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Prelims Wallah Test Series

Test 3 of 40

**Ancient and Medieval History
and Art & Culture
(NCERT)**

UPSC 2026



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Prelims Wallah Test Series

Test 03: Ancient and Medieval History and Art & Culture

1. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The Great Stūpa at Sanchi is one of the oldest surviving stone structures in India and is a significant monument of early Buddhist architecture.

Statement II: The elaborate stone toranas (gateways) and balustrades were built during the Mauryan period.

Statement III: The stūpa marks the site where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

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

- (a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both explain Statement I
- (b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one explains Statement I
- (c) Only one of Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- (d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

2. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Varāhamihira was a renowned scholar during the Gupta period.
- 2. He authored the *Brihat Samhita*, a comprehensive text on astrology and other sciences.
- 3. He was one of the Navaratnas in the court of Chandragupta I.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

3. It tells the story of a yaksha (minor deity), who, after being banished from his home by his master, sends a message to his beloved through a passing cloud. Apart from the many emotions of love, the poem describes in great detail the landscapes and weather of north India on its journey to the beloved.

Who is the author of above poem ?

- (a) Bhasa
- (b) Kalidasa
- (c) Jayadeva
- (d) Bharavi

4. Consider the following statements about the temple sculpture depicted above:

- 1. The image shows Lord Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta (Shesha), a representation of the Anantasayana or Yoganidra motif from Hindu mythology.
- 2. The scene includes Brahma emerging from a lotus that springs from Vishnu's navel, symbolizing the creation of the universe.
- 3. This exquisite panel is found in the Dashavatara Temple, one of the earliest known Panchayatana-style temples.

Where is this temple located?

- (a) Aihole, Karnataka
- (b) Ellora, Maharashtra
- (c) Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh
- (d) Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu

5. Consider the following statements about the Kamarupa Dynasty:

- 1. The Kamarupa kingdom was an early medieval polity in the eastern region of India, primarily located in present-day Assam.
- 2. The dynasty is mentioned in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

6. Consider the following statements about the Pallava dynasty:

1. The Pallavas were among the first major South Indian dynasties to build structural stone temples, marking a transition from rock-cut to structural architecture.
2. The famous Chinese traveler Faxian visited the Pallava capital of Kanchipuram during the reign of Mahendravarman I.
3. The Pallava ruler Narasimhavarman I defeated the Chalukya king Pulakeshin II and built a victory pillar at Badami to commemorate his conquest.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) II only
- (b) I and III only
- (c) II and III only
- (d) I, II and III

7. Consider the following temples:

1. Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram
2. Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram
3. Brihadeshwara Temple at Thanjavur
4. Pancha Rathas at Mahabalipuram

How many of the above temples were constructed under the Pallava Empire?

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

8. Consider the following pairs:

Place	Historical Significance
1. Kanchipuram	Famous for rock-cut caves featuring carvings of Hindu deities, especially Vishnu
2. Udayagiri	Known as a city of a thousand temples
3. Ajanta	Known for vibrant cave paintings that depict the Jataka tales
4. Pataliputra	Capital of the Guptas

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) None

9. Consider the following statements about the Vakataka Dynasty:

1. Like the Satavahanas, the Vakatakas issued coins with portraits of rulers on one side and dynastic symbols on the other.
2. Vakataka ruler Harishena patronised the Ajanta caves, which reached their artistic peak under his rule.
3. Like the Kadamba dynasty of Karnataka, the Vakatakas adopted the Kannada language as an administrative medium in their inscriptions.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

10. Consider the following statements regarding Gandhara and Mathura schools of sculpture:

1. The Gandhara school of art was influenced by Greco-Roman traditions and primarily used grey schist stone for carving Buddha images.
2. The Mathura school of art evolved indigenously without foreign influence and is known for using red sandstone from the Sikri quarries near Agra.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

11. Consider the following statements about the Gupta Empire's economy and trade:

1. Land revenue formed the primary source of income for the Gupta state.
2. The Guptas promoted maritime trade, and Indian goods such as textiles and spices were exported to the Mediterranean world.
3. The Gupta rulers issued large quantities of copper coins to facilitate inland trade and rural market transactions across the empire.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and III only
- (b) II only
- (c) I and II only
- (d) II and III only

12. In a temple frieze, Krishna is shown effortlessly lifting the Govardhana Hill on his little finger to shelter the villagers of Vrindavan from torrential rains. The relief is vivid, showing gopas, gopis, and cattle seeking protection under the hill.

This sculptural depiction is most prominently found at:

- (a) Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu
- (b) Jagannath Temple, Puri
- (c) Rani ki Vay, Patan
- (d) Vitthala Temple, Hampi

13. Consider the following statements regarding Prabhavati Gupta:

- 1. She was the daughter of Chandragupta II and married into the Vakattaka Dynasty.
- 2. The inscriptions issued during her regency were primarily in the Kannada language and Brahmi script.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

14. Consider the following statements regarding Pushyabhuti:

- 1. The Pushyabhuti dynasty rose to prominence under Harshavardhana, who ruled from Thanesar and later Kannauj.
- 2. The dynasty was founded by Banabhatta.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

15. With reference to Harsha's administration and court culture, consider the following pairs:

Term	Description
I. Mīmāṃsakas	A. Scholars engaged in Vedic ritual interpretation and logic-based philosophy
II. Mahāsāmanta	B. Feudatory chiefs who acknowledged the suzerainty of Harsha
III. Pūrvapakṣin	C. A military unit stationed along the eastern frontier of Harsha's empire

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

16. With reference to ancient Indian history, consider the following pairs:

Book / Text	Description
I. Si-Yu-Ki	Xuanzang's account describing 7th-century Indian polity, religious life, and monastic education
II. Milindapanho	A Pali text in the form of a dialogue between Indo-Greek king Menander and Buddhist monk Nāgasena
III. Tabaqat-i-Nasiri	A travel account written by Al-Biruni describing the culture and science of 11th-century India

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

17. Consider the following statements regarding the Kumbh Mela and its mythological origins:

1. The Kumbh Mela is rooted in the Samudra Manthana legend, where Viṣṇu, in the form of Mohini, carried away the pitcher of amṛita to prevent the asuras from attaining immortality.
2. According to tradition, drops of amṛita from the kumbha fell at four locations—Haridwar, Prayagraj, Nashik, and Ujjain—making them sacred Kumbh Mela sites.
3. The earliest textual reference to the Kumbh Mela is found in the Rigveda.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

18. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: Recently, Maharashtra has established a dedicated cell under the Additional Secretary (Home) to expedite the processing of mercy petitions for death row convicts.

Statement II: The Supreme Court in 2024 directed all States and Union Territories to create dedicated units within their Home or Prison Departments for timely and efficient handling of mercy petitions.

Which of the following is correct with respect to the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement I and Statement II are true, and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I
- (b) Both Statement I and Statement II are true, but Statement II is not the correct explanation of Statement I
- (c) Statement I is true, but Statement II is false
- (d) Statement I is false, but Statement II is true

19. Consider the following statements regarding the Euclid Space Telescope:

1. The Euclid Space Telescope has been launched by NASA.
2. Unlike the James Webb Space Telescope, Euclid is designed specifically to observe the Sun's corona and solar winds.
3. Euclid aims to study dark matter and dark energy.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) II only
- (b) I and III only
- (c) III only
- (d) II and III only

20. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: Neonatal sepsis remains a leading cause of neonatal mortality in India despite advances in medical care.

Statement II: Newborns have an immature immune system, making them more vulnerable to severe bacterial infections within the first 28 days of life.

Which of the following is correct with respect to the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement I and Statement II are true, and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I
- (b) Both Statement I and Statement II are true, but Statement II is not the correct explanation of Statement I
- (c) Statement I is true, but Statement II is false
- (d) Statement I is false, but Statement II is true

21. Consider the following statements regarding the Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC):

1. Possession of an EPIC is mandatory for a citizen to exercise the right to vote in India.
2. The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 provides for the issuance of Electors Photo Identity Cards to registered voters.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

22. Consider the following statements regarding Amir Khusrau:

1. Amir Khusrau is credited with popularizing qawwali a form of Sufi devotional music still performed at dargahs across South Asia.
2. He played a foundational role in shaping Hindustani classical music particularly influencing the khayal and tarana styles.
3. There is strong historical consensus that Amir Khusrau invented both the sitar and tabla during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

23. What is meant by the term "Biodiversity Leakage"?

- (a) The loss of genetic diversity from a species due to inbreeding in isolated populations.rine resources.
- (b) The unintended transfer of invasive species across borders through trade and tourism.
- (c) The displacement of biodiversity loss from one region to another due to conservation policies or land-use regulations.
- (d) The gradual decline in ecosystem services due to overexploitation of forest and ma

24. Consider the following statements regarding the Juanga Tribe:

1. The Juanga tribe is primarily found in Odisha and is recognized as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).
2. They traditionally live in isolated hill settlements known as "Pentas" and are known for practicing shifting cultivation and forest-based subsistence.
3. The mandaghar, or youth dormitory, is an important cultural structure in Juang villages, serving as a gathering place for the community.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II only
- (c) III only
- (d) I, II and III

25. Consider the following statements regarding the Bungus Valley:

1. Bungus Valley is located in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir and is known for its high-altitude grasslands and strategic military significance.
2. The valley is part of the Dachigam National Park and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

26. Consider the following statements:

1. The World Spice Organisation is a specialised agency under the United Nations focused on global spice standardisation.
2. India is the largest producer and exporter of spices in the world.
3. The organisation engages in capacity building, research, and market access support for spice farmers and processors, especially in developing countries.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) III only
- (b) II only
- (c) II and III only
- (d) I, II and III

27. Consider the following statements regarding the ICC Champions Trophy 2025:

1. For 2025, teams qualified based on their performance in the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, with Pakistan securing automatic entry as hosts.
2. The tournament will follow a round-robin format with all ten ICC full-member teams participating.
3. India secured their third ICC Champions Trophy title after defeating New Zealand in the final.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

28. Consider the following statements regarding the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA):

1. It is the only permanent intergovernmental body that specifically addresses all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture at the global level.
2. The Commission was established in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
3. It functions under the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and aims to facilitate international consensus on the conservation and equitable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

29. Consider the following statements regarding the Vertically Launched Short-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM):

1. The VL-SRSAM is an indigenously developed missile system by DRDO, designed to neutralise aerial threats including sea-skimming targets.
2. It was originally developed for the Indian Army to counter cross-border aerial threats along the Line of Control.
3. Although its original strike range was about 40 km, enhancements have reportedly increased its range to nearly 80 km.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

30. Consider the following statements regarding Exercise *Prachand Prahaar*:

1. It is a tri-service integrated multi-domain warfare exercise.
2. The exercise includes live-fire drills, joint operations with the Indian Air Force, and rapid mobilization in high-altitude terrains.
3. It was conducted in the high-altitude areas of Arunachal Pradesh under the Eastern Army Command.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

31. Consider the following statements regarding the Sarhul Festival:

1. Sarhul is a nature-worshipping festival celebrated primarily in Jharkhand and the Chhotanagpur region by tribal communities like the Oraon, Munda, and Ho.
2. The festival is celebrated in the month of Kartika to mark the beginning of the harvest season and the worship of fire.
3. Sarhul symbolically represents the sacred marriage between the Earth and the Sun and involves rituals at Sarna Sthals, the sacred groves where Sarna Maa is worshipped.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

32. What was the main objective of India's 'Operation Brahma'?

- (a) Conduct a joint military exercise with Myanmar and Thailand in response to regional security threats
- (b) Provide humanitarian assistance, including search-and-rescue, medical aid, and disaster relief, following the 2025 earthquake in Myanmar
- (c) Launch a coordinated anti-insurgency operation along the Indo-Myanmar border
- (d) Electrify remote villages in Myanmar under India's neighbourhood development programme

33. The Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath, one of the finest Mauryan sculptures, was built to commemorate which of the following events in Buddha's life?
- Birth
 - Enlightenment
 - First sermon
 - Mahaparinirvana

34. Consider the following stupa elements with their symbolic significance in Buddhism:

List I (Part of Stupa)	List II (Symbolic Significance)
I. Anda	(a) Symbolizes the cosmic mound or the universe
II. Harmika	(b) Represents the abode of gods and the sacred realm
III. Chhatri	(c) Denotes sovereignty and marks the axis mundi

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- Only one
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None
35. With reference to the Chola period paintings found in the Brihadeswara Temple at Thanjavur, consider the following statements:
- The Chola murals are located in the narrow circumambulatory passage around the main shrine of the temple.
 - Two layers of paintings were discovered — the earlier from the Chola period and the later from the Maratha period.
 - The murals depict themes such as Shiva as Nataraja, Shiva in Kailash etc.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- I and II only
 - II and III only
 - I and III only
 - I, II and III

36. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The Sun Temple at Modhera was constructed in such a way that the first rays of the rising sun illuminate the sanctum.

Statement II: The temple is dedicated to the solar deity Surya.

Which of the following is correct with respect to the above statements?

- Both Statement I and Statement II are true, and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I
- Both Statement I and Statement II are true, but Statement II is not the correct explanation of Statement I
- Statement I is true, but Statement II is false
- Statement I is false, but Statement II is true

37. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The Karkota period of Kashmir is considered the most significant in terms of architectural development in the region.

Statement II: This period saw the construction of grand stone temples like the Martand Sun Temple, which combined Gandhara and Gupta stylistic elements with regional innovations.

Which of the following is correct with respect to the above statements?

- Both Statement I and Statement II are true, and Statement II is the correct explanation of Statement I
- Both Statement I and Statement II are true, but Statement II is not the correct explanation of Statement I
- Statement I is true, but Statement II is false
- Statement I is false, but Statement II is true

38. The iconic Nataraja sculpture from the Chola period (12th century CE) was primarily made of which of the following metals?

- Iron
- Bronze
- Copper
- Brass

39. A form of stambha or tower was the minar, a common feature in the sub-continent. Two most striking minars of medieval times are the Qutub Minar in Delhi and the Chand Minar at Daulatabad Fort. The everyday use of the minar was:

- (a) Serving as astronomical observatories
- (b) Housing royal inscriptions and relics
- (c) Calling the faithful to prayer (adhan)
- (d) Storing weapons and ammunition

40. With reference to the Malwa School of Painting, consider the following statements:

1. The Malwa School emerged in Central India during the 17th century and was influenced by both Mughal and regional Rajput styles.
2. It is known for a preference for narrative scenes over courtly portraits.
3. The illustrated manuscript of the *Kalpa Sutra* is the most famous example of Malwa painting.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

41. The well-known painting "*Maru Ragini*" belongs to which of the following schools of Indian miniature painting?

- (a) Mughal School
- (b) Pahari School
- (c) Malwa School
- (d) Rajasthani School

42. Who was one of the principal painters involved in illustrating the *Razm Nama* during Akbar's reign?

- (a) Ustad Mansur
- (b) Daswant
- (c) Mir Sayyid Ali
- (d) Farrukh Beg

43. The painting "*Krishna Lifts Mount Govardhan*", a celebrated example from the late 16th century *Harivamsa Purana* manuscript, is attributed to which school of painting?

- (a) Mughal School
- (b) Mewar School
- (c) Malwa School
- (d) Deccan School

44. The *Composite Horse* painting, depicting a galloping horse formed by intricately arranged human figures with surreal motifs like cranes, Chinese clouds, and oversized leaves, is associated with which of the following painting traditions?

- (a) Mughal School
- (b) Deccani School
- (c) Company School
- (d) Rajput School

45. With reference to Baba Guru Nanak, consider the following statements:

1. He advocated nirguna bhakti and rejected ritualism, image worship, and scriptural formalism.
2. Guru Arjan compiled the *Adi Granth Sahib*, which includes hymns by Guru Nanak and saints like Kabir and Baba Farid.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

46. Consider the following traditions in Column I with their corresponding meanings in Column II:

Column I	Column II
I. Nigama tradition	A. Refers to non-Vedic, renunciatory paths like Jainism and Buddhism
II. Agama tradition	B. Refers to scriptures revealed through lineage-based teacher traditions
III. Sramaṇa tradition	C. Refers to the Vedic tradition centered on revelation (Shruti) and ritual

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one pair
 (b) Only two pairs
 (c) All three pairs
 (d) None
47. Consider the following statements regarding Charvaka philosophy:
- Charvaka philosophy asserts that the world is composed of four elements—earth, water, fire, and air—and rejects the existence of ether (akasha).
 - It denies the existence of both soul and God, considering them unobservable and unprovable.
 - It emphasizes liberation (moksha) through detachment and renunciation as the ultimate goal of human life.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

48. Consider the following statements regarding core principles of Jaina philosophy:

- Jaina philosophy accepts the independent and eternal existence of both consciousness (jīva) and matter (ajīva).
- It rejects the idea of a supreme divine creator, maintaining that the universe is self-regulated and eternal.
- The principle of karma in Jainism is considered a physical substance that binds to the soul, influencing its rebirth and experiences.
- Jainism emphasizes anekāntavāda, the doctrine that truth and reality are perceived differently from diverse viewpoints and no single perspective is complete.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

49. In Buddhist philosophy, the term Dukkhasamuppāda refers to which of the following?

- The annihilation of suffering through the attainment of Nirvana
- The doctrine of dependent origination, explaining the arising of suffering through a chain of causes
- The practice of right mindfulness and meditation to control suffering
- The eight types of suffering encountered in human life

50. Consider the following statements:

- Vaibhāsika and Sautrāntika are two major philosophical schools associated with the Hīnayāna branch of Buddhism.
- Yogācāra and Mādhyamika are philosophical traditions that developed under the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
 (b) II only
 (c) Both I and II
 (d) Neither I nor II

51. Consider the following statements regarding Sāṃkhya philosophy:

1. Sāṃkhya philosophy is a dualistic system that accepts two eternal realities: Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter/nature).
2. It holds that liberation (moksha) is attained when Purusha realizes its complete distinction from Prakriti, leading to cessation of all suffering.
3. Unlike other orthodox systems, Sāṃkhya denies the authority of the Vedas and does not accept the existence of God.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

52. The Sangita Ratnakara is one of the most authoritative and comprehensive treatises on Indian classical music, often regarded as a foundational text for both Hindustani and Carnatic traditions. It deals with various aspects of music, such as swara (notes), rāga, tāla (rhythm), musical instruments, and vocal styles.

Who among the following was the author of this seminal work?

- (a) Bharata
- (b) Dattila
- (c) Śārṅgadeva
- (d) Abhinavagupta

53. Consider the following statements regarding Kathakali:

1. Kathakali is known for its elaborate make-up, heavy costumes and facial expressions.
2. The themes of Kathakali performances are mainly drawn from Hindu epics and mythologies.
3. Traditionally, a brass plate dance and balancing a pot on the head is an essential feature of Kathakali.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) I and II only
- (d) II and III only

54. Consider the following prominent Bodhisattvas:

1. Avalokitesvara
2. Vajrapani
3. Manjushri

How many of the above are depicted in the Ajanta Caves?

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

55. He is associated with practice and meditation. Together with the Buddha and Manjusri, he forms the Shakyamuni Trinity in Mahayana Buddhism.

Which of the following bodhisattvas is being described above?

- (a) Avalokitesvara
- (b) Vajrapani
- (c) Maitreya
- (d) Samantabhadra

56. In Theravāda Buddhism, the term Vibhajjavāda implies which of the following?

- (a) The doctrine of universal compassion
- (b) The doctrine of analytical investigation or conditional analysis
- (c) The doctrine of future Buddha (Metteyya)
- (d) The doctrine of divine intervention

57. A proponent of Mahayana Buddhism in the 4th–5th century AD from Gandhara, he wrote from the perspectives of the Sarvastivada and Sautrantika schools.

Which of the following prominent personalities associated with Buddhism is being described above?

- (a) Nagarjuna
- (b) Asanga
- (c) Buddhaghosa
- (d) Vasubandhu

58. With reference to the religious history of ancient India, Sambhavanatha, Shreyansanatha, and Anantanatha were famous as—

- (a) Vedic sages
- (b) Buddhist arhats
- (c) Jain Tirthankaras
- (d) Shaiva acharyas

59. The "Memory of the World Programme" was launched by which of the following organizations?

- (a) World Bank
- (b) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- (c) International Council on Archives (ICA)
- (d) International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

60. This site is located near the confluence of the Sutlej and Sirhind rivers. Excavations revealed a multi-cultural sequence starting from the Harappan period, including later Painted Grey Ware and Kushan levels. It is notable for the discovery of a burial where the body was interred along with a dog, a rare find in IVC archaeology. The site also yielded typical Harappan artifacts like beads, pottery, and copper tools.

Which of the following IVC sites matches the description above?

- (a) Kalibangan
- (b) Rakhigarhi
- (c) Ropar
- (d) Banawali

61. The "Digital Economy Report 2024" was published by which of the following organizations?

- (a) World Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- (c) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- (d) World Economic Forum

62. With reference to mineral resources in India, consider the following pairs:

Ore	Region
1. Bauxite	Maikal Hills
2. Iron ore	Bailadila Range
3. Manganese	Sundarbans Delta

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

63. Consider the following statements regarding ancient Indian chemical knowledge:

1. The Suśruta Saṁhitā explains the use and importance of alkalies in medical and surgical procedures.
2. The Caraka Saṁhitā records knowledge of ancient Indians about the preparation of various acids, metallic oxides, sulphates, and carbonates.
3. The Suśruta Saṁhitā contains detailed instructions for the preparation of gunpowder mixtures.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

64. Consider the following personalities:

1. Ramaṇa Maharṣi
2. Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa
3. Paramahansa Yogānanda
4. Swami Vivekānanda
5. Swami Dayānanda Sarasvati

How many of the above actively promoted Yoga as a spiritual or practical discipline during the modern period?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

65. Consider the following pairs:

Site	Present-day Location
I. Harappa	Gujarat
II. Kalibangan	Sindh
III. Mohenjo-daro	Haryana
IV. Rakhigarhi	Rajasthan

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

66. Consider the following statements regarding Vedic chanting:

1. Vedic chanting has been inscribed by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
2. The preservation of Vedic chants is attributed to oral tradition through specific recitation techniques such as Padapatha and Krama-patha.
3. The oral tradition of Vedic chanting enabled the preservation of phonetic and tonal accuracy even in the absence of script-based transmission for centuries.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

67. The famous verse "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Nirāmayāḥ" is taken from which one of the following Upanishads?

- (a) Īśā Upanishad
- (b) Kena Upanishad
- (c) Mahanārāyaṇa Upanishad
- (d) Chandogya Upanishad

68. Consider the following pairs:

Festival	State
I. Makara Sankramana	Kerala
II. Makara Vilakku	Karnataka
III. Pedda Panduga	Andhra Pradesh
IV. Pongal	Tamil Nadu

Which of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) I and III only
- (b) II and IV only
- (c) III and IV only
- (d) I and II only

69. Consider the following pairs:

Ancient City	Present-day State
I. Pratiṣṭhāna	Maharashtra
II. Kaushāmbī	Uttar Pradesh
III. Kanchīpura	Tamil Nadu
IV. Śrāvastī	Bihar
V. Rājagṛiha	Jharkhand

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

70. Consider the following statements regarding Alexander's campaign:

1. Alexander invaded the Persian Empire partly to avenge the earlier Persian invasions of Greece.
2. Some Indian soldiers from the Persian-ruled northwest of India fought against the Greeks during earlier Persian invasions.
3. The retreat of Alexander's army from the Indian subcontinent was primarily due to diplomatic alliances formed by Indian rulers.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I and II only
- (b) II and III only
- (c) I and III only
- (d) I, II and III

71. Consider the following elements:

1. The king (Swāmī)
2. The territory and people (Janapada)
3. The treasury (Kośa)
4. The court poets (Kavi)
5. The army (Danda)

How many of the above are part of Kautilya's Saptāṅga system of the state?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

72. Consider the following statements regarding the Mansehra Major Rock Edicts:

1. The Mansehra edicts are among the earliest inscriptions of Ashoka and are written in the Kharosthi script.
2. These edicts, located in present-day Pakistan, are inscribed on a natural rock and contain ethical instructions issued by Ashoka after the Kalinga War.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

73. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The depiction of Samudragupta playing the veena on a Gupta gold coin symbolizes the king's patronage of music and the arts.

Statement II: This coin type is unique in early Indian numismatics for being the first to portray a monarch engaged in a musical performance rather than warfare or religious rituals.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) Statement I only
- (b) Statement II only
- (c) Both Statement I and Statement II
- (d) Neither Statement I nor Statement II

74. Consider the following educational institutions of ancient India:

1. Nalanda Mahavihara
2. Vallabhi University
3. Vikramashila Vihara
4. Takshashila University

How many of the above were patronised during the Gupta period?

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

75. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The Pandharpur Wārī is an annual pilgrimage in Maharashtra where devotees, known as *warkaris*, walk in processions to the Vithoba temple in Pandharpur.

Statement II: The tradition commemorates the journeys of the Bhakti saints like Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram, whose *palkhis* (palanquins) are carried from their native places.

Statement III: The Wārī takes place during the festival of Mahashivratri, coinciding with the full moon in the month of Phalguna.

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

- (a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both explain Statement I
- (b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one explains Statement I
- (c) Only one of Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- (d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

76. In the context of Mughal Emperor Akbar's administration, consider the following statements regarding the system of "Zabt":

1. The revenue was fixed based on the continuity of cultivation and quality of soil.
2. This system was developed under the supervision of Raja Birbal.

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

77. With reference to the history of medieval India, the terms ‘Gajapati, Narapati and Asvapati’ were related to:

- Titles given to wrestlers reflecting their strength.
- Royal officers responsible for espionage, internal and external security matters.
- Titles assigned to emperors based on their military capabilities.
- Types of ports managing the trade of horses, and elephants.

78. With reference to the categories of land mentioned in the Chola inscriptions, consider the following pairs:

Type of land	Description
1. Vellanvagai	Land donated to Jain institutions proprietors
2. Brahmadeya	Land gifted to Brahmanas
3. Shalabhoga	Land for the maintenance of a school
4. Pallichchhandam	Land of non-Brahmana peasant

How many of the above pairs are *incorrectly* matched?

- Only one
- Only two
- Only three
- All four

79. Which of the following correctly describes Misl?

- Sovereign states of the Sikh Confederacy.
- Type of land revenue during Khalsa rule.
- Mughals land revenue model.
- Maratha warrior involved in Guerilla warfare.

80. Consider the following statements with respect to Chola Kings:

- Vijayalaya built the town of Thanjavur.
- Rajaraja invaded Ganga Valley, Sri Lanka and countries of South East Asia.
- Muvendavelam was the title given to some rich landowners.

Which of the statements given above are *incorrect*?

- 2 and 3 only
- 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3

81. During the medieval period, with which of the following are the terms Bidri, Panchalas, and Saliyar associated?

- Classes of political rulers
- Coins of different monetary value
- Religious rituals
- Artistic guilds and craftsmanship

82. Consider the following statements regarding the Medieval Indian text “Akbarname”:

- It was composed by Abul Fazl.
- The book is primarily written in Arabic language.
- It contains statistical details regarding the agricultural yields during Akbar’s rule.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- Only one
- Only two
- All three
- None

83. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the administrative and succession practices of the Mughal Empire?

- The Mughal Empire followed the rule of primogeniture to ensure a smooth and conflict-free transition of power.
- In Mansabdari practice rank of a mansabdar was determined by a numerical value called zat.
- Mansabdars were mandated to reside in and administer their jagirs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1, 2, and 3
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 only

84. 'The inscription recounts how a governor under the Mauryas built a lake with embankments and channels. A fierce storm later wrecked the lake, but Rudradaman, ruling the area, financed its restoration without taxing his people.'

Identify the inscription from the options given below:

- (a) Allahabad inscription
- (b) Hathigumpha inscription
- (c) Girnar inscription
- (d) Udaygiri inscription

85. Which of the following cities were the important provincial centres of the Mauryan empire?

- 1. Taxila
- 2. Ujjayini
- 3. Tosali
- 4. Suvarnagiri

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

86. With reference to Nanda Dynasty, consider the following statements:

- 1. The foundation of the new capital of Magadha at Patliputra was laid down by Mahapadma Nanda.
- 2. The Hathigumpha Inscription refers to an aqueduct built by King Nanda.
- 3. Alexander invaded India during the rule of Nandas.

Which of the statements given above are **incorrect**?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None

87. With reference to social organisation in the Sangam Age, consider the following pairs:

Term	Meaning
1. Vellalar	Village headman
2. Uzhavar	Ordinary ploughmen
3. Adimai	Slaves

How many of the above pairs are **incorrectly** matched?

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

88. Consider the following statements about agriculture during the Mahajanapada Period:

- 1. This period witnessed a growing use of iron ploughshare for agricultural purposes.
- 2. People began transplanting paddy instead of scattering seeds which led to increased production.
- 3. No taxes were imposed by the state on agricultural produce during this period.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

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

89. With reference to the Ancient Indian History, consider the following rulers:

- 1. Ajatashatru
- 2. Mahapadma Nanda
- 3. Bimbisara
- 4. Udayin

Which of the following options represents the correct chronological sequence of their reigns, beginning from the earliest?

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

90. Which of the following statements regarding the Pallavas are **not** correct?

1. The Aihole inscription is one of the most important inscriptions associated with them.
2. Ravikirti was the court poet of the Pallavas.
3. The kingdom extended from Raichur to their capital Kanchipuram.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

91. Consider the following with reference to the Satavahana dynasty:

1. They succeeded the Mauryas in the Deccan and Central India after a gap of 100 years.
2. The rulers of this dynasty were identified through matronymics.
3. The rulers of this dynasty established matrimonial alliances with Indo-Greeks.

Which of the statements given above are **incorrect**?

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

92. Consider the following pairs:

Archeological Site	State	Description
1. Bhimbetka	Madhya Pradesh	Natural cave and rock shelters
2. Burzahom	Ladakh	Designed ostrich eggshells
3. Patne	Bihar	Pit-houses
4. Paiyampalli	Tamil Nadu	Neolithic site

How many of the pairs given above are correct?

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

93. Consider the following statements with reference to Samudragupta of the Gupta dynasty:

1. The Allahabad Pillar inscription providing information about his reign was composed by Harishena.
2. He undertook the famous Dakshinapatha expedition against South Indian rulers.
3. Kalidasa was patronised by him.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

94. Consider the following statements:

1. It became the second capital of the Kushanas.
2. It was also a religious centre having the presence of Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Which of the following cities has been described in the above statements?

- (a) Dwarka
- (b) Mathura
- (c) Vrindavan
- (d) Vijayapuri

95. Consider the following pairs:

Traveller Country they came from

1. Al-Biruni Uzbekistan
2. Ibn Battuta Morocco
3. Francois Bernier France

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

96. With reference to Vijaynagar Architecture, consider the following pairs :

Architecture type		Most Probable Purpose/characteristics
1.	Lotus Mahal	Served as Council Chamber
2.	Hazara Rama temples	Temple shrine for common people
3.	The Mahanavami Dibba	Ceremonial and administrative purpose
4.	The Vittala Temple	Famous for its stone chariot

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
 (b) Only two
 (c) Only three
 (d) All four
97. Which of the following Buddhist texts alludes to a conversation between King Ajatasattu and the Buddha?
- (a) Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thodol)
 (b) Sutta Pitaka
 (c) Jataka Tales
 (d) Mahayana Sutras

98. With reference to the Kathak dance, consider the following statements:

- Kathak dancers were originally a caste of storytellers in temples of north India.
- Kathak evolved into a distinct mode of dance during the bhakti movement.
- Rajasthan gharana and Lucknow gharana are the traditions of Kathak.

How many of the above statements are *incorrect*?

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

99. Who among the following was the publisher of 'Bhilsa Topes', one of the earliest works on Sanchi?

- (a) Alexander Cunningham
 (b) James Fergusson
 (c) Walter Elliot
 (d) John Marshall

100. With reference to various Islamic Taxes, consider the following pairs:

Column I		Column II
1.	Khums	An obligatory almsgiving or charity
2.	Zakat	Tax that amounts to one-fifth of certain types of wealth
3	Jizyah	A tax historically levied on non-muslims

How many of the above pairs are *incorrectly* matched?

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

OOOO

Prelims Wallah Test Series - 2026

Test 03: Ancient and Medieval History and Art & Culture

1.	(d)	26.	(c)	51.	(b)	76.	(a)
2.	(a)	27.	(c)	52.	(c)	77.	(c)
3.	(b)	28.	(c)	53.	(c)	78.	(b)
4.	(c)	29.	(c)	54.	(b)	79.	(a)
5.	(c)	30.	(d)	55.	(d)	80.	(b)
6.	(b)	31.	(c)	56.	(b)	81.	(d)
7.	(c)	32.	(b)	57.	(d)	82.	(b)
8.	(a)	33.	(c)	58.	(c)	83.	(d)
9.	(b)	34.	(c)	59.	(b)	84.	(c)
10.	(c)	35.	(c)	60.	(c)	85.	(d)
11.	(c)	36.	(b)	61.	(c)	86.	(a)
12.	(a)	37.	(a)	62.	(a)	87.	(a)
13.	(a)	38.	(b)	63.	(a)	88.	(b)
14.	(a)	39.	(c)	64.	(d)	89.	(c)
15.	(a)	40.	(a)	65.	(d)	90.	(d)
16.	(a)	41.	(d)	66.	(d)	91.	(c)
17.	(a)	42.	(b)	67.	(c)	92.	(b)
18.	(a)	43.	(a)	68.	(c)	93.	(c)
19.	(c)	44.	(b)	69.	(b)	94.	(b)
20.	(a)	45.	(c)	70.	(a)	95.	(c)
21.	(b)	46.	(a)	71.	(c)	96.	(c)
22.	(a)	47.	(b)	72.	(c)	97.	(b)
23.	(c)	48.	(d)	73.	(c)	98.	(d)
24.	(d)	49.	(b)	74.	(a)	99.	(a)
25.	(a)	50.	(c)	75.	(c)	100.	(b)

1. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Great Stūpa at Sanchi, located in Madhya Pradesh, is one of the oldest surviving stone structures in India and a landmark of early Buddhist architecture, initially commissioned by Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century BCE.

Statement II is incorrect: While the original stūpa was built during the Mauryan period, the elaborate stone toranas (gateways) and balustrades were added later during the Shunga and Satavahana periods (2nd–1st century BCE), not in the Mauryan era.

Statement III is incorrect: The Great Stūpa at Sanchi does not mark the site of Buddha's enlightenment. Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya under the Bodhi tree, while Sanchi is a commemorative site and one of the oldest surviving stūpas housing relics of the Buddha.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

It is a popular fact that Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree at Bodhi Gaya. So statement III is wrong. Thus it leaves us with 50% chance between options C and D.

2. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Varāhamihira was a highly respected scholar during the Gupta period, known for his works in astronomy, astrology, and natural sciences. He made significant contributions to ancient Indian knowledge systems, reflecting the intellectual vibrancy of the Gupta age.

Statement II is correct: He composed the Brihat Samhita, an encyclopedic Sanskrit text covering topics like astrology, planetary movements, rainfall prediction, architecture, omens, and natural science. It remains one of the most important classical works of ancient India's scientific and cultural heritage.

Statement III is incorrect: Varāhamihira was a Navaratna (Nine Gems) in the court of Chandragupta II, not Chandragupta I. Chandragupta I was an earlier Gupta ruler,

while Chandragupta II's reign saw a flowering of art, culture, and learning, including Varāhamihira's scholarship.

Extra-Edge by PWOnlyIAS

He was a mathematician, astronomer and astrologer from the same period. He lived in Ujjayinī, a city famous for its tradition of learning and scholarship. His encyclopedic work, Brihat Samhita, covered a wide range of subjects from astronomy and astrology to weather forecasting, architecture, town planning and even farming. His ability to observe the world, apply logical reasoning, and combine it with traditional knowledge made him a pioneer in science.

3. Ans: (b)

Exp:

The described poem is Meghadutta, a celebrated lyrical Sanskrit work by Kalidasa, one of ancient India's greatest classical poets and dramatists. The poem tells the poignant story of a yaksha, a minor divine being exiled by his master Kubera, who yearns for his distant beloved.

The yaksha spots a passing cloud and entrusts it with a message of love, instructing it to travel across northern India's diverse landscapes, rivers, mountains, forests, and cities to reach his beloved in Alakapuri. The poem is especially admired for its evocative descriptions of the Indian monsoon, flora, fauna, and cultural landmarks.

Apart from the theme of separation and longing, Meghadutta is remarkable for its geographical and emotional richness, combining natural beauty with human emotions. This makes it a masterpiece of classical Sanskrit kavya (poetry), widely studied for both its literary artistry and cultural detail.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

The description mentions about a "messaging through a moving cloud". If we dissect Kalidasa's popular work Meghadutta it literally translates into Cloud (Megha) Messenger (Dutta). Thus Kalidasa is plausibly the correct answer

4. Ans: (c)

Exp:

The **Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh**, located in **Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh**, is one of the **earliest surviving Hindu stone temples in North India**, built during the **early Gupta period (circa 5th century CE)**. It represents the **Panchayatana style**, where a central shrine is surrounded by four subsidiary shrines at the corners of the platform.

The temple is renowned for its **intricate sculptural panels**, especially the famous relief of **Vishnu in Anantasayana (Yoganidra) posture**, lying on the cosmic serpent **Ananta (Shesha)**, while **Brahma emerges from a lotus growing from his navel**, symbolizing cosmic creation.

Other notable panels depict scenes from Vishnu's incarnations like **Gajendramoksha** and **Nara-Narayana Tapasya**. Despite the sanctum's roof being lost, the temple's **architecture and iconography** showcase the refined **artistic and religious sensibilities of the Gupta age**, making it a landmark in the history of **Indian temple architecture**.

5. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The **Kāmarūpa kingdom** was an early medieval polity that existed roughly between the **4th and 12th centuries CE**, primarily in the region of **present-day Assam** and parts of North Bengal. It was known for its distinct regional culture and strong political organization.

Statement II is correct: The **Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang** visited **Kāmarūpa** in the **7th century CE** during the reign of **King Bhaskaravarman**. His travel records mention **Kāmarūpa's** geography, governance, and flourishing **Buddhist and Brahmanical religious establishments**.

6. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The **Pallavas** were pioneers of **structural stone temple architecture** in South India. Under rulers like **Mahendravarman I** and **Narasimhavarman I**, temple construction transitioned from **rock-cut cave shrines to free-standing structural temples**, notably seen at **Mahabalipuram** and **Kanchipuram**.

Statement II is incorrect: The **Chinese traveler Faxian** never visited **South India** or the **Pallava capital Kanchipuram**. He traveled mainly in **northern India** during the **Gupta period (5th century CE)**. It was **Xuanzang**, another Chinese pilgrim, who visited **Kanchipuram** during **Pallava rule**.

Statement III is correct: **Narasimhavarman I** famously **defeated the Chalukya king Pulakeshin II** in a major campaign, even capturing **Badami (Vatapi)**, the **Chalukya capital**. He commemorated his victory with architectural patronage, though no **direct victory pillar** has been historically recorded at **Badami**.

7. Ans: (c)

Exp:

I. Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram — correct.

The **Shore Temple** was built under the **Pallava ruler Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha)** in the late 7th–early 8th century CE. It's one of the earliest surviving **structural stone temples** in South India, marking **Pallava architectural achievement**.

II. Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram — correct.

This famous temple was constructed under **Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha)** in the early 8th century CE. It's the **oldest structural temple in Kanchipuram**, celebrated for its intricate carvings and distinctive **Pallava architectural style**.

III. Brihadeshwara Temple at Thanjavur — incorrect.

The **Brihadeshwara Temple** was built much later by the **Chola king Rajaraja I** in the **early 11th century CE**. It stands as a masterpiece of **Chola temple architecture**, not **Pallava**.

IV. Pancha Rathas at Mahabalipuram — correct.

The **Pancha Rathas** are **monolithic rock-cut temples** attributed to the reign of **Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla)** in the **7th century CE**. These are iconic examples of early **Pallava rock-cut architecture**.

8. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Pair 1 is incorrect: Kanchipuram was a major temple city of the Pallavas, famous for structural temples, not primarily for rock-cut caves. It's known for temples like Kailasanatha and Ekambaranatha, not for rock-cut carvings of Viṣṇu.

Pair 2 is incorrect: Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh is known for its Gupta-era rock-cut caves and Hindu iconography, including a famous image of Vishnu as Varaha, not as a city of a thousand temples. That title typically refers to Kanchipuram.

Pair 3 is correct: Ajanta Caves in Maharashtra are globally renowned for their vivid wall paintings depicting the Jātaka tales and scenes from the life of the Buddha, representing a pinnacle of ancient Indian mural art.

Pair 4 is correct: Pataliputra (modern Patna) served as the capital of several dynasties, including the Guptas, Mauryas, and Shungas. It was an important political and cultural hub in ancient India.

9. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is incorrect: Unlike the Satavahanas, who issued portrait coins with dynastic symbols, the Vakatakas did not widely issue coins featuring royal portraits. Their numismatic tradition was limited and less visually elaborate compared to their Deccan predecessors.

Statement II is correct: Vakataka ruler Harishena was the chief patron of the Ajanta Caves in the 5th century CE. Under his reign, the Ajanta murals and sculptures reached their artistic zenith, marking a high point of ancient Indian rock-cut architecture and painting.

Statement III is incorrect: The Vakatakas primarily used Sanskrit and Prakrit in their inscriptions. Unlike the Kadamba dynasty, which pioneered the early use of Kannada as an administrative language, the Vākāṭakas did not adopt Kannada for official records.

10. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Gandhara school of art emerged under Kushan patronage and was heavily influenced by Greco-Roman artistic traditions. It is especially noted for using grey schist stone and for introducing anthropomorphic images of the Buddha with features like curly hair, toga-like robes, and realistic anatomy.

Statement II is correct: The Mathura school of art developed indigenously in India, with minimal foreign influence. It's renowned for its robust, stylized figures of Buddha, Jinas, and Hindu deities, using reddish sandstone sourced from the Sikri quarries near Agra as its primary medium.

11. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: In the Gupta Empire, land revenue was indeed the primary source of state income. The agrarian economy formed the backbone of Gupta prosperity, with taxes collected both in cash and kind from peasants and landholders.

Statement II is correct: The Guptas actively promoted maritime trade, with Indian exports like textiles, spices, ivory, and precious stones reaching Mediterranean, Southeast Asian, and Roman markets. Ports on India's west and east coasts facilitated these extensive overseas commercial links.

Statement III is incorrect: The Gupta rulers issued plentiful gold and silver coins, notable for their fine artistry. However, large-scale copper coinage was relatively limited, and barter and local market exchanges often relied on goods or lesser-value coins, not abundant copper currency.

12. Ans: (a)

Exp:

The famous Govardhanadhari Krishna panel — where Krishna lifts the Govardhana Hill on his little finger to protect the villagers of Vrindavan from Indra's wrathful rains — is one of the most exquisite relief carvings found at the Hoysaleswara Temple in Halebidu, Karnataka.

This 12th-century Hoysala temple is renowned for its intricate friezes depicting scenes from Hindu epics like the Mahabharata and Bhagavata Purana, and this panel vividly captures the gopas, gopis, and cattle sheltered under the raised hill, celebrated for its rich detail, movement, and emotional depth characteristic of Hoysala art.

13. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Prabhavati Gupta was the daughter of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) and was married to Vakataka king Rudrasena II. After her husband's early death, she served as regent on behalf of her minor sons and played an important political role in the Vakataka kingdom.

Statement II is incorrect: The inscriptions issued during Prabhavati Gupta's regency were primarily in Sanskrit and written in Brahmi script, not in Kannada. While the Vakataka dynasty ruled parts of present-day Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, their official inscriptions retained Sanskrit as the administrative language, reflecting strong Gupta cultural influence.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

Statement II seems wrong. Vakataka Dynasty did not rule regions around Karnataka (Kannada speaking region). Also we know that Gupta period is known for Classical Sanskrit. Thus we can eliminate Options B and C.

14. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Pushyabhuti dynasty rose to prominence under Harshavardhana (606–647 CE), who initially ruled from Thanesar (modern Haryana) and later shifted his capital to Kannauj, establishing himself as a powerful ruler in early medieval North India.

Statement II is incorrect: The Pushyabhuti dynasty was not founded by Banabhatta. Banabhatta was a court poet and biographer of Harshavardhana, famous for authoring the

Harshacharita, a prose biography of Harsha. The dynasty's early founder was probably Pushyabhuti, with later rulers like Prabhakaravardhana and Harshavardhana.

15. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Pair I is Correct: Mīmāṃsakas were scholars of the Mīmāṃsā school of philosophy, which specialized in Vedic ritual interpretation and logic-based reasoning. They played an active role in court debates during Harsha's time, known for their focus on ritual duties (karma) and scriptural exegesis.

Pair II is Correct: A Mahāsāmanta was a powerful feudatory chief or subordinate ruler who acknowledged the suzerainty of the king (Harsha). They often managed their own territories but owed allegiance, tribute, and military support to the emperor when required.

Pair III is Incorrect: The term Pūrvaapakṣin refers to a debater's role in Indian philosophical discourse — one who presents an opposing preliminary argument before the main position is established. It has no connection to a military unit or frontier force.

16. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Pair I is Correct: Si-Yu-Ki (Records of the Western Regions) was written by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, providing a comprehensive account of 7th-century Indian polity, religious practices, monasteries, and social conditions during the reign of Harshavardhana.

Pair II is Correct: The Milindapanho is a famous Pali Buddhist text presented as a dialogue between Indo-Greek king Menander (Milinda) and Buddhist monk Nāgasena. It explores profound questions of Buddhist doctrine, ethics, and metaphysics.

Pair III is Incorrect: The Tabaqat-i-Nasiri was authored by Minhaj-i-Siraj in the 13th century CE. It is a Persian historical chronicle of the Delhi Sultanate, not a travel account by Al-Biruni. Al-Biruni's famous work is *Kitab fi Tahqiq ma li'l-Hind*, detailing 11th-century Indian culture, science, and religion.

17. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The mythological origin of the Kumbh Mela is rooted in the Samudra Manthana legend from the Puranas. As per the story, when the gods and demons churned the ocean for amṛita (nectar of immortality), Viṣṇu, in the form of Mohini, carried away the nectar to prevent the asuras from acquiring immortality.

Statement II is correct: According to traditional belief, during this event, drops of amṛita fell at four locations — Haridwar, Prayagraj, Nashik, and Ujjain. These sites thus became the four sacred venues for the Kumbh Mela, one of the largest spiritual gatherings in the world.

Statement III is incorrect: The earliest textual reference to the Kumbh Mela does not appear in the Rigveda. The Vedas, being much earlier, do not mention the Kumbh Mela. The association of the Mela with the Samudra Manthana story and the ritual bathing festivals at these sites is found in later Puranic texts and medieval records.

18. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: In 2024, Maharashtra established a dedicated cell under the Additional Secretary (Home) specifically to streamline and expedite the processing of mercy petitions for death row convicts. This initiative aimed to address administrative delays and uphold procedural fairness.

Statement II is correct: In the same year, the Supreme Court directed all States and Union Territories to establish dedicated units within their Home or Prison Departments for timely and efficient handling of mercy petitions, ensuring convicts' constitutional rights under Article 72 and Article 161 are not violated.

Statement II directly explains Statement I: The Supreme Court's directive in 2024 prompted Maharashtra and other states to take administrative action, such as setting up dedicated units for mercy petitions. Maharashtra's move was a direct outcome of this national judicial mandate, fulfilling the Court's guidelines.

19. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is incorrect: The Euclid Space Telescope was launched by the European Space Agency (ESA), not NASA. It was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket in July 2023. While NASA contributes minor components, it's an ESA-led mission.

Statement II is incorrect: Unlike the James Webb Space Telescope, which studies early galaxies and exoplanets, Euclid is not designed to observe the Sun's corona or solar winds. That function is carried out by missions like NASA's Parker Solar Probe and ESA's Solar Orbiter.

Statement III is correct: The primary goal of the Euclid Space Telescope is to study dark matter and dark energy by creating a 3D map of the Universe. It investigates how these mysterious components influence the structure and expansion of the cosmos.

20. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Neonatal sepsis continues to be a major cause of neonatal mortality in India, accounting for a significant proportion of deaths in newborns despite improvements in medical care, neonatal ICUs, and infection control protocols. It remains a persistent public health challenge.

Statement II is correct: Newborns possess an immature immune system, making them highly susceptible to severe bacterial, viral, and fungal infections, particularly in the first 28 days of life. This physiological vulnerability increases the risk of rapid disease progression and complications like sepsis.

Statement II directly explains Statement I: The immature immune response in neonates is the biological reason why neonatal sepsis remains a significant cause of death, even with modern healthcare improvements. The underdeveloped immune defenses leave newborns more exposed to severe infections, contributing to mortality rates.

21. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is incorrect: Possession of an Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) is not mandatory for voting in India. While EPIC is the most commonly used identification, the Election Commission of India permits 12 alternative documents (like passport, Aadhaar, driving licence, etc.) for identity verification at polling stations if a voter does not possess an EPIC.

Statement II is correct: The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 indeed provides for the issuance of Electors Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) to registered voters. This provision was introduced to curb electoral fraud and improve the integrity of the voter identification process.

22. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Amir Khusrau is widely credited with popularizing qawwali, the Sufi devotional music form performed at dargahs and Sufi gatherings across South Asia. Though the origins predate him, Khusrau greatly refined and institutionalized its lyrical and musical traditions.

Statement II is correct: He indeed played a significant role in shaping Hindustani classical music, particularly contributing to the development of forms like tarana and influencing khayal. His innovations bridged Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Indian musical elements, laying a foundation for later classical traditions.

Statement III is incorrect: There's no strong historical consensus that Amir Khusrau invented the sitar and tabla. While popular tradition sometimes attributes these inventions to him, modern scholarship finds no conclusive evidence supporting this claim, especially regarding the tabla, which likely developed later.

23. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Biodiversity Leakage refers to a situation where conservation efforts, land-use regulations, or environmental policies in one area inadvertently cause biodiversity loss to

shift to another region. For example, if strict deforestation rules are enforced in one country, companies might move operations to another with weaker regulations, leading to biodiversity loss there. It highlights the need for **coordinated, transboundary conservation policies** to avoid merely relocating environmental pressures rather than reducing them.

24. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Juanga tribe is predominantly found in Odisha, particularly in the Keonjhar and Angul districts, and is officially recognized as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** due to their small population, economic backwardness and distinctive culture.

Statement II is correct: The Juangas traditionally reside in isolated hill settlements called "Pentas" and practice shifting cultivation (slash-and-burn agriculture) along with forest-based subsistence activities like gathering forest produce and hunting.

Statement III is correct: The mandaghar is a youth dormitory and social institution in Juanga villages, used for community gatherings, imparting traditional knowledge and cultural practices. It plays a crucial role in preserving their oral traditions and collective identity.

25. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Bungus Valley lies in the Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, known for its pristine high-altitude grasslands, ecological richness, and strategic military significance given its proximity to the Line of Control (LoC). It remains relatively less explored due to security sensitivities. J&K government plans to develop Bungus Valley near LoC as an ecotourism hub.

Statement II is incorrect: While the Bungus Valley is ecologically significant but it is **not part of the Dachigam National Park**, which is near Srinagar, nor is it a **designated UNESCO World Heritage Site**. No such UNESCO listing currently exists for Bungus Valley.

26. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is incorrect: The World Spice Organisation (WSO) is not a specialised agency under the United Nations. It is an industry-led, non-profit international body based in India, working for sustainable spice production and food safety — but it has no affiliation with the UN system.

Statement II is correct: India is the largest producer and exporter of spices in the world, contributing a significant share to the global spice trade, with leading exports like chilli, turmeric, pepper, cumin, and cardamom.

Statement III is correct: The World Spice Organisation indeed engages in capacity building, research, and market access support for spice growers and processors, particularly in developing countries through collaborative projects aimed at sustainable and safe spice production.

27. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: For the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, teams were selected based on their performance in the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, with the top seven teams qualifying, and Pakistan earning automatic entry as hosts.

Statement II is incorrect: The tournament features 8 teams, not all ten ICC full members, and follows a round-robin format within two groups, followed by semi-finals and a final, not a full round-robin among all ten.

Statement III is correct: India clinched their third ICC Champions Trophy title in 2025, defeating New Zealand in the final by 4 wickets in Dubai.

28. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) is indeed the only permanent intergovernmental body that comprehensively addresses all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture globally, including plants, animals, forests, aquatic genetic resources, and associated microorganisms.

Statement II is incorrect: The CGRFA was not established at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. It was actually founded in 1983 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, prior to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Statement III is correct: The CGRFA functions under the FAO and its key role is to develop international agreements and guidelines to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

29. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The VL-SRSAM is indigenously developed by DRDO for the Indian Navy to neutralise aerial threats like fighter aircraft, UAVs, and particularly sea-skimming missiles. It is launched vertically from warships, offering 360° defence.

Statement II is incorrect: The VL-SRSAM was not designed for the Indian Army. It was specifically meant for the Indian Navy's frontline warships. The Indian Army uses different systems such as Akash and QRSAM for cross-border and LoC threats.

Statement III is correct: While the initially reported range was around 40 km, recent successful DRDO tests demonstrated performance enhancements pushing its range close to 80 km. This extension makes it more versatile against advanced aerial threats.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

Statement I mentions about sea skimming targets which means VL-SRSAM must have been developed for Navy usage. While Statement II talks about usgae by Army to counter cross border threats. Thus statement I and II cannot be correct at the same tie. This leaves with options B and C among correct answer.

30. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Exercise **Prachand Prahhaar** is a **tri-service integrated multi-domain warfare exercise** conducted by the Indian armed forces. It involves coordinated participation of the **Army, Air Force, and Navy** to enhance joint operational capabilities in complex, multi-threat combat scenarios across diverse terrains.

Statement II is correct: The exercise features **live-fire drills, joint air operations, and rapid mobilization in high-altitude terrain**. It tested artillery, helicopter strikes, and drone operations in integrated combat roles, improving inter-service coordination, quick response, and combat readiness in sensitive frontier areas bordering China.

Statement III is correct: Exercise **Prachand Prahhaar** was conducted in the **high-altitude regions of Arunachal Pradesh**, under the **Eastern Army Command's supervision**. The drill simulated operational scenarios along India's northeastern borders to validate rapid deployment, troop sustenance, and precision-strike capabilities in hostile mountainous environments.

31. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Sarhul is a **nature-worshipping tribal festival** celebrated in **Jharkhand and the Chhotanagpur plateau** by indigenous communities like the **Oraon, Munda, and Ho tribes**. It marks the onset of the **spring season and honors the sal tree (sarhul tree)**, a symbol of nature's fertility.

Statement II is incorrect: The festival is celebrated in the **month of Chaitra (March-April)**, not **Kartika**, and it marks the **arrival of spring and the blossoming of the sal flowers**, not the harvest season or fire worship. Its timing and rituals are closely tied to the **sal tree bloom**.

Statement III is correct: Sarhul symbolically represents the **union of Earth and Sun** and is celebrated through rituals at **Sarna Sthals (sacred groves)**, where **Sarna Maa (Mother Nature deity)** is worshipped. Rituals often involve village priests and traditional offerings for ecological balance.

32. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Operation Brahma was India's swift humanitarian relief operation launched in **March 2025** after a devastating **7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar**. It involved **NDRF teams, medical aid, search-and-rescue missions, and relief supplies** transported by **IAF aircraft and naval ships** to assist the affected population.

33. Ans: (c)

Exp:

The **Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath**, erected around **250 BCE**, was built to commemorate **Buddha's first sermon at the Deer Park in Sarnath**, also known as **Dharmachakrapravartana** (turning of the wheel of Dharma). It marks the moment when Buddha first shared his teachings with his five disciples after attaining enlightenment. This emblem later became the **National Emblem of India**.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

It is a popular fact that Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath and as the Lion Capital is located at Sarnath it is very plausible that it was made to commemorate the same.

34. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Pair I is correct: The **Anda** is the large hemispherical dome of a stupa, representing the **cosmic egg (Brahmanda)** in Buddhist cosmology. It embodies the vastness of the universe and the womb of creation, where the relics of the Buddha or revered monks are enshrined.

Pair II is correct: The **Harmika** is a **square railing placed atop the Anda**. It demarcates a sacred enclosure, symbolizing the **abode of celestial beings (Devas)** and marking the sanctified realm above the physical world. It signifies the threshold between the earthly and divine.

Pair III is correct: The **Chhatra** is an umbrella-like structure mounted above the Harmika. It symbolizes **spiritual sovereignty** and authority. It also represents the **axis mundi** — the cosmic pillar or connection between **heaven, earth, and the underworld**, signifying the Buddha's spiritual presence across all realms.

35. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Chola murals are indeed located in the narrow circumambulatory passage (pradakshina patha) around the sanctum sanctorum of the Brihadeswara Temple at Thanjavur. These murals were painted on the walls inside this enclosed space, making them some of the finest surviving examples of early Chola art.

Statement II is incorrect: While Chola period murals were discovered, the second layer was not from the Maratha period, but from the Nayaka period (16th–17th century CE). The Maratha rulers did control Thanjavur later, but the overpainting found at Brihadeswara is attributed to the Nayakas, not the Marathas.

Statement III is correct: The themes of the Chola murals include depictions of Shiva as Nataraja, Tripurantaka, and Shiva in Kailash. Notably, there's a famous mural showing Rajaraja Chola I with his spiritual mentor Karuvur Devar, underlining both religious and political themes in the artwork.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

Statement II seems wrong as Maratha Confederacy did not extend till Thanjavur. So paintings being found from Maratha Period seems highly unlikely. Thus we can eliminate option II to arrive at correct answer C.

36. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Sun Temple at Modhera was constructed so that the first rays of the rising sun illuminate the sanctum (garbhagriha), especially during equinoxes. This was achieved through precise orientation of the temple structure along the east-west axis, a feature well-documented in scholarly architectural studies.

Statement II is correct: The temple is indeed dedicated to Surya (the Sun God). Its iconography, sculptures, and rituals were meant for solar worship, and it was built by Bhima I of the Solanki dynasty in the early 11th century CE.

Statement II does not explain Statement I:

While the temple's dedication to Surya logically justifies a general solar orientation, the specific precision of alignment for the first rays to penetrate the sanctum on particular days reflects not just the deity's identity but also advanced astronomical and ritual considerations. Temples to Surya exist without such exact solar alignments, and the Modhera temple's design involves significant technical planning beyond mere dedication. So, dedication alone is a necessary but not sufficient explanation for the precise alignment

37. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Karkota dynasty period (7th–9th century CE) is widely regarded as the most significant phase of architectural development in Kashmir's early medieval history. This era witnessed the construction of large, sophisticated stone temples using advanced engineering and artistic methods.

Statement II is correct: During this period, major monuments like the Martand Sun Temple were built. These temples combined Gandhara and Gupta stylistic influences (like trefoil arches, pilasters, and ornate sculptures) with local Himalayan stone construction traditions, creating a distinct architectural idiom unique to Kashmir.

Statement II explains Statement I: Yes — the grand stone temples of this period, especially the Martand Sun Temple, symbolized the architectural peak of the Karkota dynasty. The stylistic blend and monumental scale of these temples directly justify why the Karkota period is considered the high point of Kashmir's architectural development.

38. Ans: (b)

Exp:

The iconic Nataraja sculpture from the Chola period, especially flourishing around the 12th century CE, is one of India's most celebrated examples of bronze casting using the lost-wax (cire-perdue) technique. These

bronze images, depicting **Shiva as Lord of Dance (Nataraja)**, are known for their grace, dynamic movement, and spiritual symbolism. **Bronze** was the primary metal used, sometimes alloyed with small quantities of other metals for strength and finish.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

Bronze sculptures were the most iconic artforms from Chola period. Thus we can go with Option B

39. Ans: (c)

Exp:

In medieval India, **minars (minarets)** like the **Qutub Minar** in Delhi and the **Chand Minar** at Daulatabad were tall towers built adjacent to mosques. Their **primary function was to call the faithful to prayer (adhan)**, as was customary in Islamic architecture. The muezzin would ascend the tower and issue the adhan from its balconies.

While these structures might have had secondary decorative or symbolic uses, their **everyday utilitarian role was religious**.



PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

If you would have observed any present day Mosques you would see that there is a loudspeaker installed on minarets that gives out call for prayers, thus option C seems to be likely correct.

40. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The **Malwa School of Painting** developed in **Central India (Malwa region)** during the **17th century**, influenced by both the **Mughal painting tradition** and **local Rajput styles**. This synthesis is evident in its figures, architecture, and decorative elements.

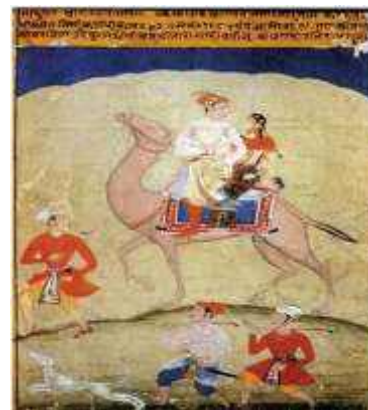
Statement II is correct: This school is characterized by **bold primary colours**, **flat two-dimensional compositions**, and an emphasis on **narrative themes**, particularly mythological and religious subjects, rather than detailed courtly portraits unlike Mughal painting.

Statement III is incorrect: The **illustrated Kalpa Sutra manuscript** is not a hallmark of the Malwa School, but a famous example of **Western Indian (Jaina) painting tradition**. While Malwa painting illustrated texts like the **Ragamala series**, the Kalpa Sutra belongs to a different stylistic lineage predating Malwa painting.

41. Ans: (d)

Exp:

The famous "**Maru Ragini**" painting belongs to the **Rajasthani School of miniature painting**, specifically associated with the **Mewar sub-school**. It depicts the love story of **Dhola and Maru** in a distinctive bold, vibrant, and folk-inspired Rajasthani style. The artwork features **rich colours, flat backgrounds, and stylized figures**, typical of early Rajasthani miniatures, particularly from the 16th–17th centuries.



PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

Maru word is associated with Rajasthani Landscape also called as Marusthali. Thus option D seems to be plausibly correct.

42. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Akbar envisioned cultural integration and commissioned translation of several revered Hindu texts. He commissioned translation and illustration of revered Sanskrit texts into Persian. **The Persian translation and illustrated version of the Hindu epic Mahabharata** done this period came to be known as **Razm Nama**. This was completed in **1589** under the supervision of master artist **Daswant**. This manuscript was scribed in ornate calligraphy and contained 169 paintings.

43. Ans: (a)

Exp:

The painting “Krishna Lifts Mount Govardhan” from the late 16th century Harivamsa Purana manuscript is attributed to the Mughal School of painting. It was created during Akbar’s reign (circa 1585–1590 CE) as part of a monumental illustrated Harivamsa Purana manuscript.

This work is distinguished by:

- ❖ Naturalistic rendering of figures
- ❖ Dynamic, multi-figure compositions
- ❖ Vibrant colours
- ❖ A synthesis of Persian and indigenous Indian artistic traditions — all hallmarks of the Akbari Mughal painting style.

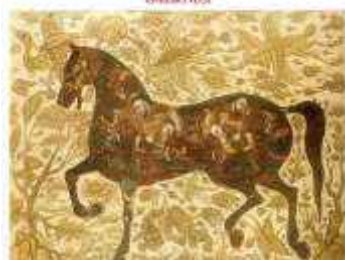
This makes it one of the finest examples of early Mughal manuscript illustration.

44. Ans: (b)

Exp:

The painting is a curious mix of many artistic devices, which culminate as Composite Horse. The painting includes human figures intertwined in a manner that emerges as an extraordinary form of a galloping horse superimposed on a decorated background. Flying cranes and lions, Chinese clouds and plants with large leaves enhance the surreal element of this painting from Golconda (Deccani School), which is of early seventeenth century. When everything appears to be airy and flying, the eyes unexpectedly encounter two corners in the bottom of the painting, which have rocky formulations

that anchor the painting on a solid ground. A certain dislocation of sense of space happens,



making this painting a memorable visual experience. All actions happen within limited colour schema, which remains largely in the shades of brown and some blue.

45. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Guru Nanak was a strong proponent of nirguna bhakti (devotion to a formless God). He rejected ritualism, idol worship, caste discrimination and scriptural formalism, advocating a direct personal relationship with the divine through devotion, ethical living, and community service.

Statement II is correct: Guru Arjan, the fifth Sikh Guru, compiled the Adi Granth Sahib in 1604. It included hymns by Guru Nanak as well as contributions from other Bhakti and Sufi saints like Kabir, Baba Farid, Namdev, and others, promoting a message of universal brotherhood and monotheism.

46. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Pair I is incorrect: The Nigama tradition refers to the Vedic tradition centered on śruti (revelation) and ritual. It comprises scriptures like the Vedas and Brahmanas, emphasizing ritual sacrifices and cosmic order as central to religious practice.

Pair II is correct: The Āgama tradition includes scriptures revealed through lineage-based teacher traditions, especially within Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta sects. These texts guide temple rituals, icon worship, and philosophical doctrines distinct from the Vedic Nigama texts.

Pair III is incorrect: The Śramaṇa tradition refers to non-Vedic, renunciatory paths like Jainism, Buddhism, and Ajivika, focusing on asceticism, meditation, ethical living, and liberation through self-effort, rejecting the authority of the Vedas and sacrificial rituals.

47. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Charvaka philosophy holds that the world is composed of four elements — earth, water, fire, and air — and explicitly rejects the existence of ether (ākāśa) as it is not perceptible through direct sense experience, which is their only accepted means of knowledge.

Statement II is correct: Charvaka denies the existence of both soul and God, considering them unobservable, unverifiable, and therefore meaningless. It is a strictly materialist and atheistic system, accepting only what can be directly perceived by the senses.

Statement III is incorrect: Unlike other Indian philosophical schools, Charvaka does not emphasize liberation (moksha) through detachment and renunciation. Instead, it advocates for pleasure, enjoyment, and material well-being as the goal of life, rejecting metaphysical concepts like liberation and rebirth.

48. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Jaina philosophy accepts the independent and eternal existence of both jīva (consciousness) and ajīva (matter and non-sentient entities). Both categories are uncreated, indestructible, and coexist eternally, forming the dual foundation of the Jain metaphysical system.

Statement II is correct: Jainism rejects the concept of a supreme divine creator. It holds that the universe is self-regulated, beginningless, and eternal, governed by natural laws like karma, without the need for a God to create or manage it.

Statement III is correct: In Jainism, karma is considered a subtle physical substance that literally binds to the jīva (soul) due to actions and passions. This karmic matter influences rebirth, experiences, and the soul's journey through various existences.

Statement IV is correct: Anekāntavāda is a core Jain doctrine which teaches that truth and reality are multifaceted and can be viewed from diverse, valid perspectives. No single viewpoint captures the complete truth, encouraging tolerance and intellectual humility.

49. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: This describes Nirvana — the cessation of suffering, not Dukkhasamuppāda.

Option b is correct: In Buddhist philosophy, Dukkhasamuppāda means the doctrine of dependent origination (Paticcasamuppāda), explaining how suffering (dukkha) arises through a chain of twelve interconnected causes and conditions, forming a cyclical process of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth.

Option c is incorrect: This describes the practice of mindfulness (sati) and meditation (bhāvanā) as part of the Noble Eightfold Path, not the doctrine of dependent origination.

Option d is incorrect: This refers to the eight types of dukkha (sufferings) like birth, aging, illness, death, not the causal theory of Dukkhasamuppāda.

50. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Vaibhāsika and Sautrāntika are indeed two major philosophical schools within the Hīnayāna (Theravāda/Nikāya) tradition of Buddhism. Both are realist schools differing in their positions on perception and the reality of external objects, with Vaibhāsika favoring direct realism and Sautrāntika supporting representational realism.

Statement II is correct: Yogācāra and Mādhyamika are two prominent philosophical traditions within Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mādhyamika, founded by Nāgārjuna, advocates emptiness (śūnyatā) of all phenomena, while Yogācāra emphasizes consciousness-only (vijñaptimātra), asserting that external objects exist only as mental constructs.

51. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Sāṃkhya philosophy is a dualistic system that posits two eternal, independent realities: Puruṣa (pure consciousness) and Prakṛti (primordial matter). The interaction between these two is considered the cause of the manifest world.

Statement II is correct: In Sāṃkhya, liberation (moksha) occurs when Puruṣa realizes its total distinction from Prakṛti, thereby becoming detached from the cycle of birth, suffering, and rebirth. This knowledge leads to the cessation of all suffering.

Statement III is incorrect: Unlike this, while Sāṃkhya is generally non-theistic, the classical Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhyakārikā remains silent on the existence of God rather than explicitly denying it. However, it does accept the authority of the Vedas, making it an āstika (orthodox) system.

52. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: Bharata was the author of the Nāṭyaśāstra, an earlier foundational treatise on drama, dance, and music, but not the Saṅgīta Ratnākara.

Option b is incorrect: Dattila composed the Dattilam, an ancient text on music predating the Saṅgīta Ratnākara, but he is not its author.

Option c is correct: Śārṅgadeva, a 13th-century scholar at the court of the Yadava kings of Devagiri, authored the Saṅgīta Ratnākara, a comprehensive treatise covering swara, rāga, tāla, musical instruments, and vocal forms. It's considered foundational to both Hindustani and Carnatic traditions.

Option d is incorrect: Abhinavagupta was a philosopher, aesthetician, and commentator known for his work on Nāṭyaśāstra and Kashmiri Shaivism, not the Saṅgīta Ratnākara.

53. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Kathakali is renowned for its elaborate make-up, heavy, colorful costumes, and intricate facial expressions (navarasas). These elements, combined with stylized gestures and movements, make it one of the most visually striking classical dance forms of India.

Statement II is correct: The themes of Kathakali performances are primarily derived from Hindu epics like the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and various Puranic mythologies, depicting stories of gods, demons, and heroes through dance-drama.

Statement III is incorrect: The description of a brass plate dance and balancing a pot on the head belongs to other folk or classical traditions (like Bhavai or Terukkuttu) and is not an essential or traditional feature of Kathakali, which focuses on facial expression, mudras, and dramatic storytelling.

54. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Avalokiteśvara is depicted in Ajanta Caves:

He is one of the most prominent bodhisattvas represented in the Ajanta murals, especially in the famous Padmapani Avalokiteśvara painting in Cave 1, holding a lotus and portrayed as a compassionate savior.

Vajrapāṇi is depicted in Ajanta Caves:

Vajrapāṇi, the bodhisattva associated with power and protection, appears in several Ajanta murals, often shown as the protector of the Buddha, holding a vajra (thunderbolt).

Mañjuśrī is not depicted in Ajanta Caves:

Although Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom, is important in Mahāyāna Buddhism but no confirmed depiction of Mañjuśrī exists in the Ajanta murals. His images become more common in later Buddhist art traditions.

55. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: Avalokiteśvara is the bodhisattva of compassion, not primarily associated with practice and meditation.

Option b is incorrect: Vajrapāṇi represents power and protection, often depicted as the Buddha's protector, not directly linked with meditation practice.

Option c is incorrect: Maitreya is the future Buddha, expected to appear in the future, and not part of the Shakyamuni Trinity in Mahāyāna iconography.

Option d is correct: Samantabhadra is the bodhisattva associated with practice and meditation, particularly the application of wisdom through meditation and virtuous conduct. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, he forms the Shakyamuni Trinity along with Buddha Shakyamuni and Mañjuśrī (wisdom).

56. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: The doctrine of universal compassion is more closely associated with Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly with bodhisattvas like Avalokiteśvara, not with Vibhajjavāda.

Option b is correct: In Theravāda Buddhism, Vibhajjavāda means the doctrine of analytical investigation or conditional analysis. It emphasizes understanding phenomena by analyzing causes, conditions, and effects, and accepting teachings only after critical examination.

Option c is incorrect: The doctrine of a future Buddha (Metteyya) relates to prophecy about Maitreya Buddha, not to Vibhajjavāda.

Option d is incorrect: Divine intervention is not a central or doctrinal concept in Theravāda Buddhism or Vibhajjavāda.

57. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: Nāgārjuna was a 2nd–3rd century CE philosopher and the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, not associated with writing from the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika perspectives.

Option b is incorrect: Asanga was a major Mahāyāna thinker and co-founder of the Yogācāra school, but his work does not reflect Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika positions.

Option c is incorrect: Buddhaghosa was a 5th-century Theravāda scholar, known for his commentaries like the Visuddhimagga, and is not linked to Mahāyāna or the Sarvāstivāda-Sautrāntika traditions.

Option d is correct: Vasubandhu was a 4th–5th century CE scholar from Gandhāra, initially writing from Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika perspectives, especially in works like the Abhidharmakośa, before later converting to Mahāyāna and contributing to the Yogācāra school alongside his brother Asanga.

58. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: Sambhavanatha, Shreyansanatha, and Anantanatha were not Vedic sages. The Vedic tradition recognizes sages like Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, and Atri.

Option b is incorrect: They were not Buddhist arhats. In Buddhism, arhats are enlightened disciples like Sariputta and Mahākassapa, not these figures.

Option c is correct: Sambhavanatha (3rd), Shreyansanatha (11th), and Anantanatha (14th) are Jain Tirthankaras, revered spiritual teachers who attained kevala jñāna (omniscience) and guide others on the path to liberation.

Option d is incorrect: They were not Shaiva acharyas, who are teachers within the Shaiva tradition like Abhinavagupta.

59. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: The World Bank is a financial institution focused on economic development and poverty reduction, not heritage documentation or preservation.

Option b is correct: The "Memory of the World Programme" was launched by UNESCO in 1992 to preserve and provide access to valuable archival and library collections worldwide, safeguarding documentary heritage of global significance.

Option c is incorrect: The International Council on Archives (ICA) works on archival issues globally but did not launch this programme.

Option d is incorrect: The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) promotes library services worldwide but is not the founding body of this programme.

60. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: Kalibangan is a prominent Harappan site in Rajasthan known for its fire altars and ploughed fields, not for a dog burial or its location near the Sutlej and Sirhind rivers.

Option b is incorrect: Rakhigarhi is one of the largest IVC sites in Haryana, notable for its urban planning and granaries, but no burial with a dog or its position at the confluence of Sutlej and Sirhind rivers is associated with it.

Option c is correct: Ropar (modern Rupnagar, Punjab) is located near the confluence of the Sutlej and Sirhind rivers. Excavations here revealed a multi-cultural sequence from the Harappan period through

the Painted Grey Ware to Kushan times. It is uniquely notable for a **burial where a human was interred with a dog**, a rare and distinctive find in IVC archaeology.

Option d is incorrect: Banawali is another Harappan site in Haryana with evidence of fortifications and pre-Harappan phases but **lacks the burial-with-dog evidence and the described location.**

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

If we remember the location of these sites we will find that only Ropar located in Punjab is through which Sutlej flows. Other sites are located in Haryana and Rajasthan. Thus option seems C seems to be the most likely option.

61. Ans: (c)

Exp:

The **Digital Economy Report 2024: Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future** was published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in July 2024. This important report examines how the rapid growth of the **global digital economy** is impacting issues of **sustainability, inclusivity, and economic equity**, particularly for **developing countries**.

It highlights challenges like the **rising environmental costs of digital infrastructure, unequal access to digital technologies, and concentration of digital power among a few global corporations**. The report calls for **international cooperation, regulatory reforms, and capacity-building initiatives** to ensure that the benefits of digitalization are **fairly distributed and environmentally responsible**.

62. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Pair 1 is correct: Bauxite, the principal ore of **aluminium**, is abundantly found in the **Maikal Hills**, which are part of the **Satpura range in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh**. These hills are one of India's significant bauxite mining zones.

Pair 2 is correct: **Iron ore** deposits in the **Bailadila Range** (located in **Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district**) are among the richest and best quality in India, particularly known for their **high-grade hematite ore**.

Pair 3 is incorrect: The **Sundarbans Delta** is a vast mangrove region and does **not have notable manganese deposits**. Major manganese reserves in India are found in regions like **Balaghat (Madhya Pradesh), Nagpur and Bhandara (Maharashtra)**, and parts of **Odisha and Karnataka**.

63. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The **Suśruta Saṁhitā**, an ancient Indian medical text, does describe the **use and importance of alkalies (kṣāras)** in **medical and surgical procedures**. It mentions their role in treating wounds, ulcers, and in specific surgical operations like cauterization.

Statement II is correct: The **Caraka Saṁhitā**, another foundational Ayurvedic text, includes detailed knowledge on the **preparation of various medicinal substances**, including **acids, metallic oxides, sulphates, and carbonates**. It reflects ancient Indian understanding of chemical processes for therapeutic purposes.

Statement III is incorrect: The **Suśruta Saṁhitā** primarily focuses on **medicine and surgery** and **does not contain detailed instructions for the preparation of gunpowder mixtures**. Knowledge of gunpowder appears in later medieval Indian texts, not in classical medical compendia like **Suśruta**.

64. Ans: (d)

Exp:

The period between A.D. 1700 – 1900 is considered as modern period. This was the time in which great legacy of Yoga teachings was carried forward by **prominent Yoga personalities like Ramaṇa Maharṣi, Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa, Paramahansa Yogānanda, Swami Vivekānanda, Swami Dayānanda Sarasvati - and Sri Aurobindo**. Their philosophies, traditions, lineages and **Guru-śiṣya paramparā** led to further the knowledge and practices of different Traditional Schools of Yoga, e.g., **Jñānayoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, Rāja-yoga, Haṭha-yoga and Integral-yoga**, etc.

65. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Pair I is incorrect: Harappa is located in present-day Punjab, Pakistan, not Gujarat. It's one of the major urban centers of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Pair II is incorrect: Kalibangan is situated in present-day Rajasthan, India, not in Sindh (Pakistan). It's known for its fire altars and ploughed fields.

Pair III is incorrect: Mohenjo-daro lies in Sindh, Pakistan, not Haryana. It's famous for its Great Bath and planned urban architecture.

Pair IV is incorrect: Rakhigarhi is in present-day Haryana, India, not Rajasthan. It's one of the largest known IVC sites discovered so far.

66. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: In 2003, UNESCO inscribed Vedic chanting on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, recognizing it as one of the world's oldest unbroken oral traditions.

Statement II is correct: The preservation of Vedic chants owes much to oral tradition techniques like Padapatha (word-by-word recitation) and Krama-patha (sequential word-pair recitation), which ensured the precise memorization and transmission of Vedic texts.

Statement III is correct: The oral tradition of Vedic chanting effectively preserved both phonetic accuracy and tonal precision for centuries, even before writing systems were employed. This was achieved through meticulously structured recitation methods and teacher-student lineages.

67. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Option a is incorrect: The Īśā Upanishad contains philosophical verses about the nature of the Self and renunciation but does not contain this shloka.

Option b is incorrect: The Kena Upanishad focuses on the nature of Brahman and the limits of sensory and mental perception, and it does not feature this verse.

Option c is correct: The famous verse "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Nirāmayāḥ" comes from the Mahanārāyaṇa Upanishad. It's a universal prayer wishing for the well-being, health, and happiness of all beings.

Option d is incorrect: The Chandogya Upanishad deals with metaphysical discussions and the significance of Om, but this verse is not part of it.

68. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Pair I is incorrect: Makara Sankramana is primarily celebrated in Karnataka, marking the Sun's transition into Makara Rāśi (Capricorn). In Kerala, the related festival is called Makara Vilakku at Sabarimala.

Pair II is incorrect: Makara Vilakku is celebrated in Kerala, particularly at the Sabarimala temple, marking the celestial event and sacred lamp appearance — not in Karnataka.

Pair III is correct: Pedda Panduga is a major harvest festival in Andhra Pradesh, equivalent to Makara Sankranti, celebrated with food, rituals, and community gatherings.

Pair IV is correct: Pongal is the famous harvest festival of Tamil Nadu, dedicated to the Sun God, marking the beginning of the Tamil month Thai.

69. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Pair I is correct: Pratiṣṭhāna (modern Paithan) was the ancient capital of the Satavahana dynasty, located in present-day Maharashtra.

Pair II is correct: Kaushāmbī is an ancient city located in present-day Uttar Pradesh, known for its association with Buddhism and ancient Indian polity.

Pair III is correct: Kanchīpura (modern Kanchipuram) is an ancient and historically significant city located in Tamil Nadu, famous for its temples and scholarly heritage.

Pair IV is incorrect: Śrāvastī is in present-day Uttar Pradesh, not Bihar. It was an important city in ancient India, especially associated with Buddhism and Jainism.

Pair V is incorrect: Rājagṛīha (modern Rajgir) is in Bihar, not Jharkhand. It was the ancient capital of Magadha and a significant site in Buddhist history.

70. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: Alexander invaded the Persian Empire partly to avenge the earlier Persian invasions of Greece by Darius I and Xerxes, which included the famous Persian Wars (490–479 BCE). His campaign was also motivated by ambition and empire-building.

Statement II is correct: Some Indian soldiers from the Persian-ruled northwest of India (regions like Gandhara and Bactria under Achaemenid control) did serve in the Persian armies during their earlier invasions of Greece, as recorded by Greek historians like Herodotus.

Statement III is incorrect: Alexander's retreat from India was not due to diplomatic alliances formed by Indian rulers. The primary reason was the refusal of his weary and homesick soldiers to proceed further east at the Hyphasis (Beas) River, fearing the powerful Nanda and Gangetic kingdoms ahead.

71. Ans: (c)

Exp:

I. The king (Swāmī) — correct.

In Kautilya's Saptānga theory (seven limbs of the state as described in the *Arthashastra*), Swāmī (the ruler) is the first and most important element.

II. The territory and people (Janapada) — correct.

Janapada, meaning territory along with its people, is one of the seven essential limbs in Kautilya's model.

III. The treasury (Kośa) — correct.

Kośa (the treasury) is crucial for the sustenance of the state, funding administration, army, and public works — it is a key element in the Saptānga system.

IV. The court poets (Kavi) — incorrect.

While poets (Kavi) had roles in ancient courts, they are not one of the seven limbs in Kautilya's theory. The seven are Swāmī (king), Amātya (ministers), Janapada (territory/people), Durga (fort), Kośa (treasury), Danda (army), and Mitra (allies).

V. The army (Danda) — correct.

Danda (the armed forces) is an essential limb in Kautilya's framework, responsible for the security and expansion of the state.

72. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Mansehra Major Rock Edicts are among the earliest inscriptions of Ashoka and are inscribed in the Kharosthi script, which was commonly used in the northwestern part of the subcontinent during his reign.

Statement II is correct: These edicts, located in present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, are inscribed on a natural rock and contain ethical instructions (Dhamma) issued by Ashoka after the Kalinga War, promoting compassion, non-violence, and moral conduct.

73. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Gupta gold coin depicting Samudragupta playing the veena reflects his patronage of music and the fine arts, demonstrating the cultural sophistication and artistic interests of the Gupta court alongside his military achievements.

Statement II is correct: This particular coin type is indeed unique in early Indian numismatics as it is the first known instance of an Indian monarch portrayed performing music, rather than engaged in warfare, royal authority, or religious rituals, making it historically distinctive.

74. Ans: (a)

Exp:

I. Nalanda Mahavihara — correct.

Nalanda flourished under the Guptas, especially under Kumaragupta I and later rulers, becoming a major centre for Buddhist learning and philosophy during the Gupta period.

II. Vallabhi University — incorrect.

Vallabhi University gained prominence under the Maitraka dynasty in the 6th–7th centuries CE, which is after the Gupta period.

III. Vikramashila Vihara — incorrect.

Vikramashila was established by Pala ruler Dharmapala in the 8th century CE, long after the Guptas.

IV. Takshashila University — incorrect.

Takshashila's major prominence was during the **Mauryan and early post-Mauryan periods**. By the **Gupta period**, its significance had declined, and it was **not a major centre during Gupta rule**.

As we saw, Gupta rulers were devout followers of Viṣṇu; this is often reflected in their coins and inscriptions. However, they also supported other traditions and schools of thought. They patronised Buddhist institutions, including the renowned Nālandā university and several other Buddhist viḥāras (monastery). Their approach was inclusive and open. We will explore these institutions further in higher grades.

75. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Statement I is correct: The Pandharpur Wārī is an annual pilgrimage in Maharashtra where devotees known as warkaris walk in processions to the Vithoba temple in Pandharpur, a major event in the regional Bhakti tradition.

Statement II is correct: The tradition commemorates the journeys of Bhakti saints like Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram, whose palkhis (palanquins) are ceremoniously carried by devotees from their native places to Pandharpur.

This statement directly explains Statement I because it provides the historical and devotional reason for the Wārī pilgrimage mentioned in Statement I — as a ritual re-enactment of the journeys of these saints.

Statement III is incorrect: The Wārī pilgrimage culminates on Ashadhi Ekadashi in the month of Ashadha (June–July), not on Mahashivratri, which is in Phalguna (February–March).

76. Ans: (a)

Exp:

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, the administration underwent significant reforms, with a particular focus on revenue collection.

Statement 1 is correct: The Zabt system is aimed at creating a more systematic and sustainable approach to revenue administration. During the 1580s, Akbar's

administration initiated a comprehensive analysis of the previous decade's local revenue statistics, taking into account factors such as productivity, price fluctuations, and the types of crops cultivated. **The revenue rates were then fixed based on the continuity of cultivation and the quality of the soil**. This strategic approach ensured that the revenue demands were tailored to the agricultural conditions of specific districts, promoting a fair and balanced system. According to this system, land was classified as:

1. **Polaj:** cultivated every year.
2. **Parauti:** cultivated once in two years
3. **Chachar:** cultivated once in three or four years
4. **Banjar:** once in five or more years.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Todar Mal, as Akbar's minister, played a crucial role in developing and implementing the 'Zabt' system. His efforts were highlighted by a meticulous survey conducted between 1570 and 1580, focusing on crop yields, prices, and cultivated areas. The data obtained from this survey served as the foundation for fixing taxes in cash on each crop. Additionally, Todar Mal was instrumental in dividing each province into revenue circles, each with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops.

77. Ans: (c)

Exp:

The titles 'Gajapati, Narapati and Asvapati' reflected emperors' military capabilities. Gajapati denoted the "Lord of Elephants," bestowed upon rulers who were skilled in commanding elephant forces. The Gajapati Kingdom in present-day Odisha notably excelled in wielding powerful elephant corps. "Ashvapati," meaning "Lord of Horses," was associated with rulers skilled in leading cavalry forces. The Deccan Sultanates who excelled in wielding powerful cavalry forces, were termed as Ashvapatis. Narapati, referred to as "Lord of Men," was a title for rulers showcasing leadership in organising infantry forces. The Vijayanagara Empire, renowned for its robust infantry and disciplined soldiers, carried the Narapati title.

78. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Pair 1 is incorrect: Vellanvagai refers to land owned by non-Brahmana peasant proprietors.

Pair 2 is correct: Brahmadeya refers to land grants given to Brahmanas to support their religious and scholarly activities.

Pair 3 is correct: Shalabhoga indicates land set aside for the upkeep of schools.

Pair 4 is incorrect: Pallichchhandam refers to land donated to Jain institutions. This land was used to support the religious and educational activities of Jain monks and scholars.

Additional information:

Devadana, tirumattukkani refers to the land gifted to the temples. These lands were donated to support temple activities, including daily rituals, festivals, and maintenance.

WHY SUPER QUESTION?

UPSC consistently tests land revenue systems of major dynasties (Cholas, Guptas, Delhi Sultanate) every 2–3 years. PYQ Evidence: 2021: Question on Chola administration (land revenue terms like *kudimai*). 2019: Matching-type question on Gupta land grants (*Agrahara* vs. *Devadana*). 2017: Question on Chola village assemblies linked to land categories.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

The term "Brahmadeya" contains "Brahma", which is directly linked to Brahmanas (the priestly class in the caste system). It logically suggests a connection with land grants or privileges offered to Brahmanas for religious or social purposes. hence Match is likely true.

The term "Shala" means "hall" or "place" and is often associated with educational or religious institutions. While "Shala" in modern Hindi means school. "Bhoga" refers to enjoyment or use, which suggests the land's yield was used for a specific purpose. Hence Match 3 is likely true. Eliminating option C and D.

79. Ans: (a)

Exp: Misls were sovereign states of the Sikh Confederacy that emerged in the 18th century in the Punjab region of the northern Indian subcontinent following the decline of the Mughal Empire. These Misls varied in size, power, and importance. They were not consolidated powers. Ranjit Singh consolidated the warring Misls and founded a unified Sikh empire.

80. Ans: (b)

Exp:

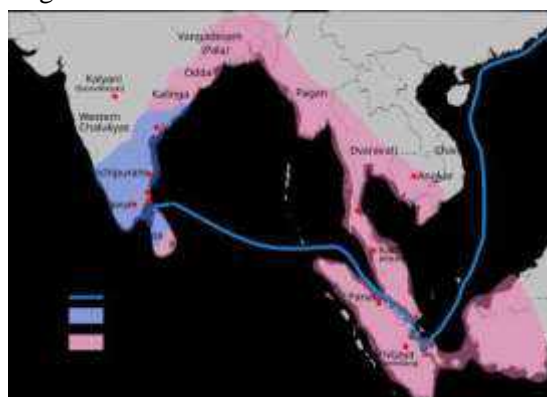
A minor chiefly family known as the Muttaraiyar held power in the Kaveri delta. They were subordinate to the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram.

Statement 1 is correct: Vijayalaya, who belonged to the ancient chiefly family of the Cholas from Uraiyur, captured the delta from the Muttaraiyar in the middle of the ninth century. **He built the town of Thanjavur and a temple for goddess Nishumbhasudini there.**

Statement 2 is incorrect: The successors of Vijayalaya conquered neighbouring regions and the kingdom grew in size and power. The Pandyan and the Pallava territories to the south and north were made part of this kingdom. Rajaraja I, considered the most powerful Chola ruler, became areas. He also reorganised the administration of the empire. **Rajaraja's son Rajendra I continued his policies and even invaded the Ganga valley, Sri Lanka and countries of Southeast Asia, developing a navy for these expeditions.**

Statement 3 is correct: Rich peasants exercised considerable control over the affairs of the under the supervision of the central Chola government. **The Chola kings gave some rich landowners titles like muvendavelan (a velan or peasant serving three kings), araiyar (chief), etc., as markers of respect, and entrusted them with important offices of the state at the centre.**

Settlements of peasants, known as **ur**, became prosperous with the spread of irrigation agriculture. Groups of such villages formed larger units called **nadu**.



81. Ans: (d)

Exp:

During the medieval period in India, the terms Bidri, Panchalas, and Saliyar were associated with specific crafting communities.

- ❖ The craftsmen of Bidar, known for their intricate inlay work in copper and silver, became so renowned that their craft was named Bidriware. Bidriware is characterised by its distinctive blackened metal surface adorned with silver or gold inlay, creating beautiful designs. This craft served decorative purposes and had practical uses in making items such as vases, trays, and jewellery.
- ❖ The Panchalas, part of the Vishwakarma community, were essential craftsmen involved in various aspects of temple construction. They included goldsmiths, bronze smiths, blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters. Their skills were crucial in building temples, palaces, large buildings, and infrastructure like tanks and reservoirs. Their craftsmanship contributed significantly to the architectural and cultural heritage of medieval India.
- ❖ Similarly, the Saliyar or Kaikkolars were prosperous weaving communities known for their expertise in textile production. They specialised in various aspects of cloth making, including cotton cleaning, spinning, dyeing, and weaving.

82. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Statement 1 is correct: Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak, a prominent courtier, author, and historian, was a key figure at the Mughal Emperor Akbar's court. He became one of Akbar's closest advisors, contributing significantly to the emperor's policies on religious tolerance and administrative reforms. **Abu'l-Fazl is best known for his monumental works, "Akbarname" and its third volume, "Ain-i-Akbari," which provide a comprehensive account of Akbar's reign and the Mughal administration.**

Statement 2 is incorrect: It was written in the Persian language (not in the Arabic language). It has been divided into three volumes:

1. **The first volume** provides an account of the ancestors of Akbar. It deals with Akbar's birth, the history of Timur's family, the reigns of Babur and Humayun, as well as the Suri sultans of Delhi. Within this volume, Akbarname delves into the details of Akbar's birth and upbringing.
2. **The second volume** records the events that took place during Akbar's reign. It also contains details about battles fought during Akbar's reign.
3. **The third volume is titled Ain-i-Akbari.** It deals with a **diverse range of subjects, including statistical details about agricultural crops, yields, prices, wages and revenues.** Apart from this, it provides details about Akbar's administration, household, army and geography of his empire. **Hence, Statement 3 is correct.**

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

FOR S2, Mughal court's primary language was Persian, not Arabic. Then why would a Mughal text for Indian administration use Arabic? Likely false, eliminate option C. S1 is a well known fact.

83. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement 1 is incorrect: The Mughals did not believe in the rule of **primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate. Instead, they believed in coparcenary inheritance, which meant dividing the estate among all sons.** This practice often resulted in conflicts among heirs over succession.

Statement 2 is correct: Those who joined the Mughal service were enrolled as mansabdars. The term mansabdar refers to an individual who holds a mansab, meaning a position or rank. **The mansabdari system was a grading system used by the Mughals to fix rank, salary, and military responsibilities. Rank and salary were determined by a numerical value called zat.**

Statement 3 is incorrect: Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs, which were somewhat like iqtas. However, unlike the muqtis (who administered the iqtas), **most mansabdars did not reside in or administer their jagirs. They only had rights to the revenue of their assignments which was collected for them by their servants** while they themselves served in some other part of the country. They were not supposed to administer the jagir allotted to them.

PWOnlyIAS SuperHint

The phrase "conflict-free transition" seems contradictory when applied to the Mughals. The Mughals are historically known for violent succession struggles. For example, the war between Aurangzeb and his brothers or the conflict between Jahangir and Khusrau. Hence S1 is likely false. eliminating option A and C. For S3, Mansabdars were often powerful nobles with administrative or military responsibilities across different regions. Expecting them to reside in jagirs while fulfilling military duties and court responsibilities is impractical. Hence likely false too. Giving option D as correct.

84. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Option C is correct: The Sudarshana lake, a man-made reservoir, is illuminated through a Sanskrit Girnar inscription (circa second century CE) chronicling Shaka ruler Rudradaman's accomplishments. It tells us that the lake with walls and water paths was initially built during the time of the Maurya rulers. Unfortunately, a big storm wrecked the walls, and water rushed out. Rudradaman, who was the ruler back then, took charge and fixed the lake using his own money, without burdening his people with taxes. Another inscription on the same rock (around the 5th century) mentions that a Gupta dynasty ruler also repaired the lake.

85. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Options Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali, Suvarnagiri are all correct: There were five major political centres in the Maurya empire – the capital Pataliputra and the provincial centres/capitals of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvarnagiri, all mentioned in Asokan inscriptions.

These centres were carefully chosen, both Taxila and Ujjayini being situated on important long-distance trade routes, while Suvarnagiri (literally, the golden mountain) was possibly important for tapping the gold mines of Karnataka.

Tosali is believed to have been located in the modern state of Odisha, India. During the Ashokan period, it was one of the regional centres in the Mauryan Empire.

86. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Statement 1 is incorrect: The immediate successor of Ajatasatru was Udayin. He laid the foundation of the new capital at Pataliputra, situated at the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganges and the Son. Later it became famous as the imperial capital of the Mauryas.

Statement 2 is correct: The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga refers to an aqueduct built by King Nanda three hundred years earlier.

Statement 3 is correct: The Nanda dynasty ruled Magadha in northern India between c. 343 and 321 BCE. It preceded the dynasty of the Mauryas. Alexander invaded India between 327 and 325 BC during the rule of Dhana Nanda.

87. Ans: (a)

Explanation:

Terms Used for different social classes in south India second century BC onwards:

- ❖ Arasar- Ruling Class
- ❖ Vellalar- Rich Peasants. Hence, pair 1 is incorrect.
- ❖ Kadaiyars and Adimai- slaves and landless labourers Hence, pair 3 is correct.
- ❖ Uzhavar- Ordinary Ploughmen Hence, pair 2 is correct.
- ❖ Pulaiyans- Artisans who made rope Charpai
- ❖ Enadi- Captains of army

Sharp social inequalities were evident in the age of Sangam, when rich people lived in brick-and-mortar houses and poor people lived in humbler structures. However, it is not known clearly whether religion sanctioned social inequalities.

88. Ans: (b)

Exp: Agriculture played an important role in the prosperity and development of the Mahajanapadas in ancient India. Significant advancements and changes transformed agricultural practices during the times of Mahajanapadas, contributing to the rise of complex societies and powerful kingdoms.

Statement 1 is correct: It is true during this time, **people adopted the growing use of iron ploughshares.** This meant that heavy, clayey soil could be turned over better than with a wooden ploughshare, so that more grain could be produced.

Statement 2 is correct: During this period, **people began transplanting paddy instead of scattering seeds.** This meant that instead of scattering seeds on the ground, from which plants would sprout, saplings were grown and then planted in the fields. This led to increased production, as many more plants survived.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The rulers of the Mahajanapadas needed more resources to build huge forts and maintain big armies. They imposed different types of taxes on people. **Taxes on crops were the most important because most people were farmers. Usually, the tax was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced.** This was known as bhaga or a share. Apart from peasants, herders paid taxes on animals and animal produce. Hunters and gatherers had to provide forest produce to the raja.

89. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Magadha was one of the most powerful mahajanapada, which was ruled by mighty rulers under different dynasties. The important dynasties of the Magadha Empire include- Haryankas, Sisunagas, Nandas, and the Mauryas.

Option 3-Bimbisara: Bimbisara ruled from 558 BC to 492 BC. He was a contemporary and follower of Buddha and was also an admirer of Mahavira. He made Rajgriha as his capital, which was strategically located and fortified by stonewalls. He was the first king to establish a standing army, contributing to the rise of Magadha.

Option 1-Ajatashatru: Ajatashatru, born to Bimbisara and Chellana, **ruled from 492 BC to 460 BC.** Notably, he ascended to power by killing his father. Despite this dark episode, Ajatashatru embraced Buddhism and organized the First Buddhist Council at Rajagriha shortly after the Buddha's death in 483 BCE.

Option 4-Udayin: Ajatashatru was succeeded by his son Udayin. **He ruled from 460 BC to 444 BC.** He was instrumental in laying the foundations of the Patliputra and shifted the capital from Rajgriha to Pataliputra.

Option 2-Mahapadma Nanda:

Mahapadma Nanda killed the last Sisunaga ruler- Kalasoka and seized power. **He ruled Pataliputra from 345 to 329 BCE.** He earned titles like "Sarva

Kashatriyantaka" (destroyer of all Kshatriyas) and "Ekraat" (sole sovereign who destroyed all other ruling princes). The empire expanded significantly under his rule. He conquered various kingdoms like Kalinga and Kosala.

Following is the list of some important rulers of the Magadha empire under different rulers:

Haryankas (558 BCE- 444 BCE)	Sisunagas (413 BCE- 345 BCE)	Nandas (345 BCE- 321 BCE)	Mauryas (322 BCE- 185 BCE)
Bimbisara Ajatashatru Udayin	Sisunaga Kalasoka/ Kakavarin	Mahapadma Nanda Dhana Nanda	Chandragupta Maurya Bindusara Ashoka Kunala Dasratha Brihadrat ha

90. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement 1 is incorrect: The **Aihole inscription** of Pulakesin II is among the most important of **Chalukya inscriptions.** It is found in the Megudi temple at Aihole (in **Karnataka**).

Statement 2 is incorrect: Pulakeshin II was the best-known **Chalukya ruler**. His court poet **Ravikirti composed a prashasti, which tells us about his ancestors, who can be traced back four generations from father to son**. Pulakeshin evidently got the kingdom from his uncle. According to Ravikirti, he led expeditions along both the west and east coasts and checked Harsha's advance.

Statement 3 is incorrect: The Pallava kingdom extended from the region around their capital, **Kanchipuram, to the Kaveri delta**, not from Raichur to Kanchipuram.

91. Ans: (c)

Exp.

Statement 1 is correct: The Satavahana dynasty emerged in the Deccan and Central India, succeeding the Mauryan Empire after a gap of approximately 100 years. They played a significant role in the post-Mauryan period, bridging the historical and cultural transition between the ancient and classical periods of Indian history.

Statement 2 is correct: The rulers of the Satavahana dynasty were often identified through matronymics, which means they were named after their mothers. This practice highlights the prominence of women in their society and the matrilineal aspects of their lineage. For example, the famous Satavahana ruler Gautamiputra Satakarni is named after his mother, Gautami.

Statement 3 is incorrect: With reference to the Satavahana dynasty because Satavahanas practiced endogamy, marriage within the kin group, which was prevalent amongst several communities in South India. Such marriages amongst kinfolk (such as cousins) ensured a close-knit community. **They didn't establish matrimonial alliances with Indo-Greeks.**

92. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Pair 1 is correct: Bhimbetka (in present-day Madhya Pradesh). Some sites, known as habitation sites, are places where people lived. These include **caves and rock shelters**, such as the one shown here. People chose these natural

caves because they provided shelter from rain, heat, and wind. Natural caves and rock shelters are found in the Vindhyas and the Deccan plateau. These rock shelters are close to the Narmada Valley.

Pair 2 is incorrect: In Burzahom in present-day Kashmir people built pit-houses dug into the ground, with steps leading into them. These may have provided shelter in cold weather. Archaeologists have also found cooking hearths inside and outside the huts, which suggests that, depending on the weather, people could cook food indoors or outdoors.

Pair 3 is incorrect: Ostriches were found in India during the Paleolithic period. **Large quantities of ostrich egg shells were found at Patne in Maharashtra.** Designs were engraved on some pieces, while beads were also made out of them.

Pair 4 is correct: Paiyampalli is a village in Tirupattur taluk of Tirupattur district in **Tamil Nadu**, India. It is known for the excavation site in the region which has **remains of Neolithic and Megalithic periods.**

93. Ans: (c)

Exp:

❖ **Statement 1 is correct:** Samudragupta was the greatest ruler of the Gupta dynasty. **The Allahabad Pillar inscription provides a detailed account of his reign. It was composed as a Kavya by Harishena, a poet and minister at Samudragupta's court.** He was the opposite of Ashoka. Unlike Ashoka, he delighted in violence and conquest.

❖ **Statement 2 is correct:** Samudragupta marched against the South Indian Expedition (Dakshinapatha expedition). He did not destroy and annex those kingdoms. Instead, he defeated the rulers but gave them back their kingdoms. He only insisted on them to acknowledge his suzerainty.

❖ **Statement 3 is incorrect:** He was also a patron of many poets and scholars, one of whom was Harishena. **Kalidasa was the court poet of Chandragupta II.**

94. Ans: (b)

Exp: The Kushanas, also known as the Yuechis or Tocharians, were a prominent clan of the Yuechi tribe that rose to power after the Scythians and Parthians. Among their rulers, Kanishka I stands out as one of the most significant ruler, known for his military conquests and patronage of art and culture. Under Kanishka's rule, the Kushan Empire became a thriving centre of trade and cultural exchange, leaving a lasting impact on the history and art of ancient India.

- ❖ Khujula Kadphises was the first Kushan king who conquered Afghanistan. He was followed by Wima Kadphises. These two kings extended their territory to Gandhara, Punjab, and as far east as the Ganga-Jumna doab up to Mathura.

The first Capital of Kushana was Purushpura or Peshawar. Around 2000 years ago, **Mathura became the second capital of the Kushanas. It was also a religious centre—there were Buddhist monasteries and Jaina shrines, and it was an important centre for the worship of Krishna.**

95. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Al-Biruni was born in 973, in Khwarizm in present day **Uzbekistan**. Khwarizm was an important centre of learning, and Al-Biruni received the best education available at the time. Al-Biruni's Kitab-ul-Hind, written in Arabic, is simple and lucid. **Hence, Pair I is correct**

Ibn Battuta, whose full name was Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Battuta, and who is known for his work Rihla, was born in **Morocco** around 1304 AD. **Hence, Pair II is correct**

François Bernier, a **Frenchman**, was a doctor, philosopher, and historian. **Hence Pair III is correct**

96. Ans: (c)

Exp:

Pair 1 is correct: The Lotus Mahal (named by British travellers in the nineteenth century) is also known as the **Kamal Mahal or Chitrangi Mahal**. While the exact purpose of the Lotus Mahal is not definitively known, as **Mackenzie**

wrote, it may have been a council chamber, a place where the king met his advisers.



Pair 2 is incorrect: Hazara Rama temples: Some historical interpretations and theories suggest that **this was probably meant to be used only by the king and his family**. Scenes from the Ramayana sculpted on the inner walls of the shrine.



Pair 3 is correct: The Mahanavami Dibba is associated with various ceremonial and administrative purposes; one of the prominent rituals is the celebration of Mahanavami.



Pair 4 is correct: The Stone Chariot in Hampi is one of the most iconic and recognised structures of the Vijayanagara Empire **inside the Vittala Complex**.

It was **built in the 16th century by the orders of King Krishnadevaraya**, a Vijayanagara ruler.



97. Ans: (b)

Exp:

The **Sutta Pitaka** is one of the three main sections, or "baskets," of the **Pali Canon**, which is the foundational text of **Theravada Buddhism**. It consists of a vast collection of discourses attributed to the Buddha, his teachings, and interactions with various individuals, including rulers like King Ajatasattu.

The **specific conversation between King Ajatasattu and the Buddha** is often found in the "**Digha Nikaya**" (The Long Discourses) of the **Sutta Pitaka**. These texts contain dialogues and discourses that provide deep insights into Buddhist teachings and philosophy.

98. Ans: (d)

Exp:

Statement 1 is correct: The term Kathak is derived from katha, a word used in Sanskrit and other languages for story. **The kathaks were originally a caste of story-tellers in temples in north India, who embellished their performances with gestures and songs.**

Statement 2 is correct: Kathak began evolving into a distinct mode of dance in the **fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the spread of the bhakti movement**. The legends of Radha-Krishna were enacted in folk plays called rasa lila, which combined folk dance with the basic gestures of the kathak story-tellers.

Statement 3 is correct: Under the Mughal emperors and their nobles, Kathak was performed in the court, where it acquired its present features and developed into a form of dance with a distinctive style. **Subsequently, it developed in two traditions, or gharanas: one in the courts of Rajasthan (Jaipur) and the other in Lucknow.** Under the patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, it grew into a major art form.

99. Ans: (a)

Exp:

Option A is correct: Sir **Alexander Cunningham** published **Bhilsa Topes**, one of the earliest works on Sanchi, in 1854. It comprised a brief historical sketch of Buddhism's rise, progress, and decline.

Sir Alexander Cunningham was a British Army Officer and Archaeologist who excavated many sites in India including Sanchi and Sarnath, and he also served as the first Director of Archaeological Survey of India. Some of his publications are:

1. The Ancient Geography of India (1871)
2. The Stupa of Bharhut (1879)

100. Ans: (b)

Exp:

Pair 1 is incorrect: **Khums** is a tax that amounts to **one-fifth (20%) of certain types of wealth**, including war booty, treasure, and other forms of surplus wealth. It is meant to be distributed among the descendants of the Prophet (Sayyids), religious leaders, or used for communal welfare and religious activities.

Pair 2 is incorrect: **Zakat** is one of the **Five Pillars of Islam** and is an **obligatory almsgiving or charity**. It requires Muslims to give a portion (usually 2.5%) of their accumulated wealth and savings annually to the needy. The aim of Zakat is to purify wealth, assist the poor, and reduce economic inequalities within the Muslim community.

Pair 3 is correct: **Jizyah** is a tax historically levied on **non-Muslims (dhimmis) living in an Islamic state**. In return for paying Jizyah, non-Muslims were granted protection by the Muslim state and exemption from military service. It allowed them to practice their religion and maintain their communal autonomy.

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