

DAILY MCQs COMPILATION
with
EXPLANATIONS

JANUARY, 2026

NEXT IAS

Table of Contents

❖	History, Art & Culture.....	1
❖	Economy	15
❖	Indian Polity & Constitution	31
❖	Geography	45
❖	Government Schemes/ Initiatives	57
❖	Defense/ Internal Security.....	70
❖	International Relations.....	77
❖	Science & Technology.....	91
❖	Environment & Ecology	106
❖	Miscellaneous	119

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

1. With reference to the Savitribai Phule, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. She founded the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852 to raise awareness about women's rights and social status.
 2. She established India's first school for girls at Bhide Wada in Pune.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
2. With reference to the Rani Velu Nachiyar, consider the following statements:
 1. Her armed struggle against British rule took place after the Revolt of 1857.
 2. She successfully recaptured Sivagangai and is regarded as the first Indian queen to defeat the British in battle.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
3. Magh Mela, recently in the news, is held annually at which of the following places?
 - (a) Haridwar
 - (b) Prayagraj
 - (c) Ujjain
 - (d) Nashik
4. With reference to the Somnath Temple, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Somnath is regarded as the first among the twelve Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva.
 2. The present structure of the Somnath Temple was inaugurated by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1951.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. With reference to the Piprahwa relics, recently seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. The relics were discovered in 1898 by William Claxton Peppé at a site identified with ancient Kapilavastu.
 2. An inscription in Kharosthi script establishes their association with Lord Buddha.

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

6. With reference to the Kushana Empire (1st century BCE–3rd century CE), consider the following statements:

1. The Kushanas originated from the Central Asian Yueh-chi tribe and established a vast empire linking Central Asia with the Indian subcontinent.
2. Kanishka I patronised Buddhism, convened the Fourth Buddhist Council, and promoted trade along the Silk Route.
3. The Kushana Empire exercised control over the entire Gangetic plain, extending from Punjab to Bengal.

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 Kushan Empire, consider the following statements:

1. The Kushans were originally part of the Yuezhi confederation that migrated from north-west China to Bactria.
2. Kanishka I established Kushan rule in north-western India in the 1st century CE.
3. Purushapura (modern Peshawar) served as the capital of the Kushan Empire under Kanishka I.

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. Consider the following statements

1. Turkman Gate is one of the gates of the city of Shahjahanabad.
2. Shahjahanabad was founded during the reign of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

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 Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It was established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham.
2. It operates under the Ministry of Culture and is headquartered in New Delhi.

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. Consider the following statements with reference to Somnath temple.

1. Somnath is located on the western coast of Gujarat and is associated with Lord Shiva.
2. Somnath faced its first recorded attack by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026.
3. Somnath was reconstructed in Chaulukya style of Hindu temple architecture in 1951.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

11. With reference to the core teachings of the Buddha, consider the following statements:

1. Samudaya in the Four Noble Truths refers to suffering arising due to craving and attachment (tanhā).
2. The Noble Eightfold Path is classified into the three broad categories of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline.
3. According to the Three Marks of Existence, Anattā signifies that the soul transmigrates until it attains Nirvana.

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 'Bhadrakali Temple Inscription' sometimes appeared in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It was discovered in Gujarat near the Somnath Temple.
2. It was written during the Mughal period in Persian.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

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

13. Kanuma festival, recently seen in news, is primarily celebrated in:

- (a) Punjab and Haryana
- (b) Tamil Nadu and Kerala
- (c) Telangana and Andhra Pradesh
- (d) Odisha and West Bengal

14. With reference to the Kashi–Tamil Sangamam, consider the following statements:

1. It is an initiative organised by the Ministry of Education launched in 2024.

2. It aims to rediscover and celebrate the civilisational links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
3. Both Kashi and Chennai have been recognised by UNESCO as 'Creative Cities of Music'.

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. Consider the following statements regarding the Keeladi excavation site:

1. The site is geographically situated in the Vaigai river basin, which served as a perennial water source for the settlement.
2. Archaeological evidence from Keeladi suggests a transition from a rural society to a sophisticated urban civilization during the Sangam period.

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. With reference to Bagurumba dance, consider the following statements:

1. It is a classical dance form that originated under royal patronage in medieval Assam.
2. It was traditionally performed by young women of the Bodo community.
3. The dance is closely associated with the Bwisagu festival, marking the Bodo New Year and the onset of spring.

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. Theyyam, an ancient ritualistic performance art, is associated with which Indian state?

- (a) Sikkim
- (b) Kerala
- (c) West Bengal
- (d) Uttarakhand

18. With reference to the Vaikom Satyagraha, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched against the denial of access to public roads leading to a temple for lower castes in the princely state of Travancore.
2. T.K. Madhavan and K. Kelappan were among the prominent leaders of the movement.
3. The outcome of the protest led to the social equality where Dalits were allowed to use the public roads leading to the temple.

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.** The Kerala Literature Festival was recently held in Kozhikode. With reference to Kozhikode, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed on the Indian subcontinent at Kozhikode in 1498.
 2. Kozhikode is India's first city to be recognised under UNESCO's Creative Cities Network in the category of 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
- 20.** Consider the following languages:
1. Odia
 2. Prakrit
 3. Konkani
 4. Bengali
- Which of the above languages are included among the Indian classical languages?
- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 21.** Who was the first to refer to Mahatma Gandhi as the "Father of the Nation" and was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress (INC)?
- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
 - (b) Subhas Chandra Bose
 - (c) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
 - (d) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
- 22.** With reference to Vande Mataram, which of the following statements is/are not correct?
1. Vande Mataram was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Sanskrit 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
- 23.** With reference to Sowmyanarayana Perumal Temple, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The temple is built in the Chola architectural style and located in the state of Karnataka.
 2. The temple is one of the 108 Divya Desams, the most sacred Vaishnavite shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

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

24. He was a prolific writer and authored several works like – “Unhappy India”, “Young India: An Interpretation”, “History of Arya Samaj” and “England’s Debt to India.”

Who among the following personalities described above ?

- (a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (b) Motilal Nehru
- (c) Aurobindo Ghosh
- (d) Lala Lajpat Rai

25. With reference to the Tulu language, consider the following statements:

1. It is predominantly spoken in the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu.
2. Tulu is one of the five literary Dravidian languages and has its own script.

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

EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

Context

- PM Modi paid homage to social reformer Savitribai Phule on her birth anniversary, remembering her contributions to society in the field of education.

About Savitribai Phule

- Savitribai Phule, a poet and social reformer, is widely recognised as the first female teacher of modern India.
- Born in 1831, she was married to social activist Jyotirao Phule at the age of 10.

Key Contributions

- **Pioneer of Women’s Education:** In 1848, alongside her husband Jyotirao Phule, she established India’s first school for girls at Bhide Wada in Pune.
 - She founded the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852 to raise awareness about women’s rights and social status.
- **Social Reformer:** She fought tirelessly against caste-based discrimination and untouchability.
- **Advocate for Vulnerable Groups:** She established Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, a shelter for pregnant rape victims and widows to prevent infanticide and provide them a safe place to deliver.
- **Literary Work:**
 - Kavya Phule in 1854
 - Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar in 1892.

2. (b)

- **Statement 1 is not correct:** Rani Velu Nachiyar (1730–1796) was one of the earliest Indian queens to wage an armed struggle against British colonial rule.
- After her husband was killed in 1772 by the British East India Company with the help of the Arcot Nawab, she fled and began organizing resistance.
- It demonstrates that organized resistance to British rule began much before 1857.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** She organized one of India's first organized armed rebellions against the British.
- She successfully recaptured Sivagangai in 1780 and became the first Indian queen to defeat the British in battle.

3. (b)

Context

- 'Magh Mela 2026' festival has begun in Prayagraj.

About

- Magh Mela is held annually at the sacred region of Prayagraj on the banks of Sangam during the month of Magh.
- It is held from Paush Purnima to Mahashivratri.
- Prayagraj is the site of the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati.
 - The confluence of these three sacred rivers enhances the importance of bathing and donating.
- **Kalpavas:** Many devotees undertake Kalpavas, a vow to live simply on the riverbanks for the entire month — rising early, bathing at Brahma Muhurat, meditating, chanting, and performing charity.

4. (c)

Context

- PM Modi commemorated 1,000 years since the first attack on the Somnath Temple in 1026 AD, describing the iconic shrine as a timeless symbol of India's civilisational resilience and unbreakable spirit.

About Somnath Temple

- Somnath is revered as the first of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, as mentioned in the Dwadasha Jyotirling Stotram.
- The temple is located at Prabhas Patan on the western coast of Gujarat, a region historically associated with maritime trade, cultural exchange, and prosperity.
- The shrine was first attacked in January 1026 by Mahmud of Ghazni, marking the beginning of a series of invasions aimed at destroying symbols of Indian civilization.
 - Despite repeated devastation, the temple was rebuilt multiple times.

Restoration of the Temple

- Ahilyabai Holkar played a crucial role in restoring the temple in the 18th century, demonstrating the role of indigenous rulers in cultural revival.
- After Independence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel envisioned the reconstruction of Somnath.
- The present structure was completed and inaugurated on May 11th 1951, by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, reflecting the constitutional ethos of cultural freedom.
 - K.M. Munshi was instrumental in the reconstruction of the temple.
- Swami Vivekananda viewed Somnath as a symbol of India's national spirit that regenerates despite adversity.

5. (a)

Context

- **PM Modi inaugurated the Grand International Exposition of Sacred Piprahwa Relics, titled “The Light & the Lotus: Relics of the Awakened One”,** in New Delhi, marking the return of sacred Buddhist relics to India after more than a century.

About Piprahwa relics

- The Piprahwa relics were discovered in 1898 by British civil engineer William Claxton Peppé in Piprahwa, Uttar Pradesh.
 - They are excavated from the Piprahwa Stupa—widely recognized as the ancient city of Kapilavastu, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
- They include bone fragments, soapstone and crystal caskets, a sandstone coffer, and offerings such as gold ornaments and gemstones.
- They are believed to be associated with the mortal remains of Lord Buddha.
 - An inscription in the Brahmi script on one of the caskets confirms these as relics of the Buddha deposited by the Sakya clan.
- **Status:** Most of these relics were moved to the Indian Museum in Kolkata in 1899 and are legally protected as ‘AA’ antiquities, forbidding their sale or removal.
- While some bone relics were gifted to the King of Siam, a portion kept by Peppé’s descendants.

6. (a)

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Kushanas were one branch of the Yuezhi (Yueh-chi) confederation, nomadic tribes from the Central Asian steppes displaced by the Xiongnu around 2nd century BCE. They conquered Bactria (c. 135 BCE), unified under Kujula Kadphises (1st century CE), and built an empire spanning Central Asia, Afghanistan, and northern India, facilitating Silk Route connectivity.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Kanishka I, the greatest Kushana ruler, adopted Mahayana Buddhism, convened the Fourth Buddhist Council at Kundalvana (Kashmir), built stupas/relic towers, and issued gold coins promoting Greco-Buddhist art. His empire controlled key Silk Route segments from Central Asia to Mathura, boosting Indo-Roman and Indo-Chinese trade.
- **Statement 3 is not correct:** Kushan control was strongest in northwest India (Punjab, Gandhara, Mathura, parts of UP to Saketa/Prayagraj). Kanishka’s Mathura pillar marks eastern limits near Varanasi, but they never reached Bengal (under local dynasties) or controlled the entire Gangetic plain (Magadha/Gaya independent).

7. (c)

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Origin: Central Asian nomadic tribe, originally part of the Yuezhi confederation.
- Migrated from north-west China to Bactria (present-day Afghanistan–Central Asia).
- **Statement 2 is not correct:** Kujula Kadphises was the founder of the Kushan rule in India, established in north-western India around 1st century CE.
- Kanishka I was the greatest Kushan ruler, whose empire extended from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Punjab, Gangetic plains up to Varanasi.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Purushapura (Peshawar) was the capital under Kanishka I.

8. (a)

In News : The Turkman Gate area in Old Delhi saw violent clashes following a demolition drive by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

Statement 1 is correct but Statement 2 is not correct : Turkman Gate is one of the gates of Shahjahanabad, the city established by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in 1683 when he moved his capital from Agra to Delhi.

- The gate is named after Shah Turkman, a Mughal-era saint whose tomb is nearby, and a fair is held annually in the area to mark his death anniversary.

9. (c)

Context

- The Union Ministry of Culture is set to allow private agencies to undertake core conservation work at centrally protected monuments, ending the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) exclusive mandate in this domain.

About ASI

- It was established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham.
- It operates under the Ministry of Culture and is headquartered in New Delhi.

10. (c)

- **In News :** Somnath Swabhiman Parv is being organised to commemorate the temple's reopening.
- **Statements 1, 2 and are correct :** The Somnath temple located in Prabhas Patan near Veraval in Saurashtra on the western coast of Gujarat, is believed to be the first among the twelve jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. Over centuries, it was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, beginning with the first recorded attack by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1026, symbolising India's enduring faith, identity, and civilisational pride.
- Reconstructed several times in the past after repeated destruction by several Muslim invaders and Portuguese the present temple was reconstructed in Chaulukya style of Hindu temple architecture and completed in May 1951.

11. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: The Four Noble Truths:

- **Dukkha:** Life is suffering or unsatisfactory.
- **Samudaya:** Suffering is caused by craving and attachment (tanhā).
- **Nirodha:** The cessation of suffering is possible by letting go of craving.
- **Magga:** The path to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path.
- **The Noble Eightfold Path:** Grouped into three categories: wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline.

Statement 3 is not correct: The Three Marks of Existence:

- **Anicca (Impermanence):** All things are in constant change.
- **Dukkha (Suffering):** Existence is filled with dissatisfaction.
- **Anattā (Non-self):** There is no permanent, unchanging self. Anattā means absence of a permanent self or soul, not transmigration of a soul.
- **The Goal:** Nirvana (Nibbāna)
 - A state beyond suffering and rebirth.
 - Achieved through wisdom, ethical living, and mental discipline.
 - Nirvana is the ultimate liberation and peace.

12. (d)

- **In News:** The Bhadrakali Temple inscription offers a rare historical lens into the enduring legacy of the Somnath Temple and the pivotal role of Solanki ruler Kumarapala in its revival during the 12th century.

- **Statement 1 is not correct:** The Bhadrakali Temple is located in Warangal, Telangana, not Gujarat, and the inscription is associated with that region, and dedicated to Goddess Bhadrakali.
- It houses inscriptions that reference significant events and rulers from across the Indian subcontinent
- Among the most notable episodes in its history is its large-scale renovation during the reign of Kumarapala (r. 1143–1172 CE), a ruler of the Solanki dynasty.
- **Statement 2 is not correct:** The inscription is from the 12th century and is typically in regional scripts like Telugu or Sanskrit, not Persian.

13. (c)

Kanuma Panduga (or Kanuma festival) is celebrated on the third day of the four-day Makar Sankranti harvest festival, primarily in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It falls around January 14-16 annually and holds deep cultural significance tied to Hindu mythology, where Lord Krishna lifted Govardhan Hill to protect villagers and cattle from floods caused by Indra.

14. (b)

- **Statement 1 is not correct:** Kashi–Tamil Sangamam is organized by the Ministry of Education, launched in 2022.
- **Statement 2 and 3 is correct:** Aim: To rediscover, reaffirm, and celebrate the age-old links between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
- It is in sync with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating the Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.
- It provides an opportunity for scholars, students, philosophers, and artists from the two regions to share their knowledge.
- It also aims to make the youth aware and experience cultural oneness.
- Both Kashi and Chennai have been recognised by UNESCO as 'Creative Cities of Music'.

15. (c)

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Keeladi is located near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, bounded by the Vaigai River to the north. The river basin played a crucial role in supporting the agricultural and domestic needs of this ancient urban center.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Excavations at Keeladi have revealed an advanced urban habitation with brick structures, street planning, water management systems, and industrial activity, indicating a sophisticated urban society in the Sangam Age. Findings on the Keeladi excavation site such as Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, craft production, and evidence of trade suggest a transition from earlier rural habitation towards an urban, literate, industrial settlement in the Vaigai plains during this period.

16. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: Bagurumba is a folk dance, not a classical dance, and is rooted in community traditions rather than royal patronage.

Statement 2 and 3 is correct: It was traditionally performed by young women, the dance symbolises harmony with nature, celebrating themes of fertility, peace and joy.

- The fluid hand movements and gentle footwork mirror the flight of butterflies, reflecting the community's close bond with the natural world.
- The dance is closely associated with the Bwisagu festival, which marks the Bodo New Year and the advent of spring.

17. (b)

In News: In Kannur, a centuries-old Theyyam shrine, banned photography after the family faced a negative experience during last year's Theyyam season.

About

- Theyyam, an ancient ritualistic performance art, is unique to north Kerala, where divine energy is believed to descend among the people, transcending caste hierarchies.
- It is predominantly performed by the Malayan and Vannan communities.
- It honors family, village, and regional deities, including Hindu gods, goddesses, forest and warrior spirits, as well as select Muslim figures, reflecting intercultural acceptance.

18. (d)

All three statements are correct: Vaikom Satyagraha was initiated against the practice of untouchability.

- In Vaikom in the erstwhile Travancore princely State, members of the lower castes, particularly Dalits, were denied the right to walk on roads leading to the Vaikom Shiva Temple.
- It was led by T.K. Madhavan, K. Kelappan, and other prominent leaders. E.V. Ramasamy Periyar also lent support to the movement.
- **Outcome:** After over a year of protest and negotiations, the Government eventually allowed Dalits to use the public roads leading to the temple, marking a victory for social equality and the end of caste-based discrimination in the region.

19. (c)**Context**

- The ninth edition of the Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) commenced at Kozhikode Beach on January 22, 2026.

About the Festival

- The Kerala Literature Festival (KLF) is the largest literary event in India, attracting over half a million attendees across four vibrant days.
- Founded in 2016, the festival is organised by the DC Kizhakemuri Foundation and co-promoted by DC Books.
- KLF is held annually on the beaches of Kozhikode (Calicut), India's first UNESCO City of Literature.
- **Significance:** KLF features a diverse line-up of speakers, including Nobel laureates, Booker Prize winners, Oscar winners, celebrities, acclaimed authors and thought leaders.
 - It also hosts performances of music, dance, theatre and other performative and participatory arts.

Significance of Kozhikode

- Kozhikode Known as the "City of Spices", has historically been a major centre of trade, cultural exchange, and intellectual activity.
- Renowned Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama touched down the Indian subcontinent on the shores of Calicut in 1498.

20. (a)

Context: The President of India inaugurated Granth Kutir.

About

- **Granth Kutir is a library at the Rashtrapati Bhawan which has the collection of around 2,300 books and about 50 manuscripts in 11 Indian classical languages:** Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Odia, Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, and Bengali.
- The collection reflects India's cultural, philosophical, literary, and intellectual heritage.
- Subjects include epics, philosophy, linguistics, history, governance, science, devotional literature, and the Constitution of India in classical languages.

- Several manuscripts are handwritten on traditional materials such as palm leaf, paper, bark, and cloth.
- Granth Kutir supports the vision of the Gyan Bharatam Mission, which aims to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's manuscript heritage, blending tradition with modern technology.

21. (b)**Context**

- The President of India, paid tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary, observed as Parakram Diwas.

About Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

- He was a prominent Indian nationalist and leader who played a crucial role in the Indian independence movement.
- He was the first person to call Mahatma Gandhi "Father of the Nation", in his address from Singapore.
- **Indian National Congress:**
 - He was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress twice, in 1938 and 1939.
 - Ideological differences with Mahatma Gandhi led to his resignation and the formation of the Forward Bloc, a political faction committed to radical change.
- **Azad Hind Radio 1942:** He established Azad Hind Radio in Germany to reach out to Indians and spread his vision of independence.
 - He coined several patriotic slogans, including "Jai Hind," "Dilli Chalo" (On to Delhi), and "Give me blood, and I will give you freedom".
- **Formation of Indian National Army (INA):** In 1942, he formed the INA with the help of Japanese forces.
 - The INA was an armed force aimed at securing India's independence through military action against British rule.
- **Azad Hind Government:** In 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose renamed the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as "Shaheed" (Martyr) and "Swaraj" (Self-Rule) during his leadership of the Azad Hind Government.
 - This was a symbolic gesture of asserting India's sovereignty against British rule.
 - On October 21, 1943, Netaji declared the establishment of the Provisional Government of Free India (Azad Hind Sarkar).
- Subhash Chandra Bose reportedly passed away in a plane crash in Taiwan in 1945.
- **Legacy:** Ross Island (an island of the Andaman Islands) was renamed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep in 2018 in his honour.
 - The Kranti Mandir Museum at the Red Fort preserves key historical material related to Netaji Bose and the Indian National Army.
 - In 2022, a grand statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was unveiled by the Prime Minister near India Gate, New Delhi.

22. (d)**Context**

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs is examining whether Vande Mataram should be governed by formal protocols and attract penalties for disrespect, on lines similar to the national anthem Jana Gana Mana.

About

- The Constituent Assembly accorded Vande Mataram the status of the national song, with equal honour to the national anthem, but not identical legal treatment.

- **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971:** Provides statutory protection to the National Flag and the National Anthem.
 - No penal provision exists for disrespect to Vande Mataram under the Act.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 51A(a) Fundamental Duties:** Mandates every citizen to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.
- **Absence of Explicit Constitutional Protection:** Unlike the national anthem, Vande Mataram is not explicitly protected by any constitutional provision.
 - Its status flows from Constituent Assembly resolutions, not from enforceable constitutional text.

Vande Mataram

- 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.
- **National Song:** On 24 January 1950, the first two stanzas were adopted as India's National Song.

23. (b)

Context

- PM Modi met priests from the Sowmyanarayana Perumal Temple.

About

- **Location:** Thirukoshtiyur, Sivagangai district, Tamil Nadu.
- **Religious Significance:** The temple is one of the 108 Divya Desams, the most sacred Vaishnavite shrines dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
 - It holds a revered position in the history of Vaishnavism.
- **Historical Significance:** This is the sacred place where Shri Ramanujam revealed the Narayana Mantra to the public, contrary to his guru's instructions, to help people achieve salvation.

Architectural Features

- The temple is built in the Chola architectural style.
- It has a unique three-tier sanctum, representing different postures of Lord Vishnu;
 - **Ground level:** Lord Krishna in a dancing form.
 - **First level:** Vishnu in Sayana (reclining) posture.
 - **Top level:** Vishnu in standing posture.
- The shrine is crowned by the rare Ashtanga Vimana. Only a few Vishnu temples in India possess this distinctive vimana.

24. (d)

In News : The Prime Minister paid tributes to Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai on his birth anniversary. Lajpat Rai was a lawyer, journalist, and freedom fighter.

- He was born on 28 January, 1865 in a Punjabi Hindu family in Dhudike.
- In 1886, Lala Lajpat Rai moved to Hisar, practiced law, co-founded the Hisar Bar Council, and established the district branches of the Indian National Congress and Arya Samaj.
- He also contributed to newspapers like The Tribune and helped Mahatma Hansraj found the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic School in Lahore.
- In 1914, he left law to fully dedicate himself to India's freedom struggle.
- He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in the Calcutta Special Session of 1920.
- In 1921, he founded Servants of the People Society, a non-profit welfare organization.
- He also founded the Punjab National Bank and the Lakshmi Insurance Company
- **He was a prolific writer and authored several works like – “Unhappy India”, “Young India: An Interpretation”, “History of Arya Samaj”, “England’s Debt to India” and a series of popular biographies on Mazzini, Garibaldi and Swami Dayanand.**

25. (b)

Context: The Karnataka government has expressed support for declaring Tulu as the State's second additional official language.

- Currently, Kannada is Karnataka's sole official language, while English is used as an additional official language.

About Tulu

- With a recorded history of over 3,000 years, Tulu is predominantly spoken in the coastal districts of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada in Karnataka.
- It has its own script and is one of only five literary Dravidian languages, the other four being Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.
- The language is gaining global recognition, with academic research in Germany and France, and inclusion in Google Translate.

Do you know?

- In 2023, the Karnataka government constituted a committee headed by educationist Mohan Alva, which recommended declaring Tulu as the State's second official language under Article 345 of the Constitution.



ECONOMY

1. Consider the following statements about the Board of Trade (BoT):
 1. It was constituted by merging the Council for Trade Development and Promotion with the Board of Trade in 2019.
 2. It is chaired by the Union Minister for Finance and advises the government on Foreign Trade Policy.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 the '*Central Silk Board (CSB)*' in India, consider the following statements:
 1. The Central Silk Board (CSB) is a statutory body.
 2. It is a regulatory body attached to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
 3. Central Silk Board (CSB)'s Head Office is situated in Bengaluru.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 tea production and export from India, consider the following statements:
 1. India is the largest producer and exporter of tea in the world.
 2. Darjeeling tea has been granted Geographical Indication (GI) status due to its unique flavour and quality.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. Which of the following statements about rice cultivation in India is correct?
 1. Rice is predominantly a Kharif or summer crop.
 2. Rice grows best in hot and humid conditions, with a mean monthly temperature around 34°C.
 3. Deep clayey and loamy soils are ideal for rice cultivation.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

5. With reference to the Payments Regulatory Board (PRB), consider the following statements:
1. The Payments Regulatory Board was established in 2025 under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, and it replaced the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).
 2. The Payments Regulatory Board is chaired by the Governor of the Reserve Bank 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
6. With reference to Opinion Trading Platforms, consider the following statements:
1. Opinion trading platforms allow users to place monetary predictions on the outcome of real-world events such as politics, sports, or weather.
 2. In India, opinion trading platforms are regulated by SEBI as recognised investment instruments.
 3. In the United States, opinion trading platforms fall under the regulatory oversight of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
7. With reference to the Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund, consider the following statements:
1. It was launched in 2019 to provide last-mile financing to stalled residential housing projects.
 2. It focuses exclusively on luxury and high-end real estate projects.
 3. The fund is managed by SBI Ventures Limited, a subsidiary of the State Bank of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
8. Which of the following best explains how District-Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT), can improve India's position in global textile value chains?
- (a) By expanding cotton cultivation in selected districts
(b) By shifting production from MSMEs to large firms
(c) By enabling district-level movement from low-value to high-value products
(d) By restricting raw material exports
9. With reference to the *'Disinvestment of Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) in India'*, consider the following statements:
1. It mandates the sale of all government shares in every PSEs.

2. Disinvestment is only carried out when a PSE is incurring losses.
3. Disinvestment always leads to privatization.

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 and 2 and 3

- 10.** The National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited (NFCSF) is best described as:
- (a) A central sector public sector undertaking engaged in sugar production
 - (b) An apex cooperative organisation involved in policy advocacy and sectoral development of sugar
 - (c) A statutory authority regulating sugar pricing in India
 - (d) A state-level federation of sugar mills
- 11.** With reference to Gig Workers and the Gig Economy in India, consider the following statements:
1. Gig work refers to income-earning activities largely based on short-term or task-based engagements.
 2. The concept of “gig” originates from the manufacturing sector, where workers are hired for single production cycles.
 3. The Code on Social Security, 2020 provides legal recognition and social security provisions for gig and platform workers.

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 recently recognized and synthetic cattle breeds in India, consider the following statements:
1. The Karan Fries is a synthetic breed developed by the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) by crossing Tharparkar cows with Holstein-Friesian bulls.
 2. Vrindavani is a composite breed that incorporates genetic traits from exotic breeds like Jersey and Brown Swiss into the indigenous Haryana breed.
 3. Medini, Rohikhandi, and Melghati have been recognized as new indigenous breeds of cattle and buffalo across different Indian 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

- 13.** With reference to Synthetic Cattle Breeds in India, consider the following statements:
1. They are developed through planned cross-breeding of indigenous cattle (*Bos indicus*) with exotic cattle (*Bos taurus*).
 2. They generally show higher mortality and poor reproductive efficiency compared to indigenous breeds.

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. With reference to the Tax Residency Certificate (TRC) and Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA) in India, consider the following statements:

1. A TRC is a mandatory document for a non-resident to claim tax treaty benefits under Section 90 or 90A of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
2. Under Indian law, a TRC is treated as the “conclusive evidence” of tax residency, and tax authorities cannot look into the “substance” of a transaction if a valid TRC is produced.
3. If an Indian resident pays tax in a foreign country with which India has no DTAA, they cannot claim any relief from double taxation in India.

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

15. With reference to India’s startup ecosystem, consider the following statements:

1. India has the third largest startup ecosystem in the world as of 2025.
2. More than two lakh startups are operational in India.
3. Nearly half of India’s startups have emerged from Tier II and Tier III cities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

16. The Shanta Kumar Committee, often seen in the news, was constituted to examine issues related to:

- (a) Financial restructuring of Public Sector Banks and resolution of non-performing assets.
- (b) Reform and restructuring of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and rationalisation of food subsidy.
- (c) Review of the functioning of Disaster Management Authorities and relief financing.
- (d) Regulation of digital platforms and data protection framework in India.

17. With reference to the ‘Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)’, consider the following statements:

1. It was constituted as a non-statutory body in 1988 through a resolution of the Government of India.
2. It is controlled by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
3. Its headquarters is located in Chennai.

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

- 18.** With reference to White Revolution 2.0, consider the following statements:
1. It aims to increase milk procurement by 50% in five years.
 2. It focuses on integrating uncovered areas into dairy cooperatives.
 3. It is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Cooperation and NABARD.
- 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
- 19.** With reference to the 'Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs)', consider the following statements:
1. They guarantee anonymity like cash transactions.
 2. CBDCs do not cause inflation by themselves.
- 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
- 20.** Social commerce is best described as:
- (a) The sale of goods exclusively through dedicated e-commerce websites
 - (b) Buying and selling goods directly through social media platforms without shifting to traditional e-commerce portals
 - (c) Online trading of financial assets using social networks
 - (d) A government-regulated digital retail model
- 21.** India's first open-sea marine fish farming project has been launched at which of the following locations?
- (a) Lakshadweep Islands
 - (b) Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu
 - (c) North Bay, Andaman and Nicobar Islands
 - (d) Chilika Lake, Odisha
- 22.** With reference to the Central Silk Board, consider the following statements:
1. It is a statutory body.
 2. It was established in 1960.
 3. It functions under the Ministry of Textiles.
- 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
- 23.** Which of the following statements is correct about the "Goldilocks economy"?
- (a) It means the economy is experiencing both high inflation and high unemployment.
 - (b) It means the government controls production and distribution with no role for private enterprise.

- (c) It means, resources and businesses are privately owned, and production is driven by profit.
- (d) It means an ideal state of balanced growth with low inflation and full employment.

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

1. It is a traditional dairy product of Jammu & Kashmir prepared from raw full-fat milk, using whey water as a coagulant.
2. It has been accorded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

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
25. Insider trading, recently seen in the news, refers to:
- (a) Buying or selling securities based on publicly available information
 - (b) Trading securities while in possession of material non-public information
 - (c) Trading only in government-owned company shares
 - (d) Buying stocks based on analyst predictions

26. Agarwood is considered rare and expensive because:

1. Only a small fraction of trees naturally develop resin.
2. Resin formation can take several decades.
3. Aquilaria trees grow only in arid regions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) only one
 - (b) only two
 - (c) all three
 - (d) none of the above
27. With reference to the Blue Category of Industries, consider the following statements:
1. It includes facilities classified as Essential Environmental Services (ESS).
 2. ESS are facilities that are essential to control, abate, and mitigate pollution arising from domestic and industrial activities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
28. With reference to the 'Economic Survey of India', consider the following statements:
1. It is part of the Finance Bill similar to the Union Budget.
 2. It extensively covers governance, climate change, infrastructure, social justice, and human capital.
 3. Recommendations made in the Economic Survey are mandatory for implementation by the government.

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

29. With reference to the Foreign portfolio investment (FPI), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. FPI consists of securities and other financial assets held by investors in another country.
2. It does not provide the investor with direct ownership of a company's assets.

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

30. With reference to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. CPI is an economic measure that tracks the average change in the prices paid by consumers for a basket of goods only.
2. The CPI in India is compiled by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

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. (a)

Context

- Many challenges were flagged by exporters in a meeting of the **Board of Trade (BoT)** chaired by the Union Commerce and Industry Minister.

About: Board of Trade

- **Board of Trade (BOT)** has been constituted by merging Council for Trade Development and Promotion with Board of Trade in **2019**.
- It **provides a platform** to state governments and UTs for articulating state-oriented perspectives on Trade Policy.
- **Functions:** It advises the Government on policy measures connected with the Foreign Trade Policy in order to achieve the objectives of boosting India's trade.
 - It is an important mechanism for deliberations on trade related issues with industry bodies, associations, export promotion councils, and state and UT governments.
- **It is chaired** by the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry.

2. (c)

In News: Recently, the **Central Silk Board** has announced an ambitious plan to **double India's silk value chain**, currently valued at **₹55,000 crore**, to **₹1.1 lakh crore by 2030**.

Statement 1 is correct and Statement 2 is not correct

- **Central Silk Board (CSB)** is a **statutory body** under the **Union Ministry of Textiles**, established by the **Central Silk Board Act, 1948** (later amended as *Central Silk Board (Amendment) Act, 2006*).

Statement 3 is correct: It is responsible for formulating policies and implementing programs for the **development of sericulture and silk industry.**

- **Headquarter:** Bengaluru, Karnataka.

3. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: India is the **second-largest producer and exporter** of tea in the world. **China** is the world's largest producer and exporter of tea.

- **Types of tea exported:** Primarily black tea (96%), with small quantities of regular, green, herbal, masala, and lemon tea.

Statement 2 is correct: Global reputation: Indian teas, especially Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiri, are renowned for their quality.

- Darjeeling tea, often called the "Champagne of Teas," was the first Indian product to receive a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2004.

4. (c)

In News

- India has become the world's largest producer of rice, surpassing China.
 - India's rice production has reached 150.18 million tonnes, compared to China's 145.28 million tonnes.

Rice

- It is the most important food crop of India.
- It is predominantly a Kharif or summer crop.
- **Geographical conditions**
 - **Temperature:** Rice requires hot and humid conditions. The temperature should be fairly high i.e. 24°C mean monthly temperature with average temperature of 22°C to 32°C.
 - **Rainfall** ranging between 150-300 cm is suitable for its growth in areas of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh where rainfall is less than 100 cm, rice is cultivated with the help of irrigation.
 - **Soil:** Rice is grown in varied soil conditions but deep clayey and loamy soil provides the ideal conditions.

5. (c)

About Payments Regulatory Board

- The Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) is a statutory body through which the Reserve Bank of India exercises regulatory and supervisory control over payment and settlement systems in India.
- It was created under Section 3 of the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007.
- It replaced the earlier Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).
- Its objective is to ensure safety, efficiency, stability, and consumer protection in digital and non-cash payments.
- It is chaired by the Reserve Bank of India Governor.

6. (a)

In News: A gambler made nearly half a million dollars by betting on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's capture just before it was officially announced, sparking questions about Opinion trading platforms.

What are Opinion trading platforms?

- Opinion trading platforms let users bet on the outcome of yes/no events, with payouts depending on whether the prediction is correct.
- These platforms often resemble investment platforms, using terms like trading, profits, and stop loss.
- Users can place predictions on events such as sports, politics, weather, or crypto, earning money if their prediction is right and losing money if it is wrong.

Status Across the globe

- The opinion trading sector is regulated across countries like the US, UK and Australia.
- In the US, it is regulated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), one of the country's two main stock market regulators.

Regulation In India

- India cracked down on prediction markets starting in early 2025, when SEBI warned that such platforms were unregulated, lacked investor protection, and could involve illegal securities trading.
- In August 2025, the government imposed a blanket ban on online money gaming under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, effectively shutting down opinion trading platforms like Probo and Opinio.
- The law introduced strict penalties, including jail terms, heavy fines, bans on promotion, and restrictions on banking support.
 - At its peak, the sector had over 5 crore users and raised ₹4,200 crore from major investors.

7. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The SWAMIH Investment Fund was launched in 2019 to provide priority last-mile debt financing for stressed/stalled residential projects in the affordable and mid-income segments.

Statement 2 is not correct: The fund specifically targets affordable and mid-income housing projects registered with RERA, not luxury or high-end real estate.

Statement 3 is correct: The fund is managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd/SBI Ventures Ltd, which is part of the State Bank Group and a subsidiary linked to SBI.

8. (c)

Context

- The Ministry of Textiles has unveiled the **District-Led Textiles Transformation (DLTT) initiative**, a strategic initiative designed to catalyze inclusive and sustainable growth across India's textile landscape.

About

- By shifting to a sector-specific, district-level approach, the **Ministry aims to transform 100 high-potential districts** into Global Export Champions and elevate 100 Aspirational Districts into self-reliant hubs.
- The Ministry analyzed all districts using a data-driven scoring methodology based on **three key parameters - Export Performance, MSME Ecosystem Workforce Presence**.
- The initiative also emphasizes on Purvodaya convergence in east and northeast zones.

Two-pronged strategy of districts categorization

- **Champion Districts (Scale & Sophistication):** These districts will focus on removing advanced bottlenecks.

- Interventions include upgrading to **Mega Common Facility Centres (CFCs)**, integrating **Industry 4.0**, and facilitating direct Export Market Linkages, etc.
- **Aspirational Districts (Foundation & Formalization):** These districts would aim to **build the ecosystem from the ground up** in setting up foundation and formalization of workforce.
 - This includes basic skilling and certification, establishing Raw Material Banks, and promoting micro-enterprises through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Cooperatives, etc.

Significance of the DLTT Initiative

- The initiative promotes decentralised and district-specific industrial development, moving away from a **one-size-fits-all approach** and ensuring that local strengths, resources, and skills are effectively leveraged.
- DLTT strengthens **India's textile export competitiveness** by enabling districts with proven capacity to scale up, upgrade technology, and integrate directly with global markets.
- The focus on MSMEs and informal enterprises helps in **formalising the textile ecosystem**, improving access to finance, technology, and markets for **small producers, artisans, and micro-entrepreneurs**.

9. (d)

In News: Recently, the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**, in its recommendations for the **Union Budget 2026–27**, has urged the government to adopt a faster, demand-led approach to the privatisation of **Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs)**.

Statement 1 is not correct: The *Disinvestment of Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs)* distinguishes between strategic and non-strategic sectors. In strategic sectors, the government may retain majority control, while in non-strategic sectors, it may fully exit.

- Not all PSEs are slated for complete divestment.

Statement 2 is not correct: Profit-making PSEs are also disinvested to unlock value, improve efficiency, and attract private investment.

- The decision is based on broader economic and strategic considerations, not just financial performance.

Statement 3 is not correct: Disinvestment can involve partial sale of equity while the government retains control.

- Full privatization occurs only when the government sells its entire stake and relinquishes management control.

10. (b)

NFCSF is a multi-state cooperative federation whose members are cooperative sugar factories and state cooperative sugar federations across India, making it an apex-level cooperative body for the sector.

Its key functions include representing member cooperatives, participating in sugar policy formulation, and working for the development and promotion of the cooperative sugar sector, which aligns with policy advocacy and sectoral development rather than direct production or regulation.

11. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Non-standard or gig work consists of **income-earning activities outside of standard, long-term employer-employee relationships**.

- It relies **heavily on temporary and part-time positions** filled by **independent contractors and freelancers** rather than full-time permanent employees.

Statement 2 is not correct: The term is borrowed from the music world, where performers book “gigs” that are **single or short-term engagements** at various venues.

Statement 3 is correct: **Code on Social Security, 2020** provides legal recognition and social security benefits to gig and platform workers.

12. (d)

Statement 1 is correct: Karan Fries was indeed developed at NDRI, Karnal. It is a cross-breed designed to combine the high milk yield of the Holstein-Friesian (exotic) with the heat tolerance and disease resistance of the Tharparkar (indigenous).

Statement 2 is correct: Vrindavani is a complex composite breed developed at IVRI, Bareilly. It involves a cross-breeding program involving three exotic breeds (Holstein-Friesian, Brown Swiss, and Jersey) and the sturdy indigenous Hariana breed.

Statement 3 is correct: The government continuously updates the list of recognized indigenous breeds. Medini (found in Jharkhand), Rohikhandi (Uttar Pradesh), and Melghati (Maharashtra) are among the recently recognized indigenous livestock breeds, reflecting the diversity of India’s animal genetic resources.

13. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: **Synthetic cattle breeds** are those developed through **planned cross-breeding of two or more breeds** usually **indigenous (Bos indicus)** with **exotic (Bos taurus)** followed by **stabilisation of desired traits** over generations.

- Once stabilised, they breed true and are recognised as distinct breeds.

Statement 2 is not correct: Significance:

- Higher productivity than indigenous cattle.
- Better climate resilience than pure exotic breeds.
- Improved economic returns for dairy farmers.
- **Lower mortality and better reproductive efficiency.**

14. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: According to Section 90(4) and 90A(4) of the Income Tax Act, a non-resident is not entitled to claim any relief under a DTAA unless they obtain a TRC from the government of their home country.

Statement 2 is not correct: While a TRC is a necessary document, it is not always considered “conclusive” proof if there are concerns about tax evasion. Under the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR), Indian tax authorities can look beyond the TRC to check the “commercial substance” of an arrangement to prevent “treaty shopping” (where a company sets up a shell office in a low-tax country just to get DTAA benefits).

Statement 3 is not correct: Even if there is no DTAA, an Indian resident can still get relief under Section 91 of the Income Tax Act. This is known as Unilateral Relief. The Indian government provides a tax credit for the taxes paid abroad to ensure the individual isn’t unfairly burdened, even without a formal treaty.

15. (c)

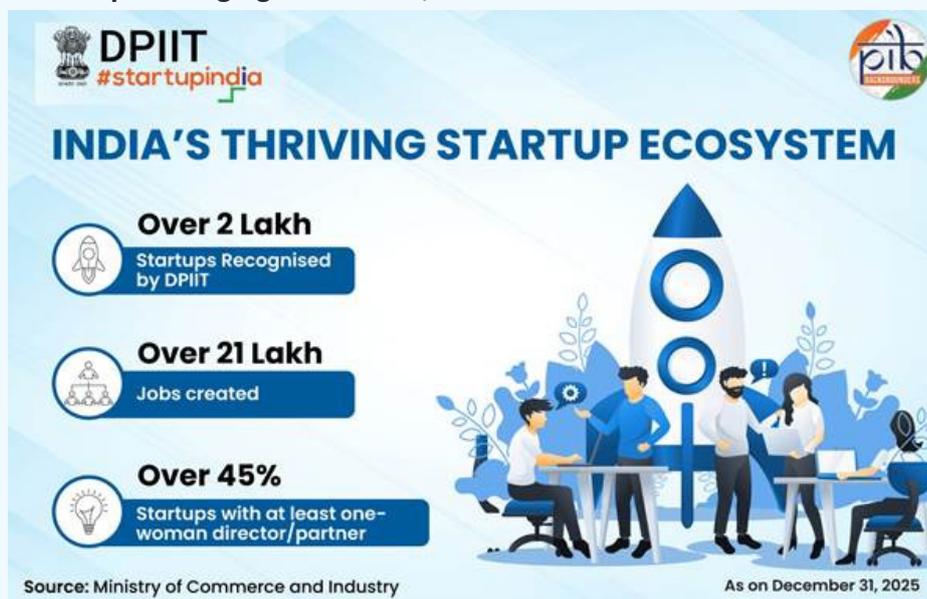
Context

- PM Modi participated in a programme marking a decade of the **Startup India initiative** on **National Startup Day**.

- **Startup India** was launched on **January 16, 2016**, as a transformative national programme to promote entrepreneurship and enable investment-driven growth.

India's Startup Ecosystem

- India has rapidly evolved into one of the **world's largest startup ecosystems**, with **more than 2 lakh startups as of 2025**.
- **India** has the **3rd largest startup ecosystem** in the world.
- **Major hubs** like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR have been at the forefront of this transformation.
- India has **over 120 unicorns** with a valuation exceeding **\$350 billion**.
- **Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 ranking**: It provides **performance metrics and ranks around 140 economies** on their **innovation ecosystems**.
 - India has made a steady climb **from 48 rank in 2020 to 38 in 2025**.
- At the same time, **smaller cities are also steadily contributing** to the momentum with **around 50% of the startups** emerging from Tier II/ III cities.



16. (b)

The Shanta Kumar Committee, formed by the Indian government in 2014, was a High-Level Committee tasked with reviewing and recommending reforms for the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to improve its financial and operational efficiency in food grain management, storage, and distribution.

17. (b)

In News: India's **Nifty50** and **Sensex** indices have slipped about **1%**, underperforming nearly every major global benchmark, while markets in **South Korea, Japan, China, and the US** have surged in recent months, rising between **2% and 21%**.

Statement 1 is correct: The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** was constituted as a **non-statutory body** in 1988 through a resolution of the Government of India and later it was established as a **statutory body** under the provisions of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992**.

Statement 2 is not correct: SEBI is not controlled by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. It functions under the **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India.

Statement 3 is not correct: The **headquarters of SEBI** is located in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

18. (i)

Statement 1 is correct: The primary goal of White Revolution 2.0, launched by the Ministry of Cooperation, is to increase milk procurement by dairy cooperative societies by 50% over the next five years.

Statement 2 is correct: The initiative specifically targets the expansion of the cooperative network to cover approximately 2 lakh uncovered Panchayats and villages. It aims to provide market access to farmers in regions that currently lack formal dairy infrastructure.

Statement 3 is not correct: White Revolution 2.0 is an initiative of the Ministry of Cooperation. While it involves cooperation with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) and entities like the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), the NABARD is not a joint implementation partner for this specific scheme.

19. (d)

In News: Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended that the **linkage of BRICS Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs)** be placed on the agenda of the **2026 BRICS Summit** to simplify **cross-border trade, tourism, and payment settlements**, which India will host later this year.

- CBDCs are **issued and regulated by a country's central bank, as legal tender.**

Statement 1 is not correct: CBDCs are typically **traceable and programmable**, allowing central banks to monitor transactions to prevent illicit activities.

- Most designs include **partial privacy, not full anonymity.**

Statement 2 is not correct: CBDCs themselves do not cause inflation. Inflation depends on **monetary policy, not the form of money.**

- A CBDC is simply a **digital representation** of a sovereign currency, not additional money creation by default.

20. (b)

Context

- In India, despite strong potential, social commerce contributes only **1–2%** of total e-commerce revenue, compared to 30–40% in China and 20–25% in Indonesia.

What is Social Commerce?

- Social commerce refers to the **buying and selling of goods directly through social media platforms.**
 - Consumers discover products while browsing social media and complete the purchase without shifting to traditional e-commerce platforms.
- It combines **social interaction** (influencers, live videos, community groups) with online shopping.
 - **Influencer-led selling:** Products are promoted by creators whom consumers trust.
 - **Live-stream shopping:** Sellers demonstrate products in real time and interact with buyers.
 - **Community-based selling:** Products are sold through WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, or regional social networks.

Difference Between E-commerce and Social Commerce

- Traditional e-commerce is **search-driven and platform-centric**, whereas social commerce is **discovery-driven and trust-centric.**
- E-commerce involves **planned purchases**, whereas social commerce encourages **impulse buying.**

21. (c)

Context

- India's first open-sea marine fish farming project was launched at **North Bay in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

About

- **Objective:** The primary goal is to transition towards a **commercially viable model for open-sea farming**, reduce pressure on traditional coastal fishing, and generate sustainable livelihoods for local fishing communities.
- **Target Species:** The initiative focuses on cultivating high-value marine finfish species like **Cobia (Rachycentron canadum)** and **Seabass (Lates calcarifer)**, alongside experimental deep-water seaweed cultivation.
- **Implementing Agencies:** The project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands administration.
- **Technology:** The project uses advanced, indigenously developed open-sea cages designed by NIOT to withstand natural oceanic conditions.

About Andaman Sea

- The Andaman Sea, a marginal sea in the **northeastern Indian Ocean**, holds historical trade significance and strategic value for maritime routes and regional biodiversity.
- It controls key chokepoints like the **Ten Degree Channel and Six Degree Channel**, vital for 25% of global trade via Malacca Strait.

22. (c)

Option c is correct: The Central Silk Board (CSB) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament—the Central Silk Board Act, 1948. The Board was formally constituted and operationalised on April 9, 1949, based on recommendations from the Silk Panel. It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, with headquarters in Bengaluru.

23. (d)

In News : India's 2025 agricultural year benefited from a rare "Goldilocks" combination of surplus monsoon rainfall and moderate temperatures, unlike 2024, which was the warmest year on record despite a good monsoon.

- A Goldilocks economy represents an ideal economic condition where there is balanced growth, low inflation, and full employment, without overheating or slipping into a recession.
- Characterized by stable interest rates and modest inflation, a Goldilocks economy provides an optimal environment for investments, especially in equities, as companies experience positive growth.

24. (c)

Context

- The Union Minister of State for Science & Technology has directed the upscaling of Kaladi, a **traditional dairy product of Udhampur** district, Jammu & Kashmir.
 - The initiative is aligned with the **One District One Product (ODOP) scheme** to enable value addition.

About Kaladi

- Kaladi is a **traditional dairy product** prepared from raw full-fat milk, using **whey water as a coagulant**.

- It is known for its milky flavour, stretchable texture, and soft mouthfeel, often referred to as the “**mozzarella of Jammu**”.
- It has received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, enhancing its economic and cultural significance.

25. (b)

Context: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has accused executives from PwC and EY, among others, of breaching insider trading rules involving a 2022 share sale by Yes Bank.

What is Insider Trading?

- Insider trading refers to the **practice of purchasing or selling a publicly-traded company's securities** while in possession of material information that is not yet public information.
- **Material information** refers to any and all information that may result in a substantial impact on the decision of an investor regarding whether to buy or sell the security.
- It is prohibited under the **SEBI (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015**.

26. (b)

About Agarwood

- **Agarwood** is a rare, highly fragrant wood that forms inside certain trees (Aquilaria) when they get infected or wounded, and the tree produces a **special dark resin as a defence**.
- This **resin-rich wood** is then used to make **high-value perfume oils (oud), incense and traditional medicines**, and is traded globally, especially in West Asia and East Asia.
- It is mainly **found in tropical, high-rainfall regions of South and Southeast Asia, including Tripura** and other parts of Northeast India, where the climate and soils suit Aquilaria trees.
- Only a small share of trees naturally develop resin, and it can take decades, which is why agarwood is rare and expensive.

27. (c)

Statements 1 and 2 are correct: Blue Category includes Essential Environmental Services (ESS) like CETPs, STPs, WTE plants, and biomining, vital for pollution abatement from domestic/ industrial sources.

28. (c)

In News: Recently, the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs tabled the **Economic Survey 2025-26** in Parliament.

Statement 1 is not correct: The Economic Survey is **not part of the Finance Bill**. It is a **separate analytical document** presented before the Union Budget.

Statement 2 is correct: The Economic Survey goes beyond macroeconomics and includes wide thematic coverage on these areas.

- *It extensively covers governance, climate change, infrastructure, social justice, and human capital.*

Statement 3 is not correct: *Recommendations made in the Economic Survey* are **advisory**, not binding by the government.

29. (c)

Context

- Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) recorded net outflows of **₹35,962 crore** from Indian equities in January 2026.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI)

- FPI consists of securities and other financial assets held by investors in another country.
- It does **not provide the investor with direct ownership of a company's assets** and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
- **FPI holdings can include** stocks, American Depositary Receipts (ADRs), Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs), bonds, mutual funds, and Exchange-traded funds (ETFs).
- It is different from **Foreign direct investment (FDI)**, which is an ownership stake in a foreign company or project made by an investor, company, or government from another country.

30. (b)**Context**

- The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has published the recommendations of an expert group revising the Consumer Price Index (CPI) base year from 2011–12 to 2023–24.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- CPI is an economic measure that **tracks the average change in the prices** paid by consumers for a basket of goods and services over time.
- The **CPI in India** is compiled by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** and is categorized into CPI for **urban** and **rural** areas.
- These indices are then combined to calculate the **CPI (Combined)**, which gives a comprehensive overview of inflation for the entire country.
- **Significance:**
 - CPI is the primary measure of **retail inflation in India**.
 - It is used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) **for inflation targeting** and monetary policy formulation.
 - CPI serves as the basis for **indexing Dearness Allowance (DA)** for government employees and pensioners. It is also used as a **deflator in national accounts**.



INDIAN POLITY & CONSTITUTION

1. With reference to Child Custody in India, consider the following statements:
 1. Child custody in India is governed by personal laws of communities, the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890, and principles evolved through judicial pronouncements.
 2. The welfare and best interests of the child override parental rights and statutory preferences in custody matters.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 the National Investigation Agency (NIA), consider the following statements:
 1. The NIA is India's central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency established in the aftermath of the 2001 Indian Parliament attack.
 2. The NIA cannot investigate scheduled offences committed outside India involving Indian citizens or Indian interests.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
3. With reference to the '*the Repealing and Amending Act, 2025*', consider the following statements:
 1. It aims to repeal outdated and redundant laws that no longer serve any purpose.
 2. It removes laws dating from 1858 to 2014 that were deemed redundant.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 the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), consider the following statements:
 1. The Bureau of Indian Standards functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
 2. BIS was established under the BIS Act, 2016.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. Match the following Constitutional provisions with their correct descriptions:

	List I (Article)		List II (Provision)
1.	Article 29 & 30	A.	Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities to investigate safeguards
2.	Article 347	B.	Recognition of a language spoken by a section of State population
3.	Article 350A	C.	Protection of minority interests & right to administer educational institutions
4.	Article 350B	D.	Instruction in mother tongue at primary stage for linguistic minorities

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1–C, 2–B, 3–D, 4–A
- (b) 1–C, 2–A, 3–B, 4–D
- (c) 1–B, 2–C, 3–D, 4–A
- (d) 1–D, 2–B, 3–C, 4–A

6. With reference to the 'Census in India', consider the following statements:

1. It is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. It includes all persons residing in India at the time of enumeration, regardless of citizenship.
3. Participation in the census is mandatory under the Census Act, 1948.

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. With reference to the 'Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006', consider the following statements:

1. It replaced the earlier Sarda Act with the objective to *prohibit* rather than merely restrain child marriages.
2. It defines a child as a male below 21 years and a female below 18 years.

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 Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body established to regulate the upstream production of crude oil and natural gas in India.
2. The board has the legal authority to adjudicate disputes between entities involved in the petroleum and natural gas sector.
3. Appeals against the decisions of the PNGRB are heard by the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL).

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. Consider the following statements regarding the Arbitration Council of India:
1. It is a statutory body.
 2. It is chaired by the Chief Justice of India.
 3. It is responsible for grading arbitral institutions.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
10. With reference to the Kuki-Zo people, consider the following statements:
1. The Kuki-Zo people are an ethnic community spread across Manipur and Mizoram only.
 2. They share close ethnic and cultural ties with the Chin–Mizo groups of Myanmar and Mizoram.
- 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. Consider the following statements
1. Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was established in 1964 following the recommendations of the Santhanam Committee.
 2. The Central Vigilance Commissioner is appointed by the President of India on the recommendations of the Prime Minister and Chief Justice of India.
 3. Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) supervises the functioning of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in cases related to offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All the three
 - (d) None
12. With reference to the Committee of Privileges in the Indian Parliament, consider the following statements:
1. The committee is a standing committee found in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, with members nominated by the respective Presiding Officers.
 2. The Lok Sabha committee consists of 15 members, whereas the Rajya Sabha committee consists of 10 members.
 3. The committee performs semi-judicial functions by examining cases of breach of privilege and recommending suitable action.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) only one
 - (b) only two
 - (c) all three
 - (d) None

- 13.** Consider the following statements regarding the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO):
1. It was established in 1951 under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
 2. EPFO covers establishments with 10 or more employees and manages provident fund, pension, and insurance schemes.
 3. It is administered solely by government representatives without employer or employee participation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1, 2, and 3
 - (d) 1 and 3 only
- 14.** The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 resulted in the statehood of which of the following?
1. Manipur
 2. Tripura
 3. Meghalaya
- 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
- 15.** Consider the following statements with reference to Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act, 2013.
1. It provides compensation of up to twice the market value in urban areas and four times in rural areas.
 2. It requires a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to evaluate the social, environmental, and economic effects of land acquisition.
- 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.** With reference to Uttar Pradesh, consider the following statements:
1. During the colonial period, the region was known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which was later shortened to the United Provinces in 1935.
 2. Uttar Pradesh shares its northern boundary with Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and has no international border.
 3. It is recognized as the "Sugar Bowl of India" because it is the country's largest producer of sugarcane.
- 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. *Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab (1974)* is related to:
- Police reform
 - Capital punishment
 - Power of Governor
 - Anti-Defection Law
18. With reference to Article 176(1) of the Constitution of India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- The Governor shall address the State Legislature at the commencement of the first session each year.
 - The address reflects the personal views of the Governor on state governance.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
19. With reference to the '*Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)*', consider the following statements:
- It was established as a statutory body in 1956.
 - It is responsible for constructing and maintaining airports in India.
 - Its headquarter is located in Chennai, Tamilnadu.
- Which of the statements given above are **not** correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
20. With reference to the Joint Sitting of Two Houses, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- Article 108 provides a constitutional mechanism for resolving legislative deadlocks between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha regarding ordinary bills.
 - The joint sitting is presided over by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, or in her absence, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
21. With reference to the Directorate of Enforcement (ED), consider the following statements:
- It was originally established in 1956 as an Enforcement Unit under the Department of Economic Affairs.
 - The Enforcement Directorate enforces both civil and criminal laws related to economic offences.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

- 22.** The “N. K. Singh Committee”, often seen in the news, was constituted for which of the following purposes?
1. Reviewing the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.
 2. Recommending a new fiscal framework for India.
 3. Suggesting targets for public debt.
 4. Examining reforms in Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
 - (b) 1 and 4 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 23.** With reference to Personality Rights in India, consider the following statements:
1. Personality rights allow an individual to protect distinctive attributes of their personality such as name, voice, pose or mannerisms.
 2. These rights are expressly codified under a specific statute in India.
 3. Personality rights are primarily traced to the Right to Privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- 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.** Consider the following statements regarding the ‘whip’ in the Indian parliamentary system:
1. A whip is an order issued by political parties directing their members in the House to follow a particular voting line.
 2. The concept of the whip is mentioned explicitly in the Constitution of India.
 3. MPs who defy a party whip may lose their seat in Parliament under the provisions of the anti-defection law.
 4. The practice of issuing whips originated from a British parliamentary tradition.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) Only three
 - (d) All four
- 25.** With reference to Article 21 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:
1. It states that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
 2. Article 21 is available only to citizens of India and not to foreign nationals.
 3. The right to menstrual hygiene is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- 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

EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

Both the statements are correct: Child Custody in India is governed by a mix of personal laws, the **Guardians and Wards Act, 1890**, and **judicial principles** developed by courts.

- **The overarching principle** unifying all Indian child custody law is that the **welfare and best interests of the child supersede all other considerations**, including parental rights, statutory preferences, and traditional hierarchies.
- **Types of Child Custody:**
 - **Sole Custody:** The child lives with one parent and the other parent may get visitation rights.
 - **Joint Custody:** The child alternates between parents, it is increasingly preferred by courts to ensure balanced upbringing.
 - **Third-Party Custody:** Granted to grandparents or relatives if both parents are unfit.
- **Guardianship ceases when** the child attains majority (at eighteen years), when a guardian dies, is removed, or resigns, or in the case of a female ward, upon her marriage to a husband.

2. (d)

Context: In 2025, the NIA achieved a conviction rate of over 92%, secured the extradition of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana, and intensified its crackdown on terrorism and organised crime across the country.

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- **Established under:** NIA Act, 2008 after 26/11 Mumbai attacks.
- **Function:** Central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency.
- **Mandate:** Investigates offences affecting India's sovereignty, security, international treaties, etc.
- **NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019:**
 - **Jurisdiction extended:** Can investigate scheduled offences committed outside India involving Indian citizens/interests.
 - **Expanded mandate:** Covers offences under Explosive Substances Act, 1908 Human Trafficking, Cyber Terrorism Arms Act, 1959.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Special Courts:** Total NIA Special Courts: 51
 - Exclusive NIA Courts: 2 (Ranchi & Jammu).

3. (a)

In News: The **Repealing and Amending Act, 2025**, passed during the Winter Session of Parliament, eliminates 71 obsolete laws and updates key statutes to streamline India's legal framework.

Statement 1 is correct

- The Repealing and Amending Act, 2025, is a legislative effort by the Government of India to declutter the country's legal system. It aims to:
 - Repeal outdated and redundant laws that no longer serve any purpose.
 - Amend select existing laws to improve clarity, consistency, and administrative efficiency.

Statement 2 is not correct

- The **Repealing and Amending Act, 2025** removes laws dating from 1886 to 2023 that were deemed redundant.

- These include colonial-era statutes and outdated regulatory frameworks that had lost practical utility.
- The Act introduces targeted amendments to four major legislations like Code of Civil Procedure; General Clauses Act; Succession Act; and Disaster Management Act.

4. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

Statement 2 is correct: BIS was established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016, which provides the legal framework for standardisation, certification, and quality assurance in India.

5. (a)

Context

- The Karnataka government has urged the Kerala Governor to reject the Malayalam Bhasha Bill, 2025, passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

About

- The Bill **mandates Malayalam as the compulsory first language** in all governments and aided schools across Kerala up to Class 10.
- Karnataka has termed the Bill unconstitutional and detrimental to the rights of the Kannada-speaking linguistic minority, particularly in Kerala's Kasaragod district.

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 29 & 30:** Protection of minority interests and right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.
- **Article 347:** Special provision for recognition of a language spoken by a section of the population of a State.
- **Article 350A:** Obligation of States to provide facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage for linguistic minorities.
- **Article 350B:** Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities to investigate safeguards.

6. (d)

In News: Recently, the Union Government has issued notification for the **first phase of Census of India 2027**.

Statement 1 is correct

- The Census of India is conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India (ORGI)**, which functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, Government of India.

Statement 2 is correct

- The Census covers **all persons residing in India at the time of enumeration**, including foreigners residing in the country. It does **not** distinguish on the basis of citizenship.
- This is why even foreign nationals living in India for work or study are counted in the Census.

Statement 3 is correct

- Under the **Census Act, 1948**, it is **legally mandatory** for every individual to answer the questions truthfully during the census process.
 - Refusal or giving false information is **an offence under the Act**.

7. (c)

In News: Recently, the Government of India has launched the **nationwide campaign Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat (Child Marriage-Free India)**, reaffirming its commitment to eliminate child marriage by 2030.

Statement 1 is correct

- It replaced the **earlier Sarda Act** with the objective to *prohibit* rather than merely restrain child marriages.

Statement 2 is correct

- According to the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA)**, a *child marriage* is any marriage where:
 - **Female is below 18 years**, or
 - **Male is below 21 years old** at the time of marriage.

8. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: While the PNGRB regulates refining, transportation, and distribution, the production (upstream) of crude oil and natural gas is specifically excluded from its purview.

Statement 2 is correct: Under the PNGRB Act of 2006, the board is empowered to adjudicate disputes arising among entities on matters relating to petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas.

Statement 3 is correct: Interestingly, as per the legal framework, appeals against PNGRB's orders are filed before the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL), which was established under the Electricity Act, 2003.

9. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The Arbitration Council of India (ACI) is a statutory body established under Part IA (Sections 43A–43M) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, as inserted by the 2019 Amendment. Section 43B empowers the Central Government to constitute ACI as a body corporate with perpetual succession.

Statement 2 is not correct: ACI is not chaired by the Chief Justice of India. The Chairperson is appointed by the Central Government from a retired Supreme Court Judge, High Court Chief Justice, High Court Judge, or eminent arbitration expert, in consultation with the CJ.

Statement 3 is correct: Section 43D explicitly mandates ACI to frame policies governing the grading of arbitral institutions, recognize accrediting bodies, review gradings, and promote uniform standards.

10. (b)**Context**

- The **Kuki-Zo Council (KZC)**, the apex civil body representing the **Kuki-Zo people**, has reiterated its demand for the creation of a **Union Territory for Kuki-Zo tribes in Manipur**.

Who are the Kuki-Zo Groups?

- The **Kuki-Zo people** are an ethnic community spread across **Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam, and Myanmar**.
- They share close ethnic and cultural ties with other **Chin–Mizo groups of Myanmar and Mizoram**.
- Since the **1980s–90s**, several Kuki-Zo insurgent groups have emerged, primarily demanding:
 - **Greater autonomy and self-determination**,
 - **Protection of tribal land and rights**, and
 - In some cases, **separate statehood**.

11. (b)

In News: Praveen Vashista was appointed as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission by the Hon'ble President of India.

Statements 1 and 3 are correct : The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is India's apex statutory body entrusted with ensuring integrity, transparency, and accountability in public administration.

- It was established in 1964 following the recommendations of the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption**.
- It inquires into or causes investigations based on references from the Central Government, complaints received against public officials under its jurisdiction, and complaints referred by the Lokpal or under the Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers (PIDPI) mechanism.
- It supervises the **functioning of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** in cases related to offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, issues directions for such investigations, and reviews their progress, including delays in sanction for prosecution.

Statement 2 is not correct : The Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, provides for the appointment of a Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners. The tenure of the Vigilance Commissioner is of four years or till the incumbent attains the age of 65 years.

- The Central Vigilance Commissioner and the Vigilance Commissioners are appointed by the President of India on the recommendations of a High-Powered Committee (HPC) consisting of the **Prime Minister, the Minister of Home Affairs and the Leader of the Opposition in the House of the People (Lok Sabha)**.

12. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Committee of Privileges is a permanent Standing Committee. Each House of Parliament has its own committee. In the Lok Sabha, members are nominated by the Speaker, and in the Rajya Sabha, they are nominated by the Chairman.

Statement 2 is correct: The composition differs by house to reflect their respective strengths. The Lok Sabha committee has 15 members, while the Rajya Sabha committee has 10 members.

Statement 3 is correct: Its function is semi-judicial in nature. It examines whether a breach of privilege of the House or its members has occurred and determines the nature of the breach and the circumstances leading to it. It then makes recommendations for action in its report to the House.

13. (b)

About Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

- It is India's largest social security organisation under the **Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India**.
- It was **established in 1951** with the enactment of the **Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952**.
- EPFO manages the provident fund, pension, and insurance schemes for the organised workforce in India, covering establishments with **20 or more employees**.
- EPFO is administered by a **tripartite body called the Central Board of Trustees (CBT)**, consisting of representatives from the government (both Centre and States), employers, and employees.
- It has also introduced initiatives like **Universal Account Number (UAN)** to facilitate portability of PF accounts, and digital claim settlement systems to improve efficiency.

14. (d)

Context

- The President of India has extended greetings to the people of Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur on their Statehood Day.
 - Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura were granted statehood on January 21, 1972, following the enactment of the **North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971**.

About

- **Manipur:** Formerly a princely state, it merged with India in **1949**. It functioned as a Union Territory from **1956** until it was granted statehood.
- **Tripura:** Also a princely state, it joined the Indian Union in **1949**. Like Manipur, it was a **Union Territory from 1956** before becoming a full state in 1972.
- **Meghalaya:** Originally part of Assam, it was first made an **autonomous state within Assam** in 1970 before being carved out as a separate state in 1972 to recognize its unique tribal and cultural identity.

15. (c)

In News : Tribal Council members in Little and Great Nicobar allege that district officials are pressuring them to surrender ancestral lands for the ₹92,000-crore Great Nicobar mega project.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct: The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 replaced the colonial-era Land Acquisition Act of 1894 to create a fair and transparent framework for land acquisition in India.

- It is being Implemented from January 1, 2014 and ensures higher compensation, mandatory consent, and comprehensive rehabilitation for affected families, though farmers allege gaps in its proper implementation.
- It provides compensation of up to **twice** the market value in **urban areas** and **four times in rural areas**, and requires consent from 70% of affected families for PPP projects and 80% for private projects.
- It mandates Social Impact Assessments to evaluate social, economic, and environmental impacts.
- It restricts acquisition of irrigated multi-cropped land, ensures rehabilitation benefits such as housing, livelihood support, employment or annuity, and infrastructure in resettlement areas, and defines “public purpose” to prevent arbitrary acquisitions.
- It also stipulates that unused land be returned within five years, offers grievance redressal through the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement (LARR) Authority.

16. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: During the colonial period the region was called the **United Provinces of Agra and Oudh**.

- The name was shortened to the **United Provinces in 1935**.
- **On January 24, 1950** the United Provinces was renamed as **Uttar Pradesh**.

Statement 2 is not correct: The State is bound by Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in the north, Haryana in the west, Madhya Pradesh in the South and Bihar in the east.

- It has an international border with **Nepal**.

Statement 3 is correct: It is the **most populous and 4th largest state of India**.

- It is recognized as the **“Sugar Bowl of India”** because it is the country’s **largest producer of sugarcane**.
- **Major rivers:** Ganga, Yamuna, Ghaghara, Gomti, Rapti, Son, Betwa, Ken.

17. (c)

Context: The walkouts of Governors from the inaugural State Legislative Assembly sessions in Opposition-ruled Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala mark a departure from the “limited freewheeling” allowed to them under the Constitution.

About

- Article **176(1)** of the Constitution clearly states that the Governor “**shall address**” the Legislative Assembly at the beginning of the first session every year.
- State governments argue that the Governor **has no discretion** to skip, modify, or abort the address, since it reflects the **elected government’s policy**, not the Governor’s views.
- In **Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab (1974)**, a seven-judge Bench held that Governors **cannot** take public stances against Cabinet policy, as it violates the **parliamentary system**.
- In the **Tamil Nadu Governor case**, the Supreme Court ruled that gubernatorial discretion **cannot negate** the authority of a responsible elected government.

18. (a)

Context

- Recent walkouts by Governors in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala during state assembly sessions have sparked constitutional debates over **gubernatorial discretion versus elected governments’ authority**.
 - These incidents test the limits of **Article 176 (Governor’s mandatory address)** and **Article 163 (aid and advice of Council of Ministers)**.

About the Governor

- The governor is the **chief executive head** of the state and is appointed by the **President by warrant under his hand and seal**.
- It has an **independent constitutional office** and is not under the control of or subordinate to the Union government.

Constitutional Position of the Governor

- **Article 176(1)** states that the Governor “**shall**” address the Legislative Assembly (or both Houses where a Legislative Council exists) at the commencement of the first session each year.
 - The address serves to **inform the Legislature of the causes of its summons**, reflecting the policy priorities of the elected government.
 - The address is not the personal opinion of the Governor, it represents the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, making it a formal executive function, not a discretionary one.

19. (d)

In News: A **Parliamentary Standing Committee** had flagged serious weaknesses in **India’s civil aviation safety ecosystem**, months before the **recent plane crash in Baramati in Maharashtra** causing the death of Deputy Chief Minister.

Statement 1 is not correct

- The ‘*Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)*’ is **India’s apex regulatory body for civil aviation**, operating under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- It was **created in 1927** and became a **statutory body in 2020** after amendments to the **Aircraft Act**.

Statement 2 is not correct

- Airport construction/maintenance is mainly done by **AAI (Airports Authority of India)**, not **DGCA**.
- DGCA primarily deals with safety regulation, licensing, and airworthiness.

Statement 3 is not correct

- **Headquarters:** Located in New Delhi.
- **Regional Offices:** Spread across major cities to manage local aviation oversight.

20. (a)

Joint Sitting of Two Houses

- **Article 108** of the Indian Constitution provides a constitutional mechanism for resolving legislative deadlocks between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha regarding ordinary bills.
- **A deadlock is deemed to have taken place** under any one of the following three situations after a bill has been passed by one House and transmitted to the other House:
 - if the **bill is rejected by the other House;**
 - if the **Houses have finally disagreed** as to the amendments to be made in the bill; or
 - if **more than six months have elapsed** from the date of the receipt of the bill by the other House without the bill being passed by it.
- **The president can summon** both the Houses to meet in a joint sitting for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the bill.
 - Voting is by simple majority of members present and voting.
- The joint sitting is presided over by the **Speaker of the Lok Sabha**, or in her absence, the **Deputy Speaker**, and then the **Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha**.

21. (c)

Context

- The Supreme Court agreed to examine whether the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is entitled to invoke the writ jurisdiction of constitutional courts to seek relief.

Directorate of Enforcement (ED)

- **Origin:** It was established in **1956** with the formation of an '**Enforcement Unit**' under the aegis of the **Department of Economic Affairs** and handles Exchange Control Laws violations under **Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 (FERA 1947)**.
 - It was renamed as the **Enforcement Directorate in 1957**, with administrative control later shifting to the **Department of Revenue**.
- It is a **multi-disciplinary organization** mandated with **investigation of the offence of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws**.
- **The statutory functions of the Directorate** include enforcement of following Acts:
 - **The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA):** It is a **criminal law** enacted to prevent money, ED has been given the responsibility to enforce the provisions of the PMLA.
 - **The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA):** It is a **civil law** enacted to consolidate and amend the laws relating to facilitate **external trade and payments**.
 - **The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA):** This law was enacted to **deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law** by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

22. (a)

Statement 1, 2 and 3 are correct: The N. K. Singh Committee (2016) was set up to review the FRBM Act, 2003.

- The Committee suggested using debt as the primary target for fiscal policy.
- A debt to GDP ratio of 60% should be targeted with a 40% limit for the center and 20% limit for the states by FY23.

Statement 4 is not correct: It did not deal with GST reforms.

23. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Personality rights refer to the right of a person to protect his/her personality under the right to privacy or property.

- These could include a pose, a mannerism or any aspect of their personality.

Statement 2 is not correct: Personality rights claims are typically filed under the **Commercial Courts Act, 2015**, since celebrities rarely hold conventional IP rights over their identity.

- There is no specific statute governing personality rights in India.

Statement 3 is correct: Personality rights or their protection are not expressly mentioned in a statute in India but are traced to fall under the **right to privacy (Article 21)**.

- In **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**, the Supreme Court recognised privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21.

24. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: A whip refers to an order to members of a party in the House to abide by a certain direction of the party.

- Political parties issue whips to their MPs to either vote for or against the bill, depending on their party line.

Statement 2 is not correct: It is not mentioned in the constitution but is considered a parliamentary convention.

Statement 3 and 4 are correct: Once the whip is issued, the MPs from each party will necessarily have to obey the whip or else risk losing their seat in Parliament.

- The term is derived from the old **British practice of “whipping in”** lawmakers to follow the party line.

25. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Article 21 is part of the Fundamental Rights, Part III of the Constitution.

- No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Statement 2 is not correct: It is guaranteed to all persons, citizens and non-citizens alike.

Statement 3 is correct: In **Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court has ruled that the **right to menstrual hygiene** is an integral part of the **right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution**.

■■■■

GEOGRAPHY

1. Hanimaadhoo International Airport, recently in news, is located in;
 - (a) Maldives
 - (b) Sri Lanka
 - (c) Mauritius
 - (d) Seychelles
2. India's first red tabletop road markings to protect wildlife have been introduced on a 2-km ghat section of which highway passing through the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve?
 - (a) NH-45 in Madhya Pradesh
 - (b) NH-30 in Chhattisgarh
 - (c) NH-27 in Uttar Pradesh
 - (d) NH-48 in Rajasthan
3. Basantar River, recently seen in the news, is a tributary of which of the following rivers?
 - (a) Indus
 - (b) Jhelum
 - (c) Ravi
 - (d) Chenab
4. Popocatépetl volcano, recently seen in the news, is related to which of the countries?
 - (a) Venezuela
 - (b) Brazil
 - (c) Russia
 - (d) Mexico
5. The 'Doomsday Glacier', recently in the news, refers to:
 - (a) A glacier in Greenland contributing to Arctic ice melt
 - (b) A rapidly retreating mountain glacier in the Andes impacting freshwater supply
 - (c) A Himalayan glacier feeding the Indus River system
 - (d) An outflow glacier of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet flowing into the Amundsen Sea
6. With reference to Iran, consider the following statements:
 1. Iran is a mountainous and arid country located in southwestern Asia.
 2. Iran shares its eastern borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan.
 3. Iran is bordered by the Red Sea to its 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

7. With reference to the given Copper belt, Consider the following pairs :
- Copper Belt State**
1. Khetri Belt : Rajasthan
 2. Singhbhum Belt : Jharkhand
 3. Malanjkhand : Chhattisgarh
- How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
- (a) Only one pair
 - (b) Only two pairs
 - (c) All three pairs
 - (d) None of the pairs
8. With reference to water vapour in the atmosphere, consider the following statements:
1. Water vapour is the most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.
 2. Its concentration decreases with altitude and from the equator towards the poles.
- Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. With reference to the Shaksgam Valley, consider the following statements:
1. Shaksgam Valley is also known as the Trans-Karakoram Tract.
 2. It lies south of the Siachen Glacier in the Ladakh region.
 3. It was ceded by Pakistan to China under the 1963 China–Pakistan Boundary Agreement, which India considers illegal.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 1 and 2 only
 - (c) 2 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
10. With reference to Western Disturbances (WDs), consider the following statements:
1. They are baroclinic systems associated with sharp horizontal temperature gradients.
 2. Their movement over India is primarily influenced by the Tropical Easterly Jet.
 3. They are more frequent during the winter months over northwestern India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
11. Consider the following countries:
1. France
 2. Switzerland
 3. Ukraine
 4. Poland
 5. Belarus

Which of the following countries shares borders with Germany?

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

12. With reference to the *La Niña and El Niño*, consider the following statements:

1. El Niño is caused by stronger-than-normal trade winds.
2. La Niña leads to warmer sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean.
3. El Niño and La Niña occur every year in a fixed cycle.

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

13. Which of the following countries borders every South American country except Chile and Ecuador?

- (a) Argentina
- (b) Brazil
- (c) Peru
- (d) Colombia

14. With reference to the Chabahar Port and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), consider the following statements:

1. Chabahar is Iran's only deep-sea port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.
2. The INSTC is a multimodal transport network designed to connect India to Russia and Europe, bypassing the traditional Suez Canal route.
3. The port of Chabahar is geographically located on the Persian Gulf, making it a strategic alternative to the Port of Gwadar.

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 '*Chagos Islands*', consider the following statements:

1. These are the southernmost archipelago of the Chagos–Laccadive Ridge.
2. Diego Garcia is the largest island of the Chagos Archipelago.

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.** A Western Disturbance is best described as;
- A tropical cyclone originating in the Bay of Bengal
 - An extra-tropical weather system moving from east to west
 - An extra-tropical weather system moving from west to east
 - A monsoonal low-pressure system confined to peninsular India
- 17.** Donbas and Donetsk regions often seen in the news, are related to which of the following?
- Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
 - Russia–Ukraine conflict.
 - Israel–Palestine dispute.
 - Balkan ethnic conflict.
- 18.** With reference to the Polar Vortex, consider the following statements:
- The polar vortex is a large low-pressure system of cold air that circulates around the Earth's polar regions.
 - The tropospheric polar vortex extends from the Earth's surface up to about 10–15 km where most weather phenomena occur.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 19.** With reference to Lonar Lake, consider the following statements:
- Lonar Lake was formed due to a meteorite impact in the basaltic rocks of the Deccan Plateau.
 - The lake has two distinct layers of water one alkaline and the other saline supporting unique microorganisms.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 20.** The Sea of Japan is directly connected to the Pacific Ocean through which of the following straits?
- Korea Strait
 - Tsushima Strait
 - Tsugaru Strait
 - La Pérouse Strait
- 21.** With reference to Bomb Cyclone, Consider the following statements:
- It is characterised by a pressure decrease in the low-pressure mass of at least 24 millibars in a 24-hour period.
 - It depends on temperature gradients rather than ocean heat content
 - It forms in the western North Atlantic, where cold North American air meets warm Atlantic air.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All the three
 - None

EXPLANATIONS

1. (a)

Context

- The Centre has asked the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to study a request from Maldives seeking assistance from Indian companies to manage its recently upgraded **Hanimaadhoo International Airport**.

About Hanimaadhoo International Airport (HAQ)

- Hanimaadhoo International Airport is a key international airport located on Hanimaadhoo Island, part of the **Haa Dhaalu Atoll**, in the **northern Maldives**.
- It serves as a **primary gateway to the northern atolls**, approximately 300 kilometers north of the capital, Malé.
- Hanimaadhoo was initially a **domestic airport** around 1986 that was upgraded to international status in **2012**.
- India supported the redevelopment and expansion works at Hanimaadhoo airport with a **\$800 million line of credit** issued by EXIM Bank of India.
 - The upgradation work includes a **2,465-metre runway** capable of landing an Airbus A320 aircraft and a new passenger building to handle 1.3 million flyers annually.

2. (a)

Context

- In Madhya Pradesh, India has introduced its first red tabletop road markings on forest highways.

About

- The initiative, implemented by NHAI, covers a 2-kilometre ghat section of **NH-45**, part of an 11.96-kilometre highway passing through the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve, previously known as the Nauradehi Sanctuary.
- Inspired by Dubai's Sheikh Zayed Road and backed by international research, these markings are designed to slow down vehicles without disturbing nature.
- They ensure no disruption to wildlife movement, no alteration to pavement structure or drainage, lower noise levels compared to conventional rumble strips, and are easy to maintain and fully reversible if future improvements are needed.

3. (c)

Context

- The bravery of 2nd Lt Arun Khetarpal, one of the many heroes of the 1971 India–Pakistan War, was pictured in **Ikkis (21)**, a reference to the age at which he died in battle.
 - His actions during the **Battle of Basantar** came to epitomise the courage of Indian armoured forces on the western front of the war.

Battle of Basantar

- Also known as the Battle of Shakargarh or Battle of Barapind.
- Fought between December 4–16, 1971.
- One of the most decisive battles of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 on the western front
- It took place in the Shakargarh Bulge, between the Ravi and Chenab rivers.
- Indian forces crossed the heavily mined Basantar River (a tributary of the Ravi) under intense enemy fire.
- India captured nearly 500 sq km of territory and was in a position to threaten Sialkot by the ceasefire on December 16.

4. (d)

In News: A team of scientists from Mexico's National Autonomous University has spent five years studying Popocatepetl.

- Popocatepetl is a snowcapped, symmetrical volcano located on the border of México and Puebla in central Mexico.
- It was formed over 20,000 years ago in the crater of older volcanoes.

5. (d)

Context

- A new study published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface explains **recent structural changes in the Thwaites Glacier region** and shows how other Antarctic ice shelves may collapse in the future.

Doomsday Glacier (Thwaites Glacier)

- It 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**.
- According to the authors of the study, about two-thirds of the detected earthquakes, 245 out of 362, occurred near the marine end of the **Thwaites Glacier**.
 - The complete destruction of the Doomsday Glacier **could lead to a global sea level rise of 3 meters**.

6. (a)

Context: Iran has witnessed **internet blackouts**, mass demonstrations, and growing unrest driven by a **deep economic crisis**, posing a serious challenge to its theocratic system.

About Iran

- Iran is a mountainous, arid, and ethnically diverse country of southwestern Asia.
- The capital is Tehrān.
- Iran is bounded to the north by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, and the Caspian Sea, to the east by Pakistan and Afghanistan, to the south by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and to the west by Türkiye and Iraq.
- **Mountains** : Elburz Mountains and Zagros Mountains
 - ♦ Iran's highest point, **Mt. Damavand**
- **River** : Karun
- **Lake** : Urmia



Geography Miscellaneous Miscellaneous

7. (b)

Context

- Global copper demand is projected to rise nearly **50% by 2040**, driven by artificial intelligence, clean-energy transition and rising defence expenditure.
 - Without a sharp expansion in mining and recycling, global supply could fall short by over **10 million tonnes** annually, creating a structural deficit.

About Copper

- Copper (Cu) is a **reddish-orange, soft and highly malleable metal** with **atomic number 29**, known for its exceptional electrical and thermal conductivity.
- These properties make it vital for **electrical wiring, power transmission, plumbing and electronic applications**.
- Copper is also a key component of important alloys such as **brass (copper–zinc) and bronze (copper–tin)**, which enhance strength and corrosion resistance.
- India has significant **copper ore resources** primarily in **Rajasthan’s Khetri belt, Madhya Pradesh’s Malanjkhand** , and **Jharkhand’s Singhbhum belt**.

8. (d)

Context

- As per the recent study, **water vapour** contributes more to atmospheric heating than **aerosols**, highlighting its dominant role in the regional climate system.

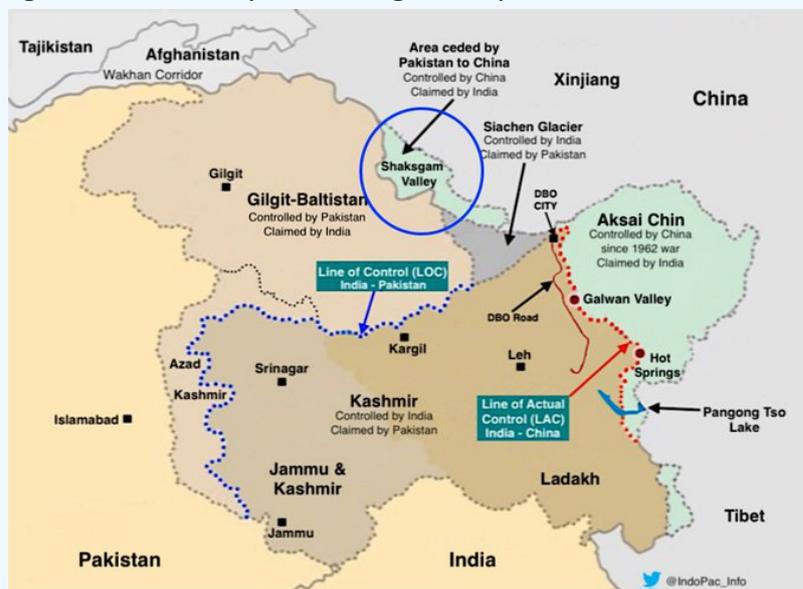
Water Vapour

- Water vapour is the most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.
- It is a condensable gas, easily changing from gas to liquid.
- Its concentration **decreases** with altitude and from the equator towards the poles.
- It can constitute up to 4% of air by volume in warm tropical regions.
- In cold, dry deserts and polar regions, it may be less than 1%.

9. (a)

Context

- India has reiterated that Shaksgam Valley is part of its sovereign territory and rejected the **1963 China–Pakistan Boundary Agreement**, calling it illegal and invalid.
 - India also reaffirmed its opposition to the **China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** as it passes through Indian territory under illegal occupation.



About Shaksgam Valley

- Also known as the **Trans-Karakoram Tract**.
- Lies north of the Siachen Glacier, in the region of Ladakh.
- Historically part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Currently under Chinese control, Pakistan illegally ceded Shaksgam Valley to China following the **1963 China–Pakistan Boundary Agreement**.

10. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Western Disturbances are extra-tropical, mid-latitude systems embedded in the subtropical westerly jet and are predominantly baroclinic in nature, associated with strong horizontal temperature gradients in the mid and upper troposphere.

Statement 2 is not correct: The movement and guidance of Western Disturbances are primarily controlled by the subtropical westerly jet stream, not the Tropical Easterly Jet (which is a summer monsoon feature linked to tropical easterlies).

Statement 3 is correct: Western Disturbances are most active and frequent during the winter months (December–February) and mainly affect north and north-western India, bringing winter rain and snow.

11. (b)

Context

- **India and Germany signed agreements spanning sectors** such as defence, technology, health, energy and human resources.
 - The German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is on a two-day visit to India.

About: Germany

- No other country in Europe has as many neighbours as Germany.
- Germany shares its 3,767-kilometre land border with Denmark to the north; the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and **France** to the west; **Switzerland** and Austria to the south; and the Czech Republic and **Poland** to the east.
- **Capital:** Berlin



12. (d)

In News: According to Berkeley Earth's Annual Temperature Report, 2025 began and ended with **La Niña conditions**, which generally cool down global average temperatures.

Statement 1 is not correct

- El Niño actually occurs when the **trade winds weaken or even reverse**. It allows warm surface water to move **eastward**, toward the eastern Pacific (near South America).

Statement 2 is not correct

- La Niña is the opposite of El Niño. It strengthens trade winds, causing **cooler-than-normal sea surface temperatures** in the eastern Pacific due to enhanced upwelling.

Statement 3 is not correct

- ENSO events are **irregular**. **El Niño and La Niña occur irregularly**, typically every **2–7 years**, not annually.

13. (b)

Context

- A new study published in Nature Communications reveals that large whale hunting began in southern Brazil some 5,000 years ago, about 1,000 years earlier than previously established by archaeological records from Arctic and North Pacific societies.

Brazil

- Brazil is a country in South America and it is the fifth largest country in the world.
- It borders every South American country except Chile and Ecuador. To the north, it shares a boundary with Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. To the northwest, it meets Peru and Bolivia, to the west Argentina and Paraguay, to the southwest Uruguay, and to the south it is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean.



14. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Chabahar, located in the Sistan and Baluchestan province, is Iran’s only oceanic port. It comprises the Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari terminals. India is specifically involved in the development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal.

Statement 2 is correct: The INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multimodal network (ship, rail, and road) for moving freight between India, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe. It is estimated to reduce carriage costs by 30% and transit time by 40% compared to the Suez Canal route.

Statement 3 is not correct: Chabahar is located on the Gulf of Oman, not the Persian Gulf. While it is indeed a strategic alternative to Pakistan’s Gwadar port, its location on the Gulf of Oman allows ships to bypass the sensitive Strait of Hormuz.

15. (c)

In News: The UK government has defended a deal to give the **Chagos Islands to Mauritius** and lease back a key military base, following criticism from US President Donald Trump over its handling.

Statement 1 is correct

- The **Chagos Islands** form the **southernmost archipelago of the Chagos–Laccadive Ridge**, a submarine ridge extending from the Lakshadweep Islands in the north to the Chagos Archipelago in the south.

Statement 2 is correct

- **Diego Garcia** is the **largest island (atoll)** of the Chagos Archipelago and is also the most prominent, hosting a major military base.

16. (c)

Context

- A powerful Western Disturbance has arrived and impacted northern India by tonight, bringing widespread rainfall, heavy snowfall, and thunderstorms to the region.

What is a Western Disturbance?

- A Western Disturbance (WD) is an **extra-tropical weather system** that originates outside India and moves from west to east, bringing rain, snowfall, and storms to northern parts of the Indian subcontinent, especially during winter and early spring.
- **Origin and Formation:**
 - Western disturbances originate over the **Mediterranean region, Black Sea, or Caspian Sea**.
 - They form when **cold polar air interacts with warmer, moist air**, creating **low-pressure systems**.
 - These systems are carried eastward by westerly winds in the upper atmosphere, particularly the subtropical westerly jet stream.
- **Regions Affected in India:** Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh.

17. (b)

Donetsk is one of four Ukrainian regions Russia claimed to **annex in 2022** after disputed referendums.

- Ukraine, Western countries, and most of the world recognise **Donetsk as part of Ukraine**.
- Russia claims Donetsk as part of its **“historical lands.”**

Donbas

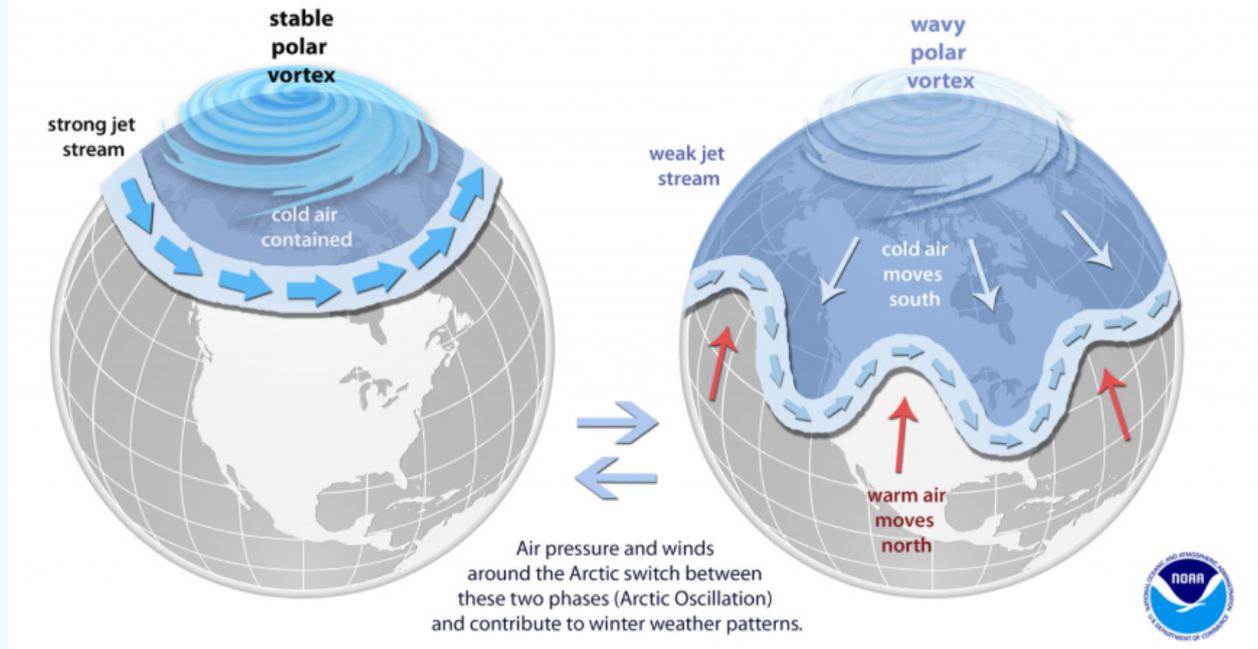
- Collectively known as the **Donbas**, the two coal-rich eastern Ukrainian regions of **Donetsk and Luhansk** used to be Ukraine’s **industrial heartland**.
- The region is well connected to the **Sea of Azov by rivers** and man-made canals. It is also known for its **fertile agricultural ground** and rich mineral deposits.
- Russian troops control almost all of the Luhansk region, they’ve only managed to seize 70% of Donetsk.

18. (c)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: The polar vortex is a **large area of low-pressure and cold air** that swirls like a wheel around both of the **Earth’s polar regions**.

The Science Behind the Polar Vortex

The polar vortex is a large area of low pressure and cold air surrounding the Earth's North and South poles. The term vortex refers to the counterclockwise flow of air that helps keep the colder air close to the poles (left globe). Often during winter in the Northern Hemisphere, the polar vortex will become less stable and expand, sending cold Arctic air southward over the United States with the jet stream (right globe). The polar vortex is nothing new — in fact, it's thought that the term first appeared in an 1853 issue of E. Littell's *Living Age*.



- There are two types of polar vortex: tropospheric and stratospheric.
- The tropospheric polar vortex occurs at the lowest layer of the atmosphere; it extends from the surface up to about 10 km to 15 km where most weather phenomena occur.
- The stratospheric polar vortex occurs at around 15 km to 50 km high.
 - Unlike the tropospheric polar vortex, the stratospheric polar vortex disappears during the summer and is the strongest during the autumn.

19. (c)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: Lonar lake is a lake of lagoon in Buldhana district of Maharashtra state.

- It was created by a meteorite impact about 52,000 years ago discovered by British Officer J E. Alexander.
- It is located in the basaltic rock of the Deccan Plateau, which was created by enormous volcanic eruptions 65 million years ago, it is the only impact crater that is known to exist.
- The lake has two distinct layers of water one alkaline and one saline harboring microorganisms not found anywhere else on Earth.
- Recognising its ecological and scientific significance, the Maharashtra government has designated Lonar and its surrounding area as a Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Depending on the time of year, the water shifts colour - sometimes emerald green, other times a surreal pink.
 - This transformation is thanks to blooming microorganisms that flourish in the unique chemical below the surface.

20. (c)

North Korea recently test-launched short-range ballistic missiles toward the Sea of Japan (East Sea).



About Sea of Japan

- It is a marginal sea in the Western Pacific that is elliptical-shaped, bordered east by Japan and Sakhalin Island, and west by Russia and the Korean Peninsula.
- It connects south to the East China Sea via Tsushima and Korea Straits, north to the Okhotsk Sea via La Perouse and Tatar Straits, and east to Japan's Inland Sea and Pacific Ocean via Kanmon and Tsugaru Straits.

21. (c)

In News: A bomb cyclone is expected to bring another round of heavy snow and severe winter weather to the eastern United States.

Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct : A bomb cyclone is characterised by a pressure decrease in the low-pressure mass of at least 24 millibars in a 24-hour period. The winds become stronger as a result of the rapid increase in the pressure differential, or gradient, between the two air masses. The term "bombogenesis," which sounds even more fierce, refers to this rapid intensification process.

- The bomb cyclone, which depends on temperature gradients rather than ocean heat content, is created when cold polar air and warm subtropical air collide at frontal boundaries, frequently over warm ocean currents.
- Bomb cyclones most typically form in the western North Atlantic. That is because it is an area where cold air from North America collides with warm air over the Atlantic Ocean, resulting in bombogenesis.



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/ INITIATIVES

1. With reference to the '*National Technology Readiness Assessment Framework (NTRAF)*', consider the following statements:
 1. It replaces all existing innovation funding mechanisms in India.
 2. It is applicable only to space and defense technologies.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. Village Defence Guards (VDG), recently seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
 - (a) Counter-terrorism and protection of villages in vulnerable border areas.
 - (b) A centrally sponsored scheme for rural policing under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - (c) Deployment exclusively in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts.
 - (d) None of the above.
3. With reference to the National Pension System (NPS), which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. NPS is a market-linked, defined-contribution pension scheme regulated by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
 2. It is available to all citizens of India, including NRIs, aged between 18 and 70 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
4. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):
 1. PMMVY is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers, launched in 2017.
 2. In 2022, PMMVY was brought under Mission Shakti, an umbrella scheme for the safety, security, and empowerment of women.
 3. The scheme is implemented as a Central Sector Scheme and is applicable only to women working in the organised sector.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

5. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It provides a cash incentive for partial compensation for the wage loss so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first child.
 2. The benefit is available to a woman for the first two living children provided the second child is a girl.
- 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
6. With reference to the 'Modernisation of State Police Forces (MPF) Scheme', consider the following statements:
1. It is implemented by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
 2. It was envisioned in 2015-16 aimed at modernizing police infrastructure.
 3. It provides 100% central funding to all states.
- 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 Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme Fund, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The scheme has a total financial outlay of ₹1 lakh crore to be spent over a period of six years.
 2. The scheme is financed through extra-budgetary resources raised by public sector enterprises.
- 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. With reference to the 'National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)', consider the following statements:
1. It is a restricted intelligence platform accessible only to authorized government agencies for national security purposes.
 2. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 3. It stores all personal data permanently in a central database.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3

9. With reference to the Samagra Shiksha scheme, consider the following statements:
1. It was launched in the Union Budget 2018–19 to integrate school education from pre-nursery to Class XII.
 2. It subsumed the earlier schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education.
 3. The scheme is implemented as a Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Education.
- 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. With reference to the Pradhan Mantri–Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY), consider the following statements:
1. It was initiated in 2007 as an umbrella scheme to ensure holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors.
 2. The scheme incentivizes States to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors.
 3. Funds are released directly by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to district-level authorities.
- 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
11. The ‘NIRANTAR platform’, sometimes appeared in the news, is associated with which one of the following organisations?
- (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
 - (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
 - (c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 - (d) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPGP)
12. Consider the following statements regarding the NPS Vatsalya Scheme, 2025:
1. The scheme enables a parent or legal guardian to open and operate an NPS account on behalf of a minor.
 2. The scheme prescribes both a minimum and a maximum annual contribution limit for the NPS Vatsalya account.
- 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.** The National Campaign on Entrepreneurship, recently launched, aims to strengthen non-farm livelihoods for rural women under which of the following initiatives?
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
 - Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission
 - VB-G RAM G Act
 - National Skill Development Mission
- 14.** Which of the following statements is correct about the Womaniya initiative?
- It empowers women artisans by providing collateral-free Enterprise Development Loans of up to ₹3 lakh.
 - It enables women entrepreneurs and self-help groups to sell handicraft and handloom products directly to government institutions.
 - It provides vocational skill training to women who are non-literate or school dropouts.
 - It assures zero-cost access to quality healthcare services for pregnant women and mothers up to six months after delivery.
- 15.** The digital platforms e-Samyukti and e-Samridhi are used for:
- Registration of cooperative banks under RBI
 - Farmer enrolment for MSP-based procurement of pulses and maize
 - Digital auditing of PACS
 - Export facilitation of cooperative products
- 16.** With reference to Border Roads Organisation (BRO), consider the following statements:
- It was established in 1980 to build and maintain strategic infrastructure in remote and border regions.
 - It has been functioning under the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs since 2020.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 17.** With reference to the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), consider the following statements:
- It was launched in 2015 to provide old-age income security to workers in the unorganised sector.
 - Individuals paying income tax are eligible to join APY if they are below 40 years of age.
 - The scheme guarantees a minimum monthly pension ranging from ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 starting at the age of 60.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
- 18.** With reference to One District One Product (ODOP) initiative, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- ODOP was first launched in 2018 with Moradabad's brassware in Uttar Pradesh.

2. The initiative is spearheaded by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

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 'Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme', consider the following statements:

- 1. It is funded and administered by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- 2. It is awarded for a fixed tenure of five years.
- 3. It is open to all university faculty through an open application process.

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

20. With reference to the Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM), which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. It is a flagship initiative launched by the Ministry of Culture to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage.
- 2. The mission aims to document and digitise over 10 million manuscripts across India over the next five 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

21. With reference to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), consider the following statements:

- 1. It is established under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- 2. It is the national agency for cyber incident response 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

22. In the context of governance, WaSH Warriors best illustrate which of the following?

- (a) Technocratic model of public service delivery
- (b) Rights-based judicial intervention
- (c) Participatory and decentralised governance
- (d) Contractual outsourcing of social services

23. What is Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0?
- Time-bound, outcome-oriented campaign to achieve saturation of key development indicators in Aspirational Districts and Blocks.
 - Long-term rural development scheme launched by the Ministry of Rural Development.
 - Financial inclusion programme for urban poor.
 - Infrastructure development programme for border areas.
24. With reference to 'Grain ATMs', consider the following statements:
- Grain ATMs are automated machines designed to dispense food grains such as wheat and pulses.
 - The technology for Grain ATMs in India was developed by the Food Corporation of India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

EXPLANATIONS

1. (d)

In News: Recently, the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India unveiled the **National Technology Readiness Assessment Framework (NTRAF)**.

Statement 1 is not correct: NTRAF is a **framework for assessing technology readiness**, not a funding mechanism. It **complements existing funding programs** by providing a standardized evaluation tool.

Statement 2 is not correct: NTRAF is designed to **assess technologies across all sectors**, including agriculture, healthcare, energy, and manufacturing, inspired by global models like NASA's TRL scale.

2. (a)

Amid growing focus of terrorists on the Chenab Valley in the Jammu region, the Army provided a step-by-step training to **local civilians who offered to work as Village Defence Guards (VDG)**.

- **Aim:** Enhancing their operational readiness and coordination with security forces.
- **Training:** The VDG were provided basic training in self-defence and taking position in bunkers. They were also trained in mountain combat.
 - VDGs were also trained to enhance their operational capabilities, with a focus on weapon handling, firing practices and basic battle drills.
- **The latest round training comes in the wake of** growing tip-offs about terrorist movements in the Chenab valley, comprising Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar districts.
- **Significance:** Training initiatives play a vital role in strengthening coordination between the armed forces and local defence groups, thereby contributing to overall security and resilience at the grassroots level.

3. (c)

Context

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has granted in-principle approval to banks to sponsor and independently set up pension funds under the National Pension System (NPS).

About

- **Eligibility Conditions for Banks:**
 - Compliance with **RBI-aligned norms**.
 - Also banks will have to meet eligibility criteria linked to **net worth, market capitalisation, and prudential soundness**.
- **Current Landscape:** Currently, banks serve as points of presence, handling subscriber registrations, contributions, and other system services.
 - At present, there are **10** registered pension funds under PFRDA.
- The regulator also revised the **Investment Management Fee structure** for pension funds starting April 1, 2026.

National Pension System (NPS)

- The National Pension System (NPS) is a **market-linked, defined-contribution** pension scheme launched by the Government of India.
- **The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** regulates and administers NPS under the **PFRDA Act, 2013**.
- **Investment:** Your funds are invested across four asset classes: Equity (max 75%), Corporate Bonds, Government Securities, and Alternate Assets (max 5%).
- **NPS is available to all the citizens of India** and offers different models depending on the following user segments:
 - **All Central Government employees** joining on or after **January 1, 2004**, are covered under the NPS scheme, **except for those in the armed forces** and are also extended to the **employees of Central Autonomous Bodies** from the said date. It is also **available to all State Government employees/employees of State Autonomous Bodies**, if the respective State/UT opted for it.
 - NPS can be **voluntarily adopted by the corporations for their employees** and contributions are made to the NPS account as per the terms of employment.
 - **NPS voluntary model** is available to **all the citizens of India** including those residing abroad, between the age of **18 and 70 years**.

4. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: PMMVY is a conditional cash transfer scheme providing maternity benefits (₹5,000 for first child, extended to second girl child under PMMVY 2.0) to pregnant women and lactating mothers to compensate wage loss, improve nutrition, and encourage health-seeking behavior; it was launched nationwide on 1 January 2017 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Statement 2 is correct: PMMVY was revised and incorporated as PMMVY 2.0 under Mission Shakti (Samarthya vertical for women's empowerment) with effect from 1 April 2022.

Statement 3 is not correct: PMMVY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (not Central Sector), with Centre-State cost sharing (60:40 general states, 90:10 for special category, 100% for certain UTs), implemented through Anganwadi Centres and ASHA workers targeting pregnant/lactating women in the unorganised sector (eligibility excludes regular salaried organised sector women).

5. (c)

Context

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, a flagship scheme for pregnant women and lactating mothers, has completed nine years.

About the scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a **Centrally Sponsored flagship scheme** to provide **maternity benefits** to women belonging to **socially and economically disadvantaged sections** of society.
 - It was launched on the **1st January 2017**.
- Objectives:** To provide cash incentive for **partial compensation for the wage loss** so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first child;
 - To **improve health** seeking behavior amongst the Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers (PW&LM).
 - To promote **positive behavioral change** towards the **girl child** by providing **additional cash incentive** for the second child, if that is a girl child.
- Benefits:** The benefit is available to a woman for the **first two living children** provided the second child is a girl.
 - A **cash benefit of five thousand rupees** for the **first child** and
 - six thousand rupees** for the second girl child.
- Cash incentives in two instalments** as per the schedule provided in table below:

Instalment	Conditions	Amount
First Instalment	On registration of pregnancy and at least one Ante-natal check-up within 6 months from LMP date at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC)/ approved Health facilities may be identified by the respective administering State /UT	₹ 3,000/-
Second Instalment	1. Child Birth is registered 2. Child has received first cycle of BCG, OPV,DPT and Hepatitis-B or its equivalent/substitute	₹ 2,000/-

- Benefits can be availed **only on the basis of the Aadhaar Number of Beneficiary** so as to avoid any duplication or malpractices.
- In case of **miscarriage/stillbirth**, the beneficiary would be treated as a fresh beneficiary in the event of any future pregnancy.

6. (b)

In News: States across India have witnessed a steady rise in the use of **Social Media Monitoring Cells (SMMCs)** by state police forces to counter misinformation, maintain law and order, and pre-empt digital threats.

Statement 1 is correct

- The **MPF Scheme** is indeed implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, Government of India. It is one of the key central schemes for improving the operational efficiency of state police forces.

Statement 2 is not correct

- The **MPF Scheme** was originally **launched in 1969–70**, not in 2015–16.
- However, it has been **restructured and continued** over the years, for instance, the scheme was extended for the period **2017–18 to 2019–20**, and further up to **2025–26** under new guidelines.

Statement 3 not correct

- The **funding pattern** is **not 100% centrally funded** for all states.
 - For **Union Territories**, the funding is **100% Central**.
 - For **North-Eastern and Himalayan States**, the **Centre bears 90%**, and the **State bears 10%**.
 - For **other States**, the **Centre bears 60%**, and the **State bears 40%**.

7. (a)

Research Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme Fund

- The scheme has an outlay of **Rs 1 lakh crore over 6 years**, with Rs 20,000 crore allocated for FY 2025–26, funded from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- **The Department of Science and Technology (DST)** will serve as the nodal department for implementation of the RDI Scheme.
- **Key objectives** of the Scheme are as follows;
 - **Encourage the private** sector to scale up research, development, and innovation (RDI) in sunrise domains and in other sectors relevant for economic security, strategic purpose, and self-reliance,
 - Finance transformative projects at higher levels of **Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)**,
 - **Support acquisition of technologies** which are critical or of high strategic importance,
 - Facilitate setting up of a **Deep-Tech Fund of Funds**.

8. (a)

In News: The ‘**National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)**’ has sparked intense debate over its implications for civil liberties, that it could usher in a new era of digital authoritarianism.

Statement 1 is correct: NATGRID is a **restricted intelligence and data-sharing platform**, accessible only to **authorized government and security agencies** for counter-terrorism and national security purposes.

Statement 2 is correct: NATGRID functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

Statement 3 is not correct: NATGRID **does not permanently store all personal data in a central database**. Instead, it **provides secure, real-time access** to existing databases of various government agencies on a need-to-know basis, with safeguards and audit trails.

9. (i)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: Launch: It was launched in the Union Budget, 2018-19.

- **Aim:** To treat school education holistically without segmentation from pre-nursery to Class 12.
- **It subsumes the three erstwhile Schemes** of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- **The main outcomes of the Scheme are envisaged** as Universal Access, Equity and Quality, promoting Vocationalisation of Education and strengthening of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

Statement 3 is not correct: The Scheme is implemented as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** under the **Ministry of Education**.

10. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: **Pradhan Mantri-Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY)** was initiated in **2007** as an umbrella scheme for **ensuring holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors**.

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- It allows **states to choose their own agriculture and allied sector development activities** as per the district/state agriculture plan.
- **Funding:** Ratio of 60:40 between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States).
 - For Union Territories the funding pattern is 100 % central grant.

- **Objective:** RKVY scheme incentivizes States to increase public investment in Agriculture & allied sectors.

Statement 3 is not correct: The funds are released to the State Governments/UTs on the basis of **projects approved in the State Level Sanctioning Committee Meeting (SLSC)** headed by the Chief Secretary of the concerned State.

11. (a)

In News: Recently, the Union Environment Minister chaired a high-level meeting on the **NIRANTAR platform**, emphasizing the need for **integrated coordination among institutions under the MoEFCC** to ensure sustainable and resilient natural resource management.

- The **National Institute for Research and Application of Natural Resources to Transform, Adapt and Build Resilience (NIRANTAR) platform** is an integrated digital portal developed by the **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)** on behalf of the **MoEF&CC**.
- It serves as a comprehensive repository and collaboration hub for environmental research, data, and innovation across India.

12. (a)

In News

- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has issued guidelines for the **NPS Vatsalya Scheme, 2025**, expanding the National Pension System (NPS) framework to enable early-life pension inclusion for minors.

About NPS Vatsalya Scheme, 2025

- NPS Vatsalya is a pension savings scheme for minors under the National Pension System.
- It allows a parent or legal guardian to open and operate an NPS account on behalf of a child.
- **Key Features**
 - **Eligibility:** Indian citizens below 18 years of age.
 - **Account Type:** Individual pension account in the name of the minor.
 - **Operation:** Managed by parent/guardian until the child attains majority.
 - **Conversion:** On turning 18, the account is converted into a regular NPS account.
 - **Minimum Contribution:** Minimum initial and annual contribution of ₹250 and no maximum limit on contributions.
 - **Investment:** Funds invested through Pension Fund Managers (PFMs) as per NPS guidelines.

13. (b)

In News

- A **National Campaign on Entrepreneurship** was launched to strengthen non-farm livelihoods for rural women under **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**.

About DAY-NRLM

- **Launch:** 2011 (restructured from Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY)). NRLM was renamed as DAY-NRLM in 2016.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Rural Development
- **Funding Pattern:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme (60:40; 90:10 for NE & Himalayan states)
- **Objective:** Reduce poverty by enabling poor rural households to access sustainable livelihoods and enhanced incomes.
- **Core Strategy:**
 - Universal mobilisation of rural poor women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

- Capacity building, access to credit, and livelihood diversification
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - Farm livelihoods
 - Non-farm livelihoods and enterprises
 - Financial inclusion and social empowerment.

14. (b)

In News : Government e-Marketplace (GeM) marked seven years of the Womaniya initiative. **Womaniya initiative** was launched in 2019, aims to enhance access for women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to government markets by providing a direct, transparent, and fully digital interface with buyers, removing intermediaries and entry barriers.

- ‘Womaniya is an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups to sell handicrafts and handloom products directly to various Government ministries, departments and institutions.

15. (b)

e-Samyukti & e-Samridhi portals were developed by the National Cooperative Consumers’ Federation (NCCF) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED). They facilitate the digital registration of farmers through cooperative networks (like PACS and FPOs). The primary focus is on increasing the domestic production of pulses (tur, masur, urad) and maize. Under this, farmers are assured procurement at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, the system also permits them to sell in the open market if prices exceed the MSP, providing them with a “price floor” security.

16. (d)

In News: The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has reinforced its role as a critical enabler of India’s strategic connectivity, defence preparedness, and regional development

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct: Border Roads Organisation (BRO) was established on 7 May 1960, is India’s premier agency for building and maintaining strategic infrastructure in remote and border regions.

- It is guided by its motto, “Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam” (“through hard work, all things are possible”).
- Since 2015–16, BRO has been functioning fully under the **Ministry of Defence**. Earlier, it was partially under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

17. (b)**Context**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister approved the continuation of Atal Pension Yojana (APY) up to FY 2030-31 along with extension of funding support for promotional and developmental activities and gap funding.

About the Atal Pension Yojana (APY)

- **Launch:** APY was launched in **2015** with the objective of providing old-age income security to workers in the **unorganised sector**.
- **Target Group:** Initially available to all citizens of India between 18 and 40 years of age.
 - With effect from 1st October 2022, individuals paying income tax are **not eligible** to join the scheme.
- **Scheme Features:** APY offers a guaranteed minimum pension of **Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000** per month starting at age 60, based on contributions.

- **Administering Body:** Administered by **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**.
 - Managed under the **National Pension System (NPS)** architecture.

18. (c)

Context

- The One District One Product (ODOP) initiative has completed **8 years of transformative impact** by promoting traditional industries.

About

- The ODOP initiative, spearheaded by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, aims to unlock each district's unique economic potential, drive balanced regional growth, and equip local artisans to compete in national and global markets.
- **Product Selection Framework under ODOP:** Products are selected by States and Union Territories based on the existing ecosystem on the ground and the final list is communicated to the DPIIT.
- ODOP was first launched in **2018** with **Moradabad's brassware** in Uttar Pradesh and has since expanded nationwide.
- The ODOP has so far identified **1243 products** from **7**
- **75 districts** across the country encompassing various sectors such as textiles, agriculture, food processing, handicrafts and more

19. (c)

In News: India's announcement to bring back around 120 Indian scientists under the **Prime Minister Research Chair (PMRC) Scheme** currently working overseas. It raises deeper questions about **India's research ecosystem** and **empowering high-quality work**.

Statement 1 is not correct

- The PMRC Scheme is **funded and overseen by the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India**, not by the UGC.

Statement 2 is correct

- The Chair is awarded for a **non-renewable tenure of five years**.

Statement 3 is not correct

- The scheme follows a **nomination-based selection process** for eminent researchers; there is **no open application**.

20. (c)

Gyan Bharatam Mission (GBM)

- GBM is a flagship initiative launched by the **Ministry of Culture** to preserve, digitise, and disseminate India's vast manuscript heritage.
- Announced in the **Union Budget 2025–26**, it revives and expands the vision of the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)** established in **2003**.
- **The mission aims** to document and digitise over **10 million manuscripts** across India over the next **five years**.

21. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: In 2025, the **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)** handled over 29.44 lakh cyber incidents, reflecting **large-scale national cyber response capability**.

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Statement 2 is correct: CERT-In is the **national agency** for cyber incident response in India.

- Its mandate **under section 70B** of the **Information Technology (IT) Act 2000** includes the prevention of cyberattacks, real-time monitoring of cyber threats, and swift coordination with stakeholders to mitigate and contain cyber incidents.

22. (c)

WaSH Warriors are grassroots champions from local communities who promote water, sanitation, and hygiene through community ownership (Jan Bhagidari). Their role is based on people's participation, local leadership, and decentralised decision-making, rather than top-down technocratic control, judicial intervention, or contractual outsourcing. Honoured at Republic Day 2026 Samvad Samaroh, they drive community-owned solutions, embodying Panchayati Raj/PESA decentralisation (73rd Amendment).

23. (a)

Context

- NITI Aayog launched Sampoonata Abhiyan 2.0 campaign.

About

- Sampoonata Abhiyan 2.0 is a time-bound, outcome-oriented **three-month campaign** aimed at achieving saturation of critical development indicators in **Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks** across the country.
- It seeks to build upon the success of Sampoonata Abhiyan 2024, which demonstrated strong improvements in key human development indicators.
- The campaign targets **112 Aspirational Districts and 513 Aspirational Blocks** under the Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme.

24. (d)

Statement 1 is not correct: Grain ATMs, known as Annapurti machines, dispense subsidized food grains like rice and wheat (not pulses) via biometric/ration card authentication under PDS/NFSA. The consumer inserts their Ration Card number or uses biometric (Aadhar) authentication. The machine then dispenses the exact weight of grain assigned to that beneficiary under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), with a margin of error of less than 0.01%.

Statement 2 is not correct: The technology for Grain ATMs was not developed by the Food Corporation of India (FCI). It was developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with the private sector (specifically a startup called Annapurti). India's first Grain ATM was set up as a pilot project in Farrukhnagar, Gurugram (Haryana).



DEFENSE/ INTERNAL SECURITY

1. With reference to the Pralay Missiles, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. Pralay, is an indigenous surface-to-surface short-range quasi-ballistic missile.
 2. It is powered by a solid-propellant rocket motor.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

2. With reference to Suryastra, consider the following statements:
 1. Suryastra is India's first indigenously developed universal multi-calibre rocket launcher.
 2. It is capable of executing precision surface-to-surface strikes at ranges extending up to 300 km.Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. With reference to the Suryastra Rocket Launcher, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. It is India's first indigenously manufactured universal multi-calibre rocket launcher capable of surface-to-surface strikes.
 2. Its maximum strike range extends up to 300 km, strengthening long-range artillery capabilities of the Indian Army.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

4. With reference to Hypersonic Missiles, consider the following statements:
 1. Hypersonic Cruise Missiles are capable of travelling at speeds exceeding five times the speed of sound for sustained durations.
 2. Hypersonic Glide Vehicles are powered throughout their flight by scramjet engines after launch.
 3. High manoeuvrability of hypersonic weapons makes them difficult to intercept by conventional air defence systems.

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. Exercise Sanjha Shakti, recently seen in the news, is a:

- (a) Bilateral military exercise
- (b) Military–Civil Fusion exercise
- (c) Counter-insurgency exercise
- (d) Anti-piracy exercise

6. The third-generation Fire & Forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM), recently tested by DRDO, has which of the following features?

- 1. Imaging Infrared (IIR) homing seeker
- 2. Tandem warhead
- 3. Capability for day and night combat operations
- 4. Requirement of continuous operator guidance after launch

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

7. Exercise SHAKTI is a joint military exercise conducted between India and which of the following countries?

- (a) Japan
- (b) France
- (c) Australia
- (d) United Kingdom

8. Dharma Guardian, is a joint military exercise between India and which of the following countries?

- (a) United States
- (b) Japan
- (c) Australia
- (d) France

9. Which among the following are part of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)?

- 1. Assam Rifles (AR)
- 2. National Security Guard (NSG)
- 3. Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)
- 4. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

10. With reference to the Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM), consider the following statements:
1. It is a Hypersonic Glide Missile developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.
 2. It is designed to meet the coastal defence and strike requirements of the Indian Navy.
 3. It is capable of engaging both static and moving maritime targets.
- 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
11. The defence exercises 'Sada Tanseeq' and 'Al Mohed Al Hindi', recently seen in the news, are conducted between India and which one of the following countries?
- (a) United Arab Emirates
 - (b) Saudi Arabia
 - (c) Oman
 - (d) Qatar

EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

Context

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted a salvo launch of two 'Pralay' missiles off Odisha coast in quick succession.

About

- **Pralay**, is an indigenous **surface-to-surface** short-range **quasi-ballistic missile**.
- **Range and Payload:** Pralay has an operational range of approximately **400 km** and carries a payload capacity of **500 to 1,000 kg**.
- **Propulsion:** It is powered by a **solid-propellant** rocket motor.

2. (d)

Statement 1 is correct: Suryastra is described as India's first indigenously produced universal multi-calibre long-range rocket launcher system, capable of firing multiple rocket calibres from a single launcher platform.

Statement 2 is correct: The system is a surface-to-surface, high-precision rocket launcher with strike ranges in the band of about 150 km up to 300 km, giving it deep-strike capability within that envelope.

3. (c)

Context

- The Indian Army has signed a **₹293 crore** contract with the NIBE Limited, in collaboration with Israel, for the supply of the long-range Suryastra Rocket Launcher system.

About Suryastra Rocket Launcher

- Suryastra is India's **first indigenously manufactured universal multi-calibre rocket** launcher capable of precision surface-to-surface strikes up to 300 km.

- The system can integrate and **fire multiple rocket types** from the same launcher, enabling flexibility across operational scenarios.
- It has demonstrated a **Circular Error Probable (CEP)** of less than five metres, indicating high-precision deep-strike capability.
- The launcher is also capable of **firing loitering munitions up to 100 km**, expanding its role beyond conventional rocket artillery.

3. (c)

Context

- The Indian Army has signed a **₹293 crore** contract with the NIBE Limited, in collaboration with Israel, for the supply of the long-range Suryastra Rocket Launcher system.

About Suryastra Rocket Launcher

- Suryastra is India's **first indigenously manufactured universal multi-calibre rocket** launcher capable of precision surface-to-surface strikes up to 300 km.
- The system can integrate and **fire multiple rocket types** from the same launcher, enabling flexibility across operational scenarios.
- It has demonstrated a **Circular Error Probable (CEP)** of less than five metres, indicating high-precision deep-strike capability.
- The launcher is also capable of **firing loitering munitions up to 100 km**, expanding its role beyond conventional rocket artillery.

4. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Hypersonic Cruise Missile is capable of exceeding **five times the speed of sound** (over 6,100 km/hr) for extended periods.

- The **speed is achieved through** a cutting-edge air-breathing engine, which utilises supersonic combustion to sustain long-duration flight.

Statement 2 is not correct: The **two types of hypersonic weapons systems** are **Hypersonic Glide Vehicles (HGV)** and Hypersonic Cruise Missiles.

- **The HGVs** are launched from a rocket **before gliding to the intended target** while **HCMs are powered by air-breathing high-speed engines or 'scramjets'** after acquiring their target.
- **Hypersonic Glide Vehicles are launched by rockets but glide unpowered to the target.**

Statement 3 is correct: These missiles are also **more maneuverable**, which allows them to more easily evade air defence systems.

- Their speed and manoeuvrability make interception by air defence systems extremely challenging.

5. (b)

In News

- The Indian Army conducted **Exercise Sanjha Shakti**, a **Military–Civil Fusion exercise**, at the Dighi Hills Range under the aegis of the **Southern Command, specifically the Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa Area**.

About

- The exercise aimed to strengthen **civil–military coordination**, enhance rapid response capabilities, and ensure public safety in rear areas, especially during disasters, internal security challenges, and other emergency situations in the hinterland.

- More than 350 personnel participated, involving the Indian Army and 16 civilian agencies, including Maharashtra Police, Force One, and fire and emergency services, highlighting the importance of integrated planning and joint execution.
- Exercise Sanjha Shakti underlined that rear area security is a key responsibility of the armed forces and requires close cooperation with civilian institutions during both peace-time emergencies and security contingencies.

6. (a)

Context

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully **flight-tested** the **third-generation Fire & Forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile**, or MPATGM, with top attack capability against a moving target.

About

- The **fire-and-forget missile** was developed indigenously by **DRDO**.
 - **The 'Fire and forget' type of missile refers** to a weapon system that locks onto a target before launch and does not require further guidance from the operator after firing.
- It is equipped with **state-of-the-art indigenous technologies**, including an Imaging Infrared homing seeker, tandem warhead, all-electric control actuation system, fire control system, propulsion system and a high-performance sighting system.
- The missile is capable of **day and night combat operations** and can effectively defeat modern main battle tanks.
- It can be **launched from a tripod** as well as a **military vehicle launcher**.

7. (b)

Context

- India and France reaffirmed their strategic partnership during the **38th India-France Strategic Dialogue**, co-chaired by National Security Adviser and Diplomatic Adviser to the French President.

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.

8. (b)

Context

- At the **18th India–Japan Strategic Dialogue**, **India and Japan** reaffirmed the upward trajectory of their **Special Strategic and Global Partnership**, with a strong focus on economic security, resilient supply chains, critical technologies, and defence cooperation.

About



9. (d)

Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)

- The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) is the collective name of **central police organizations** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** of India.
- These forces are responsible for internal security and guarding the borders. CAPF is classified as;
 - **Assam Rifles (AR):** It is a central police and paramilitary organization responsible for border security, counter-insurgency, and law and order in Northeast India.
 - **Border Security Force (BSF):** It is primarily deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders, since 2009 it is also posted in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas.
 - **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP):** It is deployed for guarding duties on the Indo-China border
 - **Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB):** It guards the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders.
 - **National Security Guard (NSG):** It is a counter-terrorism unit under the Ministry of Home Affairs. All personnel are deputed from other CAPFs and the Indian Army.
 - **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF):** It is deployed for internal security duties and has a large presence in North East, LWE theater and Jammu and Kashmir.
 - **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF):** It provides security to various Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and other critical infrastructure installations, major airports across the country and provides security during elections and other internal security duties and VVIP protection.

10. (d)

Context

- The DRDO will showcase the **Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM)** along with its launcher during the **77th Republic Day Parade** at **Kartavya Path**.

About LR-AshM

- Developed by **DRDO**, the **LR-AShM** is a **Hypersonic Glide Missile** designed to meet the coastal defence and strike requirements of the **Indian Navy**.

- The missile is capable of engaging both **static and moving maritime targets** and can carry **multiple payload configurations**.
- It is a **first-of-its-kind indigenous system**, equipped with indigenous avionics and high-accuracy sensor packages.

Key Technical Features

- The LR-AShM employs a **two-stage solid propulsion rocket motor**.
 - Follows a **quasi-ballistic trajectory**.
- Achieves speeds up to **Mach 10**, with an average hypersonic speed of **Mach 5**.
- Uses indigenously developed sensors for terminal-phase guidance against moving targets.
- **Low-altitude flight**, high speed, and manoeuvrability significantly reduce detection by **enemy ground- and ship-based radars**.

11. (b)

Context: The 3rd India–Saudi Arabia Security Working Group meeting was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

India Saudi Arabia Relations

- **Political Relations:** The two countries established diplomatic relations in **1947**.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Saudi Arabia signed a **\$250 mn** contract for ammunition from Munitions India Limited, a Defence Public Sector Undertaking.
 - Saudi Arabia has procured the **155mm** Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) from Bharat Forge.
 - **Joint exercises:**
 - ♦ **Sada Tanseeq:** The inaugural Army exercise held in Rajasthan in January 2024.
 - ♦ **Tarang Shakti:** Saudi Arabia participated as an observer in India's largest air exercise.
 - ♦ **Al Mohed Al Hindi:** Bilateral naval exercise initiated in 2022.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. With reference to the '*Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, 1996*', consider the following statements:
 1. It was signed between India and Bangladesh in 1971.
 2. It ensures equitable sharing of Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh during the dry season.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. Which one of the following statements is correct?
 - (a) Bulgaria adopted the euro after meeting the EU's convergence criteria, becoming the 21st member of the Eurozone.
 - (b) All European Union member states are mandatorily required to adopt the euro immediately upon joining the EU.
 - (c) The Eurozone was created in 2002 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.
 - (d) Monetary policy in the Eurozone is independently conducted by the national central banks of member countries.

3. With reference to the exchange of nuclear installations lists between India and Pakistan, which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. The exchange is mandated by a bilateral agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities, signed in 1988.
 2. The exchange has been carried out annually without interruption since 1992.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

4. With reference to the Monroe Doctrine, consider the following statements:
 1. It was articulated by the U.S. President James Monroe in 1823.
 2. It authorised the United States to intervene militarily in Latin American countries from its inception.
 3. It assured that the United States would not interfere in the internal affairs of European powers.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. *Operation Absolute Resolve*, recently seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
- A NATO-led military exercise in Eastern Europe
 - A US-led operation targeting drug trafficking networks in Venezuela
 - A UN peacekeeping mission in Latin America
 - An international maritime security operation in the Atlantic Ocean.
6. Greenland, recently in the news due to geopolitical remarks, is best described as:
- An independent country and a member of NATO
 - A semi-autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark
 - A dependent territory administered by the United Nations
 - A sovereign island nation in the Indian Ocean
7. With reference to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), consider the following statements:
- NATO was established in 1949 through the signing of the Washington Treaty.
 - Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides for collective defense, treating an attack on one member as an attack on all.
 - Decisions within NATO are taken by majority voting of member states.
 - Netherlands and Sweden are the most recent members, making NATO a 32-member alliance.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - Only three
 - All four
8. With reference to OPEC and OPEC+, consider the following statements:
- OPEC was established in 1960 at the Baghdad Conference and is headquartered in Saudi Arabia.
 - OPEC+ was formed in 2016 and has 22 member countries.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
9. With reference to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), consider the following statements:
- Established in 1961, the headquarters of OECD is located in Paris, France.
 - The OECD has 38 member countries, including India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

- 10.** Which of the following countries has recently withdrawn from 66 international organisations, including 31 UN entities and 35 non-UN bodies?
- United States
 - France
 - Russia
 - China
- 11.** The Graham–Blumenthal sanctions bill, recently in the news, seeks to penalise countries that:
- Export arms to Russia
 - Purchase Russian oil or uranium
 - Support Russia diplomatically at the UN
 - Conduct trade in non-dollar currencies with Russia
- 12.** With reference to the International Solar Alliance (ISA), consider the following statements:
- The ISA was jointly launched by India and France during COP21 of the UNFCCC held in Paris in 2015.
 - More than 120 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement, and its Secretariat is located in New Delhi.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- 13.** With reference to the Weimar Triangle, consider the following statements:
- It was established after the end of the Cold War.
 - It was created to facilitate reconciliation between Germany and Poland.
 - It functions as a formal military alliance similar to NATO.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
- 14.** Which of the following countries are part of Mercosur trading bloc?
- Brazil
 - Saudi arabia
 - Paraguay
 - Uruguay
 - Egypt
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
 - 1, 3 and 4 only
 - 2, 4 and 5 only
 - 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

- 15.** With reference to the Pax Silica initiative, consider the following statements:
1. Pax Silica is a US-led strategic initiative aimed at securing the global silicon and semiconductor supply chain.
 2. It seeks to reduce coercive dependencies in critical minerals and technologies foundational to artificial intelligence.
 3. All members of Pax Silica are located in the Asia–Pacific 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
- 16.** With reference to the ‘Australia Group’, consider the following statements:
1. It is a formal international treaty that imposes legally binding obligations on its members to prevent the spread of chemical weapons.
 2. It was established primarily in response to the use of chemical weapons during the Iran–Iraq War.
 3. India is a member of the Australia Group as well as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Wassenaar Arrangement.
- 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 the governance structure of the European Union (EU), consider the following statements:
1. The European Commission holds the exclusive right of legislative initiative, meaning it is the only body that can formally propose new EU laws.
 2. The Presidency of the Council of the EU is held by a permanent President elected for a term of five years to ensure institutional stability.
- 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 Greenland, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in the North Atlantic Ocean, between Europe and North America, across the Baffin Bay from Canada.
 2. It is the largest island on Earth.
- 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

19. Which of the following countries became formal members of BRICS following the expansion defined in the Johannesburg Declaration and effective as of 2024-25?
1. Saudi Arabia
 2. Indonesia
 3. Argentina
 4. United Arab Emirates
 5. Vietnam
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1, 2, and 4 only
 - (b) 1, 4, and 5 only
 - (c) 2, 3, and 5 only
 - (d) 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
20. With reference to the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), consider the following statements:
1. The corridor aims to enhance connectivity and economic integration between Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
 2. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, the United States and several European nations are part of the initiative.
- 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
21. With reference to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), consider the following statements:
1. It was established by a treaty signed in 2014.
 2. It aims to allow free movement of goods, services, capital, and labour among member states.
 3. All members of the EAEU are also members of the European Union (EU).
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one
 - (b) Only two
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None
22. With reference to the European Union’s Anti-Coercion Instrument, consider the following statements:
1. It is a trade policy tool adopted by the European Union in 2023 to counter economic and trade coercion against its member states.
 2. Under this instrument, the EU can impose import and export restrictions on goods and services within its single market.
 3. The activation of the Anti-Coercion Instrument requires unanimous approval of all EU member 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

23. The principle of “Non-intervention” under the Monroe Doctrine implied that:
- The U.S. would intervene militarily in Latin American countries if required
 - European powers should not interfere in the affairs of newly independent American states
 - The U.S. would actively support European colonial expansion
 - European countries could recolonise former Spanish colonies
24. The Board of Peace, recently in the news, is associated with which of the following?
- It is an initiative of the United Nations Security Council to reform peacekeeping in Africa.
 - It is an international body to oversee post-war governance and peace efforts focused on Gaza.
 - It is a permanent subsidiary organ of the European Union for conflict resolution in the Middle East.
 - It is a peace tribunal established by the International Court of Justice to try war crimes.
25. With reference to the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), consider the following statements:
- It was launched by India in 2019 at the East Asia Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - Maritime Security and Disaster Risk Reduction are among the thematic pillars of the IPOI.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
26. ‘Oslo Accords’ often seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
- Peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine for resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict.
 - Nuclear disarmament agreement between the United States and Russia.
 - Maritime boundary agreement among Arctic Council member states.
 - Climate change mitigation framework adopted by Scandinavian countries.
27. With reference to EURATOM, consider the following statements:
- It was established under the 1957 Treaty of Rome.
 - It promotes joint research and development in the field of nuclear energy.
- Which of the statements given above is/are **not** correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
28. With reference to the League of Arab States, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- It was established in 1945 with 15 members, representing countries across West Asia and North Africa.
 - India became a permanent member of the League of Arab States in 2008.
- 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: India and Bangladesh have initiated a **joint water measurement initiative** on the Ganga and Padma rivers as the 30-year **Ganges Water Sharing Treaty** enters its final year before expiry in **December 2026**, marking a pivotal step toward future cooperation and renegotiation.

Statement 1 is not correct

- The **Ganges Water Sharing Treaty** was **signed in 1996** between **India and Bangladesh** and established a **30-year framework** for the **equitable distribution of Ganga waters** between India and Bangladesh during the dry season.

Statement 2 is correct

- It aims to **equitably distribute the waters of the Ganga (known as the Padma in Bangladesh)** during the critical dry season from January to May, based on a formula that considers average flow and minimum guaranteed allocations.

2. (a)

Option (a) is correct: Bulgaria joined the euro area on 1 January 2026 as its 21st member after fulfilling the four nominal convergence criteria (inflation, deficit/debt, interest rates, exchange rate stability) as confirmed by the European Commission and ECB's 2025 Convergence Reports.

Option (b) is not correct: EU members (except Denmark with opt-out) must adopt the euro only once ready by meeting convergence criteria; no immediate requirement upon joining EU—as seen with Sweden, Poland etc.

Option (c) is not correct: The Maastricht Treaty (signed 1992, effective 1993) set up the framework and convergence criteria, but the Eurozone launched with physical euro notes/coins on 1 January 1999 (electronic) / 2002 (cash).

Option (d) is not correct: The ECB's Governing Council independently sets and implements single monetary policy for the entire Eurozone; national central banks execute it but lack independent control.

3. (c)

Context

- India and Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations that cannot be attacked in the event of hostilities and lists of prisoners in each other's custody.

About

- **Exchange of Nuclear Installations list:** Pakistan and India exchanged the lists of their respective nuclear installations pursuant to the agreement on **Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities** between Pakistan and India signed on **31st December 1988**.
 - The pact mandates the two countries to inform each other of nuclear installations and facilities on the **first of January of every year**.
 - This marks the **35th consecutive exchange** of such lists between the two countries, with the first exchange having taken place on **January 1, 1992**.
- **Exchange of Prisoners' Lists:** The two countries exchanged a list of prisoners under the consular access agreement signed on **May 21, 2008**.
 - The lists include **details of civilians and fishermen** lodged in each other's custody.

4. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Monroe Doctrine was announced by US President **James Monroe in 1823** during his annual address to Congress.

- It came at a time when many Latin American countries had gained independence from European colonial powers.

Statement 2 is not correct: The original doctrine **was defensive and non-interventionist**; it did not grant the U.S. the right to intervene. This interventionist stance emerged later with the Roosevelt Corollary (1904).

Statement 3 is correct: Core Principles of Monroe Doctrine:

- **Non-Colonisation:** The American continents were no longer open to future European colonisation.
- **Non-Intervention:** European powers should not interfere in the political affairs of the Americas.
- **Separate Spheres of Influence:** Western Hemisphere and Europe were to remain distinct political spheres.
- **US Assurance:** The US would not interfere in European internal affairs and would respect existing European colonies in the Americas.

5. (b)

Context

- The United States recently launched **Operation Absolute Resolve** in Venezuela.

About

- In a dramatic night-time operation, US forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and flew them to the US.
- Washington has long accused Maduro of leading a drug cartel involved in smuggling contraband into America.

Is this capture legal?

- Well, this has happened before. In 1989, the US captured Panama's dictator Manuel Noriega. US courts ruled that *jurisdiction is not defeated by abduction*.
- Since 2019, the US has not recognised Nicolás Maduro as a head of state, but as a private individual accused of leading a narco-terror organisation, and therefore considers him ineligible for diplomatic immunity.
- However, Under **Article 2 of the UN Charter**, the operation violates Venezuela's territorial sovereignty.

6. (b)

Context: The recent remarks by the US President asserting that the United States “**needs Greenland for national security**” have triggered a diplomatic standoff with Denmark and Greenland, raising concerns over sovereignty, Arctic geopolitics, and great-power competition.

About Greenland

- It is **semi-autonomous** and part of the **Kingdom of Denmark**, with strong defense ties to NATO.
- **Location:** Situated between the Arctic and North Atlantic Oceans, northeast of Canada.
- It's the **world's biggest island** with over **80%** covered by a massive ice sheet.

7. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a **military alliance of countries**.

- **Establishment:** It was founded in **1949** with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, more popularly known as the **Washington Treaty**.

Statement 2 is correct: Collective Defense: The cornerstone of NATO is **Article 5** of the North Atlantic Treaty, which states that an armed attack against one or more of its members is considered an attack against all members.

Statement 3 is not correct: Decision-Making: Decisions within NATO are made on the basis of **consensus among member countries. The North Atlantic Council**, which includes the ambassadors of all member countries, is the **principal political decision-making body**.

Statement 4 is not correct: Members: It has **32 member countries**, **Finland** and **Sweden** became the **31st and 32nd members respectively**.

- On signing the Treaty, countries voluntarily commit themselves to participating in the political consultations and military activities of the Organization.
- **Founding Members:** The original members of NATO were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, **the Netherlands**, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

8. (b)

Context: OPEC+ has agreed in principle to maintain steady oil output despite rising political tensions among key members and widening geopolitical uncertainty.

About OPEC

- The **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, established in **1960** at the **Baghdad Conference** by **Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia** and **Venezuela**.
- Currently, it has **12 members**, viz. Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and **Venezuela**.
- **Headquartered in Vienna, Austria** (a non-member state), its objective is to co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers.

OPEC+ (OPEC Plus)

- **OPEC+ has 22 members**, made up of **10 major oil producing countries** (Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Brunei, Bahrain, Mexico, Oman, South Sudan, Sudan and Malaysia), **along with the 12 OPEC members**.
- The **OPEC+ was formed in 2016** following the adoption of the **Algiers Accord** by OPEC members and the signing of the **Vienna Agreement** between OPEC and other major oil-exporting countries.
- The move was largely a response to sharply falling oil prices caused by a surge in U.S. shale oil production.

9. (a)

Context: Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) has finalized an agreement to exempt **US-based multinationals from 15% global minimum tax**.

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) and India is not a member.

10. (a)

In News: The US has withdrawn from 66 international organizations, including 31 UN entities and 35 non-UN bodies.

About

- The entities include climate/energy/science forums such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

11. (b)

Context: U.S. President Donald Trump has given his nod to the Graham-Blumenthal sanctions bill that will authorise the US President to **levy up to 500% tariffs** on nations that knowingly purchase Russian oil or uranium.

About

- This Bill would give the US tremendous leverage against countries like **China, India, and Brazil** to incentivise them to stop buying the cheap Russian oil.
- **In 2018**, under similar pressure from the previous Trump administration, India had **“zeroed out” its oil imports from Iran and Venezuela as well.**
- **Tariffs on India:** The United States has imposed high tariffs on Indian goods, up to **50%**.
 - Part of this tariff is connected to **India’s continued purchase of Russian oil.**
- **India’s Stand:** India says the decision to buy oil from Russia is based on national interest. It wants to ensure energy security and keep fuel prices affordable for its people.

12. (a)**Context**

- The United States has announced its withdrawal from the **International Solar Alliance (ISA).**

About International Solar Alliance

- **Genesis: India and France** jointly launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) during **21st** Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in **Paris in 2015.**
- **Aim:** To contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through the rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.
- **Secretariat:** Gurugram.
- **Governance:** The ISA’s governance structure integrates decision-making across **Regional Committees**, the **Standing Committee**, and **the ISA Assembly**, ISA’s apex decision - making body
- **Members:** Member Countries are countries which have signed and ratified the Framework Agreement of the ISA.
 - At present, **more than 120 countries** are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement.

13. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The Weimar Triangle was created in 1991, immediately after the Cold War’s conclusion, as part of post–Cold War European reconciliation and integration efforts.

Statement 2 is correct: A key original purpose was to foster reconciliation between Germany and Poland, symbolizing a new era of cooperation after decades of historical tensions, with the first meeting held symbolically in Weimar, Germany.

Statement 3 not correct: It functions as an informal trilateral diplomatic and political forum for policy coordination within the EU context, not as a formal military alliance like NATO.

14. (b)

In News : The European Union has approved a long-delayed trade deal with the South American Mercosur bloc, despite strong opposition led by France and concerns from farmers across Europe.

- Mercosur is a South American trade block and comprises **Brazil**, its largest member by territory, economy and population, along with Argentina, **Paraguay**, **Uruguay** and Bolivia, the newest member.
 - Venezuela, once a member, has been suspended indefinitely.

The EU–Mercosur free trade agreement

- It is the EU’s largest ever in terms of tariff reductions, eliminating over €4 billion in duties on EU exports.
- Trade between the two blocs stands at €111 billion, with the EU exporting machinery, chemicals and transport equipment, and importing mainly agricultural products and minerals.
- Under the deal, Mercosur will remove duties on 91% of EU exports over 15 years, while the EU will eliminate duties on 92% of Mercosur exports within 10 years.
- Both sides retain quotas on sensitive agricultural goods, though the EU will increase beef import quotas and Mercosur will allow duty-free cheese imports.
- The agreement also protects about 350 EU food and drink products through geographic indications.
 - To address concerns over agriculture, the EU has introduced safeguards, a crisis fund, farmer support measures, reduced fertiliser duties and stricter import controls.

15. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: Pax Silica is a **US-led strategic initiative** to build a secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain from critical minerals.

- **Its objective** is to reduce coercive dependencies, protect the materials and capabilities foundational to artificial intelligence, and ensure aligned nations can develop and deploy transformative technologies at scale.

Statement 3 is not correct: The **inaugural Pax Silica Summit** was held in December 2025 and the **signatories include** Australia, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the UK, the Netherlands, and the UAE.

- Together, these countries are home to the most important companies and investors powering the global AI supply chain.
- **Qatar** became the latest signatory to Pax Silica.

16. (b)

Statement 1 is not correct: The Australia Group is an informal, non-binding arrangement. It is not a formal treaty, but a cooperative mechanism where members harmonize national export licensing measures.

Statement 2 is correct: The group was founded in 1985 following the discovery that Iraq had used chemical weapons in its war with Iran, utilizing precursor chemicals obtained through legitimate trade channels.

Statement 3 is correct: India joined the Australia Group in 2018. India is also a member of the MTCR (joined 2016) and the Wassenaar Arrangement (joined 2017). Currently, the only major multilateral export control regime India is not a member of is the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

17. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: In the EU’s institutional “triangle,” the European Commission is the executive arm. It acts in the general interest of the EU and has the “sole right of initiative” to propose legislation to the Parliament and the Council. It also acts as the “Guardian of the Treaties” by enforcing law.

Statement 2 is not correct: The Council of the EU (also known as the Council of Ministers) does not have a single permanent President. Instead, it operates on a 6-month rotating presidency among the member states. For example, Cyprus holds the presidency for the first half of 2026.

Note: Do not confuse the “Council of the EU” with the “European Council” (heads of state), which does have a permanent President elected for 2.5 years.

18. (c)

In News : EU lawmakers are moving to delay or block approval of the EU–US trade deal after US President Donald Trump threatened tariffs on countries supporting Greenland’s sovereignty.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : **Greenland** is located in the **Northern Hemisphere** and is surrounded by the **Arctic Ocean** in the north, the **North Atlantic Ocean** in the south, **Baffin Bay** in the west and the Greenland Sea in the east. Greenland is the largest island on Earth

- It lies closer to **North America**, but culturally and politically it is tied to Denmark.
- It is mineral-rich with large deposits of traditional resources such as gold, nickel, and cobalt.
- It also has some of the biggest reserves of rare earth minerals such as dysprosium, praseodymium, neodymium, and terbium.
- It gained home rule in 1979 and expanded self-government in 2009, giving it authority over domestic affairs like healthcare and education.
 - Denmark retains control over defense, foreign policy and monetary policy.

19. (a)

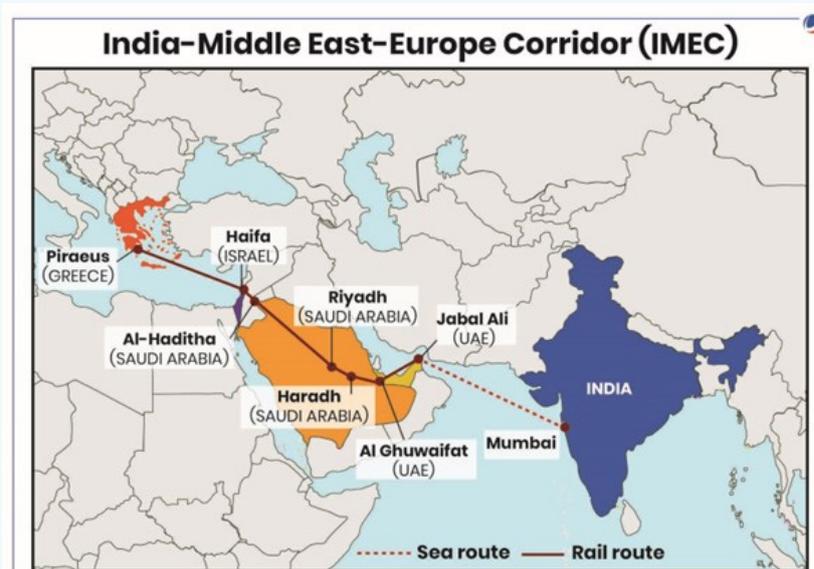
Following the BRICS expansion defined in the Johannesburg Declaration (2023) and made effective in 2024–25, the new formal members include Saudi Arabia, Indonesia & United Arab Emirates. Argentina was invited but did not become a member.

Vietnam is admitted as a BRICS Partner Country, not a full member.

20. (c)

Both the statements are correct: The IMEC is a proposed 4,800 km long route that was announced in **2023** on the sidelines of the G20 Summit.

- **Members:** India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US.
- **Aim:** Integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
- **The IMEC will comprise of two separate corridors:**
 - The east corridor connecting India to the West Asia/Middle East and
 - The northern corridor connecting West Asia/Middle East to Europe.



21. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union was signed on May 29, 2014, by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia, and the union came into force on January 1, 2015. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan signed accession treaties in late 2014, joining shortly after.

Statement 2 is correct: The EAEU's fundamental objective includes enabling the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor, supported by harmonized economic policies.

Statement 3 is not correct: None of the EAEU member states—Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia—are members of the European Union. These are post-Soviet states outside the EU.

22. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: It is a **trade tool** that the bloc adopted in **2023** but has never used.

- **Aim:** To respond to any country using trade weapons to pressure an EU member state.
- **Measures:**
 - The armoury allows the EU to take measures such as import and export restrictions on goods and services in its single market.
 - It also limits American companies' access to public procurement contracts in Europe.

Statement 3 is not correct: Implementation Process: Both the commission and member states have the right to seek its activation.

- It would need the approval of at least 55% of the member countries voting in favour, representing 65% of the bloc's population.

23. (b)

Under the Monroe Doctrine (1823), the U.S. asserted that the Western Hemisphere was closed to further European colonisation and that any attempt by European powers to extend their political system or interfere in the affairs of independent American states would be viewed as a hostile act, while the U.S. would, in turn, not interfere in European affairs or existing colonies.

24. (b)

In News : India is considering its response to US President Donald Trump's invitation to join the proposed Gaza Peace Board

The Board of Peace is an international body chaired by US President Donald Trump, created to oversee the October 2025 ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war and manage Gaza's post-war transition.

- The initiative was proposed in October 2025 and was endorsed the following month by the United Nations Security Council.

25. (c)

Context

- India has welcomed Spain joining the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

About

- To give a concrete shape to India's Indo-Pacific Vision, in **2019**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** at the East Asia Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- As an open global initiative, the IPOI draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanisms to focus on **seven thematic areas**, viz. : (i) **Maritime Security**; (ii) Maritime Ecology; (iii) Maritime Resources; (iv) Capacity Building and Resource Sharing; (v) **Disaster Risk Reduction** and Management (vi) Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation; and (vii) Trade, Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

26. (a)

The **Oslo Accords (1993–95)** were peace agreements between **Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)**, focusing on mutual recognition and a framework for resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict.

- **1948:** After the Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank was occupied and later annexed by Jordan (1949–1967).
- **1967:** During the Six-Day War, Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, and it has remained under varying degrees of Israeli control since.
- **1993–1995 Oslo Accords:** These agreements created the Palestinian Authority (PA) and divided the West Bank into three areas:
 - **Area A:** Full Palestinian civil and security control.
 - **Area B:** Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli–Palestinian security.
 - **Area C:** Full Israeli control (about 60% of the West Bank).

27. (d)

In News

- India and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation on peaceful nuclear energy uses under the existing **India-Euratom Agreement** during the **16th India-EU Summit**.

About

- EURATOM was established by the **1957 Treaty of Rome**.
- It promotes joint R&D, safeguards fissile materials against military diversion, and fosters technical knowledge sharing.
- The **2020 India-Euratom R&D pact** covers nuclear safety, fusion research (including ITER), radiation protection, and non-power applications like radio-pharmaceuticals.
- India has been CERN’s associate membership since 2017.

28. (d)

Context

- India is set to host the 2nd ministerial summit of foreign ministers from the **League of Arab States (Arab League)**, after a decade-long gap.
 - The first meeting was held in **2016 in Bahrain**.

India–Arab League Engagement

- 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.
- The dialogue process was institutionalised in **2002** through a **Memorandum of Understanding** between India and the League of Arab States to establish a regular framework for consultation.
- In **2008**, the relationship was further strengthened through a Memorandum of Cooperation, leading to the establishment of the **Arab–India Cooperation Forum (AICF)**.
 - The cooperation framework was **revised in 2013** to streamline its structure and improve effectiveness.
- India holds **observer status** in the **Arab League**, which represents countries across **West Asia and North Africa**.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. With reference to Nimesulide, consider the following statements:
 1. Nimesulide is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used mainly for the treatment of acute pain and fever.
 2. Nimesulide is considered safe for long-term use in chronic inflammatory disorders due to its selective action.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 Lab-grown diamonds, consider the following statements:
 1. Lab-grown diamonds are composed of pure carbon and have the same cubic crystal lattice structure as natural diamonds.
 2. Unlike natural diamonds, lab-grown diamonds are nitrogen-free and generally have a lower environmental footprint.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

3. With reference to Thorium, consider the following statements:
 1. Thorium is a naturally occurring radioactive element that is fertile but not fissile.
 2. In India, thorium is primarily obtained from monazite sands found in coastal and inland riverine regions.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 Cetacean morbillivirus, consider the following statements:
 1. It is a highly contagious viral disease that affects marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, porpoises and pilot whales.
 2. The virus is closely related to measles and canine distemper viruses and is believed to have evolved from terrestrial morbilliviruses.
 3. It was first detected in Arctic waters in 1987 and has remained confined only to polar regions since then.

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

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

5. Staphylococcus, recently in the news, refers to a genus of which of the following?

- (a) Protozoa causing water-borne diseases
- (b) Virus that spreads through airborne droplets
- (c) Fungal pathogens affecting crops
- (d) Gram-positive bacteria commonly found on skin

6. Consider the following statements about Huntington's Disease in India:

1. Huntington's Disease is included among the 63 rare diseases recognised under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD)-2021.
2. Symptoms typically begin between 40 and 50 years of age and there is no cure for the disease.

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 the *Wolf Supermoon*, consider the following statements:

1. The Wolf Moon refers to the full moon occurring in January and has its origin in seasonal folklore.
2. A supermoon occurs when a full moon coincides with the Moon's farthest point from the Earth, known as apogee.

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 '*biomaterials*', consider the following statements:

1. All biomaterials are naturally occurring substances.
2. Biomaterials are always biodegradable.
3. They are categorised as drop-in, drop-out and novel biomaterials.

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

9. With reference to Gravitational Microlensing, consider the following statements:

1. It is a phenomenon based on Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, where gravity bends light from a distant background star.

2. Gravitational microlensing is especially useful for detecting dark or faint objects, including free-floating (rogue) planets.
3. The microlensing event can be repeatedly observed for the same object once its orbital period is known.

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. With reference to the Mpemba effect, consider the following statements:

1. The Mpemba effect refers to a paradoxical phenomenon in which a hotter substance freezes faster than a colder one under certain conditions.
2. The Mpemba effect has been observed only in water and does not occur in other materials or physical systems.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

11. With reference to the Dust EXperiment (DEX) developed by ISRO, consider the following statements:

1. It is India's first instrument specifically designed to detect Interplanetary Dust Particles (IDPs).
2. Interplanetary Dust Particles are primarily generated from volcanic activity on planets and contribute to auroral phenomena.
3. Data from DEX can be useful for protecting satellites and for planning India's human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan.

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 Hydrogen, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Hydrogen is the lightest element and the most abundant chemical substance in the universe, constituting roughly 75% of all normal matter.
2. It is colorless, odorless, toxic, and highly combustible gas.

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. Which one of the following best describes the structure of W Ursae Majoris stars?

- (a) Two isolated stars with no interaction
- (b) A star orbiting a black hole

- (c) Two stars sharing a common outer atmosphere
- (d) A single star with multiple cores

14. With reference to bitumen and bio-bitumen, consider the following statements:

1. India has become the first country in the world to commercially produce bio-bitumen in road construction.
2. Bio-bitumen can be produced by collecting post-harvest rice straw, followed by palletisation, pyrolysis to generate bio-oil, and blending it with conventional bitumen.
3. Use of bio-bitumen can contribute to reduction in pollution caused by crop residue burning.

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 Spina Bifida, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Spina Bifida is a congenital defect of the spinal cord caused by improper closure of the neural tube during early pregnancy.
2. Periconceptional folic acid intake prevents over 70% of Spina Bifida cases.

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

1. It is a decentralized, distributed ledger system that records transactions across many computers in a way that ensures transparency.
2. It relies on consensus algorithms to validate transactions and maintain network integrity.

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 the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. HPV is an RNA virus belonging to the Herpesviridae family.
2. HPV infection is associated with cervical and other cancers.

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

18. With reference to nuclear fusion, consider the following statements:

1. Nuclear fusion involves the combination of two light atomic nuclei to form a heavier nucleus with release of energy.

2. Fusion reactions occur in plasma, which consists of neutral atoms at very low temperatures.
3. The Sun derives its energy primarily from nuclear fusion reactions involving hydrogen isotopes.

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. The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) was primarily developed to overcome which limitation of the PSLV?

- (a) Inability to launch satellites into polar orbits
- (b) Limited capability to carry heavier payloads to higher orbits
- (c) Absence of solid propulsion stages
- (d) Dependence on foreign launch facilities

20. Artemis II mission, recently in the news, is best described as:

- (a) An uncrewed lunar landing mission
- (b) A crewed lunar flyby mission without a Moon landing
- (c) A crewed mission to establish a permanent lunar base
- (d) A robotic sample return mission from the Moon

21. With reference to the '*Submarine Cable Networks*', consider the following statements:

1. Submarine cables use fiber-optic cables and data is transmitted as light signals.
2. The global internet access completely stops if a submarine cable breaks.

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 Root Wilt Disease (RWD) often seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a non-lethal but debilitating disease primarily affecting the coconut palms in India.
2. The disease is caused by Phytoplasma, which are specialized bacteria lacking a cell wall.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

23. With reference to the Copper (Cu) metal, consider the following statements:

1. Copper has high electrical and thermal conductivity, which makes it widely used in electrical wiring and power transmission.
2. In 2024, Chile, Peru and Australia together accounted for more than 40% of the world's copper reserves.
3. In India, major copper ore belts include the Khetri belt in Rajasthan, Malanjkhand in Madhya Pradesh, and Singhbhum in Jharkhand.

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 Kashiwazaki–Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant, which of the following statements is/are not correct?

1. It is situated in Niigata Prefecture on Japan's Honshu island.
2. It is the world's largest nuclear power plant in terms of installed capacity.

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

25. Which of the following statements about the C295 aircraft is correct?

- (a) It is a French twin-engine, omnirole fighter by Dassault Aviation, renowned for its versatility across multiple mission types.
- (b) It is a two-ton, seven-seater aircraft which can carry air-launched BrahMos missiles.
- (c) It is a versatile, reliable tactical transport aircraft capable of cargo transport and maritime patrol.
- (d) It is a modern 4th generation supersonic fighter that can achieve more than double the speed of sound.

26. With reference to India's Thorium reserves, consider the following statements:

1. India accounts for approximately 25% of world thorium reserves.
2. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan account for highest thorium reserves 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

27. With reference to Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) Technology, consider the following statements:

1. V2V is a wireless technology that will enable the vehicles to communicate or talk with one another to share real-time information.
2. V2V systems typically operate within a detection range of about 300 metres to exchange real-time vehicular information.
3. One of the major concerns associated with V2V implementation is the excessive fuel consumption caused by continuous data transmission.

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

28. Why is ammonium nitrate referred to as a dual-use substance?
- It can be used both in agriculture and medicine
 - It has civilian as well as military applications
 - It has legitimate industrial uses but can also be misused for explosives
 - It can be used both as fuel and oxidiser in engines
29. With reference to stem cell therapy in India, consider the following statements:
- Stem cell therapy for autism is an approved treatment under ICMR guidelines.
 - Experimental stem cell therapies can be offered commercially without clinical trials.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2

EXPLANATIONS

1. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Nimesulide is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) of the sulfonanilide class with analgesic and antipyretic action, used mainly for acute pain, osteoarthritis symptom relief, and fever in some countries.

Statement 2 is not correct: Nimesulide has been associated with serious hepatotoxicity, including acute liver failure, which has led to restrictions/withdrawals in several countries, so it is not considered safe for long-term use in chronic inflammatory disorders despite its relatively COX-2-selective profile.

2. (c)

Both the statements are correct: Lab-grown diamonds (also called synthetic or cultured diamonds) are real diamonds that are manufactured in **laboratories using advanced technology** that replicates the natural conditions under which diamonds form inside the Earth.

- **Composition:** Pure carbon
- **Crystal structure:** Same as natural diamonds (cubic crystal lattice)
- **Physical, chemical, and optical properties:** Identical to mined diamonds.
- The natural diamonds contain **small traces of nitrogen**, whereas the lab-grown diamonds are **nitrogen-free**.
 - Lab-grown diamonds are **eco-friendly and conflict-free**. Unlike mined diamonds, which displace up to 250 tonnes of earth and emit greenhouse gases, lab-grown diamonds use less water and energy.

3. (c)

Context

- Chicago-based Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) has partnered with NTPC Ltd to deploy thorium-based nuclear fuel in India's existing PHWRs, marking a new phase in India-US civil nuclear cooperation.

What is Thorium?

- Thorium is a **radioactive metallic element** found naturally in the Earth's crust.
- It is **fertile, not fissile**, meaning it cannot sustain a nuclear chain reaction on its own.
- **Thorium Availability in India:** Thorium is primarily **extracted from monazite sands**. India possesses one of the largest thorium reserves globally.

- **Major deposits are found in:**

- **Coastal sands** of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- **Inland riverine sands** of Jharkhand and West Bengal.

4. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Cetacean morbillivirus infects marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, porpoises and pilot whales.

Statement 2 is correct: It is closely related to measles and canine distemper viruses and likely evolved from terrestrial morbilliviruses.

Statement 3 is not correct: The virus was first identified in 1987, but not in Arctic waters, and it has been reported widely in the North Atlantic, Mediterranean and Pacific regions, not confined to polar areas.

5. (d)

In News: Researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru University collected air samples from parts of Delhi and found high levels of **antibiotic-resistant staphylococci** in both the indoor and outdoor environment.

About Staphylococcus

- Staphylococcus is a genus of **Gram-positive bacteria**.
- Staphylococci are spherical bacteria, commonly called “staph.” They exist in clusters and are found on skin and mucous membranes.
- Eight staphylococcal species were identified, with Staphylococcus epidermidis and Staphylococcus arlettae being the most prevalent human- and animal-associated species.

6. (b)

Context

- Globally classified as a rare disease, **Huntington’s Disease** is increasingly recognised as **underdiagnosed in India** due to limited awareness and delayed diagnosis.

About Huntington’s Disease (HD)

- It is a rare, progressive, hereditary neurodegenerative disorder that affects the brain and leads to motor dysfunction, cognitive decline, and psychiatric disturbances (depression, psychosis, irritability, OCD), resulting in lifelong disability.
- The disease is caused by a mutation in the **huntingtin (HTT) gene** and follows an **autosomal dominant inheritance pattern**, meaning a child inheriting the mutated gene from either parent will develop the disorder.
 - **Consanguineous marriages** significantly increase the probability of transmission, up to **75%**.
- **Onset and Progression:** Symptoms typically begin between 40 and 50 years of age and progress over 15–20 years.
- **Treatment:** While there is **no cure** for the disease, treatments are available that can improve patients’ quality of life and ease the burden on caregivers.

Policy Perspective

- The WHO defines rare diseases as those affecting 1 or fewer per 1,000 people. Although over 7,000 rare diseases exist globally, fewer than 5% have treatment options.
- In 2021, the Union government formulated the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD)-2021 for identification, prevention and providing support to families with rare diseases.
 - The NPRD recognises **63 rare diseases** in India, but Huntington’s Disease is not included. Patients with any of the 63 recognised diseases are eligible for financial assistance of up to ₹50 lakh under PM-JAY.

7. (a)

Context: The **January 2026 Wolf Supermoon** occurred recently.

About

- A **Wolf Supermoon** combines two distinct concepts: **Wolf Moon** and **Supermoon**.
 - **Wolf Moon:**
 - ♦ The term refers to the **full moon occurring in January**. Such traditional names for full moons originated from seasonal patterns and were popularised through folklore and almanacs to mark time before modern calendars.
 - ♦ The name is associated with winter stories of wolves being heard more frequently, though it has **no astronomical significance**.
 - **Supermoon:**
 - ♦ A supermoon is an **astronomical phenomenon** that occurs when a full moon coincides with the Moon's closest approach to Earth, known as **perigee**.
 - ♦ The Moon follows an **elliptical orbit**, with its farthest point called **apogee**.

8. (a)

In News: Biomaterials are revolutionizing fields from medicine to sustainable manufacturing.

- They are engineered substances, natural or synthetic, that interact with biological systems to repair, replace, or enhance bodily functions.

Statement 1 is not correct

- Biomaterials can be:
 - **Natural:** such as collagen, silk, or chitosan
 - **Synthetic:** like polylactic acid (PLA), titanium, or hydroxyapatite
 - **Hybrid:** combining both natural and synthetic components

Statement 2 is not correct

- Many (like titanium or certain ceramics) are permanent and non-degradable, while some biomaterials are designed to degrade in the body.

Statement 3 is correct

- Biomaterials can be broadly categorised into **three types**:
 - **Drop-in Biomaterials:** Chemically identical to petroleum-based materials; can be used in existing manufacturing systems (such as bio-PET).
 - **Drop-out Biomaterials:** Chemically different and require new processing or end-of-life systems (such as polylactic acid or PLA); and
 - **Novel Biomaterials:** They offer **new properties not found in conventional materials**, such as self-healing materials, bioactive implants, and advanced composites.

9. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Gravitational microlensing is a form of gravitational lensing predicted by Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, in which the gravity of a foreground mass bends and magnifies light from a background star. This bending of light by gravity is exactly the effect described by general relativity, where mass curves spacetime and hence deflects light.

Statement 2 is correct: Microlensing is especially useful to detect dark or faint objects—such as low-mass stars, brown dwarfs, and free-floating (rogue) planets—because it relies on the gravitational field of the lens, not on its own light. Even if the lensing object emits little or no radiation, its presence and mass can be inferred from the characteristic, temporary brightening of the background star.

Statement 3 is not correct: A microlensing event is typically a one-time, non-repeating brightness variation for a given source–lens alignment, because the exact alignment of foreground lens and background source is transient and usually does not recur. Hence, microlensing events are not generally periodically repeatable in the way implied by knowing an orbital period.

10. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The Mpemba effect describes the observation where hotter liquids can freeze faster than colder ones under identical conditions, such as similar volumes in the same environment. This paradoxical behavior was first scientifically studied by Erasto Mpemba in the 1960s, though noted earlier by Aristotle.

Statement 2 is not correct: The effect occurs beyond water, including in colloids like ice cream mixtures and even generalized systems such as single particles in Brownian motion or granular gases. Recent experiments confirm it in diverse classical and quantum systems, disproving exclusivity to water.

11. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) used the first homegrown cosmic dust detector, the Dust EXperiment (DEX), to confirm that a cosmic dust particle hits Earth's atmosphere approximately every thousand seconds (around 16 minutes).

- ISRO developed the Dust EXperiment (DEX), a 3 kg instrument that was launched into space onboard the XPoSat mission.
- It is the first-of-its-kind instrument designed to detect Interplanetary Dust Particles (IDPs).

Statement 2 is not correct: Interplanetary Dust Particles (IDPs): IDPs are microscopic shrapnel from comets and asteroids that form the atmosphere's "meteor layer", and show up as "shooting stars" at night.

- IDPs originate mainly from comets and asteroids, forming the meteor layer, not from volcanic activity or auroras.

Statement 3 is correct: The findings are significant as understanding cosmic dust particles helps protect satellites and spacecraft from high-speed micro-impacts.

- Data on cosmic dust particles will also aid in planning and executing India's first manned space mission - Gaganyaan mission.

12. (a)

Context

- Recent advances in theoretical physics and experimental spectroscopy have enabled scientists to test the foundations of quantum mechanics and quantum electrodynamics (QED) using the hydrogen molecule (H₂).

What is hydrogen?

- Hydrogen is the chemical element with the symbol H and atomic number 1.
- Hydrogen is the lightest element and the most abundant chemical substance in the universe, constituting roughly 75% of all normal matter.
- It is colorless, odorless, tasteless, non-toxic, and highly combustible gas.

13. (c)

Context

- A study of a type of stellar twin called W Ursae Majoris–type contact binaries that orbit each other closely gives new insights into how binary stars evolve and their eventual fate.

What Are W Ursae Majoris (W UMa) Stars?

- W Ursae Majoris (W UMa) stars are short-period, dumbbell-shaped binaries in which the two stars are in contact.

- These stars are so close that they share a **single outer atmosphere** and they orbit around each other.
- **Significance:** These stars act as “natural laboratories” as they assist in precise determinations of fundamental stellar parameters such as **masses, radii, and temperatures**, crucial for testing theories about how stars evolve over time.

What Are Stellar Twins?

- Stellar twins are **stars that are very similar in their fundamental physical properties**, such as mass, radius, temperature, chemical composition, and age.
- Because of these similarities, they are extremely valuable for studying stellar evolution and testing astrophysical theories.
- **Types of Stellar Twins:**
 - Binary Stellar Twins
 - Solar Twins
 - Spectroscopic Twins

14. (d)

Statement 1 is correct: India has become the **first country in the world** to commercially **produce bio-bitumen in road construction**.

- **Bitumen** is a **black, viscous mixture of hydrocarbons** produced by the **fractionation of crude oil**, and it serves as a **crucial binder in road construction**.

Statements 2 and 3 are correct: The process of making bio-bitumen involves **collection of post-harvest rice straw, palletisation, pyrolysis to produce bio-oil**, and subsequent **blending with conventional bitumen**.

- India currently **imports nearly 50% of its bitumen** requirement, and innovations like bio-bitumen would **significantly reduce foreign dependence** while strengthening domestic capabilities.
- The initiative will help in **reducing pollution** from crop residue burning.

15. (c)

Context

- Many countries launched national awareness campaigns and programs to prevent **spina bifida** through folic acid supplementation.

What Is Spina Bifida?

- Spina Bifida is a **congenital defect of the spinal cord** caused by **improper closure of the neural tube** during early pregnancy.
- The condition results in varying degrees of **paralysis**, ranging from mild weakness of the feet to complete paralysis of the lower limbs.
- Many affected children also suffer from **hydrocephalus, urinary and bowel incontinence, and orthopaedic deformities** such as clubfoot.
- **Role of Folic Acid in Prevention:** Periconceptional folic acid intake prevents over 70% of Spina Bifida cases.
 - Folic acid is a **B-complex vitamin** that supports neural tube development in the embryo.

16. (c)

Blockchain technology

- Blockchain technology is a **decentralized, distributed ledger system** that records transactions across many computers in a way that ensures security and transparency.
- Blockchain networks rely on **consensus algorithms to validate transactions** and maintain network integrity.
 - These mechanisms ensure that **only legitimate transactions are added** to the chain.

17. (b)

Context

- A large population-based study has shown that high HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccination coverage can reduce precancerous cervical lesions even among unvaccinated women, highlighting a strong herd-protective effect.

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).
- **HPV vaccination:** It prevents infection from the most dangerous HPV types. Most effective when given before sexual debut (ages 9–14 years).

18. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Nuclear fusion is the process by which **two light atomic nuclei** combine to form a **single heavier one** while releasing **massive amounts of energy**.

Statement 2 is not correct: Fusion reactions take place in a **state of matter called plasma** — a hot, charged gas made of positive ions and free-moving electrons with **unique properties distinct from solids, liquids or gases**.

- Plasma is a hot, ionised gas with free electrons and ions, not neutral atoms at low temperatures.

Statement 3 is correct: The sun, along with all other stars, is powered by this reaction.

19. (b)

In News

- ISRO's first launch of the year, the PSLV-C62 mission failed to place its 16 satellites into the intended orbit, marking the second consecutive failure of the long-reliable PSLV rocket.

PSLV

- Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the third generation launch vehicle of India.
- It has also been called "the workhorse of ISRO" for consistently delivering various satellites into low earth orbits with a high success rate.
- It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages.
- It is a four-stage rocket in which each stage has its own engine and fuel.
 - These stages operate one after another during flight, propelling the mission forward and then separating once their role is completed.

Do you know?

- The **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** is India's largest fourth-generation launch vehicle, designed to **overcome the limitations of the PSLV by carrying heavier payloads to higher orbits**.
- GSLV is a **three-stage vehicle** with four liquid strap-ons, a solid rocket motor, and a cryogenic upper stage, capable of delivering up to 1,750 kg to low Earth orbit (up to 600 km) and smaller payloads to Geostationary Transfer Orbit.
- GSLVs use **cryogenic engines** with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen, providing greater thrust than earlier launch vehicles.

- Its advanced variant, **LVM-3 (formerly GSLV Mk III)**, employs solid, liquid, and cryogenic engines, carrying up to 8,000 kg to low Earth orbit (up to 2,000 km) and 4,000 kg to geosynchronous orbit (36,000 km), earning the nickname 'Bahubali' for its payload capacity.
 - LVM-3's first successful mission was in 2017 with GSAT-19, followed by Chandrayaan-2 in 2019 and Chandrayaan-3 in 2023.
 - ISRO is developing its heaviest rocket, the Lunar Module Launch Vehicle (LMLV), expected by 2035, to support future lunar missions, including India's first human Moon mission planned for 2040.

20. (b)**Context**

- NASA has announced that the **Artemis II mission** is in its final stages of preparation.

About Artemis II Mission

- Artemis II is a crewed lunar flyby mission under **NASA's Artemis programme**.
- It will send astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft around the Moon and back to Earth without landing on the lunar surface.

21. (a)

In News: Submarine cable networks are constantly expanding, evolving, and being reconfigured to meet the exponential growth in data demands.

Statement 1 is correct

- Modern submarine communication cables are **fiber-optic cables**. They transmit data using **pulses of light** (usually from lasers), allowing extremely high-speed and high-capacity data transfer across continents.

Statement 2 is not correct

- Connectivity usually continues through **backup cables**, though users may experience **slower speeds or higher latency**.
- Submarine cable systems are part of a **redundant global mesh**, allowing traffic to be rerouted if one link fails.

22. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Root Wilt Disease (RWD) is a "slow-wilt" or debilitating disease. Unlike "Bud Rot" which kills the palm quickly, RWD does not usually result in the immediate death of the tree. Instead, it leads to a permanent decline in vigor and a drastic reduction in yield (the number and size of nuts), making it economically devastating but technically non-lethal in the short term.

Statement 2 is correct: The disease is caused by Phytoplasma. These are specialized, wall-less bacteria that live in the phloem (the food-conducting tissue) of the plant. They cannot be cultured on artificial media and are transmitted from one palm to another by insect vectors like the lace wing bug (*Stephanitis typica*) and plant hoppers.

23. (d)

All three statements are correct: **Copper (Cu)** is a **reddish-orange, soft and highly malleable metal** with **atomic number 29**, known for its exceptional electrical and thermal conductivity.

- These properties make it vital for **electrical wiring, power transmission, plumbing and electronic applications**.
- Copper is also a key component of important alloys such as **brass (copper-zinc) and bronze (copper-tin)**, which enhance strength and corrosion resistance.
- **Chile, Peru and Australia** accounted for 19%, 12%, and 10% of the world's copper reserves in 2024.

- India has significant **copper ore resources** primarily in **Rajasthan's Khetri belt**, **Madhya Pradesh's Malanjkhand**, and **Jharkhand's Singhbhum belt**.

24. (d)

Context

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : Japan has restarted operations at the world's largest nuclear plant (Kashiwazaki-Kariwa) for the first time since the **2011 Fukushima disaster**.

- **Only one reactor** is scheduled to restart initially, while the remaining units will require separate approvals.
- **Location:** It spans the towns of Kashiwazaki and Kariwa in **Niigata Prefecture**, (Island of **Honshu**) Japan, on the coast of the **Sea of Japan**.
- **Capacity:** Approximately **8,200 MW**, making it the largest nuclear power plant globally.
- **Operator:** Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO).

25. (c)

In News : The first 'Made in India' C-295 aircraft from the Airbus–Tata Vadodara assembly line is set to roll out before September 2026, highlighting deepening India-Spain defence collaboration.

C295 It is a versatile, reliable tactical transport aircraft capable of troop/cargo transport, maritime patrol, surveillance, medical evacuation, and firefighting.

- It carries up to 8 tonnes or 70 troops, cruises at 260 knots, and operates from short, unpaved runways.
- It offers 13-hour endurance, excellent maneuverability, and fuel efficiency.
- The Airbus C295 (previously CASA C-295) is a medium-range twin-engine turboprop tactical transport aircraft that was designed and initially manufactured by the Spanish aerospace company CASA, which is now part of the European multinational Airbus Defence and Space division.

26. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: India has one of the largest reserves of thorium in the world.



Statement 2 is not correct: Together, **Kerala and Odisha account for over 70%** of India's thorium.

- India has been developing a **three-stage nuclear program**, with thorium-based reactors being a critical part of the third stage.

27. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: **V2V is a wireless technology** that will enable the **vehicles to communicate or talk with one another** to share real-time information like **speed, location, acceleration, braking, etc.**

- It is the **sub-category of Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X)** and comes under the umbrella of the **Intelligent Transport System**.

- **How will it work?**
 - The V2V system will be **installed in cars** so that the **nearby vehicles can exchange information** among vehicles wirelessly.
 - It will **alert the driver** about the black spots, obstacles, parked vehicles on roadsides, fog or any potential threats.
 - Usually, V2V systems have a **range of 300 metres** and can detect vehicles in this range.

Statement 3 is not correct:

- **Concerns:** Limited frequency bands may not support all vehicles, and miscommunication could cause accidents.
 - The system also stores vast amounts of sensitive vehicle and driver data, raising privacy and misuse concerns.
 - Additionally, cyberattacks could compromise control of the system, posing serious security risks.
 - **The technology will not have any impact on the fuel consumption.**

28. (c)

Ammonium nitrate is called a “dual-use substance” because it has valid civilian applications—like as a high-nitrogen fertilizer in agriculture (providing ~34% nitrogen to crops) and as an oxidizer in mining/quarrying explosives (e.g., ANFO when mixed with fuel oil) but its high oxygen content makes it prone to misuse in improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by terrorists, as seen in global incidents like the 2020 Beirut blast and 2011 Delhi bombings.

29. (d)

Statement 1 is not correct: According to the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research (NGSCR) issued by the ICMR and the National Medical Commission (NMC), stem cell therapy (SCT) for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is not an approved treatment. As of the landmark Supreme Court ruling on January 30, 2026, the court explicitly declared the use of SCT for autism as unethical and medical malpractice when offered outside of clinical trials. It is currently categorized as an “experimental” intervention, not a “standard of care.”

Statement 2 is not correct: Under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, stem cells are categorized as “New Drugs.” Therefore, any use of stem cells for a condition that is not a standard, approved treatment (like bone marrow transplants for blood cancers) must strictly follow the Clinical Trial route. Offering these therapies commercially without rigorous, multi-phase clinical trials and approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) is illegal. The Supreme Court recently criticized the “predatory marketing” of such unproven treatments.



ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

1. Arrange the following in chronological order related to Kaziranga:

1. Declared a World Heritage Site
2. Notified as a Wildlife Sanctuary
3. Notification as a conservancy reserve
4. Declared a National Park

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (a) 3–2–4–1
- (b) 3–4–2–1
- (c) 2–3–4–1
- (d) 3–2–1–4

2. With reference to Amazon's stingless bees, consider the following statements:

1. Stingless bees either lack stingers or have non-functional stingers.
2. They play a negligible role in the pollination of crops.

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

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Galaxy frog (*Melanobatrachus indicus*):

1. It is an endemic amphibian species found in the wet evergreen forests of the southern Western Ghats.
2. Unlike most frogs, it does not produce vocal sounds and is believed to use body markings for communication.
3. It is currently listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

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 Red Sanders and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in India, consider the following statements:

1. Red Sanders is an endemic tree species confined to the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and is classified as Endangered by the IUCN.
2. In India, Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) is implemented under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and benefits are channelled through statutory bodies such as the National Biodiversity Authority.

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 the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ), consider the following statements:

1. The Taj Trapezium Zone is an eco-sensitive area notified to protect the Taj Mahal from environmental pollution.
2. The TTZ covers an area of about 10,400 sq. km and includes monuments such as Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri.
3. The TTZ was established following directions of the Supreme Court in the MC Mehta case (1996) under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

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 Madhav Gadgil and his contributions to environmental governance in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Gadgil Commission proposed a three-tier zoning system for Ecologically Sensitive Areas, with the highest level restricting mining, dams and large projects.
2. Madhav Gadgil played a role in the declaration of the Nilgiris as India's first Biosphere Reserve.
3. He was associated with the establishment of the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

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. Consider the following statements

1. Olive ridley turtles are found throughout the world primarily in the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans.
2. The IUCN Red list of Threatened species classifies Olive ridleys turtle as Vulnerable.

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 implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, consider the following statements:

Statement-I: Under the Article 6.4 mechanism, a mandatory 5% levy on all issued carbon credits is allocated to the Adaptation Fund to support vulnerable developing nations.

Statement-II: India has identified 13 specific activities, including Green Hydrogen and Carbon Capture (CCUS), as eligible for international trade under Article 6 to ensure that domestic emission targets are not compromised.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (c) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.
- (d) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.

9. Consider the following statements

- 1. Pufferfish belong to the order Tetraodontiforme and are omnivorous and benthic in habitat.
- 2. Pufferfish are found in India in Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Mahanadi rivers.
- 3. The dwarf pufferfish is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

10. With reference to the Valley of Flowers in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand and forms a part of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.
- 2. The Valley of Flowers was declared a National Park in 1982 and later recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.
- 3. The valley derives its name from the large-scale blooming of alpine flowers mainly during the winter season.

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

11. With reference to Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) consider the following statements:

- 1. It is an endemic shrub species seen only in the natural high-altitude montane grasslands of southwest India.
- 2. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species classifies it as Least Concern 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

12. Consider the following statements regarding the conservation status of vultures in India:

- 1. Indian Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, White-rumped Vulture and Red-headed Vulture are all listed as Critically Endangered by IUCN.

2. Red-headed Vulture is more commonly found near villages and slaughterhouses compared to other vultures.

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. Which of the following statements is correct about *Indiaphonte bijoyi*?

- (a) It is a root wilt disease that has destroyed coconut-growing areas.
- (b) It is the world's heaviest snake which is found in rivers.
- (c) It is a butterfly belonging to the family Hesperidae .
- (d) It is a tiny crustacean related to the Copepoda class.

14. India's first-ever Open-sea Marine Fish Farming Project has been launched in which of the following States/Union Territories?

- (a) Puducherry
- (b) Andhra Pradesh
- (c) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- (d) West Bengal

15. With reference to the Dugong, consider the following statements:

1. It is a strictly herbivorous marine mammal that plays a keystone role in maintaining seagrass ecosystems.
2. Unlike manatees, dugongs are known to inhabit both freshwater river systems and shallow coastal waters.
3. In India, they are found in the Gulf of Mannar, the Gulf of Kutch, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

16. Consider the following statements regarding the Environmental Protection Fund:

1. It is constituted under the Public Account of India as per the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. The Central Government retains the majority share of the accumulated funds for the management of national-level environmental projects.
3. The accounts of the fund are subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) only one
- (b) only two
- (c) all three
- (d) None of the above

17. Which one of the following correctly describes Egyptian Broomrape?
- A foliar parasite with photosynthetic ability
 - A root-parasitic weed dependent entirely on host plants
 - A fungal pathogen affecting mustard leaves
 - A saprophytic weed feeding on decaying organic matter
18. Consider the following pairs (Penguin species – IUCN Red List status):
- Emperor Penguin Near Threatened
 - Fiordland Penguin Near Threatened
 - Royal Penguin Vulnerable
 - Gentoo Penguin Least Concern
- Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?
- 1, 2 and 4 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2, 3 and 4
19. Darwin's bark spider (*Caerostris darwini*), recently seen in the news, is known for:
- Producing venom lethal to humans
 - Spinning the toughest known biological silk
 - Being the largest spider species in the world
 - Having the longest lifespan among spiders
20. Which of the following constitute particulate matter, referring to tiny solid particles and liquid droplets present in the air, some visible and others microscopic?
- Nitrous oxides
 - Sulphur dioxide
 - Volatile organic compounds
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
21. With reference to Bactrian camels (*Camelus bactrianus*), consider the following statements:
- They are listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
 - In India, they are found only in the cold desert region of Ladakh.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2
 - Neither 1 nor 2
22. Consider the following statements with reference to the Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark (*Stegostoma tigrinum*):
- It is a medium-sized shark that occurs across the Indo-West Pacific Oceans.
 - The IUCN Red List of Threatened species classifies it as Least concern 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

23. Consider the following pairs of flamingo species and their IUCN Red List status:

1. Andean flamingo — Vulnerable
2. Lesser flamingo — Near Threatened
3. American flamingo — Least Concern

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

24. The Living Root Bridges, sometimes seen in news, are best described as:

- (a) Stone bridges constructed during the Ahom period
- (b) Wooden suspension bridges used during monsoons
- (c) Bio-engineered bridges grown from living tree roots
- (d) Bamboo bridges rebuilt annually by local communities

25. With reference to India's Green Steel Taxonomy, consider the following statements:

1. It classifies steel production based on the level of greenhouse gas emissions per tonne of crude steel produced.
2. It aims to promote the use of hydrogen-based and electric arc furnace routes over coal-based blast furnace routes.
3. It is legally binding on all steel producers and mandates penalties for non-compliance.

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

EXPLANATIONS

1. (a)

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate a **34.5-km elevated wildlife corridor** in Assam's Kaziranga.

About Kaziranga National Park

- It is the largest undivided representative area of **Brahmaputra valley floodplain grassland**, where various stages of **biotic succession** in the grassland ecosystem are explicit.
- The Park is the abode of more than **70% of One Horned Rhinoceros** in the world.
- It is **one of the oldest wildlife conservancy reserves of India**, first notified in 1905 and constituted as a Reserved Forest in 1908.
- It was declared a **Wildlife Sanctuary in 1950, and notified as Kaziranga National Park in 1974 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, of 1972.**

- It was declared a **World Heritage Site back in 1985**. It is recognized as an **Important Bird Area by BirdLife International**.

2. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Stingless bees (Meliponini tribe, common in Amazon) either lack functional stingers (highly reduced/atrophied) or have non-functional ones incapable of penetrating skin, relying instead on biting with strong mandibles for defense.

Statement 2 is not correct: Stingless bees play a significant role in pollinating tropical crops (e.g., coffee, cacao, mangoes, passionfruit) and wild plants, often more effectively than honeybees in humid Amazon ecosystems; they are managed for pollination services.

3. (d)

All three statements are correct: Galaxy frogs (Melanobatrachus indicus) are one of the rarest amphibians in the world that live exclusively under rotten logs in Kerala's Western Ghats.

- Galaxy frogs were first discovered in **1878**, not much is known about them since they are difficult to find.
- Galaxy frogs require **precise ecological conditions**, such as temperature and humidity, to survive.
- It is endemic to wet evergreen forests of **southern Western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu states of India**.
- Measuring between 2 cm and 3.5 cm, these frogs do not produce sounds.
 - Scientists believe they use their spots to communicate.
- They were designated as the **flagship species of Kerala's Mathikettan Shola National Park in 2021**.
- The species is currently listed as **vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List.

4. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Red Sanders (Pterocarpus santalinus) is an endemic tree species restricted to the Eastern Ghats forests of Andhra Pradesh districts like Chittoor, Kadapa, Nandyal, Nellore, and Prakasam. It is classified as Endangered by the IUCN Red List due to overexploitation, smuggling, slow growth, cattle grazing, and invasive species, reverting to this status from Near Threatened (2018).

Statement 2 is correct: India's Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) regime implements the CBD's fair sharing of benefits from biological resources under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Foreign entities and Indian companies with foreign participation must obtain prior NBA approval for access; benefits (royalties, fees, joint IP) are determined mutually and channelled via the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) to the National Biodiversity Fund for conservation, local communities, and development in source areas. State Biodiversity Boards and BMCs handle approvals below NBA threshold.

5. (d)

What is the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ)?

- The Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) is a protected eco-sensitive area of about 10,400 sq. km created to protect the Taj Mahal from environmental pollution and ecological degradation.
- It covers the broader Agra region and includes key heritage sites like the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri.
- The TTZ regime traces to the Supreme Court's directions in **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1996)**, which mandated strong pollution-control measures in the area (including regulation of industries and emissions, and cleaner fuel/technology measures).

- In **M.C. Mehta (2015)**, the Supreme Court also restricted tree felling within a 5 km aerial distance from the Taj Mahal, requiring prior permission (as per the Court's directions) before any such felling.

6. (d)

All three statements are correct: Noted ecologist **Madhav Gadgil**, known for his work on the conservation of Western Ghats, has passed away.

- In 2010, the Ministry of Environment and Forests appointed Madhav Gadgil to chair the **Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)**, known as the **Gadgil Commission**.
 - **His 2011 report recommended** classifying 64% of the 1,40,000 sq km Ghats, spanning six states, as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in three tiers: ESZ-1 (no mining, dams or large projects), ESZ-2 (restricted activities) and ESZ-3 (regulated development).
- He played a key role in declaring the **Nilgiris as India's first biosphere reserve in 1986**.
- He was closely associated with the **IISc, Bengaluru** and helped establish the **Centre for Ecological Sciences there in 1983**.

7. (c)

In News: Olive Ridley sea turtles nesting on Chennai's coast have been satellite-tagged and released as part of a two-year telemetry study (2025–27) to strengthen conservation efforts.

Statements 1 and 2 are correct : Olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles in the world.

- They get their name from the olive green colour of their heart-shaped shell, and inhabit warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans.
- These turtles are best known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
 - mass nesting takes place in Odisha, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- **Protection status :** IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

8. (b)

Statement-I is correct: Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement (the successor to the Clean Development Mechanism) includes a mandatory "Share of Proceeds" (SOP). This involves a 5% levy on the issuance of carbon credits (A6.4ERs), which is directly transferred to the Adaptation Fund to help developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Statement-II is correct: The Government of India has officially notified a list of 13 activities eligible for trading under Article 6. These include high-end technological solutions like Green Hydrogen, Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS), offshore wind, and tidal energy. By restricting trade to these specific sectors, India ensures that common "low-hanging fruit" (easy emission reductions) are kept for meeting its own Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

9. (c)

In News : Scientists have confirmed India's first case of pufferfish poisoning, drawing attention to a largely unrecognised riverine health risk.

Statements 1, 2 and 3 correct: **Pufferfish** belongs to the order Tetraodontiformes and is known locally by names such as toadfish, patkafish, balloonfish and fugu.

- Global catalogues list approximately 190–193 valid species.
- It is omnivorous and benthic in habitat and Freshwater pufferfish species reported from India are often endemic to specific geographical areas and serve as indicators of healthy river ecosystems.

- Indian waters currently support eight genera and 32 species of pufferfish.
- Their distribution is specific to certain regions and river systems, primarily the Western Ghats and major basins such as the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Mahanadi.
- The dwarf pufferfish is classified as **Vulnerable** on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List due to declining populations caused by wastewater pollution and collection for the aquarium trade.

10. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Valley of Flowers is situated in the **Chamoli district of Uttarakhand** inside the Valley of Flowers National Park, which is part of the **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve**.

- It was declared a **National Park in 1982**. In **2005**, it was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** because of its unmatched beauty and unique alpine ecosystem.
- **The valley was officially discovered by British mountaineer Frank Smythe in 1931** when he accidentally reached the location.

Statement 3 is not correct: It is called the Valley of Flowers because the entire valley comes alive with **thousands of blooming flowers during the monsoon**.

11. (a)

In News : G. Rajkumar, a former bank employee and environmentalist known as "Kurinji Rajkumar," passed away in Thiruvananthapuram.

Statement 1 is correct : Neelakurinji is a purplish flowering shrub, which blooms once in 12 years in the hills of the Western Ghats and Himalayan hills

- It is said that Nilgiris gets its name due to the magical blue hue imparted by these stunning flowers.
- It is an endemic shrub species seen only in the natural high-altitude montane grasslands of southwest India, with an altitude ranging from 1,340 to 2,600 m.
- It is predominately found in the valley of **Western Ghats and Nilgiri Hills of South India (Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu)**

Statement 2 is not correct : Neelakurinji has most recently been assessed for The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 2024 and listed as **Vulnerable** emphasising the need for its conservation."

12. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: India is home to nine species of vultures. Out of these, four species are currently categorized as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List due to a massive population decline (over 90%) since the 1990s. These are:

- White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*)
- Indian Vulture (*Gyps indicus*)
- Slender-billed Vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*)
- Red-headed Vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*)

Statement 2 is not correct: The White-rumped Vulture is historically the species most commonly found in high densities near human habitations, villages, and slaughterhouses, as it is a highly social scavenger.

In contrast, the Red-headed Vulture (also known as the King Vulture) is typically a more solitary bird. It is widely distributed but sparsely populated and is usually found in open country, often away from human settlements compared to the *Gyps* species.

13. (d)

In News: Scientists have discovered a tiny crustacean from the Kavaratti lagoon in the Lakshadweep islands and identified it as both a new genus and a new species.

- It is named *Indiaphonte bijoyi* and it belongs to the Laophontidae family of Copepoda and is so small it can only be studied under a microscope.
- The name **Indiaphonte** honours India, while *bijoyi* recognises marine scientist S. Bijoy Nandan.
- The genus *Indiaphonte* is considered new due to its unique set of physical features that do not match any known genus within the Laophontidae family.

14. (c)

The government launched **India's first-ever open-sea Marine Fish Farming project** from the Andaman Sea.

- **The project is a collaboration between** the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The pilot initiative focuses on **open-sea cultivation of marine finfish** and **seaweed in natural ocean conditions**, integrating scientific innovation with livelihood generation.
- The project aims to **boost seafood production** and reduce pressure on coastal fishing.

15. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) is the only strictly herbivorous marine mammal. It is a keystone species because its grazing maintains the health of seagrass meadows by encouraging the growth of high-nutrient seagrass species and facilitating seed dispersal.

Statement 2 is not correct: Unlike manatees, which are known to inhabit both freshwater and saltwater (e.g., rivers of the Amazon basin or Florida), dugongs are strictly marine mammals. They spend their entire lives in warm, shallow coastal waters and do not enter freshwater river systems.

Statement 3 is correct: In India, dugongs are found in highly fragmented populations in four primary locations:

The Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay (hosting the largest remaining population in India).

The Gulf of Kutch (a small, isolated resident population).

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Note: They are considered locally extinct in the Lakshadweep Islands.

16. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The fund is constituted under Section 16 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and is placed in the Public Account of India. The corpus of the fund is formed by accumulating fines collected under the Air Act (1981), Water Act (1974), and Environment (Protection) Act (1986).

Statement 2 is not correct: According to the allocation rules, 75% of the funds are remitted to States/UTs, while only 25% is retained by the Centre. Thus, the Centre does not retain the majority share.

Statement 3 is Correct: The fund is managed by a Project Management Unit and is explicitly audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

17. (b)

In News: India's mustard crop is facing a serious agronomic threat due to the spread of *Orobanche aegyptiaca*, a parasitic weed that significantly reduces crop productivity and farmers' income, especially in major mustard-growing regions. The weed attaches itself to the roots of the host plant using specialized structures. It extracts nutrients, carbon compounds & water.

About *Orobanche aegyptiaca* (Egyptian Broomrape)

- It is a root-parasitic weed belonging to the genus *Orobanche*.
- It lacks chlorophyll and is therefore non-photosynthetic.
- The weed is completely dependent on host plants for survival.

18. (a)

In News: A decade-long study in Antarctica has found that penguins are shifting their breeding seasons earlier, likely due to climate change.

Penguins

- Penguins are **flightless birds** that are highly adapted for the marine environment. They are excellent swimmers and can dive to great depths.
- They play a key role in Antarctic food chains, including bringing nutrients from deep water up to the surface, which is vital to algae being able to complete their photosynthesis.
- They live primarily in the Southern Hemisphere.
- **Major species and IUCN Red List status**
 - **Emperor Penguin**(*Aptenodytes forsteri*) is listed as Near Threatened
 - **Royal Penguin**(*Eudyptes schlegeli*) is listed as Least Concern
 - **Adelie Penguin**(*Pygoscelis adeliae*) listed as Least Concern
 - **Humboldt Penguin**(*Spheniscus humboldti*) is listed as Vulnerable
 - **Magellanic Penguin**(*Spheniscus magellanicus*) is listed as Least Concern
 - **Fiordland Penguin**(*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*) is listed as Near Threatened
 - **Gentoo Penguin**(*Pygoscelis papua*) is listed as Least Concern.

19. (b)

In News

- A recent study found that the **toughest biological silk** (dragline silk) produced by large adult females is **Darwin's bark spider**.

Darwin's bark spider (*Caerostris darwini*)

- It is found in the **forests of Madagascar**.
- It produces the toughest **biological silk known**, with strength surpassing steel with a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals.
- However, this **extreme strength is not universal**, as silk quality is closely linked to body size, with larger spiders evolving to produce tougher silk to support bigger webs and capture larger or faster prey.
- They have **relatively short lifespans**, typical of orb-weaving spiders, with females living longer than males.

20. (d)

In News : A CAQM-commissioned analysis found that Delhi's winter air pollution is mainly driven by secondary particulate matter (27%), followed by transport emissions (23%), biomass burning including waste and crop residue (20%), dust (15%), and industrial sources (9%).

Particulate matter (PM) refers to tiny solid particles and liquid droplets in the air, some visible and others microscopic.

- It mainly includes PM10 (particles 10 micrometers or smaller) and PM2.5 (fine particles 2.5 micrometers or smaller), which are about 30 times thinner than a human hair.
- **Sources :** PM comes either directly from sources like construction, roads, fires, and smokestacks, or forms in the atmosphere through chemical reactions involving pollutants from vehicles, industries, and power plants.
- **Types :** **Primary pollutants** come directly from sources like road dust, construction, open burning, vehicle exhaust, and industries.
 - ♦ **Nitrous oxides, sulphur dioxide and volatile organic compounds, constitute primary particulate matter.**

- **Secondary particulate matter** forms when released gases, called precursor pollutants, react in the air—affected by humidity, temperature, and sunlight—creating fine particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs.

21. (b)

Context

- Two majestic Bactrian camels named **'Galwan' and 'Nubra'**, were showcased at the Republic Day Parade on Kartavya Path.
 - **'Galwan' and 'Nubra'** are named after places in the **cold desert of Ladakh**, the only place in India where this species is found.

Bactrian camels (Camelus bactrianus)

- The name **"Bactrian"** comes from a region (former kingdom conquered by Alexander the Great) located between Afghanistan, Iran, and Kazakhstan.
- It is a **double-humped camel**, also called the **Asian or Mongolian camel** and is listed as **Critically Endangered** on the **IUCN Red List**.
- It is mainly found in Northern Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, India, with the largest domestic population in China.
- Bactrian camels are considered **omnivorous**; however, they are **primarily herbivorous, feeding on a wide selection of vegetation**, even those that other animals might refuse, such as thorny, tough, or dry plants.
- Bactrian camels, known as the 'Ships of the Silk Road', were crucial for crossing the harsh trade routes of Central Asia.

22. (a)

In News: Thailand has begun its first "rewilding" project for the Indo-Pacific leopard shark off Maiton Island.

Statement 1 is correct : **The Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark (Stegostoma tigrinum)** is a medium-sized shark that occurs across the Indo-West Pacific Oceans.

- It is found on continental and insular shelves from inshore to a depth of 90 m and is associated with coral and rocky reefs, and inshore mudflats, mangroves and seagrass beds.
- It inhabits tropical and subtropical waters up to 142 m deep, favoring coral reefs, rocky areas, sandy plateaus, mangroves, and seagrass beds.

Statement 2 is not correct : **Indo-Pacific Leopard Shark** occurs across the Indian and Western Central Pacific Oceans from South Africa to Samoa and north to Japan

- **IUCN Red List status :** It is listed as Endangered species.

23. (c)

Context: For the first time, a flock of nearly 70 Greater Flamingos has been recorded at Hope Island in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, located in Kakinada Bay, Andhra Pradesh.

Greater Flamingos (Phoenicopterus roseus)

- **Description:** The greater flamingo is the most widespread and largest species of the flamingo family, averaging 110–150 cm tall and weighing 2–4 kg.
- **Distribution:** They are found in Northern (coastal) and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent (south of the Himalayas), the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe.
 - **Greater flamingos** usually migrate to India from Israel, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- **Diet and lifespan:** Average lifespan is **30–40 years**, and they feed on **small fish** and other aquatic organisms.

- **Threats:** The primary threats to flamingo populations are bacteria, toxins, and pollution in water supplies, which is usually run-off from manufacturing companies, and encroachment on their habitat.
- **State Bird:** The greater flamingo is the **State bird** of Gujarat.
- **Types and IUCN status:** The six flamingo species and their IUCN Red List status are
 - The greater flamingo - **Least Concern**
 - Chilean flamingo - **Near Threatened**
 - American flamingo - **Least Concern**
 - Lesser flamingo - **Near Threatened**
 - Andean flamingo - **Vulnerable**
 - James's flamingo - **Near Threatened.**

24. (c)

Living Root Bridges are unique pedestrian bridges found in Meghalaya, created by the indigenous Khasi and Jaintia tribes. Instead of constructing bridges using stone, wood, or bamboo, the communities grow these bridges by guiding the aerial roots of the Indian Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*) across streams and rivers.

Over many years, the roots are trained using bamboo or hollowed areca palm trunks and then intertwined (anastomosis) to form a strong, load-bearing structure. As the tree continues to grow, the bridge naturally strengthens with time, making it highly durable in the region's heavy monsoon rainfall, where wooden bridges would rot easily.

25. (a)

In News: India pledged and committed to submitting a revised and more ambitious **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) at COP30 in Belém** with a clear plan for **economy-wide decarbonisation**, especially in the **steel sector**.

Statement 1 is correct: India's Green Steel Taxonomy provides a classification framework based on **emissions intensity (CO₂ per tonne of steel)** to define what qualifies as green or low-carbon steel.

Statement 2 is correct: The taxonomy encourages a shift from **coal-based blast furnace–basic oxygen furnace (BF-BOF)** routes towards **Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF)** and **hydrogen-based Direct Reduced Iron (DRI)** pathways.

Statement 3 is not correct: The taxonomy is **not legally binding**; it is a **voluntary classification and reporting framework**, intended to guide industry transition and enable green finance, not impose penalties.



MISCELLANEOUS

1. With reference to the Financial Stability Report (FSR), consider the following statements:
 1. The FSR is a biannual publication by the Ministry of Finance.
 2. It assesses the stability of India's financial system, including banks, mutual funds, insurance companies, and financial markets.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. The "Brasilia Declaration", often seen in the news, is related to which of the following?
 - (a) Commitment of countries to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries.
 - (b) Framework for cooperation among BRICS nations on urban development.
 - (c) Agreement on climate finance for developing countries.
 - (d) Declaration on global food and nutrition security.
3. With reference to the Sangita Kalanidhi Award, consider the following statements:
 1. It was instituted in 1942 by the Madras Music Academy.
 2. It is regarded as the highest recognition for excellence in Hindustani music.
 3. Since 2005, Sangita Kalanidhi awardees have also received the M. S. Subbulakshmi Award instituted by The Hindu.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. "Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn", recently in the news, is related to which of the following?
 - (a) Celebration of India's first sunrise at Dong village in Arunachal Pradesh
 - (b) A harvest festival of the Naga tribes in Nagaland
 - (c) A river conservation programme in Assam along the Brahmaputra basin
 - (d) A classical dance form of Odisha
5. Consider the following statements about World Braille Day:
 1. It is observed annually on January 4 to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille.
 2. It has been celebrated in India since 2011 to raise awareness about Braille and the rights of visually impaired persons.

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

6. Which organisation recently released *The Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2025: Enhancing Disaster Risk Financing*?

- (a) World Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- (c) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- (d) Asian Development Bank (ADB)

7. With reference to BioHappiness, consider the following statements:

1. It is a term coined by statistical pioneer Prasanta Chandra (PC) Mahalanobis.
2. It is well-being achieved by conserving biodiversity to improve health and livelihoods.

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 Bio-bitumen, consider the following statements:

1. Bio-bitumen is produced from organic sources such as agricultural waste, lignin and bio-oil, and helps reduce dependence on crude oil.
2. Bio-bitumen is currently used only as a complete replacement for petroleum bitumen in road construction.

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 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), consider the following statements:

1. It is celebrated annually on 9th January to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's return to India from South Africa in 1915.
2. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention was first organised in 2003 and is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs.
3. Since 2015, the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention has been organised every year with theme-based conferences replacing it entirely.

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. The Shekatkar Committee is associated with reforms in which of the following sectors?
- Defence
 - Education
 - Railways
 - Banking
11. The writings *Raja Yoga*, *Jnana Yoga*, and *Karma Yoga* are primarily associated with which of the following personalities?
- Sri Aurobindo
 - Dayanand Saraswati
 - Ramakrishna Paramhansa
 - Swami Vivekananda
12. The “Romeo–Juliet clause”, recently discussed in the context of the POCSO Act, refers to:
- A provision that lowers the age of consent for adolescents
 - A legal exception that decriminalises consensual relationships between minors close in age
 - A clause that allows parental consent to override statutory rape laws
 - A mechanism to compound offences under child protection laws
13. The Henley Passport Index primarily ranks countries based on:
- Number of countries with which diplomatic relations exist
 - Ease of obtaining citizenship
 - Number of destinations accessible without a prior visa
 - Strength of bilateral trade agreements
14. Consider the following reports:
- World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO)
 - Global Wage Report
 - Global Employment Trends for Youth
 - Social Protection Reports
 - World Social Protection Report
- How many of the above are published by the International Labour Organization (ILO)?
- Only two
 - Only three
 - Only four
 - All five
15. With reference to the Export Preparedness Index (EPI), consider the following statements:
- It is a comprehensive assessment of export readiness across India’s States and Union Territories.
 - It provides an evidence-based framework to evaluate the strength, resilience, and inclusiveness of sub-national export ecosystems.
 - In 2024, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra were the leading states among the large states.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3

16. The *Global Risks Report 2026*, recently seen in the news, was released by which of the following organizations?
- World Bank
 - International Monetary Fund
 - World Economic Forum
 - United Nations Development Programme
17. With reference to mycorrhizal networks, recently in the news in the context of the Tyler Prize, consider the following statements:
- The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is often referred to as the “Nobel Prize for the Environment.”
 - Mycorrhizal networks consist of underground fungal threads called hyphae that facilitate a symbiotic relationship between fungi and plant roots.
 - In this association, the fungi provide essential carbohydrates to the plants, while the plants offer enhanced access to water and phosphorus to the fungi.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
18. Who among the following was the first person to be awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously?
- Mahatma Gandhi
 - Lal Bahadur Shastri
 - Jawaharlal Nehru
 - Indira Gandhi
19. Vadi manjuviraṭṭu, Vēli viraṭṭu, and Vaṭam manjuviraṭṭu are:
- Cultural dances of Kerala
 - Archaeological sites of Tamil Nadu
 - Administrative titles during medieval India
 - Variants of the Jallikattu sport
20. He is considered one of the greatest poet-philosophers of the Sangam period. He demonstrated that one could lead a divine life of purity and sanctity while remaining a householder. He authored “Tirukkural” which is a collection of 1,330 couplets dealing with morality, governance, economics, and love.
- Who among the following personalities described above?
- Vallabhacharya
 - Thiruvalluvar
 - Adi Shankaracharya
 - Madhvacharya
21. Consider the following statements regarding the Sukhatme National Award in Statistics:
- It is instituted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
 - It is awarded annually for outstanding research contributions in official statistics.
 - It is given to Indian statisticians aged 45 years and above for their lifetime contributions to the field of statistics.

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

22. The Responsible Nations Index differs from traditional global indices mainly because it:

- (a) Focuses primarily on GDP growth and military power
- (b) Prioritises ethical governance and sustainability over economic size
- (c) Evaluates only developed countries
- (d) Uses national self-reported data exclusively

23. Devarakadu, Kavu and Oran, recently seen in the news, are:

- (a) Folk dances associated with forest communities
- (b) Names of sacred groves in different parts of India
- (c) Traditional irrigation structures
- (d) Tribal administrative units

24. The 'Justice Mission-2025', sometimes appeared in the news, primarily related to:

- (a) India's Judiciary Reform
- (b) Climate Change Initiative
- (c) Economic Reform Under G20
- (d) Military Drill Around Taiwan

25. With reference to the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, consider the following statements:

1. It was instituted in 1986 by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
2. It is awarded for contributions towards international peace, disarmament and socio-economic development.
3. Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile, has been awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2025.

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. The report titled as '*Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era*' was published by:

- (a) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- (b) World Bank
- (c) United Nations University
- (d) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

27. Which of the following states is set to become the first in India to declare a 'State Bacterium'?

- (a) Tamil Nadu
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Maharashtra
- (d) Kerala

- 28.** With reference to the Franz Edelman Award, consider the following statements:
1. It is regarded as the world's most prestigious award in the field of Operations Research and advanced analytics.
 2. It is often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Operations Research and Analytics."
 3. The award is given for theoretical contributions without emphasis on real-world applications.
- 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
- 29.** The World Economic Forum (WEF) will establish five new Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including one in India. The Indian centre will be located in:
- (a) Gujarat
 - (b) Maharashtra
 - (c) Telangana
 - (d) Andhra Pradesh
- 30.** The Narayan Ramachandran Committee, recently in the news, was constituted to:
- (a) Review fiscal deficit targets under the FRBM Act
 - (b) Reform insurance regulations in India
 - (c) Regulate corporate bond markets in India
 - (d) Review investment guidelines under the National Pension System (NPS)
- 31.** Consider the following statements:
1. Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of India.
 2. Padma Shri is awarded for distinguished service in any field.
 3. The number of Padma awards is capped at 120 per year.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) One only
 - (b) Two only
 - (c) All three
 - (d) None of the above
- 32.** With reference to Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards, consider the following statements:
1. It was instituted in 1961 as a civilian offshoot of the Ashoka Chakra series to recognise brave, humane acts by ordinary people.
 2. It is open to all people, regardless of gender or profession, and can also be awarded posthumously.
- 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

- 33.** The Shikshapatri is best described as which one of the following?
- (a) A theological commentary on Vedantic philosophy
 - (b) A normative text prescribing codes of conduct for individual and social life
 - (c) A historical chronicle of the Swaminarayan movement
 - (d) A legal document governing religious institutions
- 34.** With reference to International Data Privacy Day, consider the following statements:
1. It was designated by the United Nations in 2006 to mark the signing of Convention 108.
 2. Convention 108 is the world's first non-binding international agreement on data protection.
- 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
- 35.** The Gita Mittal Committee was constituted primarily to address:
- (a) Electoral violence in conflict-prone regions
 - (b) Humanitarian concerns arising from ethnic clashes in Manipur
 - (c) Implementation of AFSPA reforms
 - (d) Displacement and rehabilitation due to natural disasters
- 36.** The "Diamond Triangle", recently in the news for its inclusion in India's UNESCO Tentative List, refers to:
- (a) Three prehistoric cave sites in central India
 - (b) A cluster of Buddhist heritage sites in Odisha
 - (c) A triangular maritime trade route of ancient India
 - (d) Three Vajrayana monasteries in the Himalayas
- 37.** Consider the following statements with reference to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
1. It tests 30 -year-olds across countries in reading, maths and science, to assess the school systems.
 2. It is conducted every three years by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- 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
- 38.** The Paathara (Khoni) tradition is primarily associated with which of the following regions?
- (a) Rayalaseema plateau
 - (b) Godavari delta
 - (c) Uddanam region of Srikakulam district
 - (d) Coromandel coastal plain

39. The Power Gap Index is derived from which of the following indices?
- Global Power Index
 - Asia Power Index
 - Global Strategic Influence Index
 - World Governance Index
40. The religious tradition followed by the Kalbelia community, under which burial (not cremation) of the dead is practised, is:
- Shaiva Siddhanta
 - Nath tradition
 - Bhakti tradition
 - Lingayat tradition
41. With reference to 'Kavach', consider the following statements:
- It is India's indigenous automatic train protection system.
 - It prevents collisions by controlling overspeeding and signal passing at danger.
 - SIL-4 compliance indicates the lowest level of safety certification.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 1 and 3 only
 - 1, 2 and 3
42. With reference to the Coking Coal in India, consider the following statements:
- Coking coal, also known as metallurgical coal or "met coal," is a type of coal that is used in the steelmaking process.
 - Jharkhand accounts for the largest share of India's estimated coking coal resources.
 - More than 90% of the coking coal requirement of India's steel sector is currently met through domestic production.
- 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. (b)

Context: The Reserve Bank of India's December 2025 Financial Stability Report (FSR) assesses systemic risks to India's financial sector and evaluates the resilience of banks amid domestic strength and global uncertainties.

Financial Stability Report (FSR)

- The Financial Stability Report (FSR) is a **biannual publication** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that assesses the stability and resilience of the Indian financial system.
- It offers insights into the health of various components of the financial sector, including **banking, non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs), mutual funds, insurance companies, and financial markets**.

2. (a)

The Brasilia Declaration was adopted at the **2nd Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety (2015) held in Brasilia, Brazil.**

- It is aligned with SDG 3.6 (halving global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents).
- In the Brasilia Declaration, the participating countries set targets under the Sustainable Development Goals and pledged to reduce road crash fatalities by 50% in the next 5 years.
- This declaration is frequently referenced in the context of public health, transport safety, and sustainable development goals.

3. (c)

Statement 1 is correct: The Sangita Kalanidhi award was instituted in **1942** by the **Madras Music Academy.**

Statement 2 is not correct: The award is considered the highest recognition for excellence in Carnatic music and is often regarded as the **“Nobel Prize” of Carnatic music.**

Statement 3 is correct: Since 2005, the Sangita Kalanidhi awardees have also received the MS Subbulakshmi Award instituted by The Hindu.

4. (a)

Context: Dong, India’s easternmost village in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh, celebrated India’s first sunrise of 2026 with **“Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn”.**

About ‘Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn’

- The sunrise was welcomed with a cultural performance titled “Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn.”
- The performance drew from the cultural traditions of the **indigenous Meyor and Mishmi communities**, with traditional chants, songs and indigenous rhythms using **traditional musical instruments.**

5. (a)

Context

- World Braille Day is observed annually on **January 4**, marking the birth anniversary of **Louis Braille.**

About

- The day, celebrated since **2019**, is observed to **raise awareness** of the importance of Braille as a **means of communication** in the full realization of the human rights of blind and partially sighted people.
- Braille is essential in the context of freedom of expression and opinion, as well as social inclusion, as reflected in **article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**
- According to the 2011 Census, there are 50,32,463 persons with visual impairment in India.

6. (c)

Context

- The Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India: Enhancing Disaster Risk Financing report 2025 was released recently.

About

- It is a regular publication on Asia’s regional economic growth and development processes.
- **Releasing Body:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- It focuses on the economic conditions of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries.**

- This edition of the Outlook comprises a thematic chapter focusing on enhancing disaster risk financing in Emerging Asia.

7. (b)

The M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation has begun work on a project on Biohappiness in **Keyi Panyor district of Arunachal Pradesh**.

Statement 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct : BioHappiness is a term coined by late agricultural scientist **Dr. M.S. Swaminathan**.

- It is a state of well-being and fulfillment achieved by conserving and using biodiversity to improve human health, nutrition, and livelihoods, fostering harmony between people and nature, as explained in his book *In Search of Biohappiness: Biodiversity and Food, Health and Livelihood Security*.

8. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Bio-bitumen derives from renewable organic sources like agricultural waste, lignin from wood, and bio-oil produced via pyrolysis of biomass. This production method reduces reliance on imported crude oil, as India aims to use it for cost savings and energy security in infrastructure projects.

Statement 2 is not correct: Bio-bitumen serves not only as a full replacement but also in blends (e.g., 15% with conventional bitumen) for road construction, enhancing properties like stability while cutting emissions. Sources highlight ongoing development for partial substitution rather than exclusive full replacement.

9. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated **once in two years** on **9th** January.

- The 18th edition took place in 2025 and the 19th is expected in 2027.
- January 9th **commemorates the day in 1915** when **Mahatma Gandhi**, the greatest Pravasi, **returned to India from South Africa** to lead the country's freedom struggle.
- The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention was first established in **2003**, it is the flagship event of the **Ministry of External Affairs**.

Statement 3 is not correct: Since 2015, it has evolved into a **biennale event**, with theme-based conferences held in the intervening years.

10. (a)

Context

- The Chief of the Army Staff during his address to the UAE National Defence College (NDC) highlighted the changing character of **modern warfare**, marked by the convergence of conventional and non-conventional threats.

India's Institutional and Strategic Response

- **Military Modernisation and Indigenisation:** India's defence capital outlay for 2025–26 was around **₹1.8 lakh crore**, with over **75%** earmarked for domestic procurement.
 - Indigenous platforms such as **Tejas, Akash, Pinaka**, and armed UAVs enhance self-reliance and operational flexibility.
- **Structural Reforms:** The creation of the **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** following the **Shekatkar Committee** recommendations aims to enhance joint planning and integration.
 - **Proposed Integrated Theatre Commands** are designed to enable unified multi-domain operations.

- Establishment of the **Defence Cyber Agency (DCA)** and **Defence Space Agency (DSA)** institutionalises emerging warfighting domains.
 - India's **Defence Space Doctrine (2023)** outlines the role of space in national security.
- **India's Mission Shakti (2019)** demonstrated anti-satellite capability, reflecting growing space militarisation.

11. (d)

In News

- Recently, National Youth Day was observed to mark the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda

- He was born Narendra Nath Datta in Kolkata on January 12, 1863, was a key figure in introducing Hindu philosophies of Yoga and Vedanta to the West.
- He was a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa and he devoted himself to spiritual and social reform in India, traveling across the country to educate people on economic improvement and spiritual knowledge.
- He gained **global recognition** with his **1893** address at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, advocating universal tolerance, acceptance of all religions, and pride in Indian traditions.
- After returning to India, he founded the **Ramakrishna Mission in 1897** and **Belur Math in 1899**, promoting the integration of spirituality with material progress.
- Through his teachings, lectures, and writings—including **Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga**—he spread the practice of yoga and the principles of 'neo-Vedanta', leaving a lasting legacy as a messenger of Indian wisdom and a visionary for social and spiritual upliftment.
- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** had called him the "maker of modern India."

12. (b)

In News/Context

- The Supreme Court of India has flagged the **misuse of the POCSO Act** in cases of **consensual adolescent relationships** and urged the Union Government to examine the feasibility of introducing a "**Romeo-Juliet clause**".

What is a Romeo-Juliet Clause?

- A legal exception, developed in the US and parts of Europe, named after Shakespeare's teenage lovers.
- It does not lower the age of consent, but shields adolescents close in age from criminal liability for consensual intimacy.
- It seeks to retain a robust child protection framework while recognising the realities of adolescence.

13. (c)

The Henley Passport Index ranks 199 passports based on access to 227 destinations using data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA)'s Timatic database. It assigns a score of 1 for each destination allowing visa-free entry, visa-on-arrival (VOA), electronic travel authorization (ETA), or visitor's permit, and 0 for prior visas, e-Visas requiring pre-approval, or government approval for VOA.

14. (d)

In News: Recently, the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** released its latest **World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) Report** highlighting persistent inequalities in the global labor market.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- **Founded:** 1919; became the **first specialized UN agency in 1946.**
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Mandate:** Promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection, and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.
- **Tripartite Structure:** Brings together governments, employers, and workers from member states.

Key Flagship Reports Published by the ILO

- World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO)
- Global Wage Report
- Global Employment Trends for Youth
- Social Protection Reports
- World Social Protection Report

15. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: NITI Aayog released the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024.**

- It is a **comprehensive assessment of export readiness** across India's states and union territories.
- **The first edition** of the EPI was published in **2020** and this is the **4th edition.**
- **EPI provides an evidence-based framework** to evaluate the strength, resilience, and inclusiveness of sub-national export ecosystems.

Statement 3 is not correct: Top Performers: In 2024, **Maharashtra**, along with Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, are leading performers among large states.

- **Uttarakhand**, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Goa are listed as leading performers in the **category of small states, northeastern states and union territories.**

16. (c)**In News**

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the **21st edition of the Global Risks Report (2026)**, warning that **gloeonomic confrontations** pose the biggest risk to major powers.

Global Risks for 2026

- **Geo-economic Confrontation:** Rated as the top risk for 2026. This includes the "weaponization" of trade, finance, and technology through sanctions and tariffs (such as the US tariffs imposed by the US, banning critical minerals by China etc).
- **State-Based Armed Conflict:** This is the second highest risk, fueled by ongoing wars like the conflict in Ukraine and recent volatility in regions like Venezuela and the Middle East.
- **Extreme Weather:** While environmental risks remain the top priority for the next decade, they have slipped to third place (8%) in the immediate two-year outlook due to the urgency of economic and military conflicts.
- **Societal Risks:** Polarization, misinformation, and AI-generated deepfakes are cited as major threats to social stability, especially during election cycles.

17. (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is a prestigious international award recognized as the "Nobel for the environment" for its contribution to environmental science and health.

Statement 2 is correct: Mycorrhizal networks (often called the “Wood Wide Web”) are formed by fungal hyphae that connect the roots of different plants, allowing for the exchange of nutrients and signaling molecules.

Statement 3 is not correct: In the symbiotic relationship, plants provide carbohydrates (produced via photosynthesis) to the fungi. In return, the fungi provide the plants with enhanced access to water and essential nutrients (especially phosphorus and nitrogen) that the fungi are more efficient at extracting from the soil.

18. (b)

In News

- The Vice President paid floral tribute to Lal Bahadur Shastri on his death anniversary (11 January).

About Lal Bahadur Shastri

- He was born on October 2, 1904 at Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Freedom Struggle** : He became more and more interested in the country’s struggle for freedom from foreign yoke.
 - He was greatly impressed by Mahatma Gandhi’s denunciation of Indian Princes for their support of British rule in India.
 - He joined the Kashi VidyaPeeth in Varanasi, one of the many national institutions set up in defiance of British rule.
 - He participated in the freedom movement since 1930
- He coined the famous slogan ‘Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan’
- He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna**, India’s highest civilian award, posthumously in 1966, becoming its **first posthumous recipient**.

19. (d)

Context: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin attended the jallikattu in Alanganallur.

What is Jallikattu?

- Jallikattu, also known as **Eruthazhuvuthal**, is a bull-taming sport traditionally played in Tamil Nadu as part of the Pongal harvest festival.
- The history of this bullfight dates back to **400-100 BCE** when it was played by the **Ayars**, an ethnic group in India.
- The name is coined from two words, Jalli (silver and gold coins) and Kattu (tied). In this festival, a bull is let loose among a crowd of people, and whoever tames it will get the coins tied to its horn.
 - The people who participate in the sport try to hold on to the animal’s hump to stop it. Sometimes, they run along with the bull.
- **Pulikulam or Kangayam** is the breed of bulls used for the sport. This festival has been part of cultural tourism in the state.
 - **Vadi manjuviraṭṭu, Vēli viraṭṭu, and Vaṭam manjuviraṭṭu** are the variants of this sport.

20. (b)

In news: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Thiruvalluvar, acknowledging the enduring influence of his timeless works and ideals across generations.

About

- Thiruvalluvar flourished around two thousand years ago in Mylapore, present-day Chennai. He was a born Siddha and poet, known simply as Valluvar, or more commonly as Thiruvalluvar,

meaning 'the devotee of the Valluva caste'. Thiruvalluvar demonstrated that one could lead a divine life of purity and sanctity while remaining a householder.

- He demonstrated that renunciation of family life was not necessary for achieving spiritual excellence.
- Thiruvalluvar is considered one of the greatest poet-philosophers of the Sangam period.
- His work is held in such high esteem that it has been referred to by several names, including Tirukkural, Uttaravedam, Tamil Veda, Teyvanul (the divine book), and Potumarai (the common Veda).
 - His magnum opus, the **Tirukkural**, is a collection of 1,330 couplets dealing with morality, governance, economics, and love.

21. (c)

About Sukhatme National Award in Statistics

- Instituted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in the year 2000.
- Named after P. C. Mahalanobis' contemporary and eminent statistician Prof. P. V. Sukhatme, known for contributions to agricultural and official statistics.
- It is given to Indian citizens of age 45 and above only. It is awarded in **alternate years**.
- The award aims to recognize exceptional and outstanding lifetime contributions in the field of Statistics, especially for improving the system of official statistics in India.
- The award will be conferred on 29 June 2026, coinciding with Statistics Day.

22. (b)

Option b is correct: The Responsible Nations Index (RNI) is a global benchmarking framework that shifts the focus from mere economic power to ethical governance, sustainability, and global responsibility in assessing national performance.

- The index evaluates countries across four core dimensions ethical governance, social well-being, environmental stewardship & global responsibility
- It is developed by World Intellectual Foundation (WIF) in collaboration with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) & Indian Institute of Management Mumbai.
- Singapore, Switzerland & Denmark topped the list & India ranks 16th globally.

23. (b)

Context

- A new study found that the **Sacred groves in the northern Western Ghats** show the highest levels of **human disturbance**.

What are Sacred Groves?

- Sacred groves are patches of trees or forest areas that are **traditionally protected by local communities** for their religious, cultural, and ecological significance.
- **They are known by diverse names:** Devarakadu in Karnataka, Kavu in Kerala, Sarna in Madhya Pradesh, Oran in Rajasthan, Devrai in Maharashtra, Umanglai in Manipur, Law Kyntang/Law Lyngdoh in Meghalaya, Devan/Deobhumi in Uttarakhand etc.
- **Sacred groves preserve** biodiversity, regulate climate, conserve water, support livelihoods, protect cultural heritage, and promote environmental awareness.

24. (d)

In News: Recently, China's **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** conducted a large-scale military exercise around Taiwan named '**Justice Mission-2025**'.

- The 'Justice Mission-2025' was a large-scale **military exercise conducted by China's PLA** around Taiwan.
- It was the **second major drill of the year**, launched to demonstrate China's **resolve to defend its sovereignty and national unity** while sending a **warning to Taiwanese separatist forces and foreign interference**, particularly the USA.
- **Objectives:**
 - Safeguard China's sovereignty and national unity;
 - Deter Taiwan's independence moves;
 - Counter foreign interference (especially from the U.S. and Japan)
- It is linked to the **Trump administration's \$11 billion arms deal with Taiwan**, involving **self-propelled howitzers, advanced rocket launchers, and missile systems**, pending **US Congress approval**.

25. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: It is an **annual award** established by the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust in India**.

- The prize is named in honor of the **late Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi**, and it was instituted in **1986**.
- **Categories:** The award is presented in three categories:
 - **Peace:** Recognizes efforts to promote and maintain international peace and security.
 - **Disarmament:** Acknowledges contributions to the reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction.
 - **Development:** Honors work in promoting economic and social development.
- **Statement 3 is not correct:** **Mozambican rights activist and humanitarian Graca Machel** has been selected for the **Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2025**, announced by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
 - Ms. Machel was chosen for her "path-breaking work" in the fields of education, health and nutrition, economic empowerment and humanitarian action.
 - **Michelle Bachelet, the former President of Chile** was awarded the **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2024**.
- The award ceremony typically takes place on **November 19th**, the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi.

26. (c)

In News: Recently, the '**Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era**' was published by the **United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)** ahead of the **UN Water Conference (2026)**.

27. (d)

Context

- Kerala is set to become the **first state in India** to declare a **state bacterium** to highlight the importance of beneficial microbes
 - A bacterium is a microscopic, single-celled organism that belongs to the group prokaryotes.

India's First 'State Bacterium'

- The initiative focuses on the role of microbes in **agriculture, health, and environmental sustainability**, and seeks to move public perception beyond viewing microbes only as **disease-causing agents**.

- The state bacterium has been selected by an **expert committee** under the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment.
- Importantly, the objective is not to conserve just one bacterium, but to represent and promote the **entire spectrum of beneficial microbes**.

28. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 is correct: The Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) is among the six finalists for the **prestigious 2026 Franz Edelman Award for its Anna Chakra initiative**.

- It is the world's **most prestigious award in the field of Operations Research (OR) and advanced analytics**.
- It is widely known as the **"Nobel Prize of Operations Research and Analytics."**
- **Instituted by: INFORMS** (Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences) a global professional body for analytics and OR.
- It is named after **Franz Edelman**, a pioneer in management science and operations research.

Statement 3 is not correct: The Franz Edelman Award specifically recognises real-world, high-impact applications of operations research, advanced analytics, mathematical modelling and data-driven decision-making.

29. (d)

Context

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) will establish five new Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including one in India's **Andhra Pradesh**.

Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Network

- The Fourth Industrial Revolution Network is a global platform for **multi-stakeholder collaboration** involving governments, industry, academia and civil society.
- It was launched by the **World Economic Forum in 2017** to ensure that emerging and exponential technologies deliver societal benefits while minimising risks.
- The focus areas of these centres would include **AI innovation, the energy transition, cyber resilience, and frontier technologies**.
- Existing centres span **Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Americas**, reflecting region-specific priorities within a global governance framework.

Newly Announced Centres

- **European Centre for AI Excellence, Paris (France):** Aims to enhance Europe's global competitiveness through sovereign and trustworthy AI.
- **Centre for AI-Driven Innovation, London (United Kingdom):** Explores AI convergence with frontier technologies such as quantum and biotechnology.
- **Centre for Frontier Technologies, Abu Dhabi (UAE):** Concentrates on quantum technologies, robotics and space, with strong public-private collaboration.
- **Centre for Intelligent Future, Abu Dhabi (UAE):** Focuses on linking frontier AI research with economic and societal challenges.
- **Centre for Energy and Cyber Resilience, Andhra Pradesh (India):** Promotes innovation in energy transition and strengthens cyber resilience across industries.

30. (d)

In News

- The PFRDA has constituted the Committee for **Strategic Asset Allocation and Risk Governance (SAARG)** chaired by **Narayan Ramachandran** to review the National Pension System (NPS) investment guidelines.

About

- The committee will review and modernise NPS investment guidelines for both Government and Non-Government sectors so that returns, risk and long-term security for subscribers are better balanced.
- It aims to align NPS with global pension standards, changes in Indian financial markets, and the evolving needs of long-horizon investors like government employees and private sector subscribers.

31. (c)

Statement 1 correct: Bharat Ratna is India's highest civilian award, instituted in 1954 for exceptional service of the highest order in any field.

Statement 2 correct: Padma Shri recognises distinguished service in any field of activity, forming the base tier of the Padma series.

Statement 3 correct: Padma Awards (Vibhushan, Bhushan, Shri) are capped at 120 per year, excluding posthumous awards and those to NRIs/foreigners.

32. (c)**In News**

- The President of India has approved the conferment of the **Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards–2025** on 30 individuals for displaying exceptional courage in saving human lives.

About

- The Jeevan Raksha Padak series are **civilian life-saving gallantry awards** that honour people who risk their own lives to save others in emergencies like drowning, fires, accidents, electrocution, mine incidents or natural calamities.
- It **started in 1961 as a civilian offshoot of the Ashoka Chakra** series to recognise brave, humane acts by ordinary people.
- Its aim is to **reward civic courage, altruism and humanitarian values** when someone voluntarily puts themselves in danger to save another person.
- It is **open to all people**, any gender, any profession; can also be given posthumously.
- It is of three categories:
 - **Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** For saving life in situations of very great danger to the rescuer.
 - **Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak:** For courage and prompt action in situations of great danger.
 - **Jeevan Raksha Padak:** For courageous, quick action where there is serious risk of bodily injury to the rescuer.
- Each award consists of a medal and certificate, plus a one-time cash amount (approximately: Sarvottam – ₹2 lakh, Uttam – ₹1.5 lakh, Jeevan Raksha – ₹1 lakh).

33. (b)**Context**

- PM Modi addressed the Shikshapatri Dwishatabdi Mahotsav.

What is the Shikshapatri?

- The Shikshapatri is a **sacred text** authored by **Bhagwan Swaminarayan in 1826**.
- It consists of **212 concise Sanskrit verses** that lay down **moral, social, spiritual, and civic codes of conduct**.
- The text serves as a practical **guide for righteous living**, addressing personal discipline, family life, social responsibilities, and devotion.

Significance of the Dwishatabdi Mahotsav

- The Dwishatabdi Mahotsav marks **200 years of the Shikshapatri's promulgation**.
- It is being observed as a global spiritual and cultural event, especially by followers of the Swaminarayan tradition.
- The celebration highlights the continuing relevance of ethical values in a modern, complex society marked by social fragmentation and moral uncertainty.

34. (d)**In News**

- **International Data Privacy Day** is observed annually on **28th January** to raise awareness about the importance of protecting personal data and privacy in the digital age.
 - It was designated in 2006 by the **Council of Europe** to commemorate the **signing of Convention 108**- the world's first **legally binding international treaty on data protection**.

Importance of Data Privacy

- Data privacy is a foundational pillar of responsible **digital governance**.
- It **protects and safeguards citizens' personal information** across large-scale digital public platforms.
- It builds public trust by strengthening **confidence in government-led digital services**.
- **Strong data privacy frameworks** promote safe, ethical, and secure digital use, reduce cyber risks, prevent data misuse, and enhance governance through transparency and accountability.
- As digital platforms grow, safeguarding **personal data ensures** that innovation remains citizen-centric, ethical, and accountable, highlighting the shared responsibility of governments, institutions, and citizens in protecting digital rights.

35. (b)

The Supreme Court extended the tenure of the Justice Gita Mittal Committee by six months till July 31, 2026, to continue overseeing humanitarian relief for Manipur violence victims.

About the Committee

- This all-women panel, formed in August 2023 under Articles 32 and 142, comprises former judges Justice Gita Mittal (Chairperson, ex-CJ J&K HC)
- It probes violence against women, ensures medical/psychological aid, compensation, rehabilitation, legal support, and property restitution amid Meitei-Kuki clashes since May 2023.
- The panel has submitted 42 reports directly to SC, covering victim aid, skill development, and housing, despite no formal extension since July 2025.

36. (b)**Context**

- UNESCO has reportedly included three Buddhist heritage sites from Odisha- Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri, in India's tentative list for potential recognition as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

About

- **The tentative list identifies sites** that are of outstanding universal value, either culturally or naturally, and suitable for potential inscription in the World Heritage List
- These sites, collectively known as the **'Diamond Triangle'**, are believed to reflect the spread and evolution of all three major schools of Buddhism: **Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana**.

Buddhist Site of Lalitagiri, Cuttack

- **Location:** It is located on **Nandapahad hillock** in the Assia hill range, within the Birupa river valley.
 - It shows uninterrupted cultural continuity from the **2nd–3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE**.
- **Archaeological Findings:** Discovery of an inscribed terracotta sealing reading “**Sri Chandraditya Vihara Samagra Arya Bhikshu Sanghasa**” (9th–10th century CE).
 - A massive stupa of **Theravada phase** containing relic caskets of **khondalite stone, with inner steatite, silver, and gold caskets**.
 - Images from Mahayana and Vajrayana pantheon such as **Vajrapani, Manjusri, Tara, Jambhala, Hariti, and Aparajita**.

Buddhist Site of Udayagiri, Jajpur

- **Location:** It is situated in the Assia hill range on the right bank of the Birupa River.
 - It is also known as “**Sunrise Hill**” due to its east-facing crescent-shaped hill.
- **Architectural Importance:** Discovery of a massive Chaityagriha showing architectural evolution from circular to apsidal to rectangular.
 - Sculptures of **Avalokiteswara (colossal), Tara, Manjusri, Bhrikuti, Hariti, Chunda, Maitreya, Vairochana, Vasudhara**, and others.
 - Inscriptions with **Buddhist Dharanis on terracotta plaques** and stone tablets.

Buddhist Site of Ratnagiri, Jajpur

- **Location:** It is located in the Assia hill range on the left bank of the **Kelua River**, a distributary of the Brahmani.
 - It is also Known as the “**Hill of Jewels**”.
- **Patronage:** It received major patronage from the **Bhaumakara dynasty (8th–10th century CE)**.
- **Copperplate inscription** records residence of Queen Karpurashri, indicating female patronage.

37. (d)

In News : The Economic Survey notes that Indian school exams focus on rote learning, and recommends a **PISA-like assessment at Grade 10** to identify learning gaps and inform targeted interventions.

Statements 1 and 2 are not correct : PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)

- It tests the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading and science
- It is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- The Economic Survey notes that Indian school examinations primarily focus on rote learning and certification, failing to generate diagnostic evidence needed to identify learning gaps. Reports like ASER and NAS highlight this structural issue.
- Therefore ,The Survey suggests using assessment data to analyze errors and misconceptions and recommends introducing a PISA-like, competency-based assessment at the end of Grade 10.

38. (c)

The Paathara (Khoni) grain storage tradition is practiced mainly in the Uddanam region of Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh, particularly along the Mahendratana River near the Odisha border. The inland, hilly terrain and relatively low soil moisture in this region make it suitable for underground paddy storage, unlike coastal or deltaic areas where high moisture can spoil stored grain.

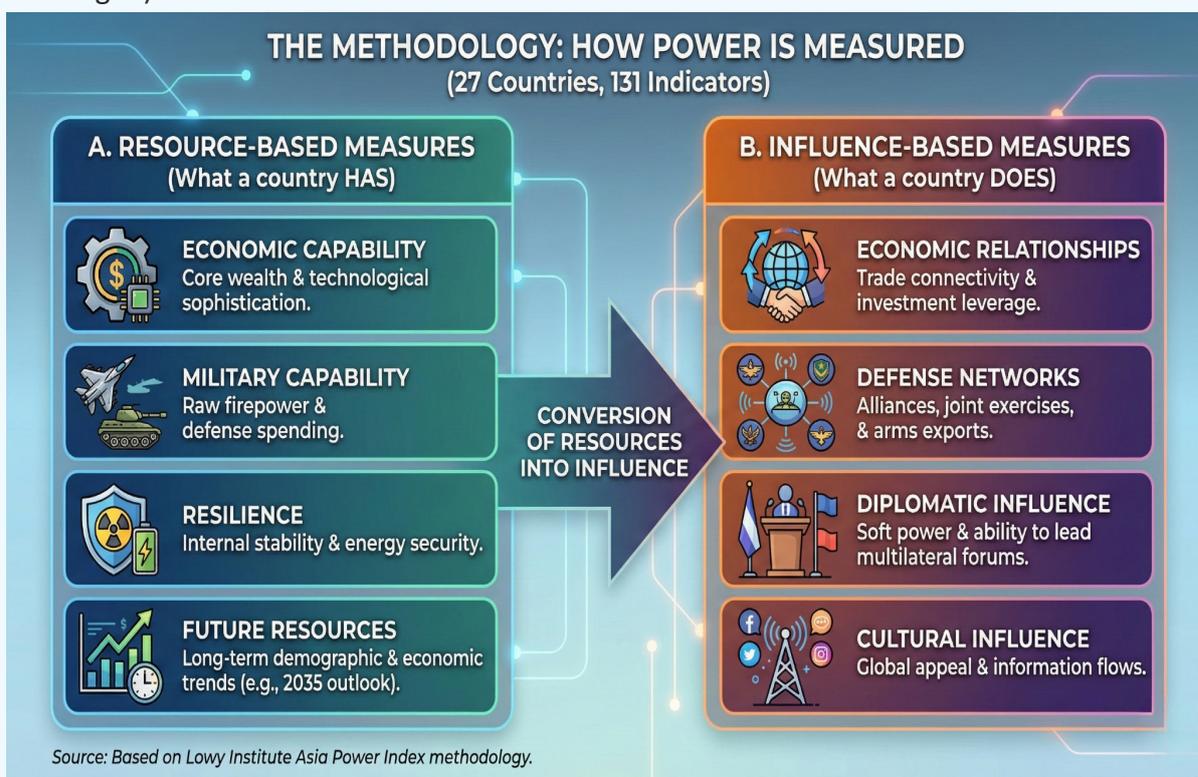
39. (b)

For the first time, the Economic Survey 2025–26, tabled in Parliament, has cited the **Power Gap Index** to underline a **Strategic Paradox in India's rise**.

- While India has officially entered the **Major Power category in Asia**, the Survey notes that it continues to underperform relative to its capabilities, reflected in a **negative Power Gap score of -4.0**.

What is the Power Gap Index?

- The Power Gap Index is **not a standalone index like HDI**.
- It is a derived analytical measure from the Asia Power Index compiled annually by the **Lowy Institute**.
- It measures the gap between a **country's potential power (resources)** and its actual **regional influence**.
- Every country has a certain **"Expected Power"** based on its raw resources (population, GDP, military hardware).
- The **"Comprehensive Power"** is what the country actually achieves through diplomacy, trade, and alliances.
 - Power Gap = Comprehensive Power Score - Expected Power Score**
- Positive score:** Country punches above its weight (efficient use of resources via diplomacy, alliances, economic statecraft).
- Negative score:** Country punches below its weight (capabilities exist, but influence is under-leveraged).



40. (b)

Kalbelyas

- Kalbelia are a **snake charming folk community** from the region of Rajasthan, India.
- Their traditional occupation used to be catching snakes and **trading snake venom**.
- They are known for their **vibrant dances and black embroidered attire**.

- In 2010, their songs and dances were added to **UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list**, recognizing them as a key marker of identity as the community adapts to changing social and economic conditions.
- Kalbelias follow the **Nath tradition**, under which their dead kin are buried and not cremated.

41. (a)

Statement 1 is correct: Kavach is an indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system developed by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) in collaboration with the Indian industry. It is a key pillar of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative in the railway sector.

Statement 2 is correct: The primary function of Kavach is to enhance safety by:

Preventing SPAD (Signal Passing at Danger): It automatically applies brakes if the locomotive pilot jumps a red signal.

Overspeeding Control: It continuously monitors the train's speed and enforces limits based on track conditions.

Collision Avoidance: It uses radio communication and GPS to detect other Kavach-equipped trains on the same track to prevent head-on or rear-end collisions.

Statement 3 is not correct: SIL-4 (Safety Integrity Level 4) actually indicates the highest level of safety certification globally for any signaling or protection system. SIL-1 is the lowest, and SIL-4 is the most rigorous.

42. (a)

Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Coking coal, also known as **metallurgical coal** or "**met coal**," is a type of coal that is used in the **steelmaking process**.

- It's **essential in the production of coke**, a key component in the steelmaking process.
- Coking coal needs to have **specific properties such as high carbon content, low sulfur and phosphorus content**, and strong coking properties to be suitable for steelmaking.
- India has an estimated **37.37 billion tonnes** of coking coal resources, largely located in **Jharkhand, with additional reserves in Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh**.

Statement 3 is not correct: Currently, around **95 % of the coking coal requirement** of the steel sector is met through imports, leading to **significant foreign exchange outgo**.

