Delhi.

About Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

- GCC is a **regional political and economic union** established in **1981**.
- **It comprises six member countries:** Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.
- It is Headquartered at **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**.
- **It aims** to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and similar political and cultural identities, rooted in Arab and Islamic cultures.



6. (d)

In News: Global concern over nuclear security has intensified with the **expiry of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)** between the United States and Russia.

- It fears that the world is edging closer to a **renewed and unrestrained nuclear arms race**.

Statement 1 is not correct: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-I (START-I) was signed between the **US and the former USSR** in 1991 and came into force in 1994.

- It limited each side to 6,000 nuclear warheads and 1,600 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) but **expired in 2009**.

- **Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, aka Treaty of Moscow)** replaced the **START-I**. Later, the **New START Treaty** was signed in 2010 & entered into force in 2011.

Statement 2 is not correct: New START **does not ban nuclear weapons**. It places **numerical limits on deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems**, not total disarmament.

Statement 3 is not correct: The treaty applies **only to strategic nuclear weapons**. **Tactical (non-strategic) nuclear weapons are excluded** from its scope.

7. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: India has assumed the **chair of the Kimberley Process (KP)** for the year 2026.

- The chair oversees the **implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)** and operations of the working groups, committees and administration that activate the KP.
- The KP is a multinational mechanism or structure for governing the trade of '**conflict diamonds**' initiated in 2000.
 - These are rough (or pre-polished) diamonds which are **used illegally by rebel or insurgent groups** across the world to undermine or threaten legitimate governments.

Statement 3 is not correct: **Negotiations with 37 signatory parties**, in 2003, led to the **Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)**.

- **KPCS** is the mechanism the KP uses to prevent the trade of conflict diamonds.
- It is enforced **individually by KP Participant countries** to ensure that rough diamonds in the legitimate supply chain are KP-compliant.
- **The KPCS is not a UN-enforced treaty**. It is implemented individually by KP participant countries, not centrally enforced.

8. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: **The African Union (AU)** is a continental body consisting of the **55 member states** that make up the countries of the African Continent.

- It was officially launched in **2002** as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).

Statement 2 is not correct: **Aim:** To realise Africa's potential and to focus towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development.

- **Headquarters:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Statement 3 is correct: **initiatives of the AU include the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement**, aiming to create a single market for goods and services across the continent, and Agenda 2063, a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years.

9. (d)

Context

- Recent remarks from senior U.S. officials describing the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) as a "very important platform" and India as an "active participant" underline the grouping's centrality to India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

- It is an **informal multilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan** aimed at cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- **Origin:** The Quad began as a loose partnership after the **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** when the four countries joined together to provide humanitarian and disaster assistance to the affected region.

- It was formalized by former Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe in 2007**, but then fell dormant.
- After a decade it was **resurrected in 2017**, reflecting changing attitudes in the region toward China's growing influence.

10. (b)

Context: The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) mentioned that India believed the **1954 Panchsheel Agreement** effectively addressed the northern boundary question, even though China viewed it differently.

Panchsheel Agreement

- In 1954, India recognised Tibet as part of China, and both countries signed the **Panchsheel Agreement**.
- **The Panchsheel Agreement** stated the five principles as:
 - Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
 - Mutual non-aggression.
 - Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
 - Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit.
 - Peaceful co-existence.
- It was designed to promote trade and friendly relations, forming the basis of the bilateral ties.
 - With this, India assumed that it had settled its **northern border**.
- **In 2025** the Chinese President underscored that Panchsheel must be cherished and promoted by the two countries.
 - It came as India and China reset their ties and PM Modi visited China after seven years.

11. (d)

All three statements are correct: India–AI Impact Summit 2026

- **Hosted by: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).**
- The India–AI Impact Summit 2026, was **announced by the PM at the France AI Action Summit** and it will be the first-ever global AI summit **hosted in the Global South**.
- It will strengthen **existing multilateral initiatives** while advancing new priorities, deliverables, and cooperative frameworks.
- **The Three Sutras:** Three foundational pillars, known as 'Sutras' i.e. **People, Planet and Progress**, define how AI can be harnessed through multilateral cooperation for collective benefit.

12. (b)

Statements 1 and 2 are correct: The Board of Peace originated from the U.S. President's 20-point Gaza peace plan and was endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2803.

Statement 3 is correct: Its goal is to make Gaza demilitarized and economically stable.

Statement 4 is not correct: It is not a permanent organ of the UN; it is an initiative-based structure with executive leadership.

13. (a)

In News: The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** launched the **Global Mission on AI for Energy** at the **India AI Impact Summit 2026** to accelerate AI adoption in clean energy across 120+ member countries, emphasizing digital infrastructure like **India's Energy Stack**.

International Solar Alliance

- It is a global initiative launched in **2015 by India and France at COP21 in Paris**.
- It has over **120 member countries** and works across Africa, Asia, and island nations.
- It works with governments to improve energy access and security worldwide and promotes solar power as a sustainable transition to a clean energy future.
- ISA's evolving vision is anchored on **four strategic pillars**:
 - Catalytic Finance Hub to unlock and mobilise investments at scale
 - Global Capability Centre and Digitisation to foster innovation, digital platforms, and capacity building across Member Countries
 - Regional and Country-level Engagement to drive tailored interventions through strategic partnerships and
 - Technology Roadmap and Policy to accelerate the deployment of emerging solar technologies through actionable policy frameworks and knowledge resources.

14. (a)

In News: Recently, India has formally entered the **US-led Pax Silica coalition**, marking a significant moment in the geopolitics of semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and critical mineral supply chains.

Statement 1 is correct

- *Pax Silica initiative* aligns with the initiative's stated objectives on economic security and supply-chain resilience.

Statement 2 is not correct

- Membership is selective and based on strategic alignment, not automatic G20 inclusion.

15. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: Established: In 1974.

- **The IEA's founding members were** Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Reason:** It was created when major oil-exporting countries drastically reduced oil supplies, causing severe economic disruptions in industrialized nations.

Statement 2 and 3 are not correct: Members: The membership was kept open only for OECD countries.

- There are now 33 full members with Colombia being inducted as 33rd members recently.
- **Associate Members:** In 2015, IEA opened the doors for non-OECD countries to become associate members.
 - The associate members participate in the policy discussions and activities, but do not have decision-making rights.
 - India became an associate member in 2017. There are 13 associate members right now.

16. (a)**Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)**

- The OECD is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes economic development, policy coordination, and global cooperation.
- **Motto:** "Better Policies for Better Lives."
- Established in **1961**, succeeding the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).

- **Headquarters:** Paris, France.
- **Membership:** 38 member countries (mainly developed economies). India is not a member.

17. (a)

In News: Germany and India have launched a €20 million (approximately ₹180 crore) Large Grant project under the **International Climate Initiative (IKI)**.

About International Climate Initiative (IKI)

- Established in 2008, IKI serves as Germany's primary funding mechanism for international climate projects.
- It supports mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity efforts in over 150 partner countries, with 14 priority nations including India, Brazil, China, South Africa, Indonesia, and Mexico.

18. (a)

The **"One Country, Two Systems" framework**, proposed by Deng Xiaoping, allows certain regions to maintain their own legal, economic, and administrative systems while remaining under the sovereignty of China.

- It has been implemented in Hong Kong (since 1997) and Macau (since 1999).

19. (a)

Context: A new geopolitical grouping, the Hexagon Alliance, has been proposed by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with India at its centre.

About

- The "Hexagon of Alliances" would include **Israel, India**, Mediterranean partners such as **Greece and Cyprus**, along with other unnamed Arab, African and Asian states.
- The framework is designed to operate across **three tracks**: economic cooperation, diplomatic alignment and security collaboration.
- For India, participation would reflect its expanding strategic footprint in the Mediterranean and West Asia, complementing initiatives like **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.
- However, deeper alignment in such a bloc could complicate India's ties with Iran, a key energy and connectivity partner.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. According to Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, which of the following best explains why planets orbit stars?
 - (a) Stars exert an attractive force on planets proportional to their masses
 - (b) Planets follow geodesics in curved space-time created by stars
 - (c) Space between stars and planets is filled with gravitational waves
 - (d) Orbital motion is due to centrifugal force balancing gravity
2. Aluminium phosphide, recently seen in the news, is related to:
 - (a) A fertilizer used to enhance soil nitrogen content
 - (b) A fumigant pesticide used for grain storage
 - (c) A heavy metal causing industrial water pollution
 - (d) A food preservative used in cold storage
3. Which of the following space agencies is NOT a partner in operating the International Space Station (ISS)?
 - (a) NASA
 - (b) Roscosmos
 - (c) ISRO
 - (d) ESA
4. Consider the following statements
 1. CAR T-cell therapy uses a patient's own T-cells, engineers them with receptors to specifically recognize cancer cells.
 2. NexCAR19 is the world's first humanised CAR-T therapy developed in India by ImmunoACT.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), consider the following statements:
 1. It is an inherited blood disorder caused by a mutation in the HBB gene affecting haemoglobin.
 2. SCD is most common in individuals of African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Indian descent.
 3. India aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia in India by 2029.

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

6. With reference to the phases of matter, consider the following statements:

- 1. Plasma is an ionised state of matter consisting of free electrons and ions.
- 2. Plasma is electrically neutral at the macroscopic level.
- 3. Plasma is commonly found in lightning, stars, and neon signs.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

7. Which of the following characteristics best describes Kyasanur Forest Disease?

- (a) Water-borne zoonotic bacterial disease
- (b) Tick-borne viral hemorrhagic fever
- (c) Air-borne viral respiratory infection
- (d) Mosquito-borne protozoan disease

8. With reference to Research and Development (R&D) expenditure in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. India's Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of GDP has remained between 0.6% and 0.7% in recent years.
- 2. The private sector accounts for more than 70% of total R&D expenditure in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. With reference to Ricin, which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Ricin is a carbohydrate-binding protein extracted from the castor bean plant.
- 2. It primarily affects the nervous system by blocking neurotransmitter release.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

10. With reference to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a zoonotic bacterial disease transmitted to human beings through the bite of infected ticks.

2. It was first identified in 2001 from a sick monkey in Karnataka's Forest.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

11. Lysosomal storage disorders (LSDs) are best described as which of the following?

- (a) Inherited disorders due to defects in lysosomal enzymes leading to accumulation of substrates
- (b) Purely neurological disorders caused by degeneration of cortical neurons only
- (c) Acquired immune disorders causing destruction of lysosomes by autoantibodies
- (d) Nutritional deficiency disorders leading to decreased synthesis of lysosomes

12. Which of the following statements is correct regarding the LHS 1903?

- (a) It is indigenously assembled Supercomputer to tackle complex challenges
- (b) It is a small red M-dwarf star that is cooler and shines less brightly than Sun
- (c) It is the second malaria vaccine for children in malaria-endemic regions
- (d) It is a long-range nuclear missile system indigenously developed by DRDO.

13. Nitric oxide in the human body is primarily produced from which amino acid?

- (a) Lysine
- (b) Methionine
- (c) L-arginine
- (d) Tryptophan

14. With reference to Gene Therapy, consider the following statements:

- 1. Gene therapy involves replacing, deactivating, or introducing genes to treat or prevent diseases.
- 2. Germline gene therapy results in genetic changes in reproductive cells.
- 3. Somatic gene therapy leads to genetic modifications that are passed on to future generations.

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

15. With reference to Bio-Based Enzymes, which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Enzymes are biological catalysts that accelerate chemical reactions under mild conditions.
- 2. They typically function at lower temperatures and pressures, thereby reducing energy consumption and emissions.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only

- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

16. Consider the following statements with reference to Drone Adoption in India:

1. Civilian drones up to 5000 kg are allowed to expand industrial applications.
2. Goods and Services Tax (GST) on drones has been reduced from 18% to zero.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

17. With reference to Critical Minerals, consider the following statements:

1. Critical minerals are essential for modern technologies and are vulnerable to supply chain disruptions due to limited geographical concentration of extraction or processing.
2. Each country prepares its own list of critical minerals based on national priorities and strategic requirements.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

18. With reference to the Sarvam AI, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a government-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
2. It focuses on developing large language models (LLMs) rooted in Indian languages.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

19. Panama disease, also known as Fusarium wilt, mainly affects which of the following?

- (a) Grapes
- (b) Banana
- (c) Pineapple
- (d) Guava

20. With reference to Undersea Cables, consider the following statements:

1. Undersea cables use fiber optic technology to transmit large volumes of data across countries and continents.
2. These cables directly connect satellites in space with terrestrial internet networks.
3. A significant share of global data traffic, international trade transactions, and financial flows depend on undersea cables.

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

21. With reference to Biosimilars, consider the following statements:

1. A biosimilar is a biological medicine that is highly similar to an already approved reference biological product.
2. Unlike generic drugs, biosimilars are not exact copies and are derived from living organisms.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

22. With reference to the tetanus, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is caused by a bacterium that produces a neurotoxin affecting the central nervous system.
2. The causative organism is commonly present in soil and animal excreta.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

23. With reference to Fluorescent Proteins (FPs), consider the following statements:

1. They were initially derived from organisms such as jellyfish and corals.
2. They emit visible light when exposed to ultraviolet or blue light.
3. They require external chemical substrates to produce fluorescence.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

24. With reference to Diphtheria, consider the following statements:

1. It is caused by a viral infection.
2. It primarily affects the mucous membranes of the nose and throat.
3. The toxin released by the bacteria can damage the heart and nerves.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 only

(c) 1 and 2 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

25. With reference to the Linear No-Threshold (LNT) model and the ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) principle in the global radiation protection framework, consider the following statements:

1. The LNT model assumes that there exists a safe threshold below which ionising radiation causes no biological harm.

2. The risk of cancer, according to the LNT model, increases linearly with increasing radiation dose.

3. ALARA is an operational principle that seeks to reduce radiation exposure while considering economic and social factors.

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

26. With reference to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), consider the following statements:

1. HIV primarily targets the body's white blood cells, thereby weakening the immune system.

2. AIDS represents the earliest stage of HIV infection.

3. Antiretroviral therapy completely cures HIV infection.

Which of the statements given above are **not** correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

27. Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection is primarily associated with which of the following diseases?

(a) Cervical cancer

(b) Japanese Encephalitis

(c) Hepatitis B

(d) Rubella

28. The terms Data Curation, Pre-Training, Fine-Tuning, and Alignment/RLHF (Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback), often seen in the news, are related to:

(a) Development of quantum computing hardware

(b) Training of Large Language Models and Generative Artificial Intelligence systems

(c) Satellite data processing for weather forecasting

(d) Cybersecurity protocols for encrypted communication

- 29.** With reference to Biosurfactants, consider the following statements:
1. They are surface-active molecules produced by microorganisms such as bacteria, yeasts and fungi.
 2. They reduce surface and interfacial tension between liquids, solids and gases.
 3. They are synthetic compounds derived mainly from petroleum products.
 4. They are biodegradable and have potential applications in bioremediation and the pharmaceutical sector.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
 - (c) 3 and 4 only
 - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 30.** With reference to Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), consider the following statements:
1. ARFID is an eating disorder characterised by restriction of food intake.
 2. It may involve anxiety related to eating, such as fear of choking or vomiting.
 3. It is primarily driven by a distorted self-image and desire for weight loss.
- 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
- 31.** With reference to Meningococemia, consider the following statements:
1. It is a rapidly progressing disease caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*.
 2. It leads to infection of the lining of the brain and spreads via respiratory droplets.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- 32.** With reference to Epstein–Barr Virus (EBV), consider the following statements:
1. It is primarily transmitted through saliva.
 2. Nearly 95% of the global population is estimated to have been infected with it.
 3. It has an approved vaccine for mass immunisation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)

Newton vs. Einstein: Option (a) describes the Newtonian view of gravity as an invisible “pulling” force. In contrast, Einstein’s theory asserts that massive objects like stars do not “pull” on planets.

Curvature & Geodesics: Instead, a star’s mass warps the fabric of spacetime around it. Planets in free motion follow the straightest possible paths in this curved environment, which are called geodesics. To us, these curved paths appear as orbits.

2. (b)

In News

- Doctors at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, have reported a major breakthrough in treating **aluminium phosphide (Celphos) poisoning**.

Celphos (aluminium phosphide)

- It is a widely used but highly **toxic fumigant pesticide for grain storage** in agricultural countries where it is sold as Celphos or rice tablets.
- Celphos poisoning is common in India, especially in rural areas, and carries a high fatality rate with symptoms varying by dose and time since ingestion. There is no specific antidote, so treatment relies on intensive monitoring and supportive care. While severe cases often involve multisystem and multi-organ failure, haematological complications are rare.

3. (c)

Context: The International Space Station (ISS) is scheduled to be de-orbited in **2030**, marking the end of nearly three decades of continuous human presence in space.

What is the International Space Station (ISS)?

- The International Space Station (ISS) is a modular, habitable, microgravity laboratory in low Earth orbit, orbiting **400 km** above Earth.
- It was launched in **1998**, and has been continuously inhabited since **2000**, making it one of the longest-running human space missions in history.
- **It is operated collaboratively by five major space agencies:** NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan) and CSA (Canada).

4. (c)

In News : India successfully test-fired the Agni-III intermediate-range ballistic missile from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : CAR T-cell therapy essentially uses a cancer patient’s own immune T-cells and engineers them in a laboratory to add receptors that can bind specifically with the cancer cells only. These engineered cells are then multiplied and infused in the patient. Usually, the cancerous cells have the ability to hide from the unmodified T-cells. However, with the new receptors on the T-cells, they cannot. The body’s immune system then kills the cancer cells. NexCAR19 is the world’s first humanised CAR-T therapy developed in India by ImmunoACT.

5. (a)

Context: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) has granted Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) to **Desidustat** for the treatment of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD).

About Orphan Drug Designation

- Orphan drugs are pharmaceutical agents developed specifically to treat rare (orphan) diseases.

- Once designated, orphan drugs receive several incentives to encourage their development, including market exclusivity, tax credits for research and development (R&D) expenses, and fee waivers for regulatory applications.

About Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

- SCD is a serious inherited blood disorder caused by a mutation in the **HBB gene**, which provides instructions for making haemoglobin.
 - Haemoglobin is the protein in red blood cells responsible for carrying oxygen.
- Due to this mutation, red blood cells become rigid and sickle-shaped instead of flexible and round. These abnormal cells can block blood flow, leading to pain, organ damage, and other serious health complications.
- **Types:** The disease manifests in various forms, with **sickle-cell anaemia** being the most severe.
- **Prevalence:** SCD is most common in individuals of African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Indian descent.
 - In India, a majority of patients are concentrated in the tribal belt spanning **Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra**.
- **Symptoms:** Anaemia, swelling in the hands and feet, delayed growth or puberty, and vision problems.
- **Treatment and Cure:** There is no single standard treatment for SCD, and management varies depending on symptoms. Currently, **bone marrow transplantation (BMT)** remains the only potential cure, though it is not suitable for all patients.
 - India aims to eliminate sickle cell anemia in India by 2047.

6. (d)

Statement 1 is correct: Plasma consists of ionized gas with free electrons and positive ions created by sufficient energy stripping electrons from atoms.

Statement 2 is correct: Plasma maintains overall electrical neutrality at the macroscopic level, as positively charged ions and negatively charged electrons exist in roughly equal numbers despite individual particle charges.

Statement 3 is correct: Plasma naturally occurs in lightning (ionized air channel), stars (ionized hydrogen/helium), and neon signs (ionized neon gas emitting light).

7. (b)

Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), also known as monkey fever, is a tick-borne viral hemorrhagic disease caused by a flavivirus and transmitted mainly through the bite of infected *Haemaphysalis spinigera* ticks. It is endemic to forested regions of Karnataka and adjoining states.

8. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: India's Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) as a percentage of GDP remained between **0.6% to 0.7%** which is **below the global average** and lower than countries like **China, South Korea and the US**.

Statement 2 is not correct: Another factor contributing to this is the **relatively low investment by India's private sector**, accounting for **only around 36%**, whereas in the aforementioned countries, **private sector contributions are more than 70%**.

- The Central Government contributes **43.7% of total R&D expenditure**.

9. (a)

Context

- In 2025, the Gujarat ATS uncovered an alleged ricin-based bioterror plot, marking India's first suspected ricin-linked bioterror case with possible international links.

About Ricin

- Ricin is a highly **toxic carbohydrate-binding protein** extracted from the castor bean plant (*Ricinus communis*).
- It **blocks protein synthesis in cells**, causing multiple organ failure and death within hours of exposure. Even a few milligrams can be fatal.
- It is listed under **Schedule-1** of the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**, supervised by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).
- There is **no known antidote** for Ricin poisoning.

10. (d)

In News: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is steadily progressing towards the development of an improved vaccine against Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD).

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct: Kyasanur Forest disease (KFD) is caused by the Kyasanur Forest disease virus (KFDV), a member of the virus family Flaviviridae.

- It was identified in 1957 when it was isolated from a sick monkey from the Kyasanur Forest in Karnataka.
- Hard ticks (*Hemaphysalis spinigera*) spread the KFD virus to people and to animals like monkeys and rodents.
- It is an important regional infectious disease in the Western Ghats region, in states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa, and Maharashtra.

11. (a)

Lysosomal Storage Disorders (LSDs) are monogenic inherited metabolic diseases caused primarily by mutations in genes encoding lysosomal enzymes (or activators), resulting in deficient or absent enzyme activity. This leads to progressive accumulation of undigested substrates (e.g., lipids, glycoproteins) in lysosomes, causing cellular swelling, organ dysfunction, and multisystem symptoms like hepatosplenomegaly, skeletal deformities, and neurodegeneration.

12. (b)

In News: Recently, astronomers found a rocky planet orbiting beyond its gaseous neighbors, challenging current planet formation theories. The system was observed using the European Space Agency's Cheops space telescope.

- It consists of four planets, two rocky and two gaseous, orbiting a relatively small and dim star called a red dwarf about 117 light-years from the earth.
 - LHS 1903 is a small red M-dwarf star that is cooler and shines less brightly than our Sun.

13. (c)**Context**

- A recent study by researchers has explored that the **high-dose inhaled nitric oxide can significantly reduce multidrug-resistant bacteria**.

About the discovery

- India faces a **high burden of antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** and hospital-acquired infections where drug-resistant pneumonia is a serious threat in **Intensive Care Units (ICUs)**.
- A significant contributor is ***Pseudomonas aeruginosa***, a bacterium responsible for nearly **one-fifth** of hospital-acquired pneumonias.
- The research shows that at **high concentrations (around 300 ppm)**, inhaled nitric oxide can act as a direct **antimicrobial agent**.

What is Nitric Oxide?

- Nitric oxide (NO) is a **colorless, gaseous free radical** molecule composed of one nitrogen and one oxygen atom.
- **Production:** It is a **gas naturally produced by the human body** from the amino acid **L-arginine**, a process that can be boosted by dietary intake of nitrate-rich foods like leafy greens, beets, and garlic.
- **Functions:** It acts as a neurotransmitter, immune system regulator, and aids in angiogenesis (new blood vessel formation).
- **In clinical practice**, it is used at **low doses (20–80 ppm)** as a **selective pulmonary vasodilator in patients** with acute respiratory failure, particularly in neonatal care.
 - It improves oxygenation by widening blood vessels in the lungs.
- **Toxicity Risks:** High doses can lead to **methemoglobinemia** and **potential lung injury**.

14. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Gene Therapy is a technique that uses genes to treat, prevent, or cure diseases by:

- Replacing faulty genes,
- Deactivating harmful genes,
- Introducing new genes to restore health.
- **Germline therapies** change DNA in reproductive cells (like sperm and eggs). Changes to the DNA of reproductive cells are passed down from generation to generation.

Statement 3 is not correct: Somatic therapies, target non-reproductive cells, and changes made in these cells affect only the person who receives the gene therapy.

15. (c)**Context**

- India is promoting bio-based chemicals and enzymes as key pillars of a green bioeconomy, linking climate action, industrial growth, and rural income diversification.

What Are Bio-Based Chemicals and Enzymes?

- **Bio-Based Chemicals:** Bio-based chemicals are industrial chemicals produced from **biological feedstocks such as sugarcane, corn, starch, agricultural residues**, or other forms of biomass.
 - They are manufactured through **fermentation, microbial processes, or enzymatic pathways**, replacing fossil fuel-based raw materials.
 - Examples include **organic acids (such as lactic acid), bio-alcohols, solvents, surfactants**, and intermediates used in plastics, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals.
- **Enzymes:** Enzymes are **biological catalysts** that **accelerate chemical reactions** under mild conditions.
 - Enzymes typically **function at lower temperatures and pressures**, thereby reducing energy consumption and emissions.
 - They are widely used in detergents, food and beverage processing, pharmaceuticals and vaccines, textile and leather processing, pulp and paper industries and advanced biomanufacturing.

16. (d)

In News : Recently ,India has built a regulated drone ecosystem as of February 2026, with more than 38,500 registered drones, 39,890 DGCA-certified remote pilots and 244 approved training organisations in operation.

Statement 1 is not correct : Drone Rules, 2021 and Drone (Amendment) Rules 2022 & 2023: The Drone Rules, 2021, along with the amendments introduced in 2022 and 2023, have significantly liberalised India's drone ecosystem.

- Fees were rationalised and delinked from drone size.
- Civilian drone operations were permitted for drones weighing up to **500 kg**, thereby expanding commercial and industrial applications.

Statement 2 is not correct: GST on drones was reduced to a **uniform 5% in September 2025**. Earlier tax rates of 18% and 28% were removed. This simplified taxation supports wider commercial and personal use of drones.

17. (c)

Both the statements are correct: Critical minerals are elements that are the **building blocks of essential modern-day technologies**, and are at risk of supply chain disruptions.

- The lack of availability of these minerals or the concentration of extraction or processing in a few geographical locations could potentially lead to **“supply chain vulnerabilities and even disruption of supplies”**.
- **Different countries have their own unique lists** of critical minerals based on their specific circumstances and priorities.
- **A total of 30 minerals were found to be most critical for India:** Antimony, Beryllium, Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Gallium, Germanium, Graphite, Hafnium, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Niobium, Nickel, PGE, Phosphorous, Potash, REE, Rhenium, Silicon, Strontium, Tantalum, Tellurium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Zirconium, Selenium and Cadmium.

18. (b)

Context

- Bengaluru-based startup **Sarvam AI** has unveiled two advanced large language models (LLMs), collectively named **“Vikram,”** at the AI Impact Summit.
 - At the same time global firms such as **Nvidia** and **OpenAI** announced partnerships with Indian industry and academic institutions to expand the country's artificial intelligence ecosystem.

What is Sarvam AI?

- Sarvam AI is an Indian artificial intelligence startup **founded in 2023** with the objective of developing advanced **large language models (LLMs)** rooted in Indian languages and contexts.
- It seeks to **build foundational AI systems comparable to global models** but optimised for India's multilingual environment.

19. (b)

In News : Recently ,researchers at The University of Queensland have identified a genomic region in the wild banana Calcutta 4 that confers resistance to Panama disease Sub Tropical Race 4 (STR4), a deadly disease threatening the globally dominant Cavendish banana.

- Fusarium wilt also known as Panama disease is a destructive soil-borne disease.
- It impacts farmed Cavendish **bananas** worldwide through its virulent Race 4 strains.
- It causes the banana plant to wilt and kills it, leaving residue in the soil to infect future crops.
- It is caused by the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. cubense, which lives in soil and can survive there for many years.

20. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Undersea cables connect global internet networks, providing vast data transfer capacity via fiber optic strands.

- These cables land at **designated points and are linked to terrestrial networks.**

Statement 2 is not correct: They connect landing stations on land to terrestrial networks, not satellites.

Statement 3 is correct: About 90% of global data, 80% of world trade, and key financial and government transactions rely on undersea cables.

21. (c)

Both the statements are correct: A biosimilar is a biological medicine highly similar to another already approved biological medicine.

- Biosimilars are approved according to the same standards of pharmaceutical quality, safety and efficacy that apply to all biological medicines.
- Unlike generic drugs (which are exact chemical copies), biosimilars are **made from living organisms**, so they are similar but not identical to the original biologic.

22. (c)

Context

- The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched the indigenously manufactured Tetanus and Adult Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine at the Central Research Institute (CRI), Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh.

Tetanus

- Tetanus is a **non-contagious infection** that **affects the nervous system**, leading to painful muscle stiffness and spasms.
- **Cause:** It is caused by the **bacterium Clostridium tetani**, which is commonly found in soil, dust, and animal manure.
- **Transmission:** The bacteria typically enter the body through a break in the skin, such as a deep cut, puncture wound (like stepping on a rusty nail), or burn.

23. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Fluorescent proteins were first discovered in organisms like the jellyfish *Aequorea victoria* and later in various corals.

Statement 2 is correct: They emit visible light when excited by ultraviolet or blue light. This property allows scientists to visualize cellular processes.

Statement 3 is not correct: Fluorescent proteins do not require external chemical substrates to fluoresce.

- They differ from bioluminescent systems (like luciferase), which need a chemical reaction to produce light.

24. (a)

Context: The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched the indigenously manufactured **Tetanus and Adult Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine** at the Central Research Institute (CRI), Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh.

Diphtheria

- Diphtheria is a **highly contagious infection** that primarily **affects the mucous membranes of the nose and throat.**
 - The toxin released by the bacteria can travel through the bloodstream and damage the heart (myocarditis), kidneys, and nerves.
- **Cause:** It is caused by **Corynebacterium diphtheriae** bacteria.
- **Transmission:** It spreads from person to person **through respiratory droplets** (coughing or sneezing) or by touching contaminated objects.

25. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: The **linear no-threshold (LNT) model** and the **ALARA principle** have served as the conceptual and operational foundations of the **global radiation protection framework for many decades**.

- **The LNT model** is a risk estimation framework that says **any amount of ionising radiation, no matter how small, carries some risk of causing harm**, especially cancer.
 - In other words, there is **no threshold below which radiation is considered completely risk-free**. And the risk increases linearly with dose.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct: Risk increases linearly with dose under the LNT assumption.

- **ALARA, short for “as low as reasonably achievable”**, is the operational philosophy of radiation protection.
 - The philosophy balances safety with feasibility, cost, and societal need, and its aim is to improve continuously, including better shielding, administrative procedures, and training.

26. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: **Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** is a virus that attacks the body's immune system.

- **HIV targets** the body's white blood cells, weakening the immune system. This makes it **easier to get sick** with diseases like tuberculosis, infections and some cancers.

Statement 2 and 3 are not correct: **Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)** occurs at the most advanced stage of infection.

- **Treatment: There is no cure for HIV infection.** It is treated with antiretroviral drugs, which stop the virus from replicating in the body. Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS, often after many years.

27. (a)

Context

- The Union government is set to launch a nationwide immunisation drive against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) targeting girls aged 14 years, marking a major preventive step against cervical cancer.

About Human papillomavirus (HPV)

- HPV is a common **sexually transmitted infection**. **Most infections are asymptomatic and self-limiting**.
- **Nature:** HPV is a DNA virus from the **Papillomaviridae family**.
- **Diseases Caused by HPV:**
 - **Cervical cancer** (over 95% of cases linked to HPV).
 - **Other cancers:** anal, vaginal, vulvar, penile and oropharyngeal cancers.
 - **Genital warts** (non-cancerous).
- **High-Risk and Low-Risk Types:** HPV types **16 and 18** are high-risk strains responsible for the majority of cervical cancer cases (over 80% in India).
 - **Types 6 and 11** are low-risk strains that primarily cause genital warts.
- **HPV vaccination:** It prevents infection from the most dangerous HPV types. Most effective when given before sexual debut (ages 9–14 years).

Cervical Cancer

- Cervical cancer is cancer that starts in the **cells of the cervix**.

- The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus (womb). The cervix connects the uterus to the vagina (birth canal).
- Cervical cancer is the **second most common cancer** among Indian women. India reports about **80,000** new cases annually.

28. (b)**Context**

- Bengaluru-based startup Sarvam AI unveiled two indigenous Large Language Models (LLMs), underscoring India's push for sovereign, multilingual, and compute-efficient AI amid global competition.

How LLMs Are Trained?

- **GPU Clusters:** LLM training requires massive computational power using clusters of Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). Thousands of GPUs operate simultaneously for weeks or months.
- **Data as the Core Input:** Training relies on enormous datasets, often scraped from the Internet.
- **Model Parameters:** Parameters represent the internal weights through which models learn patterns. Sarvam AI trained models with 35 billion and 105 billion parameters.
 - **Larger parameter** counts improve capability but require more computation.

Key Training Methodologies Used

- **Data Curation:** It focuses on **collecting high-quality datasets** in Indian languages.
 - It includes government documents, literature, media, and synthetic data generation.
 - It is critical for improving performance beyond English-centric AI systems.
- **Pre-Training:** The models learn **general language patterns** by predicting the next token in large unlabelled datasets.
 - This stage builds foundational reasoning and grammar capabilities.
- **Fine-Tuning:** Models are adapted for specific tasks using curated datasets.
 - Tools such as **Hugging Face** and **LangChain** support instruction tuning, classification, and domain adaptation.
- **Alignment/RLHF (Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback):** Human raters rank model outputs to teach it to be safer, more accurate, and better aligned with human intent, discouraging harmful or biased responses.

29. (b)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Biosurfactants are amphiphilic compounds produced by microorganisms like bacteria (e.g., *Bacillus subtilis*), yeasts, and fungi. They lower surface and interfacial tension between different phases, aiding emulsification and applications like oil recovery.

Statement 3 is not correct: Biosurfactants are biological (microbial origin), not synthetic or petroleum-derived unlike chemical surfactants.

Statement 4 is correct: They are biodegradable, less toxic, and versatile for bioremediation (e.g., pollutant degradation) and pharmaceuticals (e.g., drug delivery).

30. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: **ARFID (Avoidant/ Restrictive Food Intake Disorder)** is a mental health disorder which may look similar to picky eating.

- It is a type of **eating disorder** that is being increasingly recognised in the **global arena as a growing but treatable disorder**.

- ARFID can cause you to:
 - Lose interest in eating.
 - Feel anxious about the consequences of eating, like choking on food or vomiting.
 - Avoid foods that have an unwanted color, taste, texture or smell.

Statement 3 is not correct: It isn't the result of a distorted self-image or an attempt to lose body weight, which is common among other eating disorders.

31. (c)

In News : The Meghalaya government urged people to avoid crowds and follow health protocols after two Agniveer trainees died from suspected meningococcal infection in Shillong.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : **Meningococemia** is a serious bloodstream infection caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*, often presenting with fever, hemorrhagic rash, and rapid progression to septic shock.

- *Neisseria meningitidis* is a significant bacterial infection of the bloodstream manifesting as meningitis, septicemia, or, more often, a combination of both. It is a severe, rapidly progressing disease which leads to life-threatening meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain) or meningococemia (blood poisoning).

32. (c)

In News: Researchers are developing monoclonal antibodies that could prevent **EBV infection**.

Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV)

- It is a common virus linked with infectious mononucleosis, multiple sclerosis, cancers and other serious illnesses, after successfully testing antibodies they developed in mice.
 - Most infections occur in childhood and are usually symptom-free or mild.
- EBV infection can cause fatigue, fever, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, enlarged spleen or liver, and rash. Symptoms typically last 2–4 weeks, though fatigue may persist longer, and the virus remains latent in the body with potential reactivation, especially in people with weakened immune systems.
- It spreads mainly through saliva (kissing, sharing drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, toys).
- Nearly 95% of the global population is infected with Epstein-Barr virus, with some populations at higher risk for serious complications if the virus becomes activated.
- EBV has no vaccine; prevention involves avoiding contact with infected people. Diagnosis uses blood tests, and treatment focuses on rest, fluids, and symptom relief.



ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

1. With reference to the 'Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026', consider the following statements:
1. These integrate principles of circular economy and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
 2. They mandate mapping, assessment, biomining, and bioremediation of legacy waste sites with reporting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2. With reference to Sarus crane, consider the following statements:

1. It is the tallest flying bird in the world and has an omnivorous diet.
2. It is found in India, Nepal and Pakistan in natural wetlands with low water depth.
3. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has marked it as 'vulnerable' in its list of threatened species.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

3. With reference to the mass nesting (arribada) of Olive Ridley sea turtles, consider the following statements:

1. Odisha hosts the world's largest mass nesting grounds for Olive Ridley turtles at Gahirmatha and Rushikulya.
2. Olive Ridley sea turtles are classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

4. Mountain gorillas, recently seen in the news, are best described as:

- (a) A subspecies of the western gorilla found mainly in West African rainforests
- (b) A subspecies of the eastern gorilla inhabiting high-altitude forests of Central Africa
- (c) A species of chimpanzee found only in East Asia
- (d) A critically endangered primate found only in Madagascar

5. Recently “Ibu Baron” or “The Baroness” was in the news. It is related to which among the following?
- The longest measured snake in the world
 - A newly discovered species of crocodile
 - A deep-sea giant squid specimen
 - A record-breaking tortoise in the Galápagos
6. With reference to the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), consider the following statements:
- It is the largest living reptile in the world.
 - It can survive only in marine environments.
 - It is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
7. The term “sexual dimorphism”, in the context of the newly discovered dragonfly species, refers to:
- Difference in lifespan between male and female individuals
 - Difference in habitat preference between sexes
 - Distinct physical characteristics between males and females
 - Ability of the species to reproduce without fertilisation
8. With reference to the mangrove clam *Geloina erosa*, consider the following statements:
- It is a bivalve species commonly found in mangrove and estuarine ecosystems.
 - It is endemic only to the mangroves of India.
 - In northern Kerala, it is locally known as “Kandal Kakka”.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
9. A forest ecosystem shows declining species turnover over three decades despite stable species richness. This most likely indicates:
- Improved ecological stability
 - Reduced adaptive flexibility
 - Increased invasive species spread
 - Higher genetic diversity
10. With reference to Black Carbon, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It is a component of PM_{2.5} and is formed due to complete combustion of fossil fuels.
 - It remains in the atmosphere for more than 100 years like CO₂.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

11. Rajaji National Park, recently seen in the news, is located in which of the following states?
- Himachal Pradesh
 - Bihar
 - Uttar Pradesh
 - Uttarakhand
12. With reference to Mangrove Clam (*Geloina erosa*), consider the following statements:
- It typically inhabits organic-rich muddy substrates in intertidal mangrove zones.
 - It is distributed across mangrove and estuarine ecosystems in South and Southeast Asia.
 - It is popularly known as “Kandal Kakka” in Kerala and valued as a local delicacy.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All the three
 - None
13. With reference to the ‘**Anupam Model of waste management**’, recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:
- It has been adopted in Punjab where waste is segregated at source into wet, dry and sanitary waste.
 - The compost generated is distributed free of cost to residents, and surplus is used by The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) horticulture department.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
14. With reference to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), consider the following statements:
- It was established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
 - It aims at the expeditious disposal of environmental cases.
 - Appeals against its orders lie directly with the Supreme Court of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
15. With reference to Cheer Pheasant, consider the following statements:
- It favours rocky hillsides studded with scrub and is found only in Himachal Pradesh.
 - It is classified as Least Concern species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

16. With reference to Malabar Pied Hornbill, consider the following statements:
1. It inhabits moist evergreen forests and is only found in western Ghats of India.
 2. It is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
17. With reference to the Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), consider the following statements:
1. It is classified as Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
 2. It is found in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
18. Red Sanders is primarily found in which of the following regions?
- (a) Western Ghats
 - (b) Eastern Ghats
 - (c) Sundarbans delta
 - (d) Aravalli hills
19. With reference to the Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), consider the following statements:
1. It thrives in clean rivers and wetlands with abundant fish.
 2. It is classified as Endangered by the IUCN.
 3. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
20. With reference to Pangolins, consider the following statements:
1. Pangolins are the only mammals covered entirely with keratin scales.
 2. They primarily feed on ants and termites.
 3. There are only two recognised species of pangolins worldwide.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
21. With reference to *Total Applied Toxicity (TAT)*, consider the following statements:
1. It measures only the total volume of pesticides applied in a country.

2. It takes into account the toxicity of pesticides to non-target species such as pollinators and aquatic organisms.
3. The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework includes a target to reduce overall pesticide risk by 50% by 2030.

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

22. With reference to Kaziranga National Park, consider the following statements:

1. It is located along the floodplains of the Brahmaputra River.
2. It was declared a National Park in 1974.
3. It was designated as a Tiger Reserve before being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

23. Which of the following best describes 'functional diversity' in an ecosystem?

- (a) The total number of species present in a given area.
- (b) The variety of ecological roles performed by species and the traits that enable them to perform those roles.
- (c) The genetic variation within a single species population.
- (d) The distribution of species across different geographical regions.

24. Consider the following statements with reference to Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS)

1. It refers to technologies that capture carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from major industrial sources including oil refineries and steel
2. It aims to help to limit the greenhouse effect and slow down global warming.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

25. With reference to peatlands, consider the following statements:

1. Peatlands are ecosystems where rapid decomposition of plant material leads to low carbon storage.
2. Peatlands cover less than 5% of the Earth's terrestrial surface but store more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

26. The vegetation of Palamau Tiger Reserve is primarily characterized by:
- Tropical Evergreen forests
 - Mangrove forests
 - Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous forests dominated by Sal
 - Montane temperate forests
27. With reference to macaques, consider the following statements:
- The Japanese macaque is also known as the “Snow Monkey” and is adapted to cold climates.
 - The Lion-tailed macaque is endemic to the Western Ghats of India and is listed as endangered.
 - The Crested black macaque is native to Madagascar.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
28. With reference to the Kaziranga National Park, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- The Park is the home of more than 70% of One Horned Rhinoceros in the world.
 - It was also recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
29. The smew (*Mergellus albellus*), recently seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
- Duck
 - Reptile
 - Amphibian
 - Marine Mammal
30. With reference to *climate finance and sustainable agriculture in India*, consider the following statements:
- The majority of domestic adaptation finance for agriculture in India comes from private sector investments.
 - Agri-food systems globally receive a lower share of adaptation finance compared to their estimated requirement.
 - Blended finance mechanisms aim to combine public and private capital to reduce investment risks in climate-resilient agriculture.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3

EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

In News: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026, superseding the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.

Statement 1 is correct: The *Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026* explicitly integrate principles of **Circular Economy** and **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** into India's solid waste governance framework, emphasising waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and resource recovery.

Statement 2 is correct: The Rules also **mandate mapping and assessment of all legacy waste dumpsites** and provide for **time-bound biomining and bioremediation** with regular (e.g., quarterly) progress reporting via an online portal, thereby strengthening scientific remediation of accumulated waste.

2. (c)

In News: The population of sarus cranes in Uttar Pradesh has gone up by 634 or 3.1% in a year, as per a government census.

Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct : Sarus crane is the **tallest flying bird** in the world standing 152-156 cm tall with a wingspan of 240cm. The Sarus habitat is outside protected areas, in natural wetlands with low water depth, marshy and fallow areas and agricultural fields.

- The Sarus crane has three disjunct populations in the Indian sub-continent, south-east Asia and northern Australia
 - ♦ In the Indian subcontinent, it is found in northern and central India, Terai Nepal and Pakistan.
- They play a vital role in ecological balance by controlling the population of harmful insects and have significant cultural importance, while also being sociable. Sarus is omnivorous, feeding on fish and insects, as well as roots and plants.
- **Protection status :** Listed in Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and as Vulnerable on IUCN Red List.

3. (c)

Both the statements are correct: Mass nesting or arribada of vulnerable Olive Ridley sea turtles is a rare phenomenon, which is recorded **only along India and Costa Rica** and some handful of beaches in the world.

- **Odisha** is home to the world's largest mass nesting ground for Olive Ridley turtles with two mass nesting grounds **Gahirmatha in Kendrapara district and Rushikulya mouth in Ganjam district.**

4. (b)

Context: Rare twin mountain gorillas were recently born in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

About Mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*)

- They are a subspecies of the **eastern gorilla**, one of the two gorilla species found globally (eastern and western gorillas).
- In the wild, gorillas can live for over **40 years**, and humans share nearly **98% DNA** with them.
- **Habitat and Distribution:** They live at elevations of about **8,000–13,000 feet** and have thicker fur than other great apes to adapt to cold mountain climates.
 - They are typically found in Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa.

- **Diet** mainly includes leaves, shoots, and stems, along with insects, roots, bark, and decaying wood as a source of minerals.
- **Conservation Status and Population:** Endangered (IUCN Red List); estimated population is around 1,063 individuals in the wild.

5. (a)

Context

- Guinness World Records has confirmed a **7.22-metre** female **reticulated python** named **Ibu Baron** or **“The Baroness”**, from Sulawesi, Indonesia, as the longest measured snake in the world.

About Reticulated Python

- **Scientific Name:** Malayopython reticulatus
- **The species is native to** South and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of India.
- **Physical Characteristics:**
 - It is the **longest snake species** in the world.
 - It is among the **three heaviest snake species**, after the green anaconda and Burmese python.
 - It has **distinctive net-like (reticulated) patterns** on its scales.
- **Human Predation:** Reticulated pythons are among the few snake species known to prey on humans.
 - They kill by **constriction**, suffocating their prey before swallowing it whole.



6. (a)

Context: A recent genetic study has confirmed that the crocodiles historically found in the Seychelles were **saltwater crocodiles (Crocodylus porosus)** and not a distinct species, significantly expanding the known historical range of the species.

Saltwater Crocodile (Crocodylus Porosus)

- The saltwater crocodile is the largest living reptile and is highly adapted to marine environments. Specialised salt glands enable it to excrete excess salt, allowing survival in seawater for long periods.
- **Habitat and Distribution:** Despite the name, it inhabits rivers, estuaries, mangrove swamps, and freshwater lakes, in addition to coastal and marine environments. It is found across India, Southeast Asia, and Northern Australia.
- **Size and Lifespan:** Adult males can grow up to 5–6 metres (around 17–20 feet) and weigh over 500 kg. Lifespan may exceed 70 years, with some individuals living close to 100 years.
- **Diet:** Carnivorous and opportunistic feeders, preying on fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals.
- **Threats:** Illegal hunting, habitat loss, and negative perception due to occasional human attacks have affected populations in some regions.

- **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN Red List: Least Concern
 - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I

7. (c)

Sexual dimorphism refers to morphological differences in size, color, shape, or structure between males and females of the same species, commonly observed in dragonflies where males often display brighter colors or pronged abdomens for mating, while females have subtler patterns.

- In newly discovered dragonfly species, “sexual dimorphism” typically highlights traits like male-red vs. female-yellow bodies or wing variations aiding courtship and predator avoidance, as seen in meadowhawks.

8. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: *Geloina erosa* (synonym *Polymesoda erosa*) is a bivalve clam thriving in muddy, brackish mangrove and estuarine ecosystems.

Statement 2 is not correct: The species is not endemic to India; it is widely distributed across the Indo-Pacific region, including east/west coasts of India, Malay Archipelago, and beyond not “only” Indian mangroves.

Statement 3 is correct: In northern Kerala, *Geloina erosa* is locally called “Kandal Kakka,” valued as a delicacy despite declining populations.

9. (b)

Declining species turnover with stable species richness suggests that while the total number of species remains constant, the composition is becoming less dynamic over time. This indicates lower ecological responsiveness and reduced adaptive flexibility to environmental changes.

10. (d)

Context

- The geopolitical rivalry over Greenland’s strategic importance has overshadowed the threat of black carbon emissions in the Arctic, highlighting the de-prioritisation of environmental regulation amid strategic rivalry.

What is Black Carbon?

- Black carbon is a major component of fine **particulate matter (PM2.5)** and a **potent short-lived climate pollutant**.
- It is produced by the **incomplete combustion of fossil fuels** (especially diesel and marine heavy fuel oil), biofuels, and biomass.
- It has a warming impact **nearly 1,600 times stronger** than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period.
 - Unlike CO₂, it **does not remain long in the atmosphere** (typically 4–12 days), but its immediate impact is intense, especially in polar regions.

11. (d)

In News: The Supreme Court cleared the metalling of the 11.5-km Laldhang-Chillarkhal road project through Rajaji National Park.

Rajaji National Park

- It was established in 1983 by merging the Rajaji, Motichur, and Chilla sanctuaries.
- It was named in honor of freedom fighter and India’s first Governor-General, C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji).
- It is located in the Himalayan foothills near Haridwar, Rishikesh, and Dehradun (Uttarakhand).
- It features diverse vegetation and rich biodiversity, with the Ganga and Song rivers flowing through it.
- It is home to elephants, tigers, leopards, deer, ghorals, and numerous bird species, making it a paradise for nature lovers.

12. (c)

In News: The ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has successfully achieved induced breeding of the **mangrove clam (*Geloina erosa*)** under captive conditions.

Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct: **Mangrove clams** is commonly known as mud clams and it is ecologically important .

- It typically inhabits organic-rich muddy substrates in intertidal mangrove zones.
- It is a dwindling bivalve species distributed across mangrove and estuarine ecosystems in South and Southeast Asia.
- It continues to be a valued local delicacy in several parts of India, particularly in northern Kerala, where the species is popularly known as “Kandal Kakka”.

13. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: Following the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) decision to eliminate the need to transport household waste, **Anupam Colonies now segregate and process waste within their own premises.**

Segregation at Source: Under the Anupam model, waste is segregated at source into wet, dry and sanitary waste.

- **Further Segregation:** Dry waste is further sorted into many categories, including paper, metal, glass, e-waste, and non-recyclables.

Statement 2 is correct: Compost Generation: Wet waste is composted on site, along with horticultural waste, using wire-mesh composting bins placed in parks and green belts, eliminating the need to transport the waste to NDMC plants.

- E-waste is sent to Central Pollution Control Board-authorized recyclers, the compost generated is distributed free of cost to residents, with surplus used by NDMC’s horticulture department.

14. (b)

In News: Recently, a Bench of the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** cleared the way for the **Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project**, noting that ‘considering the strategic importance’ of it and ‘other relevant considerations’.

Statement 1 is not correct: National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a **specialized judicial body** to handle **environmental disputes** related to environmental protection, conservation of forests, natural resources, and enforcement of legal rights relating to the environment in India.

- It was **established** under the **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**, replacing the **National Environment Appellate Authority**;

Statement 2 is correct: One of the core objectives of the NGT is the **expeditious disposal of environmental cases** (Section 18–20, NGT Act, 2010). It mandates disposal of cases preferably within six months.

Statement 3 is correct: As per **Section 22 of the NGT Act, 2010**, appeals against NGT orders lie **directly to the Supreme Court of India** within 90 days.

15. (d)

Statements 1 and 2 are incorrect : BirdLife International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the cheer pheasant as **Vulnerable**, a reflection of its small and naturally fragmented populations.

- The species now survives in scattered Himalayan grasslands across northern Pakistan, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and central Nepal, preferring steep, rocky, scrubby slopes at 1,200–3,350 m elevation.

16. (d)

In News: The Chhattisgarh Forest Department is setting up six “hornbill restaurants” in the Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve to provide a permanent habitat for the rare **Malabar Pied Hornbill** and promote forest regeneration.

Statements 1 and 2 are incorrect : **Malabar Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*)** inhabits moist evergreen and tall deciduous forests, plantations, and low-altitude riparian areas

- It feeds mainly on figs and makes seasonal movements following fruiting events, sometimes visiting isolated trees in cultivated areas.
- Occurs in the Western Ghats, eastern and central India, as well as in Sri Lanka.
- In the most recent assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Malabar Pied Hornbill was listed in the ‘Red List of Threatened Species’ in 2024, under the ‘Near Threatened’ criteria.

17. (b)

Context

- According to a recent study, warmer oceans and declining food availability are affecting the reproductive and migratory patterns of **loggerhead turtles**.

Loggerhead Turtles (*Caretta caretta*)

- The loggerhead turtle is named for its large head, which supports powerful jaw muscles that enable them to feed on hard-shelled prey, such as whelks and conch.
- They are found across the Caribbean region, **Atlantic Ocean**, the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the **Indian Ocean and the North and South Pacific Oceans**.
- The Loggerhead sea turtle is a large **omnivorous marine reptile** recognized as one of the seven extant species of sea turtles.
- They can live up to 80 years or more.
- **Threats include** bycatch in fishing gear, direct harvest of turtles and eggs, loss and degradation of nesting habitat, and changing environmental conditions.
- **They are** classified as **Vulnerable** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

18. (b)

Context: The busy Tirupati pilgrimage route has made Red Sanders smuggling easier in southern Andhra Pradesh.

Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*)

- **Endemic Species:** Found only in three districts of southern Andhra Pradesh — Chittoor, Nellore, and YSR Kadapa.
- **Largest Reserve:** Located in the Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve, part of the Eastern Ghats, covering about 4,755 sq km.
- **Growth:** A slow-growing species that takes 25–40 years to reach maturity.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
 - Included under CITES, which strictly regulates international trade.
 - Protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

19. (a)

In News: The Uttarakhand Forest Department recently confirmed the presence of **smooth-coated otters** in Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary, signaling a healthy freshwater ecosystem as these animals serve as key bio-indicators.

About Smooth-Coated Otters

- **Smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*)** thrive only in pristine rivers and wetlands with abundant fish and minimal pollution.
- In India, the populations are mostly located in protected areas like **Corbett, Kaziranga, and southern reserves**.
- They are **classified as vulnerable by IUCN** and under Schedule I of India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- The species faces threats from habitat loss, pollution, and human-wildlife conflict.

20. (a)

Context: A recent CITES report titled '*Conservation Status, Trade and Enforcement Efforts for Pangolins*' revealed that over 500,000 pangolins were seized globally between 2016 and 2024."

About Pangolin

- Pangolins are mammals covered in **keratin scales**, the only such mammals on Earth.
- They feed on ants, termites, and larvae using their long sticky tongues.
- When threatened, they use **volvation** (rolling into a ball) to protect themselves with their armor-like scales.
- They are considered **"ecosystem engineers"** due to their role in soil aeration and pest control.



Do you know?

- There are eight recognised species of pangolins globally — four species are found in Africa (Black-bellied, White-bellied, Giant Ground, and Temminck's Ground pangolins) and four species are found in Asia (Indian, Philippine, Sunda, and Chinese pangolins).

21. (b)

In News: A recent study published in *Science* indicates that the world is **not on track** to meet the target of **reducing pesticide risk by 50% by 2030** at **United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15), 2022**.

Statement 1 is not correct: Total Applied Toxicity (TAT) does *not* measure only the total volume of pesticides used. It combines the **amount applied** with the **toxicity level** of each pesticide. Hence, it reflects ecological risk rather than just quantity.

Statement 2 is correct: TAT accounts for pesticide toxicity to **non-target species** such as pollinators (e.g., bees), aquatic organisms (fish, invertebrates), soil organisms, and terrestrial arthropods.

Statement 3 is correct: The **Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (COP15, 2022)** includes a commitment to **reduce overall pesticide risk by 50% by 2030**, making it directly relevant to TAT trends.

22. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Kaziranga National Park is indeed located along the floodplains of the Brahmaputra River in Assam, India.

Statement 2 is correct: It was declared a National Park in 1974, after earlier designations as a reserve forest (1908), game sanctuary (1916), and wildlife sanctuary (1950).

statement 3 is not correct: It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985 and designated as a Tiger Reserve in 2006.

23. (b)

Context: Study finds **land-use change and elevation reshaping spider communities** in the **north-western Indian Himalayas**.

What is functional diversity?

- **Functional diversity** is mostly about the **roles species play in a given ecosystem** and physical (morphological) or behavioural (life history) characters that allow them to play these roles.
 - **Each species performs different ecological functions cumulatively** contributing to functional diversity.
- **Higher functional diversity** makes ecosystems more stable, as if one species becomes locally extinct, another with a similar role can compensate.
- **Continued agricultural expansion** and other anthropogenic activities may simplify complex natural landscapes, **pushing Himalayan biodiversity towards new functional regimes with lower resilience**.

24. (c)

Recently, it has been observed that Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies are essential for achieving India's net-zero emissions targets, particularly for hard-to-abate sectors like cement.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) refers to a set of technologies that capture carbon dioxide emissions from industrial sources or directly from the air and convert them into useful products.

- It removes carbon from the atmosphere and puts it into the economy as inputs for fuels, chemicals, building materials, or polymers.
- Unlike carbon capture and storage, where captured CO₂ is permanently stored underground rather than reused, CCU uses up the captured carbon.

25. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: Peatlands are waterlogged ecosystems where decomposition is slowed, leading to accumulation of organic matter and high carbon storage.

Statement 2 is correct: Peatlands cover about 2.84% of the Earth's land surface but store more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem.

26. (c)

Palamau Tiger Reserve of Jharkhand features Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous forests as its primary vegetation, dominated by Sal (*Shorea robusta*) with associates like *Butea*, *Carissa*, and bamboo brakes. Smaller moist deciduous patches exist, but dry Sal forests characterize the undulating terrain (300-1140m), supporting tigers, elephants, and bison amid rivers like Burha and Koel.

27. (b)

In News: A viral story from a Japanese zoo about an abandoned baby **Japanese macaque ("Punch")** highlighted the complex **social hierarchy and emotional dependence in macaque societies**.

About Macaques

- Macaques are a genus of Old World monkeys belonging to the family **Cercopithecidae**.
- They are among the most widespread and diverse primate groups, with more than 20 species distributed mainly across Asia and parts of North Africa. They are highly adaptable and can survive in diverse ecological conditions.

- The **Japanese macaque**, also known as the “**Snow Monkey**,” is native to Japan and is famous for living in cold climates and bathing in hot springs.
- The **Rhesus macaque** is widely distributed in North India and Southeast Asia and is extensively used in medical and biomedical research.
- The **Lion-tailed macaque** is an endangered species **endemic to the Western Ghats of India**, recognized by its distinctive silver-white mane.
- The **Crested black macaque** is native to the **Indonesian island of Sulawesi** and is known for its dark crest and critically endangered status.

28. (c)

Context

- A total of 1,05,540 birds belonging to 107 species were recorded during the 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Estimation conducted across Kaziranga-Laokhowa- Burhachapori floodplain complex.

Kaziranga National Park

- **Location:** Golaghat, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts of the state of Assam.
- It was declared a **Wildlife Sanctuary in 1950** and notified as Kaziranga National Park in **1974** under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, of 1972.
 - It has been declared a Tiger Reserve since **2007**.
 - It was also recognized as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985**.
- **Topography:** It is characterized by wet alluvial tall grasslands, shallow pools fringed with reeds, and deciduous semi-evergreen woodlands.
- **Hydrological Influence:** The dynamic **Brahmaputra River** system plays a central role in shaping the park’s terrain through flooding, erosion, sedimentation, and formation of **oxbow lakes**.
- The Park is the abode of more than **70%** of **One Horned Rhinoceros** in the world.

29. (a)

Context

- A total of 1,05,540 birds belonging to 107 species were recorded during the 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Estimation conducted across Kaziranga-Laokhowa- Burhachapori floodplain complex.

About

- **Major species documented** include Grazing waterfowl, Dabbling ducks, Diving ducks, Migratory geese, Pallas’s Fish Eagle, Greater Adjutant Stork etc.
 - **The smew**, a **migratory diving duck** from the Eurasian taiga, was documented as a rare visitor.

About The smew (*Mergellus albellus*)

- It is a **species of duck** and is the only living member of the **genus Mergellus**.
- **Appearance:** Male smews have a black-masked white body, while females have a mottled brown body.
- **Habitat & Range:** Breeds in the **boreal forests of northern Europe and Asia**, particularly near freshwater lakes and rivers. During winter, they migrate south to the **Baltic Sea, Western/Central Europe, and Asia**.

30. (b)

In News: India needs to prioritise financing for resilience in its agricultural food production system to ensure long-term food security and protect the livelihoods of millions of small and marginal farmers.

Statement 1 is not correct

- In India, around 98–99% of adaptation finance in agriculture comes from public sources; private participation is minimal (~1%).

Statement 2 is correct

- Agri-food systems receive roughly 20% of adaptation funds despite requiring a much higher share.

Statement 3 is correct

- Blended finance reduces risk by leveraging public funds to attract private investment into sustainable sectors.



MISCELLANEOUS

1. Which of the following statements is correct regarding the Thaipusam?
 - (a) It is a harvest festival celebrated in North India
 - (b) It is a festival honouring the triumph of good over evil mainly in South India.
 - (c) It is buddhist festival marking the Enlightenment of Buddha
 - (d) It is a sikh festival commemorating Guru Nanak's teachings
2. With reference to the Cashew, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Cashew was introduced to India by Portuguese explorers.
 2. The cashew tree is native to the coastal regions of northeastern region of South Africa.Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. With reference to India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, consider the following pairs:

Operations	Purpose
1. Operation Maitri	Major evacuation effort during the Ukraine conflict
2. Operation Ganga	Humanitarian support to earthquake-hit Myanmar
3. Operation Brahma	Rapid response to the Nepal earthquake

How many of the pairs are correctly matched?
 - (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
4. With reference to nationally notified disasters, consider the following statements:
 1. All natural disasters occurring in India are automatically classified as nationally notified disasters.
 2. Inclusion in the notified list enables access to central financial assistance.
 3. Cold waves and frost are included in the current list.Which of the statements given above are correct?
 - (a) 2 and 3 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

5. With reference to the *Donetsk Region*, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in eastern Ukraine and shares a border with Russia.
 2. Donbas is one of the major industrial regions of Ukraine.
 3. The Sea of Azov lies to the south of the region.
- 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
6. Bharat GenAI, sometimes seen in the news, is best described as:
- (a) A defence-oriented artificial intelligence system
 - (b) A private-sector led generative AI platform
 - (c) A government-led initiative to develop India-specific generative AI models
 - (d) A digital payments infrastructure based on AI
7. With reference to the Global Teacher Prize, consider the following statements:
1. The Global Teacher Prize was launched in 2014 and is often referred to as the “Nobel Prize of Teaching”.
 2. It is presented by GEMS Education and organised by the Varkey Foundation in collaboration with UNESCO.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. *Candida albicans* was recently seen in the news. It is best described as:
- (a) A Gram-positive bacterium causing tuberculosis
 - (b) A protozoan parasite transmitted by mosquitoes
 - (c) A virus causing hemorrhagic fever
 - (d) A fungal pathogen responsible for infections
9. The theme “Local to Global – Atmanirbhar Bharat”, recently seen in the news, is associated with:
- (a) India International Trade Fair
 - (b) Surajkund International Crafts Mela
 - (c) G20 Culture Working Group Meeting
 - (d) National Handloom Expo
10. Right of Way (RoW), recently seen in news, is primarily associated with;
- (a) Enable private sale of electricity across states
 - (b) Reduce electricity tariffs for consumers
 - (c) Facilitate safe construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission infrastructure
 - (d) Provide ownership rights of land to transmission companies
11. The Network Readiness Index 2025 evaluates economies based on which of the following pillars?
1. Technology
 2. People

3. Governance
4. Impact
5. Sustainability

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

12. The book Satyarth Prakasha is associated with:

- (a) Raja Rammohan Roy
- (b) Swami Vivekananda
- (c) Swami Dayanand Saraswati
- (d) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

13. India's first musical road, known as "Sangeet Marg", recently seen in the news, is located in which of the following States?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Tamil Nadu
- (c) Uttar Pradesh
- (d) Maharashtra

14. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025 was recently published by which of the following?

- (a) Economist Intelligence Unit
- (b) Transparency International
- (c) Amnesty International
- (d) Reporters Without Borders

15. With reference to World Radio Day, consider the following statements:

1. It is observed every year on 13th February to commemorate the establishment of United Nations Radio in 1946.
2. It was proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2011 and later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

16. Satyarth Prakash, Sanskar Vidhi, and Yajurved Bhashyam are works of which of the following personalities?

- (a) Swami Vivekananda
- (b) Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati
- (c) Raja Ram Mohan Roy
- (d) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

17. Tangkhul Hui (Haofa) and Kombai, recently seen in the news, are:
- Indigenous Tribes
 - Native Indian Dog Breeds
 - Traditional Martial Art Forms
 - Festivals of North India
18. Which of the following has been designated as the official “State Microbe” of Kerala?
- Lactobacillus acidophilus
 - Rhizobium leguminosarum
 - Bacillus subtilis
 - Escherichia coli
19. With reference to refurbished medical devices in India, consider the following statements:
- India has a dedicated regulatory pathway under the Medical Devices Rules, 2017 specifically governing refurbished medical devices.
 - All medical devices were notified as ‘drugs’ under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 2020.
 - Imports of refurbished high-end medical equipment are currently governed primarily under the Hazardous and Other Wastes Rules, 2016.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
20. Consider the following statements regarding the Cheer Pheasant:
- It is primarily found in mid-montane grasslands of the western Himalayas.
 - It is distributed across Pakistan, India, and Nepal.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
21. The Idate Commission was constituted to examine issues related to:
- Scheduled Tribes in Left Wing Extremism affected areas
 - Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes
 - Religious Minorities
 - Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
22. In the context of telecom regulation debates, network slicing is often seen in news as;
- It allows telecom operators to block specific websites.
 - It replaces spectrum licensing requirements.
 - It enables differentiated quality of service based on technical requirements rather than content discrimination.
 - It eliminates the need for physical telecom infrastructure.

23. SAM-UN, EKAM and PRAKSHEPAN, recently seen in the news, are related to:
- Indigenous AI-based systems developed for defence and civilian applications
 - Satellite navigation systems developed by ISRO for maritime security
 - Missile guidance technologies developed under DRDO's Integrated Guided Missile Programme
 - Cyber surveillance tools developed for financial fraud detection
24. SAHI and BODH, recently seen in the news, are related to:
- Digital platforms for telemedicine insurance claims settlement
 - Genome sequencing platforms for infectious disease surveillance
 - National programmes for pharmaceutical price regulation
 - AI-based initiatives aimed at governance and evaluation of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare
25. Project Vault, recently unveiled by the United States, is related to:
- Establishing a strategic domestic reserve of critical minerals
 - Expanding offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico
 - Creating a sovereign digital currency backed by mineral assets
 - Regulating cryptocurrency mining operations
26. With reference to International Mother Language Day, consider the following statements:
- It is observed every year on 21st February.
 - It was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1999 on the initiative of Bangladesh.
 - According to the 2011 Census, India has only 22 mother tongues officially recorded.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
27. India's first net-zero panchayat, highlighted recently, is located in which of the following states?
- Gujarat
 - Maharashtra
 - Karnataka
 - Kerala
28. With reference to the *National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO)* and organ donation reforms in India, consider the following statements:
- NOTTO functions as the national apex body for coordination and allocation of organs and tissues in India.
 - The National Organ & Tissue Transplant Registry ensures real-time, transparent allocation of organs across states.
 - Green Corridors are institutional mechanisms developed to facilitate rapid transportation of organs for transplantation.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2, and 3

29. Which of the following films won the Best Children's & Family Film award at the 2026 BAFTA Awards in London?
- Boong
 - Zootropolis 2
 - The Boy and the Heron
 - Paddington in Peru
30. The Global Mind Health 2025 Report, recently seen in the news, was released by:
- Sapien Labs
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)
 - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
31. With reference to National Science Day in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It is observed to commemorate the announcement of the discovery of the Raman Effect.
 - It has been celebrated every year since India's independence in 1947.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)

In News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted everyone with a blessed Thaipusam.

- The name "Thaipusam" is a combination of "Thai" (the Tamil month) and "Poosam," the star at its highest point during the festival.
- It is celebrated on the full moon in the Tamil month of Thai.
- It is a Hindu festival celebrated to honour Lord Murugan (also known as Lord Kartikeya), the Hindu god of war, victory, and wisdom, while also being a symbol of courage, determination, and spiritual growth.
- It is widely celebrated by the Tamil community in Tamil Nadu India and across the world, especially in Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia.
- Thaipusam celebrates Lord Murugan receiving the vel spear from Goddess Parvati, which he used to defeat the demon Surapadma, symbolizing devotion, righteousness, and the **triumph of good over evil**.

2. (a)

Context

- The Union Budget 2026–27 places renewed emphasis on high-value agriculture, with targeted support for **coconut, cashew, cocoa, sandalwood**, and select nut crops to enhance farmer incomes and export competitiveness.

Cashew Production

- Type of Plant:** Cashew is an evergreen tropical tree crop belonging to the family **Anacardiaceae**.
- The cashew tree (*Anacardium occidentale*)** is native to the coastal regions of northeastern Brazil in South America.
 - Portuguese explorers introduced it to **India and Africa** in the **16th century**.

- **Climatic Requirements:** Cashew requires a tropical climate with a pronounced dry season. It grows best in areas with temperatures between 20°C and 35°C and moderate to high rainfall.
- **Soil Requirements:** Cashew can grow in laterite, red sandy, and coastal soils and performs well even on poor and degraded land.
- **Distribution in India:** Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and Tamil Nadu.

3. (d)

In News: India's HADR operations showcasing commitment to regional stability, global cooperation, and the 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' ethos, acting as a reliable first responder under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy.

All the pairs are incorrectly matched : Operation **Maitri** was India's rapid response to the April 2015 **Nepal** earthquake;

- Operation **Ganga** (Ukraine, 2022) In February-March 2022, India launched a major evacuation effort during the **Ukraine conflict**
- Operation **Brahma** (Myanmar, 2025) Under Operation **Brahma**, India's humanitarian support to earthquake-hit **Myanmar** continued through mid-April 2025

4. (a)

Statement 1 is not correct: Not all natural disasters are automatically classified as nationally notified disasters; only specific categories are notified under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Statement 2 is correct: Inclusion in the notified list enables access to central financial assistance through the SDRF and NDRF.

Statement 3 is correct: Cold waves and frost are included in the current list of nationally notified disasters.

5. (d)

In News: The remaining Ukrainian-held part of Donetsk came into focus as Russian and Ukrainian negotiators prepared to meet again in Abu Dhabi for talks on control of the Donetsk region.

Statement 1 is correct: Donetsk Oblast lies in eastern **Ukraine** and directly borders **Russia**.

Statement 2 is correct: **Donbas** includes **Donetsk and Luhansk** areas that are historically Ukraine's main coal-mining and heavy-industry belt.

Statement 3 is correct: The southern edge of Donetsk Oblast touches the **Sea of Azov** (coast near Mariupol).

6. (c)

What is Bharat GenAI?

- Bharat GenAI is India's first government-owned sovereign Large Language Model (LLM).
 - It is a key outcome of the IndiaAI Mission, launched in March 2024.
- It is designed specifically for Indian languages, culture, and societal needs, unlike global AI models largely trained on Western datasets.
- It is a national foundational model, meaning it can support multiple downstream applications.

7. (c)

Context: Indian teacher Rouble Nagi has won the Global Teacher Prize 2026, receiving the one million dollar award at the World Government Summit in Dubai.

About the Global Teacher Prize

- It was Launched in **2014** and is often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Teaching".
- It is Presented by GEMS Education and organised by the Varkey Foundation in collaboration with **UNESCO**.

- It recognises exceptional educators for their outstanding contributions to teaching and social transformation.

Do you know?

- Rouble Nagi, is a pioneering educator from India, dedicated to making learning accessible to the most marginalised communities.
- Over the past two decades, she has established more than 800 learning centres across over 100 underserved communities and villages, reimagining abandoned walls as interactive educational murals that spark curiosity and engagement.

8. (d)

Context

- Scientists at the CSIR–Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, have identified fungal metabolism as a new therapeutic target for antifungal drugs.

Fungal Virulence: The Role of Morphogenesis

- A feature of pathogenic fungi such as **Candida albicans** is their ability to change shape, a phenomenon known as **dimorphism**.
- **Fungi exist in two primary forms:**
 - **Yeast form:** Oval-shaped and relatively less invasive.
 - **Filamentous (hyphal) form:** Thread-like and highly invasive.
- Inside the human body, fungi typically enter in the **yeast form**.
 - When exposed to environmental stresses such as **nutrient limitation, temperature variation, and immune pressure**, they transform into the filamentous form.
 - This invasive form is **more resistant to immune cells and antifungal drugs**.

9. (b)

Context: A tragic accident occurred at the **Surajkund International Crafts Mela** in Faridabad when a giant swing collapsed.

About Surajkund Mela

- The fair has evolved into a strong global identity for Indian cultural heritage, crafts, and art since its inception in **1987**.
- The Mela is organised by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with the Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- This year, more than 50 countries are participating, with **Egypt** as the partner nation.
- The central **theme**, “Local to Global - Atmanirbhar Bharat”, aims to give traditional artisans international recognition, while **Uttar Pradesh and Meghalaya** are the theme states.
- The event is a reflection of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family)**.

10. (c)

Context

- Delays arising from Right of Way (RoW) issues have emerged as a major hurdle in India’s power transmission expansion, particularly affecting renewable energy evacuation projects.

What is Right of Way (RoW)?

- Right of Way refers to the **strip of land beneath and adjacent to a transmission line required for construction, operation, and maintenance**.
 - It is also known as the **transmission corridor**, which ensures minimum safety clearances.
- RoW ensures compliance with **electromagnetic field exposure norms and safety standards**.
- It allows utilities to **prevent obstruction from tall trees, buildings, or other structures** that may interfere with transmission lines.

11. (a)

Context

- India is placed at **45th rank** (with score **54.43** out of 100) as per the **Network Readiness Index 2025 report** released in 2026.

About

- The report has been prepared by the **Portulans Institute, an independent, non-profit research and educational institute** based in **Washington DC**.
- The report maps the **network-based readiness landscape of 127** economies based on their performance in **four pillars**: Technology, People, Governance and Impact, covering a total of **53 indicators**.
- **Top Three Nations**: USA, Finland, Singapore
- The report states that India secured;
 - **1st rank** in “Annual investment in telecommunication services”, “AI scientific publications”, “ICT services exports” and “E-commerce legislation”,
 - **2nd rank** in “FTTH/Building Internet subscriptions”, “Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country” and “International Internet bandwidth”, and
 - **3rd rank** in “Domestic market scale” and “Income Inequality”.
- **India is ranked 2nd** in the group of lower-middle-income countries.

12. (c)

Satyartha Prakasha (Light of Truth), originally written in Hindi in 1875 and revised in 1882, is the seminal work of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, founder of Arya Samaj.

- The book critiques idolatry, ritualism, and social evils while advocating a return to Vedic principles, influencing 19th-century Hindu reform movements.

About Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

- Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was a pivotal 19th-century Hindu reformer who founded Arya Samaj, advocating Vedic revivalism and social reforms.
- Born in Tankara, Gujarat, he established Arya Samaj in 1875 to combat idolatry, caste rigidity, child marriage, and enforced widowhood while promoting women’s education and widow remarriage.
- His educational vision, via institutions like DAV schools, emphasized Vedic studies alongside grammar, philosophy, sciences, medicine, music, and arts.
- Dayanand envisioned a decentralized polity structured as a federation of self-governing villages, rejecting centralized authority in favor of grassroots commonwealths rooted in dharma.

13. (d)

Context

- Mumbai’s Coastal Road has introduced India’s first musical road, marking an innovative use of road engineering to combine infrastructure with technology-driven public experience.

About

- A 500-metre stretch between Nariman Point and Worli, named **Sangeet Marg**, plays the Oscar-winning song “Jai Ho” when vehicles travel at a speed of **60–80 km per hour**. The concept uses specially engineered rumble strips carved into the asphalt at precise intervals.
- As vehicles move over these grooves, vibrations are generated due to friction between the tyres and the road surface. These vibrations create sound waves that combine to reproduce the melody, which can be heard by passengers inside the vehicle.
- The concept is based on Hungarian technology and has previously been implemented in countries such as **Hungary, Japan, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates**.

14. (b)

Context : Transparency International recently published 2025 Corruption Perception Index (CPI).

Corruption Perceptions Index

- It measures perceived levels of public sector corruption using assessments from experts and business leaders.
- Scores range from zero, indicating very high levels of perceived corruption, to 100, which reflects a clean public sector.

15. (c)

Both the statements are correct: The world radio day is observed on **13th February every year** to commemorate the **establishment of the United Nations Radio in 1946**.

- World Radio Day was proclaimed by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2011** and was later **adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012**.
- The day has been observed yearly to promote support for broadcasters around the world and to increase awareness of the significance of the technology.

16. (b)

Context: The Prime Minister paid tributes to Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati on his birth anniversary.

About Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati

- He was born on February 12, 1824, in Tankara, Gujarat, as 'Mool Shankar' into a Brahmin family. He later became a disciple of **Swami Virajananda**.
- He founded the **Arya Samaj** in 1875 to counter social inequities and promote social reform.
- He issued the slogan "Back to the Vedas" and emphasized **two core ideas**: the infallible authority of the Vedas and monotheism.
- Among his major beliefs were the rejection of idolatry and overly ritualistic traditions, support for women's education, denunciation of child marriage, and opposition to untouchability.
- He also advocated the idea of **shuddhi**, supporting reconversion into the Hindu fold.
- **Publications:** Satyarth Prakash, Sanskar Vidhi, and Yajurved Bhashyam.

17. (b)

Context: The **Assam Rifles** is inducting two native Indian dog breeds, the **Tangkhul Hui (Haofa)** and **the Kombai**, into its specialized dog squad.

- The induction is being managed by the **Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre (ARDTC)** in **Jorhat, Assam**.

About the Indian Dog Breeds

- **Tangkhul Hui:** It is indigenous to **Ukhrul district of Manipur** and known for being highly courageous, possessing unique tracking abilities, and having the stamina to track animals for up to **48 hours** without food or water.
 - It is also known for **disease resistance** and adaptability to **hilly terrain**.
 - **Status:** Already inducted as a pilot project in 2022 with six dogs.
- **Kombai:** It is **native to Tamil Nadu** and recognized for agility, guarding instincts, and loyalty.

18. (c)

Context

- Kerala has become the first Indian state to designate an official "State Microbe," selecting *Bacillus subtilis*, a beneficial, soil-dwelling bacterium.

About Bacillus subtilis

- It is a **non-pathogenic, rod-shaped, gram-positive bacterium** found commonly in **soil, water, and the human gut**.
- Bacillus subtilis is a probiotic or **good bacterium** that plays a vital role in improving gut health and strengthening immunity.
- The bacterium is widely **used in agriculture as a biofertilizer** and biocontrol agent to enhance crop productivity and suppress plant diseases.
- Due to its **resilience and spore-forming ability**, it has significant industrial and biotechnological applications.

19. (b)

In News: The import of refurbished high-end medical equipment has major implications for healthcare access, industry policy, and patient safety.

Statement 1 is not correct: The current **Medical Devices Rules, 2017** (framed under the *Drugs and Cosmetics Act*) do not contain a specific or separate regulatory pathway for *refurbished* medical devices, i.e., **there is no distinct licensing/approval mechanism** for refurbished devices under these rules.

Statement 2 is correct: With effect from **1 April 2020**, *all medical devices* were notified/regulated as 'drugs' under the *Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940* and related rules bringing them fully under that legal framework for quality control and price monitoring.

Statement 3 is correct: Because **Medical Devices Rules, 2017** do not offer a pathway for refurbished device imports, *imports (especially of high-end or high-value refurbished/used equipment)* have effectively been managed under the **Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016**.

- These rules have been used to issue permits/NOCs for such imports on a list basis.

20. (a)

In News: Cheer Pheasants face ongoing threats from hunting and habitat loss, making conservation critical in their restricted range. The species thrives in specific Himalayan ecosystems, tying into broader biodiversity challenges amid development pressures like hydropower.

Statement 1 is correct: It inhabits mid-montane grasslands (1,200-3,350m), steep rocky slopes with scrub, shrubs, and grasses in the western Himalayas.

Statement 2 is correct: Distributed across Pakistan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), India (J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand), and Nepal (central/western regions).

21. (b)

The Idate Commission (2015-2018, chaired by Bhiku Ramji Idate) examined socio-economic issues faced by Denotified Tribes (DNTs, post-1952 Criminal Tribes Act repeal), Nomadic Tribes (NTs), and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs) historically marginalized groups often excluded from SC/ST/OBC benefits.

22. (c)**Context**

- Telecom operators such as Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel have urged the government to revisit India's 2016 net neutrality framework to explicitly permit "network slicing" under 5G networks.

What is Network Slicing?

- Network slicing is a 5G feature that enables the creation of **multiple virtual networks** on a single physical infrastructure.
- Each "slice" can be optimised for specific needs:

- Ultra-low latency (autonomous vehicles, telemedicine).
- High reliability (industrial automation).
- High bandwidth (gaming, HD streaming).
- Telecom operators argue that this is a **technological capability** intrinsic to 5G, **not content-based discrimination**. Operators want to:
 - Offer differentiated quality of service (QoS).
 - Charge premium prices for guaranteed speeds or low latency.

23. (a)

Context: At the India AI Summit, the Indian Army showcased a range of indigenous AI-based solutions with significant dual-use potential across defence and civilian sectors.

Key Highlights Include:

- **AI Examiner:** An automated assessment and feedback system for education and training platforms.
- **SAM-UN:** A geospatial and AI-enabled situational awareness platform for mission planning, disaster response and smart command centres.
- **EKAM (AI-as-a-Service):** A secure, air-gapped indigenous AI cloud platform ensuring data sovereignty.
- **PRAKSHEPAN:** An AI-driven climatology and disaster prediction system providing advance alerts for landslides, floods and avalanches.
- **XFace:** An AI facial recognition system for security and identity verification.
- **Nabh Drishti:** A mobile telemetry-based real-time reporting and visualisation platform.

24. (d)

Context: The Union Health and Family Welfare Minister launched **two digital health initiatives**—SAHI (Secure AI for Health Initiative) and BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI)—during the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

About

- **SAHI** is a **governance framework**, policy compass, and national roadmap for the responsible use of AI in healthcare, for leveraging AI in an ethical, transparent, accountable, and people-centric manner.
 - The platform will also serve as a **knowledge-sharing and governance hub**, promoting best practices in health AI development and implementation.
- BODH, developed by the IIT Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority, will enable systematic evaluation of AI models using diverse, anonymized real-world health datasets.
 - It provides a **structured mechanism to test and validate AI solutions** before large-scale deployment.
- Together, **SAHI and BODH represent India's commitment to building a trustworthy, inclusive, and globally competitive health AI ecosystem** grounded in innovation, responsibility, and public trust.

25. (a)

Context: The United States unveiled **Project Vault**, an independently governed and operated public-private partnership.

About

- It is aimed at **establishing a strategic domestic reserve of critical minerals** in the **United States**.

- The partnership is backed by **\$10 billion** in financing by the **Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM)** and an additional **\$2 billion in private funds**.
- This stockpile build-up represents a **whole-of-government transformative approach** to reduce dependence on foreign-controlled supply chains.
- Project Vault is intended to function as a **long-term insurance for domestic manufacturers**, who could procure minerals without geographic restrictions, based on supply availability and commercial considerations, and store them.

26. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: International Mother Language Day is observed on **February 21**, under the **theme “Youth voices on multilingual education”**.

- International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in **1999**, it was the initiative of **Bangladesh**.
- The UN General Assembly welcomed the **proclamation of the day in its resolution of 2002**.

Statement 3 is not correct: According to the 2011 Census, India is home to more than **1,300 mother tongues and 121 constitutionally recognised languages**.

27. (b)

In News : Recently, Bela Gram has become India’s first net-zero panchayat.

About

- Bela Gram is situated in the Bhandara district of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.
- It was recognized as India’s first net-zero panchayat during Mumbai Climate Week 2026 for its sustainable and carbon-neutral initiatives.
- The panchayat leadership plays a vital role in shaping localised climate action and combating climate change.
- It planted over 90,000 trees, transitioned from smoky chulhas to LPG.
- It installed solar panels, promoted waste segregation, and eliminated single-use plastics.

28. (d)

In News: Recently, the Prime Minister of India, through his *Mann Ki Baat* address, has repeatedly highlighted the importance of organ donation, giving renewed momentum to the organ donation movement in India.

Statement 1 is correct

- NOTTO is the national apex body responsible for coordination, regulation, and allocation of organs and tissues across India under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Statement 2 is correct

- The **National Organ & Tissue Transplant Registry** promotes transparency, traceability, and equitable allocation through digital integration and inter-state coordination.

Statement 3 is correct

- Green Corridors are officially coordinated mechanisms involving traffic police, airports, and hospitals to ensure rapid and safe transportation of organs for transplantation.

29. (a)

In News

- Manipuri film Boong, produced by Farhan Akhtar’s Excel Entertainment, won the prestigious BAFTA Award for Best Children’s & Family Film in London.

About British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA)

- It is a British organization that **gives awards annually** for British and international film, television, and games.
- It **aims to honor individuals** who contribute to the advancement of the film industry and to give awards for artistic merit.
- It was officially **renamed the British Academy of Film and Television Arts in 1976**.
- It also **runs educational and talent development programs**, such as scholarships to the National Film and Television School.

30. (a)

Context: The Global Mind Health 2025 Report, released by Sapien Labs, highlights a significant mental health crisis among young adults in India and reveals a sharp generational divide in mind health outcomes.

About the Report

- Formerly known as the **Mental State of the World Report**, it is published under the **Global Mind Project**.
- The study assesses emotional, social, cognitive and functional capacities required to manage life, work and relationships, using the **Mind Health Quotient (MHQ)** as a composite indicator.
- The study identifies **four key drivers** behind declining youth mental health:
 - Weakening family bonds
 - Decline in spirituality
 - Early exposure to smartphones
 - High consumption of ultra-processed foods.

31. (a)**Context**

- National Science Day is celebrated every year on 28th February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' made by the physicist Sir C.V. Raman.

About

- Sir C.V. Raman was awarded the **Nobel Prize in 1930** for the discovery of the Raman Effect.
- **The first celebration** took place on **February 28, 1987**, marking the beginning of a tradition that continues to inspire generations.
- **The objective** of the observation of National Science Day is to spread the message of the importance of science and its application among the people.
- **Theme for 2026: "Women in Science: Catalyzing Viksit Bharat"**.

