

**DAILY MCQs COMPILATION**  
*with*  
**EXPLANATIONS**

**MARCH, 2026**

**NEXT IAS**

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# HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

1. Which of the following Sikh Gurus is also remembered as “Hind di Chadar” for sacrificing his life to protect religious freedom?

- (a) Guru Hargobind (b) Guru Tegh Bahadur  
(c) Guru Gobind Singh (d) Guru Arjan

2. With reference to Santiniketan, consider the following statements:

1. It was established as a residential school by Rabindranath Tagore in 1901.
2. The place was originally named by Debendranath Tagore in 1863 when he established an ashram there.
3. The institution later evolved into Visva-Bharati University, envisioned as a “world university.”
4. It is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

3. The place described as being flanked by the rivers Ajay and Kopai and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List is:

- (a) Nalanda (b) Hampi  
(c) Mahabalipuram (d) Santiniketan

4. Consider the following initiatives associated with Savitribai Phule:

1. Establishment of Mahila Seva Mandal for women’s rights.
2. Creation of Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha to provide shelter to pregnant widows.
3. Introduction of Satyashodhak marriage practices rejecting dowry and Brahminical rituals.

Which of the above are correct?

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

5. Which of the following are literary works of Savitribai Phule?

1. Kavya Phule (Poetry’s Blossoms)
2. Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar (The Ocean of Pure Gems)

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. (d)

Santiniketan was established as a residential school by Rabindranath Tagore in 1901, starting with five students under the name Brahmacharyashram.

The place was originally named by Debendranath Tagore in 1863 when he established an ashram there, open to all regardless of caste or creed. The institution later evolved into Visva-Bharati University in 1921, envisioned by Tagore as a “world university” promoting global unity and later declared a central university in 1951. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in September 2023 as India’s 41st site, recognized for its cultural, educational, and artistic significance.

## 3. (d)

**Context:** For decades, **Santiniketan’s Basant Utsav** has been celebrated as Rabindranath Tagore’s creation.

**About: Santiniketan**• **Geography**

- **Location:** Santiniketan, popularly known today as a university town, is located in the **Birbhum district in West Bengal.**
- **Rivers:** The area is flanked on two sides by the rivers, the **Ajay and the Kopai.**

• **History**

- Santiniketan was earlier known as **Bhubadanga.** It was established by **Maharshi Debendranath Tagore in 1862,** and later expanded by his son, **Rabindranath Tagore.**
- In **1901,** Rabindranath Tagore chose a vast tract of land and started a school on the ‘**Brahmacharya Ashram**’ modeled on the ancient Indian Gurukul system. The school was upgraded to a University and was renamed **Visva Bharati in 1921.**
- In **1951,** Visva Bharati was declared to be a **central university** and an institute of national importance.
- Santiniketan was inscribed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** in 2023.

## 4. (d)

- Savitribai Phule established the Mahila Seva Mandal to advocate for women’s rights, particularly against widow tonsure and other oppressive practices.
- She created Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha in 1863 as a shelter specifically for pregnant widows to prevent female infanticide.
- Through her work with Satyashodhak Samaj (co-founded with Jyotirao Phule), she promoted Satyashodhak marriages that rejected dowry, Brahmin priests, and caste rituals.

## 5. (c)

**Context:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid tribute to Savitribai Phule on her death anniversary.

**About Savitribai Phule (1831 - 1897)**

- **Born** in Naigaon village of Maharashtra’s Satara district.
- In 1840, at the age of nine, she married **Jyotirao Phule,** who was just 13 at the time.
- Formally recognised as **India’s first female teacher.** In 1848, the couple established the **country’s first school for girls** in Bhidewada, Pune.
- In **1863,** Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai began Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, **India’s first home dedicated to prohibiting infanticide.**
  - She also advocated inter-caste marriages, widow remarriage, and eradication of child marriage, sati, and dowry systems, among other social issues.

- In 1873, the Phule's set up the **Satyashodhak Samaj ('Truth-seekers' society')**, a platform open to all, irrespective of their caste, religion or class hierarchies, with the sole aim of bringing social equity.
- **Literary works:** Kavya Phule (Poetry's Blossoms) in 1854 and Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar (The Ocean of Pure Gems), in 1892.

6. (d)

The **Kurumba art tradition** is facing the threat of extinction due to **declining practitioners**.

#### About

- Kurumba paintings trace back over 3,000 years, linked to rock art sites like Ezhuthupaarai in Tamil Nadu's Nilgiris; they were practiced by the **Kurumba tribe**.
  - The Kurumba tribe is classified as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**.
- Originally they were painted over the house walls, temple walls or during festivals and artists derive natural pigments from forest sources like tree resins.
- These folk paintings illustrate rituals, festivals, honey hunting, nature, animals, and daily community activities using simple linear motifs, dots, lines, and geometric patterns.

7. (a)

#### Context

- The Vice President of India recently paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom fighters involved in the **Dandi March (1930)**.

#### About Dandi March

- The British colonial government had imposed a **monopoly on the production and sale of salt** and levied a salt tax, making even this basic necessity expensive for Indians.
- **In 1930**, Gandhiji declared that he would **lead a march to break the salt law** as it was sinful to tax salt since it is such an essential item of food.
- Gandhiji with his 78 followers started Salt Satyagraha March on **12th March 1930** from **Sabarmati Ashram** and reached Dandi after **24 days on 6th April 1930**.
  - He broke the salt law by picking up natural salt from the seashore and boiling seawater to make salt.
- The Salt Satyagraha became the starting point of the **Civil Disobedience Movement**.

8. (a)

#### Context

- The Tribes Art Fest 2026, held at **Travancore Palace in New Delhi**, showcased India's rich tribal artistic heritage.

- It was organised by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** in collaboration with **National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)** and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- **Warli Painting:** It originates from **Maharashtra** and is practised by the **Warli tribe**. It has roots possibly dating back to the Neolithic period (2500–3000 BC). **Key features are;**
  - Use of **white pigment** made from **rice paste** on mud walls.



- Representation through basic **geometric shapes (circles, triangles, squares)**.
- **Themes** include agriculture, rituals, hunting, and Tarpa dance.
- **Bhil Painting:** It is practised by the Bhil tribe, one of India's largest indigenous groups mainly from **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan**. It is considered among the **oldest tribal art traditions**. Key features are:
  - **Use of thousands of coloured dots**, symbolising seeds and nature's rhythm.
  - Themes include **deities, animals, forests, and daily life**.



### Madhubani paintings

- These brightly colored Madhubani paintings are characterized by their geometrical patterns and are widely practiced in the Madhubani district in **Bihar**.



### 9. (a)

**In News :** The Centre has opened nominations and recommendations for the Padma Awards 2027, one of the country's highest civilian honours.

The nomination process began on March 15 and will remain open until July 31, 2026.

**Statements 1 and 2 are incorrect :** The Padma Awards are among India's highest civilian honours, Instituted in 1954

- **They** are presented in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
  - 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service;
  - 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and
  - 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.
- The awards recognise "work of distinction" and are given for exceptional achievements or service across a wide range of fields, including art, literature and education, sports, medicine, social work, science and engineering, public affairs, civil service, trade and industry. Self-nominations are also allowed.

- The nominations must include detailed information about the nominee’s distinguished achievements in their respective fields

**Statement 3 is correct** : All individuals are eligible for the awards regardless of race, occupation, position or gender.

- However, government servants, including employees of public sector undertakings, are generally not eligible, except for doctors and scientists.

**10. (a)**

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Keeladi (Keezhadi)** is a major archaeological site located near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, offering crucial insights into early South Indian urban civilization.

- Started in 2014, the excavation at Keeladi uncovered around 7,500 artefacts.
- Scholars have since referred to the site as part of the **Vaigai Valley Civilisation**.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** The findings indicated the presence of a sophisticated, literate, and secular urban society and offered crucial evidence in bridging the historical gap between the **Iron Age (12th-6th Century BCE)** and the **Early Historic Period (6th-4th Century BCE)**.

- It **challenges the notion** that early urbanisation was limited to the **Indus Valley Civilization** in North India and shows parallel development in the South.

**11. (a)**

**Context**

- A medieval inscription linked to the **Gajapati Dynasty** has been discovered at the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

**Gajapati Dynasty**

- The Gajapati Dynasty was a powerful medieval kingdom that originated in **Odisha** and flourished during the 15th–16th centuries.
- It was founded by **Kapilendra Deva** after the decline of the Eastern Ganga dynasty.
- At its peak, the empire extended from parts of present-day West Bengal to Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu, with its capital at **Kataka** (modern-day Cuttack).
- The Gajapati rulers were known for their patronage of art, architecture, and literature, and they maintained continuous rivalry with the **Vijayanagara Empire**.



**12. (c)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** He was a prominent Indian nationalist and leader who played a crucial role in the Indian independence movement.

- **Indian National Congress:** He was elected as the President of the Indian National Congress twice, in **1938 and 1939**.

**Statement 2 is not correct: Azad Hind Radio 1942:** He established Azad Hind Radio in Germany to reach out to Indians and spread his vision of independence.

**Statement 3 is correct: 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.

### 13. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Buddhavanam is located in Telangana and is India's first Buddhist Heritage Theme Park.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** It is developed by the Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation, not ASI.

**Statement 3 is correct:** It depicts the life and teachings of Buddha through art, sculptures, meditation zones, etc.

### 14. (c)

#### Context

- The Vice-President of India visited the birthplace of Birsa Munda in Jharkhand.

#### About

- **Birsa Munda was born on 15th November 1875** in Ulihatu of the erstwhile Bengal Presidency (present day Jharkhand).
  - He was a legendary Indian tribal freedom fighter, religious leader, and folk hero from the Munda tribe.
- **Birsait religion:** He founded a new religion called "**Birsait**" and declared himself as God's messenger. He believed in **One God**.
  - People of Munda and Oraon community joined the sect and challenged British conversion activities of tribals.
  - He was referred to as '**Dharti Abba or Father of Earth**' by his followers.
- **Munda Rebellion:** It was the tribal movement led by Birsa Munda against the oppressions of the British Raj and local exploiters (Dikus).
  - It is also referred to as '**Ulgulan**' or the '**Great Tumult**'.
  - In 1900 he was arrested in Jamkopai forest and passed away in custody (due to cholera).
  - **Outcome:** The British government introduced the **Chotanagpur Tenancy Act in 1908**, to prohibit the transfer of tribal land to **non-tribals (Dikus)**.
- **Janjatiya Gaurav Divas:** Observed on November 15 **since 2021** to honor his legacy.





5. With reference to Government Securities (G-Secs), which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. They are tradable financial instruments issued by the Central Government or State Governments.
  2. G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are called risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

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 Coal Gasification, consider the following statements:
1. Coal gasification converts coal into synthetic gas (syngas) consisting mainly of hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide.
  2. The syngas produced can be used to manufacture products such as methanol, fertilizers, and synthetic natural gas.
  3. In Underground Coal Gasification (UCG), coal is first mined and then converted into syngas in surface plants.

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 regarding the Dam Safety Act, 2021:
1. It provides for the establishment of both a National Dam Safety Authority and State Dam Safety Organisations.
  2. The Act applies only to dams constructed after the year 2000.
  3. It aims to ensure uniform dam safety standards across India.

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

8. With reference to the glass industry in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The first modern glass plant in India was established in 1908 in Maharashtra by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
  2. Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh is known as the "Glass City of India".

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

9. With reference to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in India, consider the following statements:
1. LPG is composed mainly of propane and butane and is obtained during crude oil refining or natural gas processing.
  2. India imports about 60% of its LPG consumption, and nearly 90% of these imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

3. India has underground LPG storage caverns at Mumbai and Chennai.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

10. With reference to the National Shipping Board (NSB), consider the following statements:

1. It is an apex advisory body on shipping and maritime matters in India.
2. It is constituted under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
3. It functions under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

11. With reference to the concept of 'Thermal Independence' for India, consider the following statements:

1. It refers to the ability of a country to meet its industrial heat demand without relying on imported fossil fuels.
2. Technologies such as concentrated solar thermal (CST), induction heating, and plasma torches can contribute to achieving thermal independence.
3. Industrial heat accounts for a significant share of India's total energy consumption.

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 purple potatoes, consider the following statements:

1. Purple potatoes originated in the Andean region of South America, particularly in Bolivia and Peru.
2. Their purple colour is due to the presence of anthocyanins, which are natural antioxidants.
3. India has developed a purple potato variety called Kufri Jamunia at the Central Potato Research Institute.

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. Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged Joha Rice, recently seen in the news, is primarily cultivated in which of the following states?

- (a) Assam (b) West Bengal  
(c) Odisha (d) Chhattisgarh

14. With reference to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in India, consider the following statements:

1. They were established on the recommendations of the Narasimham Working Group (1975).
2. They were established under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976.
3. They are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and supervised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.



19. With reference to Project Insight (PI), consider the following statements:
1. It involves the integration of multiple databases to track high-value financial transactions.
  2. It is implemented by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to monitor banking frauds.
  3. It aims to promote voluntary compliance among taxpayers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

20. With reference to Bioeconomy, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It integrates biological resources into economic production systems with an emphasis on sustainability.
  2. It involves the application of biotechnology across secondary and tertiary sectors only.

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 *Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)*, consider the following statements:
1. It operates under the Ministry of Finance.
  2. It investigates cases related to dumping and subsidized imports.
  3. It has the authority to directly impose anti-dumping duties in India.
  4. It acts as the designated authority for implementing WTO-compliant trade remedy measures.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

22. With reference to International Accounting Frameworks, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. International Financial Reporting Standards is a globally accepted accounting framework developed by the International Accounting Standards Board.
  2. The Generally Accepted Accounting Principles is followed by more than 140 countries including India.

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 women in agriculture and global initiatives, consider the following statements:
1. Women play a crucial role in achieving targets under the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 2 (Gender Equality) and SDG 5 (Zero Hunger).
  2. The United Nations has designated 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

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

24. With reference to India's bioeconomy, consider the following statements:

1. India is among the top 12 destinations for biotechnology globally.
2. India is the largest biotechnology destination in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. India's bioeconomy has grown from about \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$160 billion in 2024.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

25. With reference to India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. SPRs are underground rock caverns designed for long-term storage of crude oil.
2. SPRs are managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited, a special purpose vehicle under the Oil Industry Development Board.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

26. Consider the following locations of India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR);

1. Visakhapatnam
2. Mangaluru
3. Padur
4. Paradip

Which of the above are existing SPR facilities?

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

27. With reference to Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), consider the following statements:

1. FIIs are crucial participants in global markets, investing outside their home countries.
2. FIIs include entities such as hedge funds, pension funds, and insurance companies.
3. In India, FIIs are required to register with the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

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

28. With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which of the following statements is/are **not** correct?

1. It is responsible for fixing the benchmark interest rate in India
2. It consists of ten members, six from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

29. With reference to gold production and reserves in India, consider the following statements:
1. Maharashtra is the leading gold-producing state in India.
  2. India is the largest consumer of gold in the world.

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

30. With reference to agriculture in India, consider the following statements:

1. India is the largest producer of millets in the world.
2. India is the largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

31. With reference to the *North–South divide in India*, consider the following statements:

1. Southern states generally have higher per capita income and better human development indicators than northern states.
2. Northern states have lower population growth rates compared to southern states.
3. The Finance Commission uses fiscal transfers as a mechanism to address regional disparities.

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

32. With reference to the Coffee production, which of the following statements is/are **not** correct?

1. Coffee is traditionally a tropical crop and grows well in warm, humid conditions.
2. Karnataka contributes nearly 70% of India's total coffee production.

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

33. Consider the following statements regarding insurance sector in India:

1. IRDAI has made Ind AS-based reporting mandatory for all categories of insurers.
2. IRDAI is a constitutional body regulating the banking and insurance sectors jointly.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 and 2

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** It is the **regulatory authority** for the securities and capital markets in India.

- It was established in **1988** and given statutory powers through the SEBI Act of **1992**.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** It falls under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Finance**.

**Statement 3 is correct: Powers of SEBI**

- **Quasi Judicial Powers:** In cases of fraud and unethical practices in the securities market, SEBI India can pass judgements.
  - The said power of SEBI facilitates transparency, accountability and fairness in the securities market.
- **Quasi Executive Powers:** SEBI can examine the Book of Accounts and other vital documents to identify or gather evidence against violations. If it finds one violating the regulations, the regulatory body can impose rules, pass judgements and take legal actions against violators.
- **Quasi Legislative Powers:** To protect the interest of investors, it has been entrusted with the power to formulate pertinent rules and regulations.
  - Such rules tend to encompass listing obligations, insider trading regulations and essential disclosure requirements.

2. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Coconut is a perennial plantation crop and a **monocotyledonous palm** belonging to the family **Areaceae**.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** Coconut is native to the Indo-Pacific region, commonly traced to Southeast Asia, not the Mediterranean region.

**Statement 3 is correct:** Coconut requires a warm and humid tropical climate, ideally between 25°C and 30°C, with high and evenly distributed rainfall

3. (b)

**In News :** Sungudi sarees are gaining popularity among consumers looking for distinctive and eco-friendly fashion.

**Statement 1 is not correct but statements 2 and 3 are correct:**

- **Sungudi saris** are traditional cotton saris which are Perfected by the **Saurashtrian community**, who migrated from Gujarat to **Madurai (Tamil Nadu)** in the 17th century.
- It features **intricate tie-and-dye patterns** inspired by the night sky. Each sari, woven on a base cloth with a zari border.
- It is hand-knotted, dyed, washed, starched, and sun-dried, often revealing over 15,000 delicate white dots.
- The **process** takes more than 15 days, producing breathable, culturally rich garments prized across generations.
  - prices ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 20,000
- It exemplifies exquisite craftsmanship and holds potential for international fashion recognition.
  - The Madurai Sungudi sari received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag in December 2005**.

4. (a)

**In News:** The **Union Budget 2026–27 proposed major reforms to expand the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS)**, including mandatory use by **CPSEs**, **credit guarantees through CGTMSE**, and **integration with GeM** to improve MSME liquidity.

- These measures align with the **World Bank's 2025 Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP) recommendations** to strengthen receivables financing and reduce delayed payments to MSMEs.

**Statement 1 is correct:** TReDS is an RBI-regulated digital platform for financing MSME receivables.

**Statement 2 is correct:** MSME invoices are auctioned to financiers such as banks and NBFCs for discounting.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** Both **banks and NBFCs (including private entities)** can participate as financiers, not only public sector banks.

5. (c)

#### Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted Open Market Operation (OMO) purchase auctions of Government Securities (G-Secs) worth ₹50,000 crore to inject liquidity into the banking system.

#### What is Government Security (G-Sec)?

- It is a **tradable instrument** issued by the Central Government or the State Governments. Such securities are;
  - Short term** (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year) or
  - Long term** (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with an original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the **Central Government issues both** treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the **State Governments issue only bonds** or dated securities, which are called the State Development Loans (SDLs).
- G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are called **risk-free gilt-edged instruments**.

6. (a)

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct:** Coal gasification enables **conversion of coal into syngas** (synthetic gas), which comprises **hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and CO<sub>2</sub>**.

- The syngas can be used** to produce Methanol, Synthetic Natural Gas (SNG), Ammonium nitrate, Fertilizers and Petrochemicals and power.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** UCG is a process that **converts coal into a combustible gas** called **syngas** while it is still in the ground, rather than through conventional mining.

- In UCG, coal is not **mined; it is converted into gas while still underground**.

7. (a)

- The Dam Safety Act, 2021 establishes the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) as a central body and requires State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs) in states with specified dams.
- It applies to all “specified dams” meeting criteria like height over 15m (or 10-15m with certain conditions), reservoir capacity  $\geq 1$  million m<sup>3</sup>, or flood discharge  $\geq 2000$  m<sup>3</sup>/s—covering existing dams, not just those post-2000.
- The Act’s core aim is uniform dam safety standards, surveillance, inspection, and maintenance nationwide via institutional mechanisms like NDSA and SDSOs.

8. (c)

#### Context

- India’s glass manufacturing industry is facing operational challenges as the government plans to curb gas supplies to industrial consumers amid uncertainties over LNG shipments due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

#### Energy Dependence of the Glass Industry

- Glass manufacturing plants primarily rely on **piped natural gas (PNG)** and **liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)** as fuel sources for furnaces.

- The manufacturing process requires **continuous high-temperature operations**, making uninterrupted fuel supply essential.

### Glass Industry of India

- The first modern glass plant in India, **Paisa Fund Glass Works**, was established in **1908 at Talegaon**, Maharashtra by **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** as part of the Swadeshi movement to promote indigenous industries.
- **Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh** Known as the “**Glass City of India**”, has been a centre for glass production since the 17th century and is the world’s largest producer of glass bangles.
  - Other key states with major glass manufacturing units include **Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal**.

### 9. (b)

**Context:** Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, disruptions are being reported in the supply of **liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)** cylinders in several Indian cities, including Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata.

### About LPG

- Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is a **highly flammable, energy-rich, and clean-burning fuel** composed mainly of **propane and butane**.
- It is obtained during **crude oil refining or natural gas processing** and is stored under pressure as a liquid in steel cylinders for **household cooking, heating, and automotive use**.
- Oil Marketing Companies such as IOC and BPCL produce 40% of India’s LPG requirement.

### Why the Disruption?

- **Geopolitical Risk:** India imports about **60 percent** of its LPG consumption and out of these imports about **90 percent** come through the **Strait of Hormuz**, which has been impacted due to current happenings (US and Israel’s war with Iran).



- **Infrastructural Weakness:** India’s LPG supply system is largely designed for continuous operational flow rather than large-scale stockpiling. For long-term storage, the country currently has **two underground LPG storage caverns** located at **Mangaluru and Visakhapatnam**, with a **combined capacity of about 1.4 lakh tonnes**, which is limited compared to national consumption.
- **Surge in Domestic Demand:** According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), India’s LPG imports increased threefold between 2011-12 and 2024-25, reaching nearly 20 million tonnes. The expansion has been driven partly by the **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**, under which nearly **10 crore LPG connections** have been added since 2017.
  - India now has about **33 crore domestic LPG connections**.

### 10. (b)

**In News:** The government held a high-level interaction with the National Shipping Board (NSB) to address emerging challenges in India’s shipping sector amid evolving global geopolitical dynamics.

### About National Shipping Board (NSB)

- It is India's apex advisory body on shipping and maritime matters, constituted under Section 23 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.
- It works under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- Its primary role is to advise the central government on shipping policies and maritime development.
- Its chairperson is appointed by the Central Government.

### 11. (d)

**In News:** Escalating tensions in West Asia and disruptions around the **Strait of Hormuz** that have increased energy prices and reduced gas availability for Indian industries underscores the urgent need for **thermal independence**.

#### Statement 1 is correct

- Thermal independence means producing industrial heat using domestic and sustainable energy sources rather than relying on imported fossil fuels.

#### Statement 2 is correct

- Technologies like **concentrated solar thermal (CST), induction heating, electric furnaces, and plasma torches** are emerging alternatives for industrial heat decarbonisation.

#### Statement 3 is correct

- Industrial heat accounts for a **large share of total industrial energy consumption**, making it critical for energy transition and climate goals.

### 12. (d)

**Context:** A young farmer from Punjab has gained attention for cultivating **purple potatoes** using seed tubers imported from Bolivia.

#### About Purple potatoes

- Originally cultivated in the **Andean region of South America, especially Peru and Bolivia**.
- The tubers are deep purple both externally and internally due to a high concentration of **anthocyanins**, natural antioxidants responsible for the colour.
- The thicker peel gives them a **longer shelf life than conventional potatoes**, while the tuber size remains comparable.
- The crop duration is around **90–100 days**, with sowing generally done in **October–November** and harvesting in **February–March**, similar to other potato varieties.
- They are rich in **vitamin C and antioxidants**, and are considered beneficial for people managing conditions such as **diabetes or joint pain**.



#### Do You Know?

- India has developed its own purple potato variety **Kufri Jamunia**, launched in 2024 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The variety was developed by scientists at the Central Potato Research Institute.

### 13. (a)

#### Context

- India has facilitated the export of 25 metric tonnes of Assam's GI-tagged Joha Rice to the United Kingdom and Italy.

**About**

- The aromatic indigenous rice variety, which received its Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2017, is gaining recognition in premium global markets for its distinctive fragrance, fine grain texture and rich taste.
- Joha Rice is cultivated in about **21,662 hectares** with a production of approximately 43,298 metric tonnes (FY 2024-25).
- The **leading districts** in Joha rice production are: Nagaon, Baksa, Goalpara, Sibsagar, Majuli, Chirang and Golaghat.
- This strong production base provides a good opportunity to create a surplus for exports and enhance farmers' income.

**14. (d)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** Regional Rural Banks were set up on the recommendations of the Narasimham Working Group (1975) to strengthen institutional credit in rural areas.

**Statement 2 is correct:** RRBs were legally established under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, which provides the statutory framework for their functioning.

**Statement 3 is correct:** RRBs are Scheduled Commercial Banks. They are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India and supervised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) under the Banking Regulation framework..

**15. (a)**

**Statement 1 is correct.** DICGC functions as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India, with RBI fully subscribing its authorized capital of ₹50 crore.

**Statement 2 is correct.** DICGC operates under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961, which governs its deposit insurance and credit guarantee functions.

**Statement 3 is incorrect.** Banks pay the deposit insurance premium to DICGC as a percentage of their assessable deposits, not depositors directly.

**16. (a)**

**Context:** India is the world's largest producer of coconuts contributing to 30.37% of the Global coconut production.

**About**

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

**17. (a)**

**Statement 1 is incorrect:** The Cotton Corporation of India functions under the **Ministry of Textiles** and is not responsible for fixing the MSP. The MSP is determined by the Government of India based on the recommendations of the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.

**Statement 2 is correct:** The Cotton Corporation of India acts as the **nodal procurement agency** for cotton and undertakes procurement operations when market prices fall below the MSP to ensure **price stabilisation and farmer welfare**.

**Statement 3 is correct:** MSP is announced on the recommendation of the CACP to ensure **remunerative prices to farmers** and to safeguard them against adverse price fluctuations.

18. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** ECGC is wholly owned by the Government of India and was established in 1957. It plays an important role in supporting India's export sector.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Its main function is to provide credit risk insurance to exporters. This protects them against risks such as buyer default or political instability in importing countries.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** ECGC functions under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**, not the Ministry of Finance. This aligns with its role in promoting exports rather than managing finances.

19. (c)

**In News:** India has begun leveraging technology to improve tax compliance and governance, as it faces a persistent fiscal challenge in the form of a **low tax-to-GDP ratio (16.36% during 2001–22)** and **significant tax evasion (≈4.3% revenue loss annually)**.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- Project Insight integrates **multiple databases** (PAN, banking, property, financial transactions) to identify **high-value and suspicious transactions** using data analytics.

**Statement 2 is not correct**

- It is **not implemented by the RBI**. Project Insight is an initiative of the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** under the Income Tax Department. RBI deals with banking regulation, not direct tax monitoring.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The project aims to **promote voluntary compliance** through non-intrusive verification and data-driven insights. Such systems encourage compliance by leveraging integrated databases and analytics.

20. (a)

**Context**

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh said India's bioeconomy has witnessed a remarkable surge from around **\$10 billion in 2014 to over \$195 billion in 2025**, underlining the country's emergence as a fast-growing global biotechnology hub.

**What is BioEconomy ?**

- The BioEconomy is the **knowledge-based production and use of biological resources to provide products, processes and services** in all economic sectors within the frame of a sustainable economic system.
- It encompasses sectors like **agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food production, biotechnology, and bioenergy**.
- The very foundation of the bioeconomy lies in the **primary sector** (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture).

21. (b)

**In News:** Recently, India has initiated an **anti-dumping investigation on imports of Ethyl Chloroformate** from China, following **allegations of unfair pricing** harming domestic industry.

**Statement 1 is not correct**

- The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- It investigates cases related to dumping and subsidized imports, as DGTR's primary function.

**Statement 3 is not correct**

- Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) only **recommends**; the **Finance Ministry imposes** anti-dumping duties in India.

**Statement 4 is correct**

- Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) acts as designated authority for WTO-compliant trade remedy measures.
- It ensures alignment with WTO frameworks.

**22. (a)****Context**

- India's increasing integration into the global financial system has created demand for professionals proficient in international accounting frameworks such as IFRS and U.S. GAAP.

**Background**

- **International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)** is a globally accepted accounting framework developed by the **International Accounting Standards Board (IASB)** and is followed by over 140 countries.
- **US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP)** is a rules-based framework primarily developed and maintained by the **Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB)** and used by companies operating or listed in the United States.
- **India follows Ind AS**, which are largely converged with IFRS but include certain modifications to suit domestic regulatory and economic conditions.
  - As a result, full harmonisation with global standards has not yet been achieved.

**23. (b)**

**Context:** Rural women form the backbone of India's agriculture, with 80% engaged in farming and allied activities.

**About**

- Women participate across the entire agricultural value chain: crop production, livestock management, agroforestry, fishing, horticulture, post-harvest processing, packaging, and marketing.
- Women are increasingly recognized as key agents in achieving **sustainable agriculture and food security**, especially under frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)** and **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**.
- The United Nations has **designated 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026)**, in recognition of the vital and indispensable role of women in global agriculture.

**24. (a)****Context**

- **Biotechnology has emerged as a transformative force** in agriculture, aquaculture, and animal sciences.

### India's Bioeconomy

- India is among the **Top 12 destinations** for biotechnology worldwide and **3rd largest destination** for biotechnology in Asia Pacific.
- India's bioeconomy has grown sixteen-fold from **\$10 billion in 2014 to an impressive \$165.7 billion in 2024**.
- **Contributing 4.25%** to the national GDP, the sector has demonstrated a robust compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of **17.9%** over the past four years.
- India's Biotechnology sector is **categorised into Biopharmaceuticals, Bio agriculture, Bio IT and Bio Services**.
- **Future Goals:** Target of achieving a **\$300 billion bioeconomy by 2030**.
  - India also seeks to lead globally in bio-pharma, including vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics.

25. (c)

#### Context

- As of March 2026, nearly one-third (about 36%) of India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) remain unfilled, raising concerns amid rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

#### What are Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs)?

- SPRs are **emergency stockpiles of crude oil** maintained by governments to tackle supply disruptions and price shocks.
- The idea emerged after the **1973 Oil Crisis**, when oil supply disruptions exposed the vulnerability of import-dependent economies.
- In India, SPRs are managed by **Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited**, a special purpose vehicle under the **Oil Industry Development Board**.
- SPRs are **underground rock caverns** designed for long-term storage of crude oil.
- **Existing SPR Facilities:** India has established SPRs with a total capacity of **5.33 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT)** at;
  - Visakhapatnam (1.33 MMT)
  - Mangaluru (1.5 MMT)
  - Padur (2.5 MMT)

26. (d)

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- Padur (2.5 MMT)
- Gol 2021, had also approved the establishment of **two additional commercial-cum-strategic petroleum reserve facilities** with total storage capacity of **6.5 MMT** at;
  - **Chandikhol (4 MMT) in Odisha** and
  - **Padur (2.5 MMT) in Karnataka.**

## 27. (d)

**All three statements are correct:** Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) are crucial participants in global markets, **investing outside their home countries.**

- FIIs include entities such as **hedge funds, insurance companies, pension funds, and investment banks.**
- In India, FIIs must register with the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** and comply with strict investment rules.
- FIIs can be important sources of **capital in developing economies.**
  - They bring in foreign capital, which can stimulate growth and bolster foreign reserves, thus boosting the overall economy of a nation.

## 28. (b)

**Context**

- The Government of India has retained the inflation target of 4% with a tolerance band of  $\pm 2\%$  for the period April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031.

**What is the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)?**

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

## 29. (d)

**Context:** Gold prices have declined sharply despite the outbreak of a major conflict in West Asia in February 2026.

**Key Facts**

- **Top Global Producers (2024–25):** China, Australia, Russia.
- **India's Position:**
  - **Production:** Extremely low, less than 1% of global production.
  - **Consumption:** Second largest consumer of gold globally.
- **Gold Reserves in India:** Bihar, Rajasthan, and Karnataka.
- **Key Mining Areas in India:**
  - **Karnataka** is the leading gold-producing state in India. Major mining sites include **Hutti Gold Mines and Kolar Gold Fields (closed in 2001).**
  - **Jharkhand:** Gold is found in alluvial form in the Subarnarekha River basin.

30. (a)

**Context:** India's agricultural sector continues to play a pivotal role in sustaining rural livelihoods, ensuring economic resilience, and safeguarding national food security.

#### Agricultural Sector in India

- **Rice and Wheat:** Rice production is primarily concentrated in states such as **Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and West Bengal.**
  - **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab** constitute the leading wheat-producing regions.
- **Pulses and Millets:** In pulse production **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan** serve as the principal producing states.
  - The country also ranks first worldwide in **millet production** largely driven by **Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.**
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** India is the **world's second-largest producer** of fruits and vegetables.
  - Fruit production is primarily concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, while Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Gujarat lead vegetable output.

31. (c)

**In News:** The issue of **India's North–South Divide** is no longer cyclical but structural, requiring **institutional innovation** rather than incremental policy fixes.

- **Southern states** (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana) generally perform better in per capita income; and education and health outcomes (HDI components).
- **Northern states** (Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan) tend to lag in these indicators but often have higher population growth rates; and greater demographic pressures.

#### Statement 1 is correct

- Southern states consistently show **higher per capita income and better HDI indicators.** The persistent **regional disparities in income and human development**, with southern states leading.

#### Statement 2 is not correct

- Northern states actually have **higher population growth rates**, not lower. The **demographic divergence**, with southern states achieving **lower fertility and slower growth** earlier.

#### Statement 3 is correct

- The **Finance Commission uses fiscal transfers** (tax sharing, grants-in-aid) to address regional disparities. The **intergovernmental fiscal transfers are designed to reduce inequality across states.**

32. (d)

#### Context

- The ongoing crisis in West Asia has severely disrupted Indian coffee exports, stalling approximately 15–20% of shipments near the Persian Gulf, impacting key markets in West Asia and Europe.

#### Geographical Condition for Coffee production

- **Climate:** Coffee grows well in tropical climates. It requires a **warm, humid climate with mild winters.** Shade is essential for healthy growth, and coffee is often grown under tree cover.
- **Soil:** Requires **well-drained, fertile soils, rich in humus and organic matter.**
  - Soil should be slightly acidic, with a pH of **6.0–6.5.**

- **Temperature:** Ideal annual temperature ranges between **15°C and 28°C**.
  - Frost is harmful to **coffee plants**, and **extreme hot or dry conditions** also reduce yield.
- **Precipitation:** Coffee thrives in hilly regions with elevations of **600–1,600 metres** above sea level.
  - Sloping terrain ensures proper **drainage** and **prevents waterlogging**.
- **Major Coffee producing states** are **Karnataka** (largest producer, contributes nearly **70%** of India's coffee), Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

**33. (a)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** IRDAI has made Ind AS-based financial reporting mandatory from April 1, 2026. This marks a major change in accounting practices for the insurance sector.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** IRDAI is a statutory body created under the IRDA Act, 1999. Its role is to regulate, supervise, and develop the insurance sector in India. The banking sector in India is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



# INDIAN POLITY & CONSTITUTION

1. Consider the following statements with reference to the Controller General of Accounts of India (CGA):
1. It serves as the Principal Accounting Adviser to the Government and prepares monthly and annual analyses of government expenditure.
  2. It submits the Annual Appropriation Accounts and Union Finance Accounts to Parliament Article 150 of the Constitution.

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 Finance Commission, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. It is a Statutory body that recommends how tax revenues should be distributed among the Centre and various States in the country.
  2. The Centre is not legally bound to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

3. With reference to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), consider the following statements:
1. It is the apex decision-making body in India for matters related to national security and defence.
  2. It is chaired by the Defence Minister of India.
  3. The National Security Advisor acts as the secretary-level coordinator for issues within its purview.

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

4. With reference to the appointment of Governors in India, consider the following statements:
1. Under Article 155 of the Constitution of India, the Governor of a state is appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
  2. The Constitution mandates that the Union government must consult the Chief Minister of the concerned state before appointing a Governor.

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 Speaker of the Lok Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The Speaker is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha from among themselves after the general elections.
2. When a resolution for the removal of the Speaker is under consideration, the Speaker cannot preside over the sitting of the House.
3. The Speaker cannot participate in the debate on the resolution for his/her removal.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

6. With reference to the proposal of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) in India, consider the following statements:

1. It proposes simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies.
2. Implementing ONOE would require constitutional amendments.
3. India has never conducted simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

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

7. With reference to the election of members to the Rajya Sabha, consider the following statements:

1. The maximum strength of the Rajya Sabha is 250 members, out of which 10 members are nominated by the President.
2. The election of Rajya Sabha members is conducted through proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

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. Consider the following statements regarding the *Essential Commodities Act, 1955*:

1. It empowers the government to regulate production, supply and distribution of certain commodities.
2. It aims to prevent hoarding and black marketing.
3. It allows the government to impose stock limits on essential commodities.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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





18. The 26th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1971 is associated with which of the following?
- Abolition of Privy Purses and official recognition of former rulers of princely states.
  - Reduction of voting age from 21 years to 18 years.
  - Constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions.
  - Abolition of the Right to Property as a Fundamental Right.
19. Which of the following statements regarding the appointment of the Director General of Police (DGP) in states is correct as per the Prakash Singh judgment?
- The DGP is directly appointed by the Governor from any serving IPS officer.
  - The Union Home Ministry appoints the DGP of all states.
  - The DGP must be selected from a panel of three senior-most IPS officers shortlisted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
  - The DGP is selected through a nationwide competitive examination conducted by UPSC.
20. With reference to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:
- It is provided under Article 244 for the administration of tribal areas.
  - It applies to the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.
  - Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) under this Schedule have only executive powers and no legislative authority.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
21. With reference to adoption regulations in India under the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, consider the following statements:
- A child must be declared legally free for adoption by a Child Welfare Committee before being adopted.
  - Only orphaned children are eligible for adoption under CARA guidelines.
  - Single individuals, including divorced or widowed persons, are eligible to adopt.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
22. With reference to Parliamentary Standing Committees (PSCs) in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?
- They are permanent committees that function throughout the year.
  - They are constituted only to examine bills introduced in Parliament.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2



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

1. The Constitution of India explicitly mandates the conduct of a population census at regular intervals of 10 years.
2. The population census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

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

30. With reference to Article 51A(g) of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Fundamental Duty related to environmental protection.
2. It was added by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act and is part of Part IVA of the Constitution.
3. The judiciary has linked it with Article 21 to expand the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

31. With reference to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), consider the following statements:

1. It is a permanent committee of Parliament.
2. It consists of members from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

32. With reference to the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019*, consider the following statements:

1. It recognises the right of a transgender person to self-perceived gender identity without any requirement of certification.
2. It provides for the establishment of a National Council for Transgender Persons.
3. It includes 'persons with intersex variations' within the definition of transgender persons.
4. It explicitly grants marriage and adoption rights to transgender persons.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

33. With reference to regulation of mineral water in India, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is regulated by both FSSAI and BIS.
2. It must carry the ISI mark under BIS standard IS 13428.
3. It must have a stable mineral composition over time.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

34. Consider the following statements regarding the *Delimitation Commission of India*:

1. Its orders have the force of law and cannot be challenged in any court.
2. It is chaired by a serving judge of the Supreme Court.
3. The Chief Election Commissioner is a member of the Commission.

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   |

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)

**In News :** The Controller General of Accounts (CGA) launched the Government Bank Dashboard and the Government Bank Manual to strengthen the governance and efficiency of banks handling government transactions.

**Statements 1 and 2 are correct :** **Controller General of Accounts of India (CGA)** is under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance

- It is the Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India and is responsible for establishing and maintaining a technically sound Management Accounting System.
- The CGA prepares monthly and annual analyses of government expenditure, revenues, borrowings, and key fiscal indicators.
- It submits the Annual Appropriation Accounts (Civil) and Union Finance Accounts to Parliament under Article 150 of the Constitution, along with an M.I.S Report titled 'Accounts at a Glance' is prepared and circulated to Hon'ble Members of Parliament.

2. (b)

**Context**

- The Sixteenth Finance Commission presented its recommendations amid concerns over rising cess and the balance between efficiency and equity, raising questions about effective devolution and equalisation.

**What is the Finance Commission?**

- The Finance Commission is a **constitutional body** constituted by the **President of India** under **Article 280**, that recommends how tax revenues collected by the Central government should be distributed among the Centre and various States in the country.
- The Commission is **reconstituted every five years** and usually takes a couple of years to make its recommendations to the Centre.

- The Sixteenth Finance Commission was chaired by **Arvind Panagariya** and its recommendations cover the five-year award period from **2026–27 to 2030–31**.
  - The Centre is **not legally bound** to implement the suggestions made by the Finance Commission.

### 3. (c)

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the evolving situation in West Asia.

#### **About Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**

- It is the apex decision-making body in India responsible for matters related to national security and defence.
- It is **chaired by the Prime Minister**, it typically includes **key ministers** such as the Home Minister, Defence Minister, Finance Minister, and External Affairs Minister.
- The **National Security Advisor (NSA)** acts as a secretary-level coordinator for issues within its purview.

### 4. (a)

**Context:** A major gubernatorial reshuffle has taken place in India. R. N. Ravi, currently the Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been appointed as the Governor of West Bengal.

#### **About**

- In total, new Governors and Lieutenant Governors have been appointed across **nine States and Union Territories**.
- However, the Chief Minister of West Bengal stated that the state government was **not consulted**, despite a long-standing convention of doing so.
- But here's the key point: the Constitution does not require the Union government to consult states before appointing Governors.
- Under Article 155 of the Constitution of India, the Governor of a state is appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
- In practice, however, the President acts on the aid and advice of the Prime Minister and the Union Council of Ministers, which means the Union government effectively appoints and removes Governors.
- The Sarkaria Commission and the Punchhi Commission recommended amending Article 155 to ensure the Centre consults the Chief Minister before appointing a Governor. However, these recommendations **have not been implemented**.

### 5. (a)

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct: The Speaker of the Lok Sabha** is the presiding officer of the Lok Sabha, responsible for maintaining order and conducting the proceedings of the House.

- **Election:** The Speaker is elected by the members of the Lok Sabha from among themselves.
  - The election takes place after the general elections when the new Lok Sabha meets for the first time.
- **Removal:** The Speaker can be removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the members of the Lok Sabha.
  - 14 days' notice is required before moving the resolution.
  - When the resolution for removal is under consideration, the Speaker cannot preside over the sitting.

**Statement 3 is not correct: Right of the Speaker:** The Speaker can participate in the debate and defend himself/herself during the discussion on the removal resolution.

6. (a)

**In News:** Comparative international experience and constitutional principles raise concerns regarding **federalism, democratic accountability, and institutional design** for the proposed **'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE)** in India.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- The proposal of **One Nation, One Election (ONOE)** aims to conduct **simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies** so that elections across the country take place at the same time.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- Implementing ONOE would require **constitutional amendments**, particularly to provisions related to the **duration and dissolution of legislatures**, such as:
  - **Article 83:** Duration of Lok Sabha
  - **Article 172:** Duration of State Legislative Assemblies
- Possible changes to provisions related to **dissolution and President's Rule**.

**Statement 3 is not correct**

- India **did conduct simultaneous elections earlier**. Elections to the **Lok Sabha and State Assemblies were held together from 1951–52 until 1967**.
- The cycle broke due to **premature dissolution of assemblies and political instability**.

7. (b)

**Statement 1 is not correct:** Rajya Sabha has up to **250 members**, **12** of whom are nominated by the President for their special knowledge of literature, science, art or social service. The others are elected.

**Statement 2 is correct:** Unlike Lok Sabha, whose members are directly elected by citizens, Rajya Sabha members are **elected by state Assembly members** through the system of **proportional representation by a single, transferable vote**.

8. (d)

**In News:** Recently, the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) invoked the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** by notifying the **Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026** amid the **ongoing conflict in West Asia** and disruptions in LNG shipments through the **Strait of Hormuz**.

**Statement 1 is correct:** The **Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955** empowers the government to **regulate the production, supply, and distribution** of essential commodities to ensure availability and prevent shortages.

**Statement 2 is correct:** One of the key objectives of the Act is to **prevent hoarding, black marketing, and profiteering**, especially during shortages.

**Statement 3 is correct:** The government can **impose stock limits** on traders, wholesalers, and retailers to prevent hoarding and artificial price rise.

- However, after the **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020**, stock limits can generally be imposed **only under extraordinary circumstances** such as war, famine, natural calamity, and extraordinary price rise.

9. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Euthanasia is the act of deliberately ending a person's life to eliminate pain or suffering

- Ethicists differentiate between **active and passive euthanasia**.
- **Passive euthanasia** entails the deliberate **decision to withhold or withdraw medical interventions**, like life support, with the aim of permitting a person's natural death.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** **Active Euthanasia** is the intentional act of killing a terminally ill patient on voluntary request, by the direct intervention of a doctor for the purpose of the good of the patient. **It is illegal in India.**

**Statement 3 is correct:** **Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)** is a landmark Supreme Court of India judgment that legalised passive euthanasia and recognized "living wills" (advance medical directives) as valid, allowing individuals to decide against artificial life support if terminally ill or in a vegetative state.

10. (c)

#### Context

- Opposition parties are considering an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

#### Article 324 of Constitution

- Article 324 of the Constitution states that the Election Commission will comprise the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of Election Commissioners (ECs), as the President may decide.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for managing the preparation of electoral rolls and conducting elections to **Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President**.
- The Constitution specifies that the President will appoint the CEC and ECs, subject to the provisions of an Act of Parliament.

#### Constitutional Provisions for Removal of the CEC

- **Article 324(5)** of the Constitution of India provides that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- **A motion seeking the removal of the CEC** may be introduced in either House of Parliament and must specify the grounds for seeking removal.
- The motion must be supported by:
  - At least **100 members** of the Lok Sabha, or
  - At least **50 members** of the Rajya Sabha.
- Once the motion is admitted, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha **constitutes an inquiry committee** to investigate the allegations.
  - If the committee finds the charges proven, the **motion is taken up for voting in Parliament**.
- Both Houses must then pass the motion with a **two-thirds majority of those present and voting**. After both Houses approve the motion, the President issues the final order for removal.

11 (d)

**In News:** Recently, the **Supreme Court of India** ruled that **creamy layer status for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) cannot be determined solely based on parental income**, especially salary income.

- It ruled that treating children differently amounts to hostile discrimination, violating the principle of equality under the Constitution.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- The **Indra Sawhney (1992)** judgment introduced the **creamy layer exclusion** to prevent advanced sections within OBCs from taking most reservation benefits.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- The creamy layer principle applies to **OBC reservations in education and public employment** under Articles 15(4) and 16(4).

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The **Supreme Court recently held** that creamy layer status for **OBCs cannot be determined solely on the basis of parental income, particularly salary income.**
- It ruled that **treating children of PSU/private sector employees differently from** those of government employees in determining reservation eligibility amounts to hostile discrimination, violating the **principle of equality under the Constitution.**

**12. (c)****Both the statements are correct: Reservation for Women in India**

- **The Constitution 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts**, mandated the reservation of **one-third of seats for women** in Panchayati Raj institutions and offices of the chairperson at all levels of Panchayati Raj institutions, and in urban local bodies respectively.
  - Out of the total 1/3rd seats reserved for women, **33% had to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.**
- One-third of the seats of office-bearers and chairpersons at all levels had to be reserved for women as well.
- **106th Constitutional Amendment:** It reserves one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, including those reserved for SCs and STs.

**13. (c)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 applies to processing of digital personal data in India, including data collected offline but later digitised.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** It also applies outside India if the processing is related to offering goods or services to individuals in India, not based on the location of servers.

**Statement 3 is correct:** The Act establishes the Data Protection Board of India to adjudicate complaints and cases of non-compliance with the provisions of the Act.

**14. (b)**

**In News:** Recently, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences highlighted the **critical role of geodesy** in strengthening **India's geospatial ecosystem, governance and technological sovereignty** in the inaugural session of **GeodCon-26.**

**Statement 1 is not correct**

- The **National Geospatial Policy 2022** actually **liberalises the geospatial sector** and **encourages private sector participation.** It aims to democratise access to geospatial data rather than impose complete restrictions.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- The policy proposes the development of **national geospatial infrastructure**, including **high-precision geodetic reference frameworks**, to support mapping, navigation, infrastructure development and governance.

15. (d)

**Statement 1 is correct:** LGBTQIA+ is an umbrella term for **lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual persons**, with '+' representing other identities that are not specifically included in these letters.

**Statement 2 is correct:** *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)* decriminalised consensual homosexual acts (Section 377 partially struck down).

**Statement 3 is correct:** *NALSA v. Union of India (2014)* recognised the right to self-identify gender.

- It recognises **transgender as the "third gender"** upholding their fundamental rights.

16. (c)

**Both the statements are correct:** **Supplementary Demands for Grants** refers to an additional funding request made by the government when the allocated funds for a particular purpose in the annual budget are insufficient or when a need arises for unforeseen expenditure during the financial year.

- It is governed under **Article 115** of the Indian Constitution and requires the approval of Parliament and the necessary funds are drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)
- **Types of Supplementary Grants:**
  - **Supplementary Grant:** For additional funds over and above the amount approved in the annual budget.
  - **Excess Grant:** Granted when money spent exceeds the amount sanctioned in the budget.
  - **Token Grant:** A small sum (₹1) is sought for the Parliament's approval to reallocate funds within different heads of accounts.
  - **Advances from Contingency Fund:** For meeting urgent, unforeseen expenditures, later regularized through supplementary grants.

17. (d)

**In News:** In India, **euthanasia and the right to die with dignity** has evolved through judicial interpretation of **Article 21 of the Constitution**, which guarantees the **Right to Life and Personal Liberty**.

- Recently, the Supreme Court's decision to **allow withdrawal of life support** under established legal guidelines highlights the continuing development of India's jurisprudence on **end-of-life care and dignity in death**.

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Supreme Court in *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)* held that the **Right to Die with Dignity is part of Article 21** (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).

**Statement 2 is correct:** The Court recognised **Advance Medical Directives (Living Wills)**. These allow individuals to specify that life-sustaining treatment should not be continued if they become terminally ill or permanently incapacitated.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The judgment permitted **passive euthanasia**, meaning **withdrawal or withholding of life-support treatment** (such as ventilators or artificial nutrition) under strict safeguards and medical board approval.

18. (a)

After Independence, about **560 princely states** acceded to India through the Instrument of Accession.

- Even after integration, **princes retained several special privileges, including:**

- Privy purses (state-funded allowances).
- Use of royal titles and ceremonial honours.
- The right to fly royal flags on residences and cars.
- Special vehicle number plates bearing the name or initials of the princely state (e.g., J for Jaipur, B for Baroda).
- Informal immunity on roads, where police rarely fined or prosecuted royal vehicles.
- The privileges ended with the **26th Amendment of the Constitution of India, 1971**.

**19. (c)****Context**

- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has revised the rules for the empanelment of the State Director General of Police and Head of Police Force.

**Key Changes in the Rule**

- **Prior approval of the Supreme Court required for delay:** State governments must now obtain permission from the Supreme Court of India if there is any delay in sending the list of eligible DGP-rank officers to the Union Public Service Commission.
- **Three-month advance submission rule:** States must send proposals at least three months before the retirement of the incumbent DGP.
- **No concept of “acting DGP”:** The Court reiterated that States cannot appoint an acting DGP, as this concept does not exist under the guidelines laid down in the landmark Prakash Singh vs Union of India case.
- **UPSC cannot condone excessive delays:** There is no legal provision allowing UPSC to overlook major delays and proceed with empanelment. Delays may be considered only in exceptional situations such as:
  - Death of the incumbent DGP
  - Resignation
  - Premature relieving from office.

**Prakash Singh Judgment on Police Reforms**

- The judgment in the **Prakash Singh vs Union of India case (2006)** laid down police reforms, including guidelines for appointing State DGPs. Key directions include:
  - DGP must be selected from a **panel of three senior IPS officers** shortlisted by UPSC.
  - The selected DGP should have a **minimum tenure of two years**.
  - The process should **ensure merit-based selection** and insulation from political interference.

**20. (a)**

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct:** The Sixth Schedule is provided under Article 244 for administration of tribal areas.

- It applies to Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** ADCs have legislative, executive, and some judicial powers, not just executive.

**21. (c)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** A child must be declared legally free for adoption by a Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

**Statement 2 is not correct:** Not only orphans; abandoned and surrendered children are also eligible.

**Statement 3 is correct:** Single individuals (unmarried/divorced/widowed) can adopt. The minimum age difference between the adoptive parent and child should be 25 years.

22. (a)

#### Context

- A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance report has criticized the Ministry of Planning and NITI Aayog for underutilisation of funds and poor financial management, with spending falling below 36% in FY24 and FY25.

#### What are Parliamentary Standing Committees?

- Parliamentary Standing Committees (PSCs) are **permanent committees of Parliament** constituted to examine, scrutinise, and oversee the functioning of the executive.
- These committees **continue to function throughout the year**, unlike ad hoc committees which are temporary.
- **Types of Parliamentary Standing Committees:**
  - **Department-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs):** It examines demands for Grants of ministries, bills referred to them and policy issues. Example: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance
  - **Financial Committees:** Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Estimates Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings.
  - **Other Standing Committees:** Business Advisory Committee, Committee on Privileges and Rules Committee.

23. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Standing Committees are permanent bodies. They are constituted regularly and perform ongoing functions such as examining policies, budgets, and legislation.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Ad hoc Committees are temporary and created for a specific purpose. Once they complete their assigned work and submit their report, they are dissolved.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Railway Convention Committee is not a standing committee, it is an Ad Hoc committee.

24. (a)

**Context:** Protest rallies were held in Ladakh recently for **Statehood status and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule.**

#### Sixth Schedule of the Constitution

- **The Sixth Schedule** was adopted under **Article 244** of the Constitution with provisions for formation of **autonomous administrative divisions within a state.**
  - The Sixth Schedule is applicable to what are officially called as 'tribal areas' in the States of **Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.** There are 10 such 'tribal areas' at present in these four States.
  - These divisions, in the form of ADCs, were granted certain **legislative, judicial and administrative autonomy** within the state.
- **Composition:** According to the Sixth Schedule, the ADCs administering a region within a state have **30 members** with a **term of five years.**
  - **The Bodoland Territorial Council** in Assam is an exception to this with more **than 40 members** and rights to make laws on **39 issues.**

- **Jurisdiction:** ADCs can make laws, rules and regulations with regard to land, forest, water, agriculture, village councils, health, sanitation, village and town level policing, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs, and mining, among other issues.
  - ADCs also have **powers to form courts to hear cases** where both parties are members of Scheduled Tribes and the maximum sentence is less than **5 years in prison**.
- **The Governor** is the central authority for the functioning of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) and Regional Councils.

25. (b)

#### Context

- Recently the Chief Justice of India made the observation that India may need to explore a mechanism for **compulsory voting** to enhance voter participation and strengthen democratic engagement.

#### Right to Vote in India

- **Article 326** of the Indian Constitution provides that every citizen of India, not less than **18 years of age** is entitled to be registered as a voter for Elections to the House of the People and Legislative Assembly of every State on the basis of **adult suffrage**.
- However, voting is a **statutory right**, not a fundamental right (as held by the Supreme Court of India in various judgments).

#### What is Compulsory Voting?

- Compulsory voting mandates citizens to participate in elections, failing which penalties may be imposed.
- It is practised in over **20 countries** including;
  - **Australia:** Fines for non-voters; turnout consistently above 90% since 1924
  - **Belgium:** Oldest system (1893); turnout often 85–90%
  - **Brazil:** Mandatory for 18–70 age group.
- **Indian Experience:** Gujarat became the **first state** to introduce compulsory voting in local bodies through the **Gujarat Local Authorities Laws (Amendment) Act, 2009**; however, the Gujarat High Court stayed its implementation, highlighting legal concerns.

26. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Inquiry Wing is provided under **Section 11 of the Lokpal Act, 2013**. It is a mandatory institutional mechanism under the law.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Its main role is to carry out preliminary inquiries into complaints of corruption.

27. (c)

**Option (a) is incorrect:** Preliminary investigation is done by the Inquiry Wing, not the Prosecution Wing.

- **Option (b) is incorrect:** Financial auditing is done by institutions like CAG, not Lokpal wings.
- **Option (c) is correct and Option (d) is incorrect :** **Section 12 of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013** obligates the Lokpal to constitute a **Prosecution Wing (headed by a Director of Prosecution)** for the purpose of prosecution of public servants in relation to any complaint by the Lokpal.

28. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct: State Subject:** Water is primarily under **Entry 17 of State List (Seventh Schedule)**.

**Statement 2 is not correct: Regulation of inter-state rivers under Entry 56 of Union List.**

- Entry 56 of the Union List (List I) in the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution empowers Parliament to regulate and develop inter-State rivers and river valleys.
- This authority applies to the extent that such regulation is declared by Parliament by law to be necessary in the public interest.

**Statement 3 is correct: Article 262:** Parliament can adjudicate inter-state water disputes.

29. (a)

**Context:** The Union Government has indicated that it may introduce an amendment Bill to carry out delimitation based on the **2011 Census**.

- The objective is to implement the **Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023** before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

**Census in India**

- **A census is a survey of the population** of an area that includes collecting details of a country's demographics including **age, sex and occupation**.
  - The census, typically conducted **every ten years** to update the **National Population Register (NPR)**.
- **The Constitution mandates** that enumeration is carried out but the **Census of India Act of 1948** does not specify its timing or periodicity.
- The population census is conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

30. (d)

**All three statements are correct: Article 51A(g)** is a fundamental duty (Environment Protection).

- It was added by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act** and falls **under Part IVA of the Constitution**.
- It mandates every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, rivers, lakes, and wildlife.
- Courts have linked Article 51A(g) with Article 21, expanding the right to a clean and healthy environment.

31. (b)

**Context:** The Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha and referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for detailed examination.

**What is a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)?**

- A Joint Parliamentary Committee is an **ad hoc committee** constituted by Parliament to **examine a specific Bill or issue in detail**.
- It includes members from **both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha**, ensuring wider political representation.
- It is **constituted through a motion** adopted by one House and agreed to by the other.

32. (c)

**In News:** Recently, the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** was passed by Rajya Sabha (*earlier passed by Lok Sabha*) to amend the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** that suffers from **conceptual confusion between sex, gender identity, and intersex variations**, and weak implementation mechanisms.

**Statement 1 is not correct**

- The Act does **not provide absolute self-identification**. It requires a **certificate of identity issued by the District Magistrate**. ; Pure self-identification (as per NALSA) is diluted.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- The Act establishes a **National Council for Transgender Persons** for policy formulation and monitoring.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The definition of transgender persons **includes ‘persons with intersex variations’**, which has been criticised for conflating distinct categories.

**Statement 4 is not correct**

- The Act **does not provide marriage or adoption rights**, leaving a major gap in civil rights.

**33. (d)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** In India, natural mineral water is regulated by both the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). This ensures quality and safety standards.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** It must carry the ISI mark under BIS standard IS 13428. This helps consumers identify certified natural mineral water.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** One key requirement is that the mineral composition must remain stable over time. This distinguishes natural mineral water from ordinary purified packaged water.

**34. (c)**

**In News:** The upcoming delimitation becomes a pivotal moment in India’s democratic evolution as it affects federal balance, representation, and governance outcomes.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- The orders of the Delimitation Commission have the **force of law** and **cannot be challenged in any court**.

**Statement 2 is not correct**

- The Commission is chaired by a **retired Supreme Court judge, not a serving judge**.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** is a member of the Commission.









19. Consider the following statements regarding the Litani River:

1. It is the longest river flowing entirely within Lebanon.
2. It originates in the Beqaa Valley and drains into the Mediterranean Sea near Tyre.
3. It flows directly into the Red Sea.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

20. Consider the following statements regarding the Dwarka Basin:

1. It is a sedimentary basin located off the coast of Gujarat.
2. It lies near the Kathiawar Peninsula.
3. It is primarily known as a volcanic plateau formed by basaltic lava flows.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

21. Zojila Pass, recently seen in the news, is located in:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| (a) Himachal Pradesh  | (b) Uttarakhand |
| (c) Jammu and Kashmir | (d) Sikkim      |

22. Consider the following mountain ranges:

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Zagros   | 2. Alburz |
| 3. Khorasan |           |

Which of the above are located in Iran?

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

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (d)

**In News:** The reported killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei marks a **tectonic shift in West Asian geopolitics**. His sudden death amid an ongoing conflict with the **US-Israel alliance** has triggered uncertainty within Iran and **across the Middle East and beyond**.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- Iran shares land borders with **Armenia**, and **Azerbaijan** (including the Nakhchivan exclave).

**Statement 2 is correct**

- Iran shares a land border with **Turkmenistan**. It **does not** border **Uzbekistan** (Uzbekistan is separated from Iran by Turkmenistan and Afghanistan).

**Statement 3 is correct**

- Iran borders Afghanistan (east), and Pakistan (southeast).

2. (c)

**In News :** The World Meteorological Organization forecasts a high likelihood of El Niño developing in the latter half of 2026, following the fading of the current La Niña into ENSO-neutral conditions.

**All the statements are correct :** **El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** is a recurring natural phenomenon characterised by fluctuating ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, coupled with changes in the atmosphere, which have a major influence on climate patterns in various parts of the world.

- **Phases :**
  - **El Niño :** It refers to an abnormal Warming of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It is known to suppress monsoon rainfall.
    - ♦ It weakens easterly winds or reverses them; reduces rainfall over Indonesia and increases it over the tropical Pacific.
  - **La Niña –** Cooling of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean; strengthens easterly winds; increases rainfall over Indonesia and decreases it over the central tropical Pacific.
  - **Neutral –** Sea surface temperatures are near average; neither El Niño nor La Niña dominates, though sometimes ocean and atmosphere conditions may not fully align.
- **Impacts on India :** In India, El Niño is associated with decreased rainfall and higher temperatures, while La Niña is associated with increased rainfall and hence lower temperatures.

3. (b)

**In News:** Israeli pre-emptive strikes in Iran, with US support, have raised concerns about possible escalation into a wider West Asian conflict, impacting global energy security and geopolitics.

- Israel declared a **state of emergency**, anticipating retaliation by Iran, while the **US reportedly supported the strike**, describing it as a **pre-emptive action to prevent future threats**.
- Iran shares **land borders with 7 countries**. These are: **Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**.

4. (b)

Tehran's Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, sustained damage from shockwaves and debris caused by US-Israeli airstrikes.

**About**

- Golestan Palace is a historic royal complex that served as the official residence of the **Qajar dynasty** and is one of the oldest historic monuments in Tehran.
- The origins of the complex date back to the **Safavid Dynasty**, when Tehran first gained importance as a political centre. Later rulers expanded and renovated the palace complex.
- Golestan Palace reflects a blend of traditional **Persian architecture and Western influences** introduced during the 19th century.
- **Inscribed by UNESCO in 2013**, it preserves cultural archives, early Iranian photography, and sites of historic coronations.

5. (c)

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed President of Finland Alexander Stubb, who is on a state visit to India.

**About: Finland**

- It is part of Scandinavia, a geographical region in northern Europe, and shares land borders with **Norway, Sweden, and Russia**. The Baltic Sea borders the country to the south and southwest.
- Finland is heavily forested, with over 70 percent of the country covered by thick woodlands. Called "land of a thousand lakes," Finland actually has 187,888 of them.
- **Major Mountain Ranges:** Scandinavian Mountains

- **Major Rivers:** Kemi, Luiro, Muonio, Oulu, Teno, Torne
- **Capital:** Helsinki



6. (d)

**All three statements are correct:** The Strait of Hormuz lies between **Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south**, linking the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

- At its narrowest point it is about **33 kilometres** wide, with shipping lanes just a few kilometres across in either direction.
- Nearly half of India's crude oil and around 60 per cent of its natural gas imports pass through the strait.

7. (b)

**In News :** The Telangana government is planning to make the Musi River perennial and develop its banks, risking displacement of longtime residents.

**Statement 1 is not correct but statement 2 is correct :** The Musi River, with an aggregate length of about 260 km, is created by the confluence of two rivulets – **Musa and Esi** originating in **Ananthagiri** hillocks of Vikarabad district in **Telangana**. The Musi river is one of the major tributaries of **Krishna**.

- It flows through Hyderabad for 55 km and looks like an open sewage channel most of the year, except during the monsoon.

8. (a)

**Context**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of "black rain" and toxic air pollution in Tehran, following attacks on oil facilities.

**What is "Black Rain"?**

- "Black rain" refers to **rainfall contaminated with soot, ash, oil particles, and chemical pollutants** that are released into the atmosphere after large fires or explosions.
- Instead of **clear water droplets**, the rain carries **dark, oily particles**, giving it a **black or grey appearance**.
- Such rain usually occurs when **massive fires release pollutants into the air and rainfall absorbs these particles** before reaching the ground.
- Historically, similar phenomena were observed after the **Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945**, when radioactive soot and debris mixed with rainwater.

9. (a)

**Context**

- Recent discussions about unusual wildlife habitats have highlighted the presence of bull sharks in Iran’s Karun River near the city of Ahvaz.

**About Karun River**

- The Karun River is the **largest** and only navigable river in Iran. It originates in the **Zagros Mountains**.
- It flows through southwestern Iran and eventually joins the **Shatt al-Arab**, which is formed by the confluence of the **Tigris River** and **Euphrates River**.
- The Shatt al-Arab then empties into the **Persian Gulf**.

10. (b)

- Iraq shares land borders with **Iran, Jordan, Turkiye, Syria, Saudi Arabia** and **Kuwait**.
- Qatar does not share a border with Iraq.



11. (c)

**Context:** Recently, U.S. forces struck military targets at **Kharg Island** in Iran.

**About Kharg Island**

- Often referred to as the **“orphan pearl,”** Kharg Island is a small island in the **northeastern Persian Gulf**, approximately 25 kilometres off the coast of **Iran’s Khuzestan Province**.
- Despite its modest size, it is the single most important oil export terminal in Iran and one of the most strategically significant **energy chokepoints** in the world.
- Almost all Iranian crude destined for international markets is loaded here before passing through the **Strait of Hormuz** into global shipping lanes.



12. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Nor’westers are pre-monsoon thunderstorms common in eastern India and Bangladesh.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** They occur during March to May, not in winter.

**Statement 3 is correct:** They are known as “Kalbaisakhi” in West Bengal and nearby regions.

13. (a)

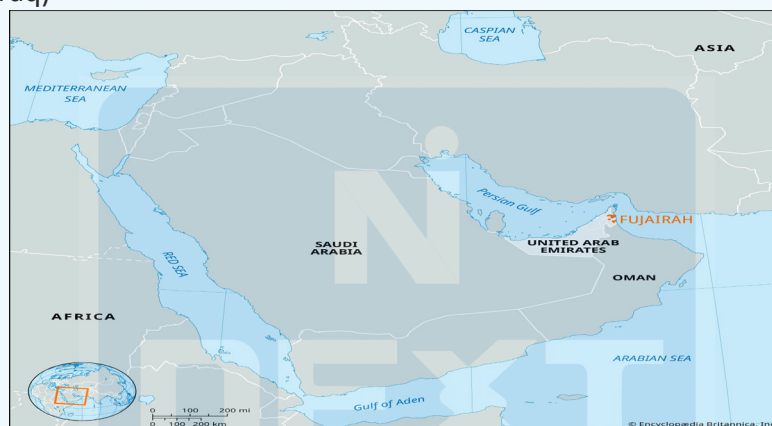
**Context:** A targeted drone attack happened at the **Port of Fujairah** in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**About**

- It is the only multi-purpose maritime facility on the east coast of the United Arab Emirates.
- Strategically located just **70 nautical miles outside the Strait of Hormuz**, the Port provides an essential economic link between Europe and Asia.

**Other Ports in the News Due to Ongoing West Asia Conflict**

- Ras Tanura (Saudi Arabia)
- Jebel Ali (UAE)
- Umm Qasr (Iraq)



14. (b)

**Context:** **NMDC Limited** has become India’s first mining company to achieve **50 million tonnes (MT)** of iron ore production in a single financial year (FY 2025–26).

**About Iron Ore**

- Iron ore refers to **rocks and minerals** from which metallic iron is extracted.
- Iron ore is categorized into **four main types based on iron content and quality:** **Magnetite** (best quality, >70% iron), **Hematite** (most important industrial ore, 60-70% iron), **Limonite** (lower grade, 40-60% iron), and **Siderite** (poor quality, <40% iron).
- **India is the 4th largest producer**, after Australia, Brazil, and China.
- **Odisha leads in production**, followed by Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

**About NMDC**

- Established in **1958** to develop India’s iron ore resources.
- India’s **largest iron ore producer** and a **Navratna CPSE** under the **Ministry of Steel**.
- Production increased from **~10 MT (1978)** to **50 MT (FY26)**, reflecting sustained growth.
  - Supports India’s target of 300 MT steel production capacity by 2030.

15. (a)

**Context**

- A new study by scientists from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) found the flash flood in Dharali village in Uttarakhand was triggered by the **collapse of an ice patch in the nivation area of the Srikanta glacier**.

**About**

- **Nivation** is defined as the **erosion of the ground beneath and around a snow bank**, primarily as a result of **alternate freezing and thawing**.
- This can form a **nivation hollow**, which gradually becomes deeper when snow repeatedly accumulates in the same place.

**Nivation area of the Srikanta glacier**

- It lies in the upper Bhagirathi river basin in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.
- Srikanta Glacier is a small- to medium-sized valley glacier with a height of 6,133 m, around 9.8 km upstream of Dharali.
- The glacier has steep accumulation and ablation zones, seasonal snow cover, and extensive nivation areas.

**16. (d)**

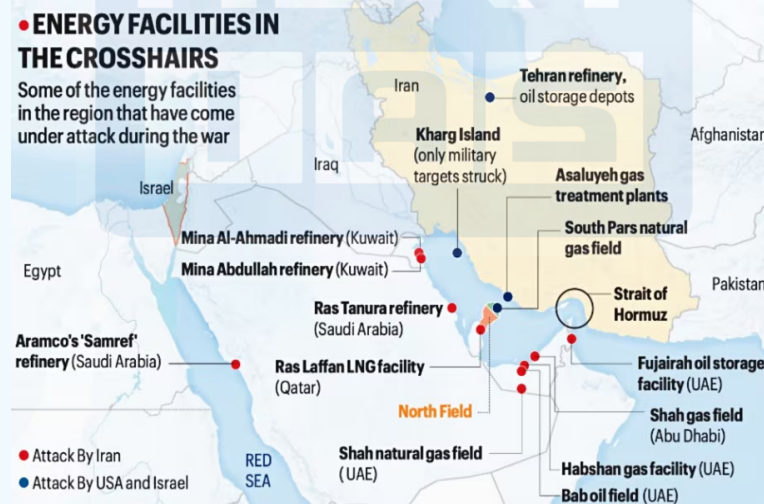
**Context:** Recent attacks on South Pars and Ras Laffan have heightened tensions in the Persian Gulf and raised global energy security concerns.

**About South Pars Gas Field**

- Located in the **Persian Gulf**, off Iran’s southern coast.
- Part of the **world’s largest natural gas field**, shared with Qatar (called *North Dome* on the Qatari side).
- Accounts for around **70%** of Iran’s natural gas production.

**About Ras Laffan Industrial City**

- Located in **Qatar**, on the Persian Gulf coast.
- One of the **world’s largest LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas)** export hubs. Under normal conditions, about **one-fifth** of the world’s LNG exports come from this single complex.



**17. (c)**

**Context**

- Iranian missile strikes on southern Israel have left scenes of chaos in Dimona a town known as “Little India” for its large Indian-origin population

**About**

- Dimona, tucked away in the Negev desert, is known for housing Israel’s highly guarded nuclear facility.
- It hosts the secretive **Negev Nuclear Research Center**, widely believed to be the core of Israel’s **undeclared nuclear programme**.

18. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Diego Garcia is located in the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean. It occupies a central and strategic position in this region.

**Statement 2 is correct:** It is a joint US–UK military base used for logistics and long-range operations. It plays a key role in military missions in West Asia and surrounding regions.

**Statement 3 is correct:** Diego Garcia serves as an important logistics and bomber base. It supports long-range military operations, especially in West Asia, due to its strategic location.

19. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Litani River is the longest river that flows entirely within Lebanon. It is an important freshwater resource for the country.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The river originates in the **Beqaa Valley**, flows southward, and later turns west to empty into the Mediterranean Sea near Tyre. This makes it geographically and strategically important.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The river does not flow into the Red Sea. It drains into the Mediterranean Sea, which is located to the west of Lebanon.

20. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Dwarka Basin is a **sedimentary geological basin** located off the Gujarat coast. Such basins preserve ancient deposits and are useful for studying Earth's past environments.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** It is situated near the **Kathiawar Peninsula**, which makes it important both geographically and archaeologically. Its coastal location has contributed to marine sediment deposition over long periods.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The basin is not a volcanic plateau. It is made up of marine sedimentary rock layers rather than lava-based formations.

21. (c)

#### Context

- An **avalanche** at the **Zojila Pass** claimed multiple lives, raising concerns over traffic management and safety protocols on this high-risk mountain highway.
  - An avalanche is a rapid flow of snow down a slope, such as a hill or mountain.

#### Zojila Pass

- It is one of the **most critical and challenging high-altitude passes** in the world.
- It is located at 3,528 metres in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It is a vital link between the **Kashmir Valley and Ladakh**.
- It is known for its strategic importance and stunning Himalayan scenery.

22. (c)

**Context:** The US Central Command (CENTCOM) sent 3,500 American sailors and marines for possible ground military operations in Iran.

#### About Iran

- Iran is bordered by the Caspian Sea to the north, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan to the east, Pakistan to the southeast, the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the south, and Iraq and Turkey to the west.
- The Iranian Plateau dominates the country's interior, surrounded by mountain ranges like the **Zagros, Alburz, and Khorasan Mountains**.



# GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/ INITIATIVES

1. Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) is administered by which Ministry?
  - (a) Ministry of Home Affairs
  - (b) Ministry of Rural Development
  - (c) Ministry of Finance
  - (d) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
2. Which of the following statements are correct about the SHINE app recently launched by the Indian Railway?
  - (a) It integrates ticketing, grievances and travel services in one platform.
  - (b) It is a unique train app that displays live train status and up-to-date schedules
  - (c) It provides real-time train tracking and enables digital food ordering on trains.
  - (d) It allow women employees to lodge workplace sexual harassment complaints.
3. With reference to the PM SVANidhi Scheme, consider the following statements:
  1. It was launched in 2020 to provide affordable working capital loans to street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
  2. Beneficiaries are eligible for a UPI-linked RuPay Credit Card after repayment of the second loan tranche.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. The Orunodoi Scheme, recently seen in the news, is implemented by which state government?
  - (a) Tripura
  - (b) Meghalaya
  - (c) Manipur
  - (d) Assam
5. With reference to the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), consider the following statements:
  1. It aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to every rural household.
  2. It is implemented by the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
  3. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 1 and 2 only
  - (c) 2 and 3 only
  - (d) 1, 2 and 3



- 11.** With reference to the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), consider the following statements:
1. It aims to develop “future-ready” industrial parks integrated with the PM GatiShakti programme.
  2. The scheme provides for the development of industrial parks ranging between 10 to 100 acres.
  3. The funding model involves participation from the Central Government, State Governments, and the private sector.

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.** Consider the following statements regarding the expected outcomes of the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme:

1. It is expected to attract significant private investment and generate employment.
2. States will be encouraged to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for future projects.
3. It aims to reduce dependence on renewable energy sources.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

- 13.** Consider the following statements regarding the RELIEF Scheme:

1. It provides credit insurance cover to exporters affected by disruptions in West Asia.
2. It ensures insurance premiums at reduced rates compared to pre-conflict levels.
3. It focuses particularly on supporting MSMEs.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

- 14.** With reference to the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. The IVFRT Scheme was first approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2010.
2. It aims to interlink immigration, visa issuance, and registration of foreigners in India.
3. The scheme mandates physical verification for all visa applications to enhance security.

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 PRISM-SG Portal:

1. It is related to improving coordination in highway and railway infrastructure projects.
2. It is mainly intended for management of airport runway construction.
3. It is designed to digitise approval and inspection processes for steel girder works.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

16. With reference to UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) Scheme, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The scheme operates on a market-based mechanism where airlines bid for routes supported by Viability Gap Funding (VGF).
2. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Tourism.

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. Consider the following statements regarding the IVFRT Scheme:

1. It is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan.
2. It is implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs.
3. It aims to create an integrated digital system for immigration and visa management.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

18. With reference to the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It was launched by the Ministry of Power in 2024 to promote renewable energy.
2. The scheme subsumes the Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS-2024).
3. It provides demand incentives for electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and e-trucks.

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. Which of the following best explains why battery energy storage systems (BESS) are being considered under PM-KUSUM 2.0?

- (a) To replace solar pumps completely with diesel generators
- (b) To store surplus solar energy and supply power when demand remains high but solar generation falls
- (c) To reduce the need for agricultural electricity during daytime
- (d) To eliminate the role of state DISCOMs in rural electricity supply

20. Consider the following statements regarding PM-KUSUM:

1. It is implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
2. It aims to promote solarisation of agricultural pumps.
3. The State Government covers 40% as subsidy.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

## EXPLANATIONS

1. (d)

**Context**

- Twenty-one MPs recommended works outside the State or constituency they were elected from or are associated with, using their Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds.

**About Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)**

- **The scheme was launched in 1993** with the objective to enable MPs to **recommend works of developmental nature** with emphasis on the **creation of durable community assets** based on the locally felt needs to be taken up in their Constituencies.
- **The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has been responsible for the policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism for implementation of the Scheme.
- **District Authority:** District Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner will generally be the District Authority to implement MPLADS in the district.
- **Financial Allocation:**
  - Each MP is entitled to recommend works worth **₹5 crore** per financial year.
  - **Funds are non-lapsable** and are released in installments subject to utilisation conditions.
- **Area of Operation:**
  - **Elected members of the Lok Sabha** can recommend works within the district that fall under their constituency.
  - **Elected members of the Rajya Sabha** can recommend works within the State from which they are elected.
  - **Nominated MPs** can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- **Exceptions Under MPLADS:**
  - In the event of “Calamity of severe nature” in any part of the country, an MP can recommend works up to a maximum of **Rs.50 lakh** for the affected district. Whether a calamity is of severe nature or not, will be **decided by the Government of India**.
  - If an elected Member of Parliament, finds the need to contribute MPLADS funds, to a place outside that State/UT, Or outside the constituency within the states or both, the MP can recommend eligible works, under these Guidelines **up to a maximum of Rs.10 lakh** in a financial year.

2. (d)

**In News :** Recently, the Indian Railways launched the SHINE app on International Women’s Day to enhance safety and empowerment at work.

**Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment (SHINE) app** is mobile app for women employees to lodge complaints about sexual harassment in the workplace.

- It is designed to maintain confidentiality and ensure complaints are addressed quickly by the Internal Complaints Committee, in line with **Visakha guidelines (1997) and government instructions**.
- Complaints can be filed through the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) and the Employee Self Service portal.
- **Coverage:** For women employees of Indian Railways.

## 3. (c)

**Both the statements are correct: PM SVANidhi Scheme was launched** in 2020, as part of the government's COVID-19 economic relief package.

- **Objective:** Provide affordable working capital loans to street vendors affected by the pandemic.
- **Implementing Agencies:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs & Department of Financial Services.
- **Digital Empowerment:** UPI-linked RuPay Credit Card for beneficiaries after repayment of the second loan.

## 4. (d)

**In News:** The Assam Chief Minister announced plans to transfer ₹9,000 to approximately 40 lakh beneficiary families under the **Orunodoi scheme** through **direct benefit transfer (DBT)**.

**Orunodoi scheme**

- **Orunodoi' or Arunodoi Scheme** is a new scheme of the Government of Assam launched in 2020.
- It envisages women empowerment, poverty alleviation and socio-economic inclusion of financially vulnerable women of the state through sustained financial assistance on a monthly basis, so that they are assured of minimum monthly cash flow.

**Benefits**

- The Assam government's Orunodoi 3.0 Scheme provides financial support of ₹1,250 per month to women from low-income families via Direct Benefit Transfer.
- The amount covers various essential expenses: ₹400 for medicines, ₹200 for a 50% subsidy on 4 kg of pulses, ₹80 for a 50% sugar subsidy, ₹150 for fruits and vegetables, ₹150 for other essential needs, ₹170 for COVID-19-related expenses, and ₹250 for a subsidy on 50 units of electricity.

## 5. (d)

**Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** to 2028

**About Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**

- **Type:** Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- **Background:** The National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) was restructured and subsumed into JJM.
- **Objective:** To ensure **Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC)** to every rural household with **55 litres per capita per day (lpcd)** of potable drinking water.
  - It also seeks to certify all **Gram Panchayats** as **"Har Ghar Jal"**.
- **Coverage and Extension**
  - Launched in **August 2019** with the aim of achieving **100% rural tap water coverage by 2024**. However, the programme reached about **81% coverage**, leading to its **extension till 2028** under **JJM 2.0**.
- **Digital Monitoring Framework:** A national digital platform called **"Sujalam Bharat"** will be introduced to digitally map the drinking water supply system **from source to tap**.
  - Each village will be assigned a **unique "Sujal Gaon / Service Area ID"**.
- **Progress:** Tap water access in rural India has expanded rapidly, rising from 3.23 crore households (16.7%) to an additional 12.48 crore households connected since then.

- **Funding Pattern:** 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 100% for Union Territories and 50:50 – Other States.

6. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, introduced in 1998, was designed to simplify and expedite farmers’ access to short-term institutional credit for crop production.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** It provides working capital and investment credit for allied activities and covers post-harvest and marketing expenses, thereby offering comprehensive financial support to enhance farm incomes.

- KCC also covers allied activities, post-harvest expenses, and marketing needs, **not just crop cultivation.**

**Statement 3 is correct: Eligible Beneficiaries of KCC:** It extends coverage to:

- individual farmers and joint borrowers who are owner-cultivators,
- tenant farmers, oral lessees, and sharecroppers.
- In addition, the scheme also includes Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), including groups formed by tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

7. (b)

**Statement 1 is not correct:** PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) is a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the central government and implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare—not a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Ministry of Rural Development.

**Statement 2 is correct:** Financial assistance of ₹6,000 annually is transferred directly to eligible landholding farmers’ Aadhaar-seeded bank accounts in three equal installments via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

**Statement 3 is correct:** Beneficiary identification and data upload occur through State Governments and Union Territory administrations’ land records.

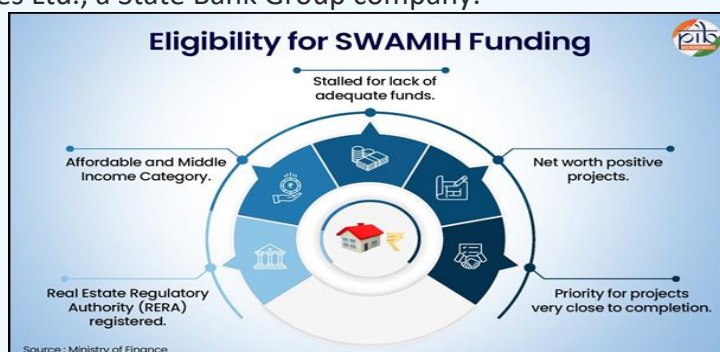
8. (a)

**Context**

- The Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Investment Fund (**SWAMIH**) has emerged as a key policy initiative for India’s Housing Sector.

**About**

- Launched in **2019**, SWAMIH provides last-mile financing to housing projects affected by financial constraints.
- The fund is sponsored by the **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India, and is managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd., a State Bank Group company.



- **Impact and Outcomes:** Over 58,596 homes completed so far under SWAMIH, with more than 1 lakh homes expected, benefiting over 2.38 lakh people.

- Revival of projects has generated 30,000+ jobs and significant demand for construction materials.

9. (a)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The National Quantum Mission (NQM) is implemented by the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

**Statement 2 is correct:** One of its core aims is to make India a global leader in quantum technologies.

**Statement 3 not correct:** The mission is not limited to academic research; it explicitly promotes both scientific and industrial R&D, aiming to build a complete ecosystem.

10. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** PM-POSHAN provides one hot cooked meal to students in government and aided schools up to Class 8. It is a continuation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme with a broader focus on nutrition and education.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It is a centrally sponsored scheme, meaning both the Centre and States share the funding. It is not fully funded by the Central Government alone.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The scheme aims to address hunger while also improving school attendance, retention, and learning outcomes. Better nutrition supports better concentration and academic performance among students.

11. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Union Cabinet approved the **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)**, with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore.

- **Aim:** To create **100 “future ready”** industrial parks that will integrate with the **PM GatiShakti programme** so that they can avail of that programme’s multi-modal connectivity and last-mile access.
  - These parks will **set new benchmarks** in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability, reducing inefficiencies, and enhancing productivity across sectors.

**Statement 2 is not correct: Land Use:** Industrial parks ranging from **100 to 1,000 acres will be taken up for the development.**

**Statement 3 is correct: Funding:** While the Central government will provide funding of up to Rs 1 crore per acre, the scheme is meant to include the involvement of the respective State governments as well as the private sector.

12. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The scheme is expected to attract around ₹15,000 crore in investment. It will also create employment opportunities during construction and operation phases, especially in rural areas.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** States will be incentivised to prepare DPRs for about 200 projects. This ensures a steady pipeline of future hydro power projects.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The scheme promotes renewable energy, not reduces it. Small hydro is a clean and low-emission source that supports India’s energy transition goals.

13. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The RELIEF Scheme provides credit insurance cover to exporters **whose shipments are stuck or at risk due to the West Asia crisis.** This helps protect exporters from financial losses arising from disruptions.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The scheme ensures **premiums remain at pre-conflict rates, not reduced below those levels**. The aim is to prevent any increase in cost burden during crisis conditions.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The scheme gives special focus to MSMEs, which are more vulnerable to external shocks. Supporting them helps maintain export stability and employment.

## 14. (a)

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct:** The Union Cabinet has approved the **continuation of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme** beyond March 31, for a period of five years, till 2031.

- It was first approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in **2010** with **project duration till 2014**.
- The IVFRT platform seeks to **interlink and optimize functions** related to immigration, visa issuance and registration of foreigners in India.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** IVFRT system has enabled a **100% contactless and faceless visa process** leading to **faster visa processing times with 91.24% of e-Visa applications** having been cleared within 72 hours during the past five years.

- Average passenger clearance time at Immigration Posts has also been reduced to 2.5-3 minutes from the conventional 5-6 minutes.

## 15. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The PRISM-SG Portal has been launched to improve coordination in road and railway infrastructure projects. It is especially useful where roads and railways intersect, such as in bridge construction.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The portal is not related to airport infrastructure. Its focus is specifically on **rail-road bridge related works**.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** The portal digitises approvals and inspections related to steel girders used in Road Over Bridges and railway bridges. This helps reduce delays and improves transparency.

## 16. (a)

**Context**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **modified version of the UDAN Scheme** with a total outlay of **₹28,840 crore**.

The scheme will be implemented over a 10-year period from **FY 2026–27 to FY 2035–36**.

**About UDAN Scheme**

- **The UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik)** is a regional connectivity scheme launched in **2016** to make air travel affordable and widespread.
- The scheme **aims to connect unserved and underserved airports** across India through subsidised fares and financial incentives.
- It operates on a market-based mechanism where airlines bid for routes supported by **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)**.
- The scheme is implemented by **the Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- As of February 2026, a total of **663 routes** have been operationalised across 95 airports, heliports and water aerodromes, with over **3.41 lakh** flights carrying more than **162.47 lakh passengers**.

## 17. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** IVFRT is a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan. It focuses on using digital technology to improve governance in immigration systems.

**Statement 2 is incorrect:** The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, not the Ministry of External Affairs. MHA handles internal security and immigration-related functions.

**Statement 3 is correct:** The scheme aims to build a centralized digital platform for immigration control, visa processing, and tracking of foreign nationals. This improves efficiency and coordination.

## 18. (b)

**Statement 1 is not correct:** The scheme was launched in **2024** by **The Ministry of Heavy Industry**.

**Statement 2 and 3 is correct:** **The EMPS-2024 (Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme)** was also subsumed under the PM E-DRIVE scheme.

- The PM E-DRIVE scheme is proposed to be implemented through the following components:
  - **Subsidies:** Demand Incentives for e-2W, e-3W, e-ambulances, e-trucks and other new emerging EV categories.
  - **Grants for creation of capital assets:** e-buses, establishment of network of charging stations & upgradation of testing agencies of MHI, and;
  - Administration of the Scheme including IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for project management agency (PMA).

## 19. (b)

**Option (a) is not correct:** Battery storage is not meant to replace solar pumps with diesel systems. In fact, the scheme tries to move away from diesel use.

- **Option (b) is correct:** Solar power peaks during the day, while agricultural demand may continue even when sunlight reduces. Batteries can **store excess solar energy** and release it later, improving reliability and grid stability.
- **Option (c) is not correct:** The purpose is not to reduce electricity demand but to **manage supply better**.
- **Option (d) is not correct:** DISCOMs still remain important. Battery storage only helps improve power management and reduce pressure on the grid.

## 20. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** PM-KUSUM is implemented by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**. This fits with its objective of expanding renewable energy use in agriculture.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** One of the main aims of the scheme is to **solarise agricultural pumps**. This helps farmers access cleaner and more reliable power.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The Central Government contributes **30% subsidy** under the scheme. The State Government also provides **30% subsidy**. The farmer contributes the remaining **40%**, often with the help of **bank loans**.



# DEFENSE/ INTERNAL SECURITY

1. The Mark 80 series, recently seen in the news, refers to:
  - (a) A class of cruise missiles used by the United States Navy
  - (b) A series of conventional gravity bombs used by the United States
  - (c) A family of submarine-launched ballistic missiles
  - (d) A type of air-defence interceptor system
2. The Minuteman III, recently seen in the news, is a:
  - (a) Main battle tank
  - (b) Intercontinental ballistic missile
  - (c) Nuclear-powered submarine
  - (d) Aircraft carrier
3. With reference to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), consider the following statements:
  1. It was established under the CISF Act, 1968 and came into existence in 1969.
  2. It functions under the Ministry of Defence.
  3. It is the only Central Armed Police Force with a dedicated fire wing.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
4. The exercises “Tiger Triumph” and “Vajra Prahar” are conducted between India and which of the following countries?
  - (a) United States
  - (b) Japan
  - (c) France
  - (d) Australia
5. With reference to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, consider the following statements:
  1. It is a missile defence system developed by the United States to intercept ballistic missiles during the terminal phase of their flight.
  2. Israel was the first foreign buyer of the THAAD system.Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. The Joint Military Exercise ‘LAMITIYE’, recently seen in the news, is conducted between India and which country?
  - (a) Mauritius
  - (b) Seychelles
  - (c) Madagascar
  - (d) Maldives

7. The KC-135 Stratotanker, recently seen in the news, is primarily used for:
- Strategic airlift of troops and heavy military equipment
  - Aerial refuelling of military aircraft during missions
  - Launching intercontinental ballistic missiles
  - Conducting airborne early warning and surveillance
8. The Tunguska Air Defence Missile System is of which origin?
- USA
  - Israel
  - France
  - Russia
9. With reference to Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), consider the following pairs:
- | <i>Paramilitary Forces</i> | <i>Primary Role</i>                 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. BSF                     | India-Pakistan & Bangladesh borders |
| 2. CISF                    | Industrial security                 |
| 3. CRPF                    | Counterinsurgency operations        |
| 4. SSB                     | Indo-Nepal & Indo-Bhutan borders    |
- Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?
- 1, 2 and 4 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 2, 3 and 4 only
  - 1, 2, 3 and 4

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)

**Context:** US Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth announced that the US would be shifting to 'gravity bombs', marking a major tactical pivot in the ongoing campaign against Iran.

**What is a Gravity Bomb?**

- A gravity bomb (or free-fall bomb) is an unpowered munition dropped from an aircraft. Unlike cruise missiles such as the Tomahawk cruise missile, it has no engine and falls toward the target under gravity, guided by the aircraft's speed and altitude.
- Despite their World War-era origins, gravity bombs remain widely used by the United States Air Force in conflicts such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.
- Modernisation:** Many gravity bombs are fitted with **Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM)** kits, which use GPS and steerable fins to convert them into precision-guided munitions.
- Types:** The United States widely uses the Mark 80 series, including;
  - Mk-82 (500 lb):** Soft targets such as vehicles or radar sites.
  - Mk-83 (1,000 lb):** Reinforced structures and command posts.
  - Mk-84 (2,000 lb):** Bunker-buster for hardened facilities.
- Key Feature:** Gravity bombs are relatively cheap (\$25,000–\$30,000 with JDAM) but require aircraft to fly close to targets, making them effective mainly when air superiority is achieved.

2. (b)

**Context:** As tensions continue to rise in the Middle East, the United States conducted a test launch of a Minuteman III missile.

**About Minuteman III**

- It is nicknamed as 'doomsday' missile, and is an **intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)**.

- It reaches a top speed of **Mach 23**, or roughly 28,400 kilometres per hour, and can travel over **9,600 kilometres**.
- Developed by **Boeing** in the 1950s to bolster American homeland protection, the Minuteman III is stored and launched from a silo, a fortified underground bunker designed to protect the missile from enemy attacks.
- Notably, a Minuteman III has never been fired in actual combat, making the weapon one of the most powerful things on Earth that has never actually been used in war.

### 3. (b)

**Context:** The 57th Raising Day of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was observed recently.

#### About the CISF

- It is a **paramilitary force** that came into existence in the year **1969** under the CISF Act, 1968.
- It operates under the **Ministry of Home Affairs** and is responsible for providing security to **various critical infrastructure installations** and industries including the Department of Space, the Department of Atomic Energy, Parliament complex, the Airports, the Delhi Metro, the ports across the country.
- Presently, CISF is also providing security to the protected persons classified as **Z Plus, Z, X, Y**.
- CISF is the only force with a customized and dedicated **fire wing**.

### 4. (a)

#### Context

- India has denied reports that it assisted the **United States in targeting an Iranian vessel near Sri Lankan waters**.

#### About

- The vessel was returning home **after participating in the multilateral naval exercise 'Milan' hosted by India**.
- India has clarified that **existing India-U.S. communication and logistics agreements do not automatically apply to such situations**.

#### India - US Defence Ties

- Defence ties have transformed from transactional to a Major Defense Partnership (2016).
- Guided by mechanisms such as:
  - 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue
  - Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) (2012)
  - Military Cooperation Group (MCG)
- India is designated as **"Major Defense Partner"** and given **Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) status (2018)**, easing high-tech exports.
- **India has signed all four major foundational agreements with the U.S.:**
  - General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002 and the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016.
  - COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) signed in 2018 to secure communications & interoperability.
  - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA 2020) for Geo-spatial intelligence & satellite data for precision targeting.
- **Military Exercises:**
  - Yudh Abhyas: Land forces.

- Malabar: Naval quadrilateral with US, India, Japan, Australia.
- Cope India: Air exercise.
- **Tiger Triumph**: Tri-service HADR exercise.
- **Vajra Prahar**: Special forces.
- **The deals, pursued under emergency procurement powers**, allow the armed forces to bypass the long procurement process for contracts, with a maximum ceiling of Rs 300 crore under the **Foreign Military Sales (FMS) route**.

## 5. (a)

**Context:** Iran has reportedly struck a key radar associated with the **Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)** missile defence system used by the United States and Israel in West Asia.

**About THAAD**

- THAAD is an **advanced missile defence system** developed by the United States to counter short-medium-and limited intermediate-range ballistic missiles.
  - THAAD can engage ballistic missile threats at ranges of **around 150–200 km**.
- It intercepts missiles during the **terminal phase of their flight**, both **inside and outside the Earth's atmosphere**, providing a high-altitude defensive shield.
- The system uses **“hit-to-kill” technology**, in which interceptor missiles destroy targets through **direct kinetic impact rather than explosive warheads**, improving precision and reducing collateral damage.
- The **United Arab Emirates** became the first foreign buyer in **2011**, followed later by **Saudi Arabia**.

## 6. (b)

**Context**

- An Indian Armed Forces contingent has arrived at Seychelles to participate in the Eleventh edition of Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE-2026.

**About**

- ‘LAMITIYE’ meaning ‘Friendship’ in the **Creole language** is a biennial training event and has been conducted in Seychelles since **2001**.
- The exercise will enhance synergy in the domains of sub-conventional operations in a semi-urban environment and cooperation and interoperability between both sides during peacekeeping operations.

## 7. (b)

**Context:** A **KC-135 Stratotanker refuelling aircraft** crashed in western Iraq during an ongoing military mission **Operation Epic Fury** (code name mission against Iran).

**About KC-135 Stratotanker**

- The KC-135 Stratotanker was built by **Boeing** in the **1950s and early 1960s**.
- It has been a backbone to the US military's air refuelling fleet, and critical in allowing aircraft to carry out missions without having to land.
  - They were used extensively in the **first Gulf War** to extend the range of fighter jets and bombers.
- It has a speed of 530 miles per hour at 30,000 feet (9,144 meters).

8. (d)

#### Context

- The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts for the procurement of the Tunguska Air Defence Missile System.

#### About

- The Tunguska is a Soviet-origin (Russia), tracked, self-propelled air defence system designed to protect ground forces from low-flying aerial threats.
- **Upgraded variants:** 2K22M, 2K22M1 with improved fire control and missile capability.
- **NATO designation:** SA-19 “Grison.”
- It uniquely combines **missiles and guns** on a single platform.

#### Key Features

- **Hybrid System:** Integrates surface-to-air missiles with twin 30 mm autocannons, effective against helicopters, drones, and cruise missiles.
- **Missiles:**
  - 9M311 series
  - **Range:** 8–10 km
  - **Altitude:** up to 3,500 m
  - **Guidance:** Radio command
- **Autocannons:**
  - **Fire rate:** 3,900–5,000 rounds/min
- **Radar & Tracking:** 360° target acquisition radar with detection range up to 18 km.

9. (d)

**In News:** Recently, the **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026** was introduced in the Rajya Sabha that seeks to formalize the **deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers** into senior leadership roles within the CAPFs.

- Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in India are specialized forces with distinct operational mandates, broadly classified into:
  - **Border Guarding Forces:** BSF, SSB, ITBP
  - **Internal Security Forces:** CRPF
  - **Infrastructure Protection Forces:** CISF
- CAPFs collectively handle **border security, internal security, and infrastructure protection**, often complementing the Army.





- (c) Establish a common European currency
- (d) Regulate migration flows within Europe

6. With reference to the International Energy Agency (IEA), consider the following statements:
1. The IEA was established in 1974 in response to disruptions in global oil supply caused by actions of major oil-exporting countries.
  2. Only OECD countries can become full members of the IEA.
  3. Associate members of the IEA have full voting rights in the agency's decision-making process.

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 membership criteria of the International Energy Agency, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. A country must be a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
  2. It must maintain crude oil or petroleum product reserves equivalent to at least 90 days of the previous year's net imports.

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 BRICS, consider the following statements:
1. It was initially formed as a formal international organization with a permanent secretariat.
  2. It has expanded to include countries such as UAE, Egypt, and Iran under the BRICS+ framework.
  3. The New Development Bank (NDB) was established to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

9. With reference to the *World Trade Organization (WTO)*, consider the following statements:
1. The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the WTO.
  2. The WTO dispute settlement mechanism provides legally binding rulings on member countries.
  3. The WTO follows a majority voting system for all its decisions.

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

10. With reference to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), consider the following statements:
1. It was established in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty.
  2. It operates on the principle of collective defence under Article 5.
  3. All its member countries are from Europe.





- **UNSCR 1325 (2000)** launched the **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda**, emphasizing women's participation in peace processes and protection of women and girls in armed conflicts.

## 4. (c)

**Context**

- PM Modi attended the inaugural session of the Raisina Dialogue 2026 in New Delhi.
  - The theme for 2026 edition is "**Samskara: Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement.**"

**Raisina Dialogue**

- The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier **conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics** committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community.
- It brings together **global leaders, policymakers, diplomats, scholars**, and strategic experts to discuss major international challenges.
  - **The first session** was held in **2016**.
- It is hosted by the Delhi-based **Observer Research Foundation**, in collaboration with the **External affairs ministry** of India.

## 5. (b)

The Three Seas Initiative is a regional effort in Europe to expand cross-border energy, transportation, digital infrastructure and boost economic development in the area between the Adriatic Sea, Baltic Sea, and Black Sea. The 13 participating countries match exactly: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. All are EU members and Austria is the sole non-NATO participant among them.

## 6. (a)

**Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Established:** In 1974.

- **The IEA's founding members were** Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Reason:** It was created when major oil-exporting countries drastically reduced oil supplies, causing severe economic disruptions in industrialized nations.
- **Members:** The membership was kept open only for OECD countries.
  - There are now 33 full members with Colombia being inducted as 33rd members recently.

**Statement 3 is not correct: Associate Members:** In 2015, IEA opened the doors for non-OECD countries to become associate members.

- **The associate members participate in the policy discussions and activities, but do not have decision-making rights.**
- India became an associate member in 2017. There are 13 associate members right now.

## 7. (c)

**Context**

- Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has agreed to release 400 million barrels of emergency oil reserves, the largest coordinated release in its history.

**International Energy Agency (IEA)**

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) **was set up in the wake of the 1973-1974 oil crisis** to help industrialised countries respond to major oil shocks.
- **Headquarters: Paris, France.**
- **Members:** The IEA is made up of **32 Member countries** including the United States, Canada, Turkey, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea etc.

- **Association Countries:** India, China, Indonesia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand etc.
- **Criteria for membership:** A candidate country to the IEA **must be a member country of the OECD**. In addition, it must demonstrate several requirements. These are:
  - Crude oil and/or product reserves equivalent to **90 days** of the previous year's net imports,
  - A demand restraint programme to reduce national oil consumption by up to **10%**,
  - Legislation and organisation to operate the **Coordinated Emergency Response Measures (CERM)** on a national basis.

## 8. (b)

**In News:** BRICS has emerged as a key platform advocating a **multipolar world order** and reducing dependence on Western-led systems.

- In recent years, **Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI)** has become a crucial yet **underexplored pillar of BRICS** cooperation.

**Statement 1 is not correct**

- BRICS is an **informal grouping**, not a formal international organization, and **does not have a permanent secretariat**.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- BRICS has expanded under **BRICS+**, including countries like **UAE, Egypt, and Iran**.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** was established to fund **infrastructure and sustainable development projects** in member states.

## 9. (a)

**In News:** The **WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14)** is scheduled to take place **from 26 to 29 March 2026 in Yaoundé, Cameroon** to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the multilateral trading system and to take action on the future work of the WTO.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- The **Ministerial Conference** is the highest decision-making body of the WTO.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- The WTO's **dispute settlement mechanism gives binding rulings**, making it one of the strongest features of the organization.

**Statement 3 is not correct**

- WTO decisions are generally taken by **consensus**, not by majority voting.

## 10. (a)

**Context:** US President Donald Trump has warned of leaving the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) after its allies declined to assist in securing the [Strait of Hormuz](#).

**About NATO**

- **Establishment:** A military alliance founded in **1949** with the signing of the **North Atlantic Treaty**, more popularly known as the Washington Treaty, in the aftermath of **World War II**.
- **Aim:** To ensure the security and defence of member states through the principle of collective defence.
- **Collective Defense:** The cornerstone of NATO is **Article 5**, which states that an armed attack against one or more of its members shall be considered an attack against all.
- **Members:**
  - **Founding members:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

- **Present strength:** 32 member countries (**Finland** and **Sweden** became the 31st and 32nd members respectively).
- **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**.
- **Headquartered:** Brussels, Belgium.

## 11. (b)

**Context**

- In Rajya Sabha the concerns have been raised that India's participation in Pax Silica could lead to digital colonialism.

**About Pax Silica**

- **Pax Silica** is a **US-led strategic initiative** to build a secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain from critical minerals.
- **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.
  - **India joined** the initiative in February 2026 during the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.
- **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.
- **Countries will partner** on securing strategic stacks of the global technology supply chain, including, but not limited to, software applications and platforms.

## 12. (d)

**Statement 1 is correct:** UNSC Resolution 1701 was adopted after the **2006 Lebanon War**. It was intended to reduce tensions and restore stability in southern Lebanon.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The resolution required the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River to remain free of armed personnel, weapons, and military assets. This was meant to create a demilitarised buffer zone.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Only the **Government of Lebanon and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)** were authorised to operate militarily in this area. This was designed to prevent non-state armed groups from controlling the zone.

## 13. (a)

**Context:** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report titled "Understanding and Mitigating the Risks of Offshore Virtual Asset Service Providers" highlights India's efforts to curb money laundering and terror financing through action against offshore Virtual Asset Service Providers (oVASPs).

**Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**

- **The Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** is an intergovernmental organization (**not a UN agency**) which leads global action to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing.
- **History:** FATF was established in **1989** by the **G7** to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering. It originally included the G7 countries, the European Commission and eight other countries.
  - **In 2001**, the FATF expanded its mandate to also combat terrorist financing.

- **Members:** FATF has **40** members including **India**.
- FATF has the authority to issue warnings and sanctions against countries that fail to comply with its standards, such as suspension of membership and blacklisting.

14. (d)

**All three statements are correct: Iran is a signatory to the NPT, which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while allowing peaceful nuclear activity under monitoring.**

- It was signed in **1968** and entered into **force in 1970**, the NPT aims to prevent the **spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament**.
  - It divides the world into **nuclear-weapon states (NWS)**, recognized as possessing nuclear weapons at the time of the treaty's signing, and **non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS)**, which agree not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.
  - The treaty also requires NWS to pursue disarmament negotiations in good faith.
- **India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan** have not signed the NPT.

15. (c)

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

- **Seven founding member states:** Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** The **League Council** is the **highest body** and is composed of **representatives of member states**.

- The league makes decisions on a **majority basis**, but there is no mechanism to compel members to comply with resolutions.

**Statement 3 is correct:** **Currently it has 22 member states. The member nations are located in the Middle East and North Africa.**

16. (c)

**Context**

- The 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) of the World Trade Organization concluded in **Yaoundé** without consensus on extending the e-commerce duty moratorium.

**World Trade Organization (WTO)**

- **WTO** is the international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries.
- **History:** **WTO** is the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** established in the wake of the Second World War.
  - **The Marrakesh Agreement** establishing the World Trade Organization was signed by 123 countries in 1994, leading to the birth of the WTO on 1 January **1995**.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Member:** The WTO is run by its **166 members**.
- **Mandate:** Its aim is to promote free trade, which is done through trade agreements that are discussed and signed by the member states.
  - **The preamble** of the Marrakesh Agreement accords primacy to the developmental objectives of this organization.



# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. The primary objective of the MAVEN mission is to:
  - (a) Search for microbial life on the Martian surface
  - (b) Study the geological features of Mars
  - (c) Understand the processes responsible for atmospheric loss on Mars
  - (d) Establish a human settlement on Mars
2. The primary objective of the Moonshot Project is to:
  - (a) Develop quantum computers for national security
  - (b) Build artificial organs using stem cells
  - (c) Create brain co-processors to decode and stimulate neural signals for restoring lost brain functions
  - (d) Develop AI-driven robotic surgeons for remote surgery
3. With reference to the Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAT), consider the following statements:
  1. It detects viral RNA or DNA directly in blood samples.
  2. It helps identify infections during the window period when antibodies are not yet detectable.
  3. It is commonly used for screening infections such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C in blood transfusion services.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

4. With reference to Hydroxyl Megamaser, consider the following statements:
  1. A hydroxyl megamaser emits amplified microwave or radio waves rather than visible light.
  2. It is produced by hydroxyl (OH) molecules present in giant molecular gas clouds in distant galaxies.
  3. Hydroxyl megamasers are typically associated with galaxy collisions or mergers that trigger intense infrared radiation.

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. With reference to Quantum Computing, which of the following statements is/are correct?
  1. Quantum computers use qubits instead of classical bits to process information.

2. A qubit can exist in multiple states simultaneously due to the principle of superposition.

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 Brain Co-Processors, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. They are devices designed to interact directly with the human brain.
  2. They function as AI-powered closed-loop systems that can assist in restoring brain functions.

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

7. With reference to the Dark Web and Deep Web, consider the following statements:
1. The deep web refers to the part of the internet that is not indexed by standard search engines.
  2. The dark web can only be accessed through special software such as Tor.
  3. The dark web is completely illegal and all activities conducted on it are unlawful.

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

8. With reference to desalination plants, consider the following statements:
1. Desalination plants convert seawater into fresh water by removing dissolved salts and minerals.
  2. The most widely used desalination technology is based on the principle of Reverse Osmosis.
  3. Countries in the Persian Gulf region rely heavily on desalination because of limited natural freshwater resources.

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. 2024 YR4, recently in the news, is a:
- (a) Near-Earth Asteroid (b) Heavy bomber  
(c) Space telescope (d) Intercontinental ballistic missile
10. Which of the following statements are correct about the Kavach system ?
1. It integrates microprocessors, Global Positioning System (GPS), and radio communication technologies for train operations.
  2. It controls overspeeding and ensures safe operation in low visibility and adverse weather.
  3. It generates alerts during wrong-direction and provides automatic information on level crossing gates.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

11. Which of the following statements correctly describes peptides?

- (a) Peptides are large proteins that form cell membranes.  
(b) Peptides are very small chains of amino acids that act as messengers in the body.  
(c) Peptides are carbohydrates involved in energy storage.  
(d) Peptides are lipids that form hormonal precursors.

12. Consider the following statements regarding Cobalt:

1. It is a naturally occurring metal found in rocks, soil, water, plants and animals.
2. It forms an essential component of Vitamin B-12.
3. It is widely used in lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles.

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

13. With reference to the Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) consider the following statements:

1. It is a minimally invasive procedure to replace the aortic valve.
2. It is primarily used in patients unfit for conventional open-heart valve surgery.

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 thorium resources and their utilisation in India's nuclear programme, consider the following statements:

1. India possesses one of the largest reserves of thorium in the world.
2. The states of Kerala and Odisha together account for more than 70% of India's thorium resources.
3. Thorium-based reactors form a crucial component of the third stage of India's nuclear power programme.

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 Atomic Clocks, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Atomic clocks measure time based on the frequency of radiation emitted when atoms transition between energy states.
2. Cesium and rubidium atoms are commonly used in atomic clocks.

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





27. With reference to Ribonucleic Acid, consider the following statements:
1. RNA is typically a single-stranded nucleic acid composed of ribose sugar.
  2. Ribosomal RNA (rRNA) is primarily responsible for carrying amino acids to the ribosome.
- 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
28. Consider the following statements regarding Artemis II mission:
1. It is a crewed lunar flyby mission where astronauts orbit the moon without landing on its surface.
  2. It marks the first time humans have ventured to the lunar vicinity in over five decades.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)  
MAVEN, or Mars Atmosphere and Volatile EvolutionN, orbits Mars to study its upper atmosphere, ionosphere, and interactions with solar wind, measuring how gases like CO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>2</sub>O escape to space. Launched in 2013 and arriving in 2014, it determines the rate of atmospheric escape to explain Mars' climate shift from wet to dry.
2. (c)  
India's Moonshot Project, launched by IISc and Pratiksha Trust, focuses on developing implantable and non-invasive brain co-processors. These devices decode neural activity from recordings, process signals via AI, and re-encode them through stimulation to restore functions like movement and cognition, especially for stroke patients.
3. (d)  
**Statement 1 is correct:** The Nucleic Acid Amplification Test detects viral genetic material (RNA or DNA) directly in blood samples. Unlike antibody tests, it identifies the pathogen itself, making it a molecular diagnostic method.  
**Statement 2 is correct:** NAT can detect infections during the "window period"—the time between initial infection and the development of detectable antibodies. This is why it is more sensitive than traditional antibody-based tests like ELISA.  
**Statement 3 is correct:** NAT is widely used in blood banks to screen donated blood for transfusion-transmitted infections (TTIs) such as: Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Hepatitis B Virus & Hepatitis C Virus.
4. (d)  
**All three statements are correct:** Astronomers reported finding the **most distant hydroxyl maser** using the **MeerKAT telescope**.
- A **hydroxyl megamaser** is an extremely powerful natural microwave/radio-wave emitter in space produced by **hydroxyl (OH) molecules in distant galaxies**.
    - It is similar to a laser, but instead of visible light it **emits microwaves or radio waves**.

- **Galaxy collisions or mergers** occur that trigger intense star formation, feeding of supermassive black holes, and release of large infrared radiation.
  - Infrared energy excites hydroxyl (OH) molecules to a high-energy state.
  - When the molecules return to a lower energy level, they emit amplified radio waves.

5. (c)

#### Context

- At the Raisina Dialogue 2026, the need for early collaboration between scientists and diplomats was emphasized to design governance frameworks for emerging technologies such as quantum computing.

#### What is Quantum Computing?

- Quantum computing refers to a new class of computers that **use the principles of quantum mechanics** rather than classical binary logic.
- Classical computers process information using bits (0 or 1), while quantum computers **use qubits, which can exist in multiple states simultaneously.**
- This capability allows quantum computers to perform certain calculations exponentially faster than conventional computers.

6. (c)

#### Context

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) launched a moonshot project to develop brain co-processors that combine neuromorphic hardware and AI algorithms to enhance or restore brain function.

#### What are Brain Co-Processors?

- Brain co-processors are **advanced devices** designed to interact directly with the human brain.
- They **decode neural signals, process them using AI algorithms, and re-encode them back into the brain** through neural stimulation or neurofeedback.
- These systems function as **AI-powered closed-loop devices** that assist the brain in restoring or enhancing cognitive and motor functions.

#### Key Objectives of the Project

- Develop **implantable and non-invasive brain co-processors** capable of decoding and processing brain activity.
- Use **AI algorithms and neuromorphic hardware** to interpret neural signals and stimulate the brain accordingly.
- Enable **cognitive and motor rehabilitation**, particularly for stroke survivors who lose sensorimotor abilities such as reaching and grasping objects.

7. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Deep Web refers to parts of the internet not indexed by search engines like Google. Examples include: Password-protected websites, Online banking portals, academic databases & private organizational networks.

**Statement 2 is correct:** The Dark Web is a subset of the deep web that requires special software or configurations to access, such as Tor, which works through encrypted overlay networks to maintain anonymity.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** The dark web itself is not completely illegal. While it hosts illegal activities (drug markets, cybercrime), it is also used for legitimate purposes, such as anonymous communication, journalism in oppressive regimes & whistleblowing platforms.

8. (d)

**All three statements are correct:** As the conflict in West Asia enters the 10th day, the military strikes by both sides have found a new target: **desalination plants**.

- Desalination plants **convert seawater into fresh drinking water** by removing salt and other minerals.
- The most widely used method is a process called **Reverse osmosis**, which pushes seawater through **ultra-fine membranes** that filter out salt.
- The freshwater produced is used to supply households, industry, hotels and some agriculture across the region.
- Many Gulf countries depend heavily on desalinated water because they lack natural freshwater resources such as rivers or large lakes.

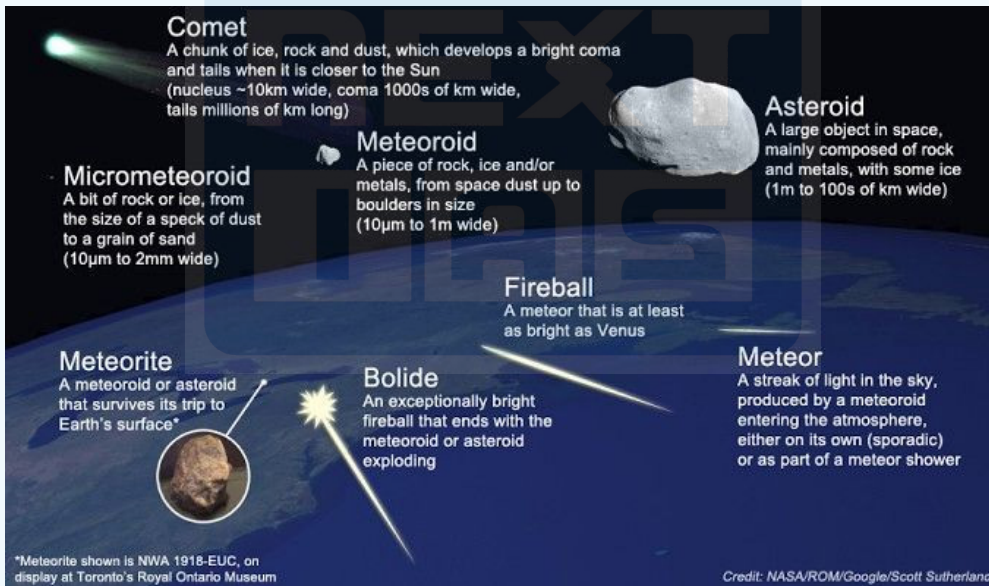
9. (a)

**Context:** NASA has confirmed that asteroid **2024 YR4** poses no collision risk to the Moon in 2032, based on observations from the **James Webb Space Telescope**.

- **2024 YR4** is classified as a Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA), indicating its orbit brings it close to Earth’s orbital path.

**About**

- Asteroids, sometimes called **minor planets**, are rocky, airless remnants left over from the early formation of our solar system about 4.6 billion years ago.
- Most asteroids can be found **orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter** within the main asteroid belt.



10. (c)

**In News :** Indian Railways has successfully commissioned Kavach 4.0, the latest version of its indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system, across 1,452 route kilometres on the high-density Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah corridors.

**Statements 1,2 and 3 are correct:**

- **Kavach** is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system of Indian Railways, designed to provide the highest level of operational safety.
- It is a highly technology-intensive system certified to Safety Integrity Level–4 (SIL-4), one of the highest safety standards in signalling systems, reflecting Indian Railways’ commitment to world-class safety and reliability.

- It assists Loco Pilots by automatically applying brakes in situations where prescribed speed limits are exceeded or when safety is compromised, thereby preventing accidents and enhancing safe train operations, including during adverse weather conditions.

11. (b)

**In News:** Peptide therapeutics are gaining global attention, with over 80 drugs approved and more than 150 in clinical trials for various conditions.

**Peptides** are very small chains of amino acids, the basic building blocks of proteins in the body.

- They naturally act as messengers that regulate functions such as hormone release, metabolism, immune responses and tissue repair.

12. (d)

Cobalt is a naturally occurring metal present in rocks, soil, water, plants, and animals, often as trace amounts in the Earth's crust and environmental sources. It serves as the central component in vitamin B12 (cobalamin), essential for red blood cell formation and neurological function. Cobalt is a key ingredient in lithium-ion batteries, particularly in cathodes like NMC, powering electric vehicles worldwide.

13. (c)

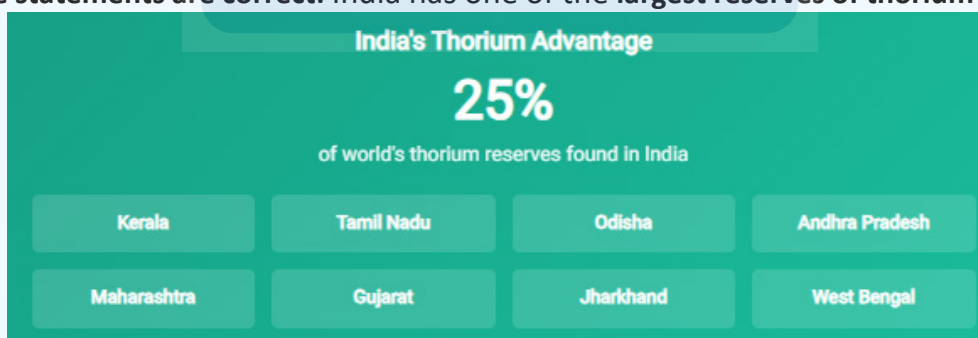
**In News :** S3V Vascular Technologies Ltd. has launched an indigenous Balloon-Expandable TAVR system for preclinical studies.

**Statements 1 and 2 are correct :** Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) is a minimally invasive procedure to replace the aortic valve in adults who are not fit for traditional open-heart surgery. The aortic valve controls blood flow from the heart into the aorta and prevents backward flow.

- Conditions like aortic stenosis (valve does not open fully) and aortic regurgitation (valve leaks) impair blood flow to the body and brain. TAVR restores proper valve function and blood circulation without opening the chest.

14. (d)

**All three statements are correct:** India has one of the **largest reserves of thorium** in the world.



- 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.

15. (c)

**Context**

- India's indigenous navigation satellite system **Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)** has suffered a setback after the failure of the **IRNSS-1F** satellite due to malfunction of its last **operational rubidium atomic clock**.

- **The IRNSS-1F satellite** was launched in **2016** by the **Indian Space Research Organisation** and has completed its **10-year design mission life**.

#### About Atomic clock

- An Atomic Clock is a **highly precise time-keeping device** that measures time based on the natural vibration frequency of atoms, usually cesium or rubidium atoms.
- It is considered the **most accurate time-keeping technology**, capable of maintaining accuracy to nanoseconds (billionths of a second).
- **Working Principle:**
  - Atoms vibrate at **extremely stable and predictable frequencies** when they **change energy states**.
  - The atomic clock measures this frequency and converts it into standard time signals.

#### 16. (a)

**In News:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the financial sector by enhancing efficiency, strengthening risk management, and improving customer experience. At the same time, it raises concerns related to employment, ethics, and systemic risks.

#### Statement 1 is correct

- AI enables *alternative credit scoring* using non-traditional data (e.g., transaction history, mobile usage), thereby improving **financial inclusion**, especially for unbanked populations.

#### Statement 2 is not correct

- AI does **not remove the need for regulation**. It increases the need for **strong regulatory oversight** due to risks like bias, opacity, and systemic vulnerabilities.

#### Statement 3 is correct

- AI enhances customer experience through **personalization**, chatbots, and tailored financial products.

#### 17. (b)

**Context:** Scientists at the CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory have developed indigenous technology to produce Dimethyl Ether (DME) as an alternative to LPG amid supply disruptions.

#### Dimethyl Ether (DME)

- DME is a **colourless, clean-burning gas** produced from **biomass, methanol, or fossil fuels**.
- **Key Features:** Emits significantly lower **soot, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and particulate matter** than conventional fuels and offers **thermal efficiency** comparable to LPG.
- **Regulation & Adoption:**
  - Recognized under the **National Policy on Biofuels, 2018** as an alternative fuel.
  - Bureau of Indian Standards permits use under **IS 18698:2024**, allowing up to **20% blending with LPG**.
  - Up to **8% blending requires no modification** in existing LPG infrastructure like cylinders, regulators, or burners.
- **Economic Impact:** Replacing **8% LPG with DME** can save about **₹9,500 crore annually** in foreign exchange.
- **Other Uses:** Can be used as an **automotive fuel (diesel substitute)** and as an **aerosol propellant replacing CFCs**.

## 18. (c)

**Context**

- A recent study has identified a novel link between cholesterol accumulation in the nuclear membrane and increased cancer metastasis, especially in Melanoma.

**What is Cholesterol?**

- Cholesterol is a **fat-like (lipid) substance** that is essential for the normal functioning of the human body. It is a key structural component of cell membranes and required for the synthesis of:
  - Hormones such as steroids (e.g., estrogen and testosterone).
  - Vitamin D.
  - Bile acids, which aid in digestion of fats.
- The body produces most of its cholesterol in the **liver**, while a smaller portion is obtained from **dietary sources** such as animal-based foods.
- Cholesterol is transported in the blood through lipoproteins, mainly:
  - **Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL)**, often termed “bad cholesterol” due to its role in plaque formation.
  - **High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL)**, known as “good cholesterol” as it helps remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream.
- While cholesterol is essential, excessive levels, especially of LDL, can lead to health issues such as cardiovascular diseases.

## 19. (c)

**Context**

- Recent scientific research has highlighted that adipose tissue (fat) is not merely a passive storage site for excess calories but an active metabolic and endocrine organ.

**What is Fat (Adipose Tissue)?**

- Adipose tissue is a **specialised connective tissue** responsible for **storage of excess energy** in the form of fat, regulation of metabolism through **hormone secretion** and protection and **insulation of vital organs**.
- It functions as an endocrine organ by releasing hormones such as:
  - **Leptin**: Regulates appetite and energy balance
  - **Adiponectin**: Enhances insulin sensitivity.

**Types of Fat (Adipose Tissue)**

- **White Adipose Tissue (WAT)**: It is the **most abundant form of fat** in adults and has functions like;
  - Storing energy as triglycerides
  - Acting as a metabolic reserve during energy deficit
  - Providing insulation and mechanical cushioning
  - Secreting hormones regulating metabolism
- **Brown Adipose Tissue (BAT)**: It is the specialized fat that **burns energy to generate heat (thermogenesis)**. It is rich in mitochondria and contains Uncoupling Protein-1 (UCP1).
- **Beige adipose tissue (BeAT)**: It is a thermogenic, “brown-like” fat that emerges within white adipose tissue (WAT) depots, typically in response to cold exposure or adrenergic stimulation, a process known as “browning”.

**20. (b)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** Small Hydro Power projects are defined as hydropower plants with a capacity of up to 25 MW. They are considered suitable for decentralised and local energy generation.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** Most SHP projects operate as run-of-river systems, using natural water flow without creating large reservoirs. This reduces environmental impact compared to large dams.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** SHP projects are developed under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), not the Ministry of Power.

**21. (a)**

**Context**

- The entry of generic versions of Semaglutide in India has reduced prices significantly, improving affordability for patients with Type 2 Diabetes and obesity.

**About Semaglutide**

- Semaglutide is a **GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) receptor** agonist used for;
  - Glycaemic control in diabetes.
  - Weight management in obese patients.
- It works by **enhancing insulin secretion and reducing appetite** and slowing gastric emptying.
- It is often described as a **weight-loss breakthrough drug**, leading to rising demand beyond clinical indications.

**What are Generic Medicines?**

- A generic medicine is a medication created to be the same as an already marketed brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, and performance characteristics.
- It contains the same active ingredient as the brand-name version and works in the body the same way to provide the same clinical benefit.

**22. (d)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** MPC receives observational data, verifies it, calculates orbital paths, and assigns official identities to newly discovered objects. This helps standardise global astronomical records.

**Statement 2 is correct:** It tracks Near-Earth Objects and works with agencies like NASA to assess potential collision risks. This function is important for planetary defence.

**Statement 3 is correct:** The MPC functions under the International Astronomical Union (IAU). It operates at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in the USA.

**23. (c)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** World Tuberculosis Day is celebrated on **March 24** to educate people about tuberculosis.

- The day is observed to commemorate the **anniversary of Dr. Robert Koch’s discovery of the TB bacteria in 1882.**

**Statement 2 is not correct:** Tuberculosis (TB) is an **infectious disease** that most often affects the lungs and is caused by the **bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis.**

- It spreads through the air when infected people **cough, sneeze or spit.**

- **Symptoms:** prolonged cough (sometimes with blood), chest pain, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, fever, night sweats.
  - While TB usually affects the lungs, it also affects the kidneys, brain, spine and skin.

**Statement 3 is correct: The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine** remains the only licensed vaccine against TB; it provides moderate protection against severe forms of TB (TB meningitis) in infants and young children.

24. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Natural mineral water comes from protected underground sources such as springs, aquifers, or borewells. This underground origin is important for maintaining purity and natural mineral characteristics.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The minerals in such water are acquired naturally over long periods through water-rock interaction. As water moves through rocks like limestone or granite, minerals dissolve into it.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Natural mineral water keeps its original mineral profile, while packaged drinking water is usually purified and may have minerals re-added later. This is the key scientific and regulatory distinction.

25. (a)

**Context**

- Scientists at CERN have successfully conducted the first-ever road transport of **antiprotons**, marking a breakthrough in **antimatter research** and experimental physics.

**About CERN**

- CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research) is the **world's largest particle physics laboratory**, located on the **Franco-Swiss border near Geneva**.
- **Founded in 1954**, it uses complex accelerators, including the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), to study the fundamental constituents of matter,
- **Key Discoveries:** Higgs boson (2012), W and Z bosons (1983) and created the first antihydrogen atoms (1995).

26. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** 'Agnite' is a 3D-printed booster engine developed by the Indian space startup **Agnikul Cosmos**. It represents an important step in indigenous private-sector space technology.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The engine is specifically designed for the booster stage of Agnibaan launch vehicles. This makes it a crucial part of the launch system.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Unlike conventional engines made from many separate parts, Agnite is built as a **single-piece structure**. This reduces assembly complexity and manufacturing time.

27. (a)

**Statement 1 is correct: RNA (Ribonucleic Acid)** is a **biological molecule** that helps convert **genetic information into proteins**, which are essential for life.

- RNA is a **single-stranded nucleic acid** made of nucleotides containing Ribose sugar, Phosphate group, Nitrogen bases: Adenine (A), Uracil (U), Cytosine (C), Guanine (G).

**Statement 2 is not correct: Transfer RNA is responsible for carrying amino acids to the ribosome.** Ribosomal RNA acts structurally and catalytically within the ribosome to form peptide bonds between amino acids, but it **does not transport them**.

28. (c)

**Statement 1 is correct:** Artemis II is a crewed lunar flyby mission. It carries four astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft. The mission traces a free-return trajectory around the Moon. Astronauts do not land on the lunar surface. It serves as a test of deep space life support, navigation, and communication systems before an actual landing mission.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The last time humans travelled to the lunar vicinity was Apollo 17 in December 1972. That was over 50 years ago. Artemis II is the first crewed mission to travel beyond low Earth orbit since then. It marks a historic return of human presence to cislunar space after more than five decades.

■■■■





2. It operates under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

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. Consider the following statement with reference to National Chambal Sanctuary:

1. It is located on the Godawari River near the tri-point of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
2. It is home to gharial, the red-crowned roof turtle and Ganges river dolphin.

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 Western Tragopan, consider the following statements:

1. It is also known as Jujurana or "King of Birds."
2. It is endemic to the Himalayan region of India and Pakistan.
3. It is listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

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. Which of the following species are naturally found in Silent Valley National Park?

1. Lion-tailed macaque
2. Nilgiri tahr
3. Great Indian Bustard

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

9. With reference to methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a colorless, odorless, and highly flammable gas, and the primary component of natural gas.
2. It has a large atmospheric lifetime of about 100 years with a strong warming impact.

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. Which of the following are sources of methane emissions?

1. Oil and gas extraction
2. Enteric fermentation in livestock
3. Wetlands
4. Volcanic eruptions

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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





21. A new species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh has been named after singer Zubeen Garg. It belongs to which of the following categories?
- (a) Butterfly (b) Frog  
(c) Fish (d) Bird
22. Consider the following statements regarding the “Bhavasagara” Referral Centre:
1. It has been designated as India’s National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna.
  2. It is authorised to act as the official custodian of newly discovered deep-sea species.
  3. Its designation as a Referral Centre has come from the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one (b) Only two  
(c) All three (d) None

### EXPLANATIONS

1. (d)

#### Context

- India has submitted its 7th National Report to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, assessing national progress toward biodiversity targets for 2030.

#### About

- The report evaluates India’s performance against 23 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs) aligned with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).
- It finds that **only two targets are clearly on track**, despite improvements in policy frameworks, forest cover, and ecosystem restoration.

#### Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was concluded at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in **Montreal, Canada, in 2022**.
- This framework is a landmark agreement aimed at addressing the global biodiversity crisis.
- It features **23 targets to be met by 2030** and **four global goals for 2050** to preserve biodiversity for current and future generations.
- The agreement is **not binding** on members.

2. (a)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro on June 5, entering into force in December 1993.

**Statement 2 is not correct:** While the CBD is a legally binding treaty, its secretariat operates under the UNEP, but UNEP is not the treaty’s administering body; the CBD is serviced independently.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** The CBD’s governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP), not the UN General Assembly.

3. (a)

**Context:** The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a body under the Union Environment Ministry, said that cheetahs travelling from Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh to Baran in Rajasthan was “natural territorial behaviour”.

**Do you know?**

- **Project Cheetah** is India's initiative to reintroduce cheetahs, the world's fastest mammal, decades after their extinction in 1952.
- There are two main species of cheetahs in the world — the African cheetah, listed as Vulnerable, and the **Asiatic cheetah**, which is **Critically Endangered**.

**4. (b)**

Dark Oxygen refers to oxygen produced in the deep ocean without sunlight, unlike conventional oxygen generation through Photosynthesis.

**Key Features**

- **Production without sunlight:** Occurs in the deep ocean floor, where sunlight does not penetrate. This means oxygen can be produced without photosynthetic organisms like plants or algae.
- **Source:** Scientists link the phenomenon to electrochemical reactions involving polymetallic nodules found on the seabed. These nodules (rich in metals such as manganese, nickel, cobalt, and copper) may act like natural batteries, splitting seawater molecules and releasing oxygen.

**5. (c)****Context**

- The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has reportedly halted the fortnightly alerts generated by its AI-based Anavaran–Deforestation Alert System, which monitored forest cover loss in near-real time.

**Forest Survey of India (FSI)**

- The Forest Survey of India (FSI) is the nodal national organisation responsible for **assessing and monitoring India's forest resources**.
- It operates under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.
- **Established** in 1981, and headquartered in **Dehradun**, it succeeded the "**Preinvestment Survey of Forest Resources**" (PISFR).
- It assesses and monitors forest and tree resources of the country and publishes the results in the **biennial India State of Forest Report**.

**6. (b)**

In News Recently, the Supreme Court of India took suo motu cognisance to protect the National Chambal Sanctuary from rampant illegal sand mining that threatens the habitat of Gharial.

**Statements 1 is not correct but 2 is correct :** **National Chambal Sanctuary** is situated in a large arc of the **Chambal River**, covering nearly 1800 km across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

- It is the first and only tri-state riverine protected area in India.
- Besides Gharials, the sanctuary hosts a rich biodiversity of Marsh Crocodile Muggers, several species of freshwater turtles, including the endangered Red Crowned Roof Turtle, Smoothcoated Otters, Gangetic River Dolphins, Indian Skimmer, Black-bellied Tern, Sarus Crane and Black-necked Storks.

**7. (d)**

**Context:** The **Western Tragopan**, a rare Himalayan pheasant, faces increasing threats due to forest loss and human pressures.

**About**

- The Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*), also known as Jujurana or "king of birds," is one of the rarest and most stunning pheasant species in the world.

- **Habitat and Distribution:** Found in **temperate and subalpine forests** at 2,400–3,600 m (occasionally down to 2,000 m in winter).
  - From **Swat Valley (Pakistan)** across **Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh to Uttarakhand**.
- **Diet:** They are omnivores, feeding on berries, seeds, buds, shoots, and insects.
- **Major Threats:** Forest degradation, climate change, and human disturbances.
- **Conservation Status:** It is listed as **Vulnerable** by BirdLife International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

8. (d)

#### Context

- A rare case of gynandromorphy has been reported in a freshwater crab species **Vela carli** from **Silent Valley National Park** in the Western Ghats.

#### Silent Valley National Park

- It is located in the **Nilgiri hills, Kerala**.
- Silent Valley was declared as a **National Park in 1984** and formally inaugurated in the year **1985**.
- **The Bhavani River**, a tributary of the Kaveri River, and **Kunthipuzha River**, a tributary of Bharathapuzha river, originate in the vicinity of Silent Valley.
- **Fauna:** **Lion tailed macaques, Nilgiri tahr**, Crimson-backed sunbird, Yellow-browed bulbul, Black bulbul, Indian white-eye, and Indian swiftlet.
- **Flora:** The valley areas of the park are in a **Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests** ecoregion.
- **The indigenous tribal groups** that live within park boundaries include **Irulas, Kurumbas, Mudugas and Kattunaikkars**.

#### Great Indian Bustard

- This bird is **not found in Silent Valley**.
- It is a large terrestrial bird that **inhabits dry grasslands and scrublands**, primarily in the Desert National Park of **Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat**.

9. (a)

#### Context

- Recent satellite-based research by the Stop Methane Project (UCLA) has revealed that a small number of oil and gas sites account for disproportionately high methane emissions.
  - **Turkmenistan** dominates the list, hosting over **two-thirds of the worst emitters**, while other major emitting regions include **Iran, Venezuela, Texas (USA) and Sindh (Pakistan)**.

#### About Methane

- Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is a **colorless, odorless, and highly flammable gas**, and it is the primary component of natural gas.
  - It has a relatively short atmospheric lifetime of about **12 years**, compared to carbon dioxide.
- **Methane as a Greenhouse Gas:** Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas with a strong short-term warming impact.
  - It is over 80 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat over a 20-year period.
  - It is responsible for around 30% of the current global warming since the pre-industrial era.
- **Major Sources:** Human-driven emissions arise mainly from oil and gas production, coal mining, **livestock enteric fermentation (burps)**, and decomposing waste in landfills.

- Natural sources include **Wetlands**, marine sediments and hydrates and geological Sources like **volcanoes**.

### 10. (a)

#### Context

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  - Natural sources include **Wetlands**, marine sediments and hydrates and geological Sources like **volcanoes**.

### 11. (b)

**In News:** Recently, the **Supreme Court of India** has **dismissed a petition** alleging violation of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**) parameters.

#### Statement 1 is correct

- CITES is an **international treaty between governments**, meaning countries that join are legally bound to implement its provisions through national laws.
- It is binding, but enforcement depends on national implementation.

#### Statement 2 is not correct

- CITES does **not completely ban all trade**. Instead:
  - It classifies species into **Appendices (I, II, III)**.
  - Only **Appendix I species** face **near-total bans** on commercial trade.
  - Others are **regulated, not banned**.

#### Statement 3 is correct

- CITES is **administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** through the CITES Secretariat.

### 12. (b)

#### Context

- The Chokramudi hills near Munnar in Idukki (Kerala) have now transformed into a thriving natural habitat for the **Nilgiri tahr**.

#### About Nilgiri Tahr

- **Description:** A stocky mountain goat (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) with short, yellowish-brown fur, and the state animal of Tamil Nadu.
- **Habitat and Distribution:** Endemic to a 400 km stretch of the Western Ghats, primarily across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

- **Diet:** A herbivore feeding on over 120 species of grasses, herbs, and shrubs.
- **Threats:** Key threats include habitat loss (deforestation, plantations, hydroelectric projects), competition with domestic livestock, and hunting.
- **Conservation Status:** Listed as Endangered (IUCN Red List) and protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

#### Do you Know?

- The Nilgiri tahr is the **state animal of Tamil Nadu**, and Eravikulam National Park hosts the largest surviving population and highest density of the species.

#### 13. (b)

**Statement 1 is not correct:** Biogas is produced through anaerobic digestion (in the absence of oxygen), not aerobic digestion.

**Statement 2 and 3 is correct:** Biogas consists of methane, carbon dioxide, and traces of other gases such as hydrogen, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen sulphide.

- The methane content of biogas is appreciably high, at 60%.
- **Significance:** It is a renewable and dispatchable source of energy (unlike solar/wind).
  - Helps in waste management and provides additional income to farmers.
  - Reduces dependence on coal and lowers net greenhouse gas emissions.

#### 14. (a)

##### Context

- Thailand seized 284 tonnes of US imported e-waste falsely labelled as scrap metal, highlighting concerns over transboundary hazardous waste and “exporting pollution.”

##### Basel Convention

- The Basel Convention is a **global treaty aimed at controlling the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes** and their disposal, ensuring that such wastes are managed in an environmentally sound manner.
- **It mandates:**
  - Prior informed consent of importing countries.
  - Environmentally sound management of hazardous waste.
  - Return of illegal waste shipments at the exporter’s expense.
- It was adopted in **1989** and entered into force in **1992**.
- **India is a party** to the Basel Convention.

#### 15. (a)

##### Context

- A recent study found that Chennai’s beaches have fewer microplastics than many global counterparts yet the risk to marine life remains significant.

##### What are Microplastics?

- **Definition:** Microplastics are tiny plastic particles or fibres **smaller than 5 millimetres**, many of which are **invisible to the human eye**.
- **Scale of Pollution:** Around **2.7 million tonnes of microplastics** entered the environment in **2020**, and this figure is **projected to double by 2040**, indicating a rapidly growing environmental threat.
- **Forms of Microplastics:** They come in various forms, such as beads, fragments, pellets, film, foam, and fibers.

- **Types of Microplastics:**

- **Primary:** Manufactured small on purpose (e.g. microbeads in cosmetics).
- **Secondary:** Result from breakdown of larger plastic items (e.g. bottles, bags).

**Why does low abundance not mean low risk?**

- **Toxic fibres:** Nylon microfibres are highly toxic and persistent, accounting for nearly 35% of ocean microplastics.
- **Pollutant carriers:** Absorb toxins up to **10<sup>5</sup>–10<sup>6</sup> times** higher than surrounding water (heavy metals, POPs).
- **Food chain transfer:** Microplastics move through the food chain—from plankton to fish to humans—leading to biomagnification and increased health risks.

**16. (d)**

**All three statements are correct:** The Union Cabinet approved India's updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035** under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

**Updated NDCs**

- **Emissions Intensity Reduction:** India has committed to reducing the emissions intensity (CO<sub>2</sub> per unit of GDP) of its GDP by **47%** by 2035 from 2005 levels.
  - India has already reduced its emissions intensity by about 36% between 2005 and 2020.
- **Expansion of Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity:** India has committed to achieving **60%** of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2035.
  - India has already achieved more than **52%** non-fossil fuel capacity by 2026, ahead of its earlier target.
- **Creation of Carbon Sink:** India has committed to creating a carbon sink of **3.5 to 4 billion tonnes** of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2035.

**17. (b)**

**Context**

- The officials of the Wildlife Management Authority and Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary have conserved nearly 20,000 eggs of Olive Ridley Turtles on Hope Island in the Kakinada Bay.

**Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary**

- It is India's **second-largest mangrove forest**, located near Kakinada in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- The sanctuary lies in the **Godavari estuarine region**, where the Godavari River meets the Bay of Bengal.
- **Keystone Species:** Fishing cat, smooth-coated otter, and golden jackal.

**18. (b)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** CMS is an international environmental treaty operating under UNEP. It focuses on protecting migratory wild animals across their range.

**Statement 2 is correct:** CMS is also called the Bonn Convention because its Secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** Appendix I contains species threatened with extinction. Parties are expected to prohibit "taking," protect habitats, and remove migration barriers.

Appendix II (Conservation-Dependent Species) covers species with unfavourable conservation status, requiring international cooperation and agreements.

## 19. (b)

**Context:** Once a jewel of the Ganga, the Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle now survives in a rapidly shrinking habitat.

#### About Red-crowned roofed turtle

- **Scientific Name:** *Batagur kachuga*
- **Genus:** *Batagur* (one of three large freshwater species in India).
- **Habitat:** Beyond India, Bangladesh and Nepal hold only marginal habitat, with no confirmed wild populations.
- **Diet:** Primarily herbivorous; helps regulate aquatic vegetation and maintain nutrient cycling, supporting balanced freshwater ecosystems.
- **Threats:** Rampant harvest of adults and eggs, illegal trade, and habitat degradation.
- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List); protected under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; listed in Appendix I of CITES.

#### Do you Know?

- The Indian Turtle Conservation Program, supported by Namami Gange and the Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan forest departments, works to restore the species' former glory.



## 20. (a)

#### Context

- The officials of the Wildlife Management Authority and Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary have conserved nearly 20,000 eggs of Olive Ridley Turtles on Hope Island in the Kakinada Bay.

#### About Olive Ridley Turtles

- The olive ridley gets its name from the **olive green color** of its heart-shaped shell.
  - These are **carnivores** and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp etc.
- **Distribution:** Olive ridleys are found throughout the world primarily in the tropical regions of the **Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans**.
- **Major nesting sites in India** are located along the coasts of **Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu** including Rushikulya rookery coast (Odisha) and Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National park).
- **Features:** They are known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- **Conservation Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
  - **CITES Appendix I**
  - **Schedule I** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

## 21. (a)

**Context**

- A new species of butterfly recorded in a forest of Arunachal Pradesh has been named after Singer Zubeen Garg, the cultural icon of Assam.

**About**

- **Basar Duke** is proposed as the common name for **Euthalia zubeengargi**.
- The butterfly belongs to the **genus Euthalia**, a group commonly found across South and Southeast Asia.
- Members of this group are typically seen in **forested habitats and are known for their earthy brown wings marked with pale spots**.
- The newly discovered species stands out for its **distinct wing patterns** and structural features, which allowed them to confirm it as a separate species.
  - **Euthalia zubeengargi** prefers **cool, shaded forest interiors**.



- Much about the butterfly's life cycle, including its breeding pattern and host plants, remains unknown.
- **Euthalia zubeengargi** is **one of more than 80 species** from this group recorded in India's northeastern region.

## 22. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** The "Bhavasagara" Referral Centre has been officially designated as India's National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna. This gives it an important national role in preserving deep-sea biodiversity.

**Statement 2 is correct:** Under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, it is authorised to act as the official custodian of new deep-sea species. It can also preserve representative biological samples like DNA sequences.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** The Centre itself is part of Centre for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE), which functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, but the official designation as national repository was granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).



# MISCELLANEOUS

- India's first semiconductor facility, set up by Micron Technology as an Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) plant, was inaugurated at which of the following places?
  - Noida, Uttar Pradesh
  - Sanand, Gujarat
  - Pune, Maharashtra
  - Mohali, Punjab
- The World Obesity Atlas, recently seen in the news, is published by which of the following organizations?
  - World Health Organization
  - World Obesity Federation
  - UNICEF
  - Food and Agriculture Organization
- Project HANUMAN, recently seen in the news, has been launched by which of the following states to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts?
  - Karnataka
  - Tamil Nadu
  - Andhra Pradesh
  - Uttar Pradesh
- With reference to the Kurds, consider the following statements:
  - The Kurds are an ethnic minority in the Middle East without an independent nation-state.
  - Their population is mainly concentrated across parts of eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran, and Syria.
  - Kurdish languages belong to the Turkic language family and are closely related to Turkish and Arabic.Which of the statements given above are correct?
  - 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
- Which of the following initiatives aim to strengthen regional maritime security cooperation involving India?
  - Colombo Security Conclave
  - Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
  - International Fleet ReviewSelect the correct answer using the code below:
  - 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
- The year 2026 has been observed as the 'International Year of the Woman Farmer'. Which of the following is the primary objective of this observance?
  - Recognising the role of women in agriculture and food security.
  - Promoting gender equality in land and resource ownership.

3. Encouraging participation of women in agricultural decision-making.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

7. Consider the following statements

1. The F-category visa is for students studying at academic institutions and language training programs in the U.S.
2. The M-category visa is for students attending vocational and non-academic institutions in the U.S.

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. The term “Leaky Pipeline”, recently seen in the news, refers to:

- (a) The gradual decline in the participation of women at successive stages of scientific education and careers
- (b) Declining global investment in science and technology research
- (c) Shortage of laboratories and research infrastructure in developing countries
- (d) Migration of skilled scientists from developing to developed countries

9. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme primarily regulates trade in which of the following?

- (a) Polished diamonds (b) Rough diamonds
- (c) Industrial synthetic diamonds (d) Precious gemstones

10. With reference to the National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI), consider the following statements:

1. It is released by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) in coordination with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. The index measures vegetation along National Highways using satellite-based detection of chlorophyll content.

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 second annual edition of Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026, consider the following statements:

1. FHI initiative assesses the fiscal health of states in India.
2. In 2026, Odisha remains the top-performing state while Goa and Jharkhand also feature among the Achiever states.

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. Operation “White Hammer”, recently seen in the news, is related to:
- Anti-piracy naval operations in the Indian Ocean
  - Crackdown on illegal drug manufacturing and trafficking
  - Counter-terrorism operation in Jammu and Kashmir
  - Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations
13. Operation Sagar Bandhu, recently seen in the news, is related to:
- Joint naval exercises between India and Sri Lanka
  - India’s humanitarian assistance and infrastructure support to Sri Lanka following a cyclone
  - Anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean
  - Maritime boundary negotiations between India and Sri Lanka
14. With reference to the Sangita Kalanidhi Award, consider the following statements:
- It was instituted by the Ministry of Culture.
  - It is regarded as the highest honour in Carnatic music.
  - The award carries a gold medal and a citation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
15. With reference to the Jnanpith Award, consider the following statements:
- It was instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
  - It is awarded annually to an Indian author for outstanding contribution to literature.
  - It is given only for works written in the languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
16. Consider the following statements regarding the university affiliation system in India:
- It ensures uniform curriculum and standardized examinations across affiliated colleges.
  - It allows colleges complete freedom to design their own courses and evaluation systems.
  - Universities grant affiliation based on compliance with prescribed norms.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- Only one
  - Only two
  - All three
  - None
17. Consider the following statements:
- India has eradicated smallpox, polio and maternal & neonatal tetanus through vaccination.
  - India has launched Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and indigenous Td (Tetanus-Diphtheria) vaccine in 2026.

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.** Which of the following factors are considered in the World Happiness Report rankings?

- 1. Social support
- 2. Freedom to make life choices
- 3. Military expenditure
- 4. Perceptions of corruption

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

**19.** With reference to vaccination in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. National Vaccination Day is observed on March 16 to commemorate the elimination of polio from India.
- 2. India contributes nearly 60% of global vaccine production.

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.** The Amitava Roy Committee (2018) is related to:

- (a) Prison reforms in India
- (b) Electoral reforms
- (c) Environmental conservation
- (d) Panchayati Raj institutions

**21.** Consider the following statements regarding the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP):

- 1. It is led by the United Kingdom, Italy, and Japan.
- 2. It is expected to have a demonstrator aircraft by around 2027.
- 3. It offers India a high level of industrial participation in design and production.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

**22.** With reference to youth suicide in India, consider the following statements:

- 1. According to NCRB data, suicide is among the leading causes of death in the 15–29 age group in India.
- 2. Higher suicide rates in India are generally observed in less developed states due to poverty.
- 3. The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 decriminalizes suicide attempts and recognizes the role of severe stress.
- 4. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022) aims to reduce suicide rates by 50% by 2030.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

23. With reference to the *Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025*, consider the following statements:
1. It is released by the World Bank.
  2. It measures perceived levels of public sector corruption.
  3. India scored above the global average in CPI 2025.
- Which of the statements given above is/are **not** 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 boards:
1. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board
  2. Dental Assessment and Rating Board
  3. Ethics and Dental Registration Board
- Which of the above are part of the National Dental Commission?
- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
25. With reference to the Saraswati Samman, consider the following statements:
1. It was instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991.
  2. It is awarded annually for literary works published only in the English language.
  3. The award includes a cash prize of ₹15 lakh, a citation, and a plaque.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3
26. With reference to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, consider the following statements:
1. India has the highest share of rising entries among countries with more than 10 institutions.
  2. India ranks 3rd globally in terms of the number of institutions featured in the rankings.
- 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. Consider the following statements regarding the IIED Food Security Index:
1. India's baseline score is lower than the global average.
  2. India performs better than Brazil and Indonesia in the index.
  3. India's food security score is projected to decline further under higher warming levels.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) Only one  
(b) Only two  
(c) All three  
(d) None



**More About the News**

- The semiconductor plant has been set up by **Micron Technology** (an American chipmaker) as an Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) facility, with an investment of ₹22,516 crore at Sanand, Gujarat.
- The facility will manufacture memory and storage products including: **DRAM (Dynamic Random Access Memory), NAND Flash memory, and SSD (Solid State Drive)** storage devices.
- India had approved **10 projects under the Semicon India programme**, and besides the Micron plant, three more would start production very soon, in Noida (Uttar Pradesh), Assam, Odisha and Punjab.

**2. (b)**

**Context:** India ranks **second globally** in the number of children who are **overweight or living with obesity**, according to the **World Obesity Atlas 2026** released on **World Obesity Day** (4 March).

**About**

- The World Obesity Atlas is a **non-commercial publication** produced by the **World Obesity Federation**, which provides **global data, projections, and policy insights** on obesity trends and related health risks.
- The report highlights that the **global target to halt the rise in childhood obesity by 2025 has been missed**, and the deadline has now been extended to **2030**. However, **most countries remain off track**, including India.

**3. (c)**

**In News:** **Project HANUMAN** is a new initiative by the Andhra Pradesh government to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts through advanced rescue, monitoring, and community protection measures.

**About**

- Its full name is **Healing and Nurturing Units for Monitoring, Aid and Nursing of Wildlife**.
- It targets **forest-fringe areas prone to incidents** like elephant raids and snake bites, promoting coexistence via scientific tools and local involvement.

**4. (a)**

**Statement 1 and 2 is correct:** **Kurds:** The Kurdish people are an **ethnic minority group in the Middle East** without an independent state.

- The population ranges between **25 million and 45 million worldwide**, with most living in the mountainous region across parts of **western Iran, eastern Turkey, northern Iraq and Syria, and Armenia**.

**Statement 3 is not correct:** They speak various Kurdish dialects, not related to Turkish or Arabic; and are mostly **Sunni Muslims**.

**5. (a)**

The Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) strengthens maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region through radar networks, joint exercises, and info-sharing among India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Bangladesh. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), initiated by India in 2008, promotes naval dialogue, exercises, and interoperability for IOR stability among 25+ members.

The International Fleet Review (IFR), hosted by the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam (February 2026), is a ceremonial multinational naval gathering showcasing fleets, with incidental goodwill but not primarily focused on security cooperation planning.

6. (d)

**In News:** Women's contributions to agriculture remain largely invisible, as **land titles and property ownership continue to remain in men's names**, limiting women's access to resources, institutional support and decision-making power, despite legal reforms such as **equal inheritance rights**.

#### International Year of the Woman Farmer

- International Women's Day on **8 March 2026** carries particular significance as **2026 is being observed as the International Year of the Woman Farmer**.
- The **theme for 2026** highlights the urgent need to ensure **equal rights, justice and recognition for women in agriculture**.
- The **International Year of the Woman Farmer (2026)** aims to highlight and strengthen the role of women in agriculture and food systems. Its major objectives include:
  - Recognising the role of women in agriculture and food security;
  - Promoting gender equality in land and resource ownership;
  - Encouraging participation of women in agricultural decision-making.

7. (c)

**In News :** In 2025, F-1 visa issuances to Indian students fell sharply due to measures by the Trump administration, dropping 69% in June-July (12,776 visas) compared to 41,336 in 2024.

**Statements 1 and 2 are correct :** The F-category visa is issued to foreign students for studying in U.S. academic institutions such as universities, colleges, high schools, private elementary schools, seminaries, conservatories, or language training programs.

- The M-category visa is issued to foreign students for studying in vocational or other recognised non-academic institutions, excluding language training programs.

8. (a)

**In News:** Recently, it has been observed that Globally, women are underrepresented in STEM, a problem often called the "leaky pipeline."

#### About

- Women remain significantly **underrepresented in STEM globally** and in India, despite progress in education access.
- Women constitute only **35% of STEM graduates across the world and earn only 40% of STEM PhDs**.
- Further, based on data from 146 nations, women scientists comprise only 30% of the STEM workforce, which includes academic jobs and faculty positions.
  - This systematic loss of women at various stages of STEM education and careers is commonly called the '**leaky pipeline**'.

9. (b)

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) specifically regulates the international trade in rough diamonds to prevent conflict diamonds from funding rebel conflicts. Every shipment of rough diamonds requires a tamper-resistant Kimberley Process Certificate, issued only by certified participant countries, ensuring trade occurs solely among compliant members. This covers over 99% of global rough diamond production and excludes polished diamonds, synthetic ones, or other gemstones.

Polished diamonds fall outside KPCS scope as they enter downstream markets post-processing. Industrial synthetic diamonds and precious gemstones like rubies are unregulated by the scheme, which targets only natural rough diamonds linked to conflict financing.

10. (c)

**Context:** NHAI in coordination with ISRO has released the first-of-its-kind Annual Report on the **National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26**.

#### About

- The assessment uses **high-resolution satellite sensors** to detect **chlorophyll content**, enabling an objective and technology-driven measure of vegetation along highways.
- The **NH-GCI value is expressed as a percentage**, indicating the proportion of land covered by green cover within the **Right of Way (RoW)** of National Highways.
- The index measures vegetation along **both sides of highways at a granularity of one kilometre**.
- Approximately **30,000 km** of National Highways spanning 24 States have been covered for the period July–December 2024.

11. (c)

**Both the statements are correct: Fiscal Health Index**

- FHI initiative assesses the **fiscal health of states in India**.
- **Sub Indices:** Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, and Debt Sustainability.
- Data for the index is sourced from the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)**.

#### Key Highlights of FHI 2026

- **Overall State Rankings:**
  - **Odisha remains the top-performing state**, further improving its fiscal score.
  - Goa and Jharkhand also feature among the Achiever states.
  - Gujarat and Maharashtra continue to remain in the top five.
  - Haryana shows a notable improvement by gaining three ranks.

12. (b)

**Context:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) raided an illegal **Alprazolam** manufacturing unit in Andhra Pradesh under **Operation “White Hammer.”**

#### About

- The raid uncovered a clandestine industrial setup producing **Alprazolam**, a psychotropic substance regulated under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985**.

#### Do you know?

- During the current financial year, DRI has dismantled eight clandestine drug manufacturing units through intelligence-based operations, reaffirming its firm commitment to the Government’s **Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan** and to safeguarding society and people from the menace of narcotic and psychotropic substances.

13. (b)

#### Context

- The Indian Army has launched a **Major Bridge Project in Sri Lanka** under **Operation Sagar Bandhu**.

**About**

- The bridge will connect **Colombo**, the capital city, with the key economic centre of **Puttalam** along a vital coastal corridor passing through **Chilaw District**.
- The project reflects India's engineering assistance to support Sri Lanka's infrastructure recovery and connectivity.
- It is aligned with India's **Neighbourhood First Policy** and broader regional cooperation initiatives.

**Background**

- India launched **Operation Sagar Bandhu** in November 2025 as a **First Responder** following the devastating **Cyclone Ditwah**.
- The operation aimed to provide **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** to Sri Lanka.

**14. (b)**

**Context:** Veena player **Jayanthi Kumaresh** will receive the coveted **Sangita Kalanidhi** at the 100th Conference and Concerts of **The Music Academy, Madras**.

- Bharatanatyam dancer **Narendra G** will be conferred the **Nritya Kalanidhi** award.

**About Sangita Kalanidhi Award**

- Instituted in **1942** by **The Music Academy, Madras**.
- It is regarded as the highest honour in Carnatic music, often described as the "Nobel Prize of Carnatic music."
- The award comprises a **gold medal** and a **birudu patra (citation)**.
- Since **2005**, recipients have also been honoured with the **MS Subbulakshmi Award**, instituted by The Hindu.

**15. (a)**

**Context:** Tamil poet and lyricist **Vairamuthu** has been selected for the **Jnanpith Award** for the year 2025.

**About Jnanpith Award (also spelled Gyanpeeth Award)**

- Instituted in **1961** by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, it is **India's highest literary honour**, awarded annually to an Indian author for outstanding contribution to literature.
  - **Bharatiya Jnanpith** is a literary and research organization founded by **Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain and Rama Jain**.
- It is awarded for the work in **22 languages** recognized by the Constitution of India and, from 2013, in the **English** language.
- The award carries a **₹11 lakh cash prize, citation, and a bronze statuette of Vagdevi (Saraswati)**.
- The **first recipient** was Malayalam writer **G. Sankara Kurup** in **1965** for **Odakkuzhal**.

**16. (b)**

**Statement 1 is correct:** The affiliation system ensures uniform curriculum, examinations, and regulatory oversight across colleges. This was one of its key historical objectives.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Affiliated colleges do not have complete autonomy in designing courses or evaluation systems. They must follow university-prescribed frameworks.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Universities grant and renew affiliation based on compliance with norms related to infrastructure, faculty, and academic standards.

## 17. (c)

**Both the statements are correct:** The UIP is one of the world's largest immunisation programmes, reaching 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year, free of cost.

- India has eradicated **smallpox, polio** and **maternal & neonatal tetanus** through vaccination, and continues to expand its immunisation programme — most recently launched **HPV and indigenous Td vaccines in 2026**.

## 18. (a)

**Context:** The **World Happiness Report 2026** highlights that heavy social media use is adversely affecting the well-being of young people across many countries.

**About**

- The annual report is published by the **University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre** in partnership with **Gallup**, and the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**.
- **Six factors** for evaluation of happiness ranking:
  - GDP per capita,
  - Life expectancy,
  - **Social support,**
  - **Freedom to make life choices,**
  - Generosity,
  - **Perceptions of corruption.**
- **Top 3:** Finland (1st, since 2018), Iceland (2nd), and Denmark (3rd).
- **Bottom 3:** Malawi (145th), Sierra Leone (146th), and Afghanistan (147th).
- **India:** Ranked 116th (improved from 118th in 2025).

## 19. (b)

**Context:** India marked National Vaccination Day (March 16) to highlight achievements in immunisation.

- The day is observed to commemorate the first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine administered in 1995 under the Pulse Polio Programme.

**About**

- Vaccination has played a transformative role in improving public health in India. The country has eradicated smallpox (1977) and eliminated polio (last case in 2011), yaws, and maternal & neonatal tetanus.
- It has significantly reduced child mortality and the burden of diseases such as measles-rubella and tuberculosis.
- India emerged as the “pharmacy of the world” during COVID-19, administering over 200 crore vaccine doses and supplying vaccines globally. Notably, India contributes nearly 60% of global vaccine production.

## 20. (a)

**Context**

- The Supreme Court of India has directed all States and Union Territories to submit updated and comprehensive data on prison conditions, in a suo motu case on inhuman conditions in prisons.
  - **“Prisons/persons detained therein”** is a **‘State-list’** subject as per **Entry 4** of List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

### Committees on Prison Reforms

- **Mulla Committee:** Formally the **All India Committee on Jail Reforms (1980–83)** recommended Separation of undertrial prisoners from convicts and improvement of prison conditions, nutrition, and sanitation.
- **Justice Amitava Roy Committee:** It recommended decongestion of prisons, speedy trials and legal aid reforms and use of technology for prison management.
- **Krishna Iyer Committee:** It advocated for separate jail facilities for women to prevent exploitation.

#### 21. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** GCAP is a joint initiative led by the United Kingdom, Italy, and Japan. It is one of the major sixth-generation fighter programmes globally.

- **Statement 2 is correct:** The programme is considered relatively advanced, with a demonstrator expected by around 2027. Induction is targeted around 2035, showing a clear timeline.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** India may get limited industrial participation in GCAP. This is due to pre-decided workshare among existing partner countries, restricting new entrants' roles.

#### 22. (a)

**In News:** The tragic death of two young sisters in Rajasthan, compelled into unwanted marriages, highlights a disturbing reality, and underscore the urgent need to examine the societal roots of suicide, particularly among young women.

- **Statement 1 is correct:** NCRB data shows suicide is a leading cause of death among youth.
- **Statement 2 is not correct:** Higher suicide rates are observed in more developed states (e.g., Kerala, Tamil Nadu), indicating an aspiration gap.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 decriminalizes suicide and treats it as a mental health issue.
- **Statement 4 is not correct:** Target is **10% reduction by 2030**, not 50%.

#### 23. (c)

**In News:** The *Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025* highlights that **corruption is intensifying rather than declining**, reflecting a broader erosion of democratic accountability and institutional strength.

**Statement 1 is not correct**

- The **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)** is released annually by **Transparency International**, not the World Bank.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- CPI specifically measures **perceptions of corruption in the public sector**, based on expert assessments and surveys.

**Statement 3 is not correct**

- India's score in recent CPI reports (including 2025 trends) is **below the global average** (global average ~43; India ~38–40 range).

#### 24. (d)

**Context:** The Government of India has replaced the Dental Council of India (DCI) with a new regulator, the **National Dental Commission (NDC)**.

**About the National Dental Commission**

- Established under the **National Dental Commission Act, 2023**.

- Aims to bring regulatory reforms in dental education and improve access to affordable oral healthcare.
- **Key Functions**
  - Frame regulations to implement the provisions of the Act;
  - Conduct assessment and rating of dental institutions;
  - Evaluate human resources and promote dental research;
  - Frame guidelines for fee regulation in private dental colleges;
  - Set standards for community dental care, education, research, and professional ethics.
- **Institutional Structure:** To support its functioning, three autonomous boards have been constituted:
  - **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board** – to oversee dental education;
  - **Dental Assessment and Rating Board** – to regulate accreditation and institutional assessment;
  - **Ethics and Dental Registration Board** – to govern professional conduct and registration of dentists.

25. (a)

**Context:** Bengali Novel Hara Parbati Katha by Author Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay has been selected for Saraswati Samman, 2025.

**About**

- The Saraswati Samman, instituted by the **K.K. Birla Foundation** in 1991, is an annual award given to outstanding literary work written in any Indian language by an Indian citizen and published during the **last 10 years**.
- The awardee will be given **15 lakh rupees**, a citation and a plaque.

26. (a)

**Context:** The recently released **QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026**, highlight India's improving performance in global higher education.

**About QS Rankings**

- The **16th edition** of the rankings, published by **London-based QS Quacquarelli Symonds**, evaluates over 21,000 academic programmes across 1,900 universities in more than 100 countries.

**Key Highlights**

Institution	Subject	2026	2025
IIT-ISMDhanbad	Engineering-Mineral & Mining	21	20
IIM Ahmedabad	Business & Management Studies	21	27
	Marketing	21	Debut*
IIT Kharagpur	Engineering-Mineral & Mining	22	45
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences	Dentistry	25	26
JNU	Development Studies	26	29

\* DEBUT ENTRY IN SUBJECT;

SOURCE: QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT 2026

- **Total Entries:** India has **599 entries across 55 disciplines**.
- **Rising Presence:** A total of **99 Indian institutions** feature in 2026, up from **79 five years ago**.
- **Performance Trend:** India has the highest share of rising entries (44%) among countries with 10+ institutions.
  - **265 entries improved**, while only **80 declined** globally.
- **Global Standing:** India ranks **4th globally** in terms of number of institutions, after the USA (228), China (158) and UK (114).
- **New Entries:** India also recorded 120 new entries this year, placing it fourth globally for fresh appearances, behind only the US (287), China (181), and the UK (159).
- **Asia Position:** India is the 2nd most represented country in Asia, after China (101 institutions).

27. (b)

**Statement 1 is correct:** India's baseline score is **5.31**, while the global average is **6.74**. This shows that India already has weaker food security compared to the global average.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** India is placed **behind** countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Indonesia. This means its food system is more vulnerable in comparison.
- **Statement 3 is correct:** India's score is projected to fall to **4.96 at 1.5°C warming** and **4.52 at 2°C warming**. This shows that rising temperatures can worsen food insecurity.

28. (c)

**Statement 1 is not correct:** **Paternity leave** is leave granted to a **male employee (father)** to take care of his newborn or adopted child and support the mother after childbirth.

- India **does not** have a universal paternity leave law.

**Statement 2 is correct:** Under the **Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972** male government employees are entitled to **15 days of paternity leave**, which they can take **within six months of their child's birth or adoption**. Hence **statement 3 is not correct**.

29. (d)

**In News:** India's online gaming sector has evolved into a complex socio-digital ecosystem, with over **568 million gamers** and increasing real-money participation. However, concerns such as **financial fraud, addiction, money laundering, and national security risks** have necessitated a robust regulatory framework.

**Statement 1 is correct**

- The Act imposes a **blanket ban on real-money gaming**, covering both **games of skill and chance**.

**Statement 2 is correct**

- It empowers the government to **block platforms under Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000**.

**Statement 3 is correct**

- It provides for the creation of a **National Online Gaming Authority** for regulation and registration.

30. (c)

**Context:** A study published in The Lancet found that India remains among the countries with the **highest number of maternal deaths globally**.

**What is Maternal Mortality?**

- **Maternal death** is the death of a **woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy** from any cause related to or **aggravated by the pregnancy** but not from accidental or incidental causes.

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** is the number of maternal deaths per **1,00,000** live births.
- **Maternal Mortality Rate:** This is calculated as maternal deaths to women in the ages **15-49 per lakh of women** in that age group, reported under **Sample Registration System (SRS)**.
- The **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1** targets reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than **70 per 1,00,000 live births by 2030**.

31. (d)

#### Context

- India is set to conduct its next population Census digitally, with the exercise scheduled to commence in 2026 and conclude by March 1, 2027

#### Census in India

- **A census is a survey of the population** of an area that includes collecting details of a country's demographics including **age, sex and occupation**.
  - It is typically conducted **every ten years** and was scheduled for **2021** but had to be postponed due to the Covid pandemic.
- **History:** Under **W.C. Plowden**, the Census Commissioner of India, the first synchronous decennial (every ten years) census was conducted in **1881**.
  - **Independent India's first census** was held in **1951** and since then it has happened in the first year of every decade.
- **The Constitution mandates** that enumeration is carried out but the **Census of India Act of 1948** does not specify its timing or periodicity.
- The population census is conducted by the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**.

32. (d)

**Context:** A recent study has found that the re-entry of rockets such as the Falcon 9 is altering the chemistry of the upper atmosphere, leading to a tenfold surge in lithium atoms.

#### What are the concerns?

- **Impact on Atmospheric Chemistry:** Artificial metals alter the natural composition of upper atmospheric layers. Natural space dust contributes negligible lithium (~80 g/day), while rockets inject significantly higher amounts.
- **Kessler Syndrome:** It is a theoretical scenario in which a **cascade of collisions** between artificial objects in low Earth orbit leads to a rapidly increasing amount of space debris, making the use of near-Earth space impossible for an extended period of time.

