

- **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 **10⁵–10⁶ 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 (CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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

1. 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?
(a) Noida, Uttar Pradesh (b) Sanand, Gujarat
(c) Pune, Maharashtra (d) Mohali, Punjab
2. The World Obesity Atlas, recently seen in the news, is published by which of the following organizations?
(a) World Health Organization (b) World Obesity Federation
(c) UNICEF (d) Food and Agriculture Organization
3. Project HANUMAN, recently seen in the news, has been launched by which of the following states to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts?
(a) Karnataka (b) Tamil Nadu
(c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
4. With reference to the Kurds, consider the following statements:
 1. The Kurds are an ethnic minority in the Middle East without an independent nation-state.
 2. Their population is mainly concentrated across parts of eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran, and Syria.
 3. Kurdish languages belong to the Turkic language family and are closely related to Turkish and Arabic.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. Which of the following initiatives aim to strengthen regional maritime security cooperation involving India?
 1. Colombo Security Conclave
 2. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
 3. International Fleet ReviewSelect 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
6. 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?
 1. Recognising the role of women in agriculture and food security.
 2. 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

- **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.

