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IAS EXAM PREPARATION

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01 DECEMBER 2017

1. According to the latest data (2016) published by the National Crime Records Bureau,
1. A major chunk of crimes against Dalits involves the violation of women
 2. Revenge and sexual exploitation were the two top motives that accounted for cyber-crimes
 3. Around 40 per cent of all seized fake Indian currency notes were from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

It must be noted that the NCRB figures merely reflect the number of crimes registered by the police. These may or may not reflect the actual situation on the ground. Well-policed states generally do have a high crime rate as the police ensures the registry of all cases.

- The 2016 NCRB report, which, for the first time, has tabulated city-wise data on atrocities against Dalits, shows that a major chunk of crimes against Dalits involves the violation of women.
- More than 12,000 incidents of cybercrime were reported in 2016, a jump of 6.3% from 2015. Illegal gains and revenge were the two top motives that accounted for cyber-crimes. Sexual exploitation, insulting the modesty of women and causing disrepute constituted 13% of the crimes.
- For the first time, the NCRB included data on the seizure of fake Indian currency notes in its report. In 2016, a total of 2,81,839 fake notes with a face value of ₹15,92,50,181 were seized. Around 40% of these fake notes were seized from Delhi, followed by Gujarat and West Bengal.

Additional Information:

- The latest NCRB data for the year 2016 shows that while overall crimes against women have risen by just about 3%, incidents of rape have gone up by 12%. The majority of cases categorised as crimes against women were reported under 'Cruelty by husband or his relatives' (32.6%), followed by 'Assault on woman with intent to outrage her modesty' (25%), 'Kidnapping and abduction of women' (19%) and 'Rape' (11.5%).
- The latest NCRB data for the year 2016 has registered a sharp spike in cases of rape against children — even as overall crimes against children have increased. According to the NCRB data for 2016, incidents of rape of children have increased by over 82% compared to 2015.

[http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/ncrb-data-2016-most-atrocities-against-dalits-involve-crimes-against-women-most-cases-in-bengaluru-4962457/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/ncrb-data-2016-most-atrocities-against-dalits-involve-crimes-against-women-most-cases-in-bengaluru-4962457/)

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/many-cybercrime-cases-not-investigated/article21235628.ece;>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/spurt-in-rape-cases-with-mp-up-leading-the-table/article21236302.ece;>

2. Which one of the following reports/indices is **not** compiled by the World Economic Forum?

- a) Global Financial Stability Report
- b) Global Competitiveness Index
- c) Global Gender Gap Report
- d) Global Risks Report

Solution: a.

The GFSR is compiled by the IMF.

“What is significant about this particular ranking is that it is compiled by the World Economic Forum... could this be because gender gaps matter for business and growth?”

- The World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world, is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.
- The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does.

Improvisation: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/gender-gap-indian-ranking-in-world-gender-disparity-4962303/>;

<http://reports.weforum.org>;

3. Article 239AA of the Indian constitution is associated with

- Constitution and composition of panchayats
- Administration of scheduled areas and tribal areas
- Extent of laws made by Parliament and by the legislatures of states
- Special provisions with respect to Delhi

Solution: d.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/arvind-kejriwal-versus-anil-baijal-delhi-governor-responsibility-without-power-4962304/>;

4. Consider the following pairs:

Region of India	Species that can be found here
1. West	: Great Indian Bustard
2. Central	: Sangai
3. South	: Pangolin

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

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

Solution: b.

The Great Indian Bustard is the State Bird of Rajasthan (but it can be found as far south as Karnataka). The Sangai is the State Animal of Manipur. The Pangolin can be found all over India (except for the Himalayan regions).

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/some-animals-are-more-equal-than-others/article21235763.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction:

1. The Law Commission of India's draft law – the Protection of Children (Inter-Country Removal and Retention) bill, 2016 is in consonance with it
2. India has not ratified it as it believes the worst affected in cases under the convention will be women who often flee abusive marriages

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

Solution: c.

A mains-oriented question (a similar question was posted here earlier).

Regarding statement 1 (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/protecting-children-from-abduction/article21235805.ece>): The Commission's draft is in consonance with the principles of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980, which seeks to protect a child from the harmful effect of wrongful removal and secure prompt return and reintegration of the child in an environment of his/her 'habitual residence'.

Regarding Statement 2: From 2016: (<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-will-not-ink-hague-treaty-on-civil-aspects-of-child-abduction-4397236/>): "We found that there are more cases of Indian women who return to the safety of their homes in India after escaping a bad marriage. Cases of women who are foreign citizens, married to Indian men, going away with their children are far fewer. Hence signing the Hague Convention would be to the disadvantage of Indian women. Also, a majority of such cases pertain to women instead of men running away," said a WCD official.

02 DECEMBER 2017

1. 'Canadian tar sands' was recently in the news for which one of the following reasons?

- (a) The rare element Tellurium was recently discovered in large quantities beneath reserves of these tar sands
- (b) Their utilisation by industries is contributing to biological darkening of the ocean waters
- (c) The leftover from refining it – petroleum coke – is exported to India where it is used as an energy source
- (d) As part of its policy to diversify the energy mix, India will be importing these tar sands

Solution: c.

- US oil refineries that are unable to sell a dirty fuel waste product at home are exporting vast quantities of it to India instead.

- Petroleum coke, the leftover from refining Canadian tar sands and other heavy crude, is cheaper and burns hotter than coal. But it also contains more planet-warming carbon and far more heart- and lung-damaging sulphur — a key reason few American companies use it.
- Refineries are sending it around the world instead, especially to energy-hungry India, which last year got almost a fourth of the fuel grade “petcoke” from the US.
- The petcoke burned in countless factories and plants is contributing to dangerously filthy air in India.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/oZPvLWU14bJ7XxYGinws6O/Pollutionchoked-India-importing-dirty-fuel-petcoke-from-U.html>;

Also, recently in the news (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-for-nationwide-ban-on-furnace-oil-pet-coke/article20534514.ece>): “The Supreme Court ... requested all States and Union Territories to move forward towards a nationwide ban on the use of pet coke and furnace oil to power up industries, in a bid to fight pollution.”

2. The Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017, a proposed new law for resolving bankruptcy, will be applicable to
1. Pension funds
 2. Stock exchanges
 3. Insurance companies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above

Solution: d.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 provides a time-bound process for resolving insolvency in companies and among individuals. Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.

On the other hand, the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017 establishes a Resolution Corporation to monitor financial firms (these include banks, non-banking financial companies, insurance companies, pensions funds, stock exchanges, and depositories), anticipate risk of failure, take corrective action, and resolve them in case of such failure. The Corporation will also provide deposit insurance up to a certain limit, in case of bank failure.

<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Financial%20Resolution%20Bill,%202017/Legislative%20Brief%20Financial%20Resolution%20Bill%202017.pdf>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/fm-seeks-to-allay-depositors-fears-hints-at-review-of-bill/article21245600.ece>;

3. GDP growth recovered in the second fiscal quarter from a three-year low of 5.7% in the preceding three-month period. This reversal of the economic slowdown was caused significantly by growth in the
- (a) Manufacturing sector
 - (b) Agriculture sector
 - (c) Services sector
 - (d) a, b and c

Solution: a.

Data released on Thursday show that economic growth as measured by the gross domestic product rebounded to 6.3% in the three months through September, from a three-year low of 5.7% in the preceding quarter. The reversal in direction apart, what is equally noteworthy is that this revival was coterminous with the nationwide roll-out of the goods and services tax from July 1.

Interestingly, it was manufacturing that was in the vanguard of the rebound, with gross value added for the sector recovering smartly from the first quarter's anaemic 1.2% growth to post a healthy 7% expansion.

Agriculture remains in a slump, and this in a 'normal' monsoon year — GVA growth in the sector, which includes forestry and fishing, slowed to 1.7%, from 2.3% in the first quarter, and was considerably weaker than the 4.1% pace posted in the year-earlier period.

Experts also point to the slowdown in the services sector, especially finance, transport, and hotels, all of which saw growth slowing in the second quarter compared with the first quarter.

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/growth-rebounds-to-63-in-september-quarter/article21225392.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/fragile-momentum/article21244424.ece>;

4. The Justice KS Radhakrishnan panel, sometimes in the news, deals with which one of the following issues?
- (a) Child Abduction
 - (b) Custodial Torture
 - (c) Road Safety
 - (d) Black money

Solution: c.

A Coimbatore-based orthopaedician's PIL (*Dr. S. Rajasekaran v. Union of India case*) on Thursday led to the Supreme Court to insist on all States and Union Territories to frame a Road Safety Policy and the setting up of lead agencies to work as secretariats of State Road Safety Councils to co-ordinate on activities such as licensing issues like driving licences, registration of vehicles, road safety and features of vehicles.

The court has made it mandatory for States and Union Territories to establish Road Safety Fund, the corpus of which would come from traffic fines collected. The money would be used to meet the expenses for road safety.

The court has also directed framing Road Safety Action Plans by March 31 (2018) to reduce the number of road accidents, as well as the fatality rate.

The court found that most of the States and Union Territories have already framed a road safety policy, though some have not; some also have not constituted the Road Safety Council as yet. The court gave them time January 31, 2018.

The Justice Radhakrishnan panel (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sc-panel-gives-states-june-30-deadline-to-enforce-road-safety/article7235785.ece>) would fix the responsibility and functions of the councils. These councils would periodically review the laws and take appropriate remedial steps wherever necessary.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-tightens-the-screw-on-road-safety/article21210650.ece>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/accident-prone/article21244425.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Election Commission of India:

1. The other election commissioners cannot be removed from office except in the same manner and on the same grounds as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)
2. In case of difference of opinion amongst the CEC and the other election commissioners, the views of the former will prevail

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

Solution: d.

The chief election commissioner and the two other election commissioners have equal powers and receive equal salary, allowances and other perquisites, which are similar to those of a judge of the Supreme Court. In case of difference of opinion amongst the Chief Election Commissioner and/or two other election commissioners, the matter is decided by the Commission by majority.

Any other election commissioner or a regional commissioner cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the chief election commissioner.

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/way-to-remove-poll-commissioners-vague/article21244300.ece>;

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

03 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements about UNESCO's list of intangible heritage:

1. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is the responsibility of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee
2. The tradition of Vedic chanting is an element inscribed on the list

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

Intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary and living at the same time; it is inclusive, representative and community-based.

".. The list of 'intangible' cultural treasures was created in 2003, mainly to increase awareness about them, while UNESCO also sometimes offers financial or technical support to countries struggling to protect them..." .. The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is the responsibility of States Parties to the Convention. Developing States have the possibility to request international assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The grant is decided by the Committee.

There are 12 elements from India inscribed on the list.

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/faq-00021#once-elements-are-included-on-the-lists-what-steps-does-unesco-take-to-safeguard-themij;>

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/state/india-IN;>

<https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/heritage-spin-for-naples-pizza/article21250499.ece;>

2. The 'Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) of Things' refers to

- (a) The exploitation of vulnerabilities in devices that are part of the Internet of Things
- (b) A situation in which Artificial Intelligence systems are unable to differentiate between legit and illegitimate transaction requests thereby rejecting all of it
- (c) The use of Quantum Computers to crack multiple secure networks simultaneously
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

- Devices used to build the Internet of Things (IoT), a network of devices capable of exchanging data, will be used by cyber criminals to 'liberate' attacks in the near future, said Sanjai Gangadharan, regional director, SAARC, A10 Networks, a cybersecurity firm.
- "IoT will continue to be used to liberate attacks," Mr. Gangadharan said in an e-mail interview. "The attackers will take advantage of lax security standards in connected smart devices to build massive botnets that are able to deploy DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) payloads."
- "When you combine this with the lack of consumer and user awareness about the vulnerabilities of IoT devices — you have the perfect storm! We call it the DDoS of 'things,'" he said.
- A DDoS attack will try to disrupt an online service, ranging from news websites to banks, unavailable by jamming it with traffic from multiple sources disabling the provider of such a service to publish or access information.

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/iot-will-make-online-devices-less-secure/article21252285.ece;>

3. The 'Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone' can be found in

- (a) India
- (b) Maldives
- (c) Indonesia
- (d) Myanmar

Solution: d.

President Xi's backing for the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor followed last month's announcement of this plan in Myanmar by Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi. During his visit to Myanmar, Mr. Wang said that the Y-shaped corridor can start from China's Yunnan province, and head towards Mandalay in Myanmar. From there it could extend towards the east and west to Yangon New City and Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone, in the Rakhine province.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/xi-jinping-backs-china-myanmar-economic-corridor-during-talks-with-suu-kyi/article21248992.ece;>

Myanmar

Divisions/States:

[https://i.pinimg.com/originals/87/2a/e5/872ae52bdb58749129e0a3fe8f5ff300.gif;](https://i.pinimg.com/originals/87/2a/e5/872ae52bdb58749129e0a3fe8f5ff300.gif)

4. The People's Linguistic Survey of India

1. Was initiated by the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre (BRPC)
2. Contains stories of people's origin and dispersal

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) was initiated in 2010 by Prof. G.N. Devy at the Language Confluence hosted by Bhasha Research and Publication Centre (an NGO), Vadodara and envisions the creation of a Linguistic Survey rooted in people's perception of language. Conceived as a project to capture how people identify, name and perceive what they speak, the survey in its published form will also contain the stories of people's origin, dispersal and relationship with the neighbouring cultures.

The PLSI is not

- A repeat, substitute, replacement or a sequel to Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, or a sample survey or part of Census survey.
- It is not an exhaustive survey of each and every language in existence in India.
- It is not an exercise in standardizing or fixing the writing or the speech of Indian Language communities.

The PLSI is

- A quick, non-hierarchical, public consultation and appraisal, intended as an aid to cultural impact assessment of development, and as an acknowledgement of the self-respect and sense of identity of all, especially, endangered speech communities of India.

<http://www.peopleslinguisticsurvey.org/aboutus.aspx?page=PLSI;>

[http://indianexpress.com/article/india/7780-indian-languages-surveyed-and-documented-by-plsi-next-aim-to-document-6000-world-languages-4781113/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/india/7780-indian-languages-surveyed-and-documented-by-plsi-next-aim-to-document-6000-world-languages-4781113/)

Improvisation (Reference to linguist G.N. Devy): <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/bharatavani-portal-offers-digital-dictionaries-of-vanishing-indian-languages/article21249663.ece>

5. Which of the following is geographically closest to Great Nicobar?

- (a) Java
- (b) Celebes
- (c) Bali
- (d) Sumatra

Solution: d.

Q98, CS(P) 2017: [http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/06/19/answer-key-upsc-civil-services-prelims-exam-2017-general-studies-paper-1/;](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/06/19/answer-key-upsc-civil-services-prelims-exam-2017-general-studies-paper-1/)

Improvisation: Who.What.Why.When.Where Page, Sunday Edition The Hindu;



04 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements:

1. The weightage of indicators associated with children below the age of five accounts for the majority share in the Global Hunger Index (GHI)
2. The incidence of hunger is taken as the proportion of the population whose food intake provides less than its minimum nutritional requirements

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

...the GHI assigns 70.5% weightage to children below five who constitute only a minor population share and 29.5% weightage to the population above five, which constitutes 81.5% of the total population. Therefore, the term "Hunger Index" is highly biased towards undernutrition of children rather than representing the status of hunger in the overall population. It would be more appropriate to term the conceptualisation and composition of this composite index as a "Global Hunger and Child Health Index" than as a "Global Hunger Index".

The incidence of hunger is taken as the proportion of the population whose food intake provides less than its minimum energy requirements. The figure of the incidence of hunger depends on energy norms and the methodological approach used in its estimation. At a global level, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has an average norm of 1,800 kcal, while the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) specified average norm of 2,400 kcal for rural areas and 2,100 kcal for urban areas in India, varies across age, gender and activity-level.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-misleading-hunger-index/article21255142.ece>;

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Cryptocurrencies like ethereum have attracted investors due to their nature of being hard currencies
2. Cryptocurrencies is a form of fiat money

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

Solution: d.

Regarding Statement 1 (Hard Currency): It is a currency widely accepted around the world as a form of payment for goods and services. A hard currency is expected to remain relatively stable through a short period of time, and to be highly liquid in the forex, or foreign exchange (FX), market. A hard currency generally comes from a nation with a strong economic and political situation.

Regarding Statement 2: Bitcoin is a decentralized currency that uses peer-to-peer technology, which enables several functions. While this decentralization renders Bitcoin free from government manipulation or interference, the flipside is that there is no central authority to ensure that things run smoothly or to back the value of a Bitcoin. Bitcoins are created digitally through a “mining” process that requires powerful computers to solve complex algorithms and crunch numbers.

These characteristics make Bitcoin fundamentally different from a fiat currency, which is backed by the full faith and credit of its government. Fiat currency issuance is a highly centralized activity supervised by a nation's central bank. While the bank regulates the amount of currency issued in accordance with its monetary policy objectives, there is theoretically no upper limit to the amount of such currency issuance.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/bit-of-a-bubble/article21255125.ece>;

Refer to the content under the first sub-heading to comprehensively understand the difference between a Cryptocurrency and fiat money: <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/forex/091013/future-cryptocurrency.asp>;

3. The ‘Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism’ was initiated and is led by

- (a) China
- (b) Myanmar
- (c) Asian Development Bank
- (d) Thailand

Solution: a.

- Departing from the past, China's approach to transboundary water sharing is shifting towards multilateral arrangements. The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism was proposed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in the China-ASEAN Leaders meeting held in November of 2015. Here, China signed the **Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) framework** along with five other countries through which the Mekong flows. This China-led multilateral agreement is an alternative to the Asian Development Bank-led **Mekong River Commission (MRC)**, which China never signed. The LMC aligns with China's Belt and Road Initiative and focuses on land and water connectivity, besides river management.

- **Mekong River** (Chinese ‘Lancang’) is the longest river in Southeast Asia. Rising in southeastern Qinghai province, China, it flows through the eastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Yunnan province, after which it forms part of the international border between Myanmar and Laos, as well as between Laos and Thailand. The river then flows through Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam before draining into the South China Sea south of Ho Chi Minh City. Vientiane, the capital of Laos, and Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, both

stand on its banks. About three-fourths of the drainage area of the Mekong lies within the four countries the river traverses on its lower course—Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-brahmaputra-conundrum/article21254881.ece>;
http://www.chinaaseanenv.org/lmecc/strategy_and_mechanism/cooperation_mechanism/201711/t20171107_425953.html;

4. The international law of 'prior appropriation' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of
- Double taxation avoidance
 - Disputed international borders
 - Water rights
 - Online data protection and individual privacy

Solution: c.

"..A decade ago, India started planning multiple hydropower projects on the Brahmaputra as a reactive strategy against Chinese dam-building activities on the upper reaches of the river. This strategy is informed by the international law of 'prior appropriation', which states that the first user gets the rights to continue using that quantity of water.."

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-brahmaputra-conundrum/article21254881.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements:

- The first ever World Report on Disability was produced by the Association of People with Disability
- According to the 2011 census of India, about ten per cent of the population has one or multiple types of disabilities

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: d.

The first ever **World report on disability**, produced jointly by **WHO** and the **World Bank**, suggests that more than a billion people in the world today experience disability.

In India, according to the 2011 Census, 2.21% of the population has one or multiple types of disabilities, making the country home to one of the largest disabled populations in the world. World Bank data suggest that the numbers are nearly four-five times higher.

http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/;

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/disability-rights-over-time/article21254946.ece>;

05 DECEMBER 2017

1. Close to 7,000 cases were reported under the umbrella term 'Offences against the State' in 2016 in India. Which one of the following topped the list among the States?
- Jammu and Kashmir
 - Nagaland
 - Maharashtra
 - Tamil Nadu

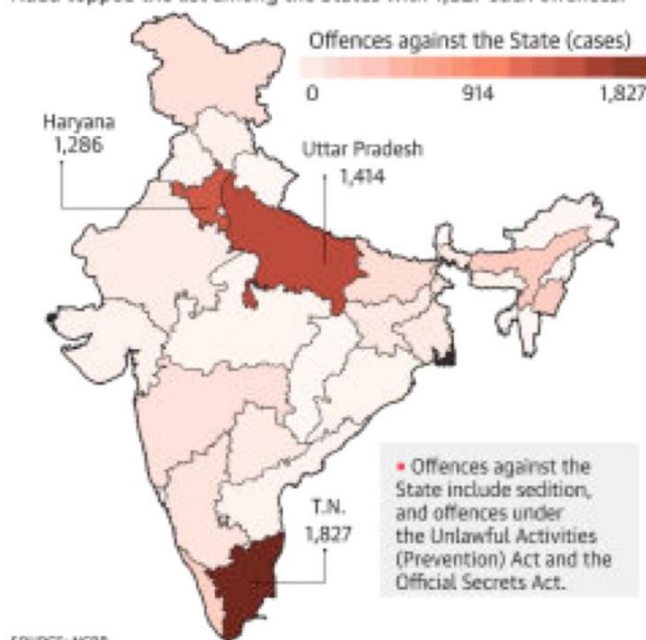
Solution: d.

A GK/mains-oriented question.

DATA POINT

Going against the State

Close to 7,000 cases were reported under the umbrella term 'Offences against the State' in 2016 in India. Of them, 83% were related to the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act. Tamil Nadu topped the list among the States with 1,827 such offences.



2. Consider the following pairs:

<i>Term relating to treaty actions</i>	<i>explanation</i>
1. Signature	: Expresses the willingness of the signatory state to continue the treaty-making process, but does not establish the consent to be bound
2. Ratification	: A state indicating its consent to be bound to a treaty
3. Accession	: It has the same legal effect as Ratification

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

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

Solution: d.

"The **Convention Against Torture (CAT)** came into force in 1987 and India signed it in 1997. Today, the CAT has 162 state parties; 83 are signatories.." India has so far refused to ratify it.

- **Signature Subject to Ratification, Acceptance or Approval:** Where the signature is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, the signature does not establish the consent to be bound. However, it is a means of authentication and expresses the willingness of the signatory state to continue the treaty-making process.

- **Ratification:** Ratification defines the international act whereby a state indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. The institution of ratification grants states the necessary time-frame to seek the required approval for the treaty on the domestic level and to enact the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to that treaty.
- **Accession:** "Accession" is the act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force.

[https://treaties.un.org/pages/overview.aspx?path=overview/glossary/page1_en.xml#ratification;](https://treaties.un.org/pages/overview.aspx?path=overview/glossary/page1_en.xml#ratification)

Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/stand-up-against-torture/article21261356.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/stand-up-against-torture/article21261356.ece)

3. Presently,

1. India can be recognised more appropriately as being a procedural democracy than a substantive democracy
2. The Election Commission of India has no powers to penalise political parties that fail to hold regular internal elections for office bearers

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Democratic theory includes both procedural and substantive democracy.

- *Procedural democracy* can be said to refer to the practice of universal adult franchise, periodic elections, secret ballot.
- *Substantive democracy* can be said to refer to the internal democratic functioning of the parties, which purportedly represent the people. Internal democracy includes provisions governing internal elections, candidate selection, secret ballots, and registration and deregistration of parties etc.

Currently, there is no express law for internal democratic regulation of political parties in India and the only governing law is provided by Section 29A of the RPA, which provides for registration of political parties.

Unfortunately, there are no provisions do not regulate the internal functioning of already registered parties. Moreover, the ECI's power to require parties to hold regular internal elections for office bearers, and candidate selection is compromised in the absence of any penal provisions.

[https://www.gktoday.in/gk/inner-party-democracy/;](https://www.gktoday.in/gk/inner-party-democracy/)

<http://vle.du.ac.in/mod/book/print.php?id=12119&chapterid=24488;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rahul-is-sole-nominee-for-post-of-congress-president/article21261838.ece>

4. A 'Bank Run'

- (a) Is a situation in which a bank that is authorised to hold the assets and liabilities of an insolvent bank can no longer meet its own financial obligations
- (b) Is an oft-witnessed chain reaction in which lowering of interest rates by one bank forces others to do the same
- (c) Refers to the phenomenon of predatory pricing of loans in order to "poach" customers of competitor banks
- (d) Occurs when a large number of customers of a bank withdrawing their deposits simultaneously

Solution: d.

A bank run occurs when a large number of customers of a bank or another financial institution withdraw their deposits simultaneously due to concerns about the bank's solvency. As more people withdraw their funds, the probability of default increases, thereby prompting more people to withdraw their deposits. In extreme cases, the bank's reserves may not be sufficient to cover the withdrawals.

Additional information: A silent bank run is much like a normal bank run, except withdrawals are made by customers in the form of electronic fund transfers and wire transfers, rather than going into the bank and withdrawing cash or a bank draft. As banking has become more and more automated, the electronic movement of funds from one institution to another has become more common.

<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bankrun.asp>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/bail-in-doubts/article21261606.ece>;

5. The National Policy for Drug Demand Reduction has been drafted by the

- (a) Ministry of Women and Child Development
- (b) Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
- (c) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- (d) Ministry of Home Affairs

Solution: c.

"The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that it is finalising a **National Policy on Drug Demand Reduction** to combat the rising menace of drug and alcohol abuse, especially among children. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment informed a Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra that 18 States have responded to an advisory sent by the Centre to formulate an action plan for combating drug abuse."

From 2014: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=113998>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/finalising-policy-against-drug-abuse-govt-tells-sc/article21261551.ece>

06 DECEMBER 2017

1. The 'integrated Fertiliser Management System (iFMS)' was set up with the objective to

- (a) Incentivise firms to enhance their fertiliser production efficiency
- (b) Ensure that small and marginal farmers derive full benefits of subsidised fertilisers
- (c) Monitor the import, production and movement of subsidised fertilisers and processing subsidy claims
- (d) Monitor and inform farmers about nutrient status of the soils along with the recommendation on appropriated dosage of nutrients to improve soil health and fertility

Solution: c.

The Agriculture Minister informed that the Soil Health Card portal has been linked to the **Integrated Fertilizer Management System (iFMS)** and distribution of fertilizers has started in 16 districts on the basis Soil Health Card recommendation as a pilot scheme.

About iFMS: With the objective to monitor the import, production and movement of various subsidized fertilizers and processing subsidy claims, different software systems were introduced by **Dept. Of Fertilisers viz** FMS, mobile FMS (mFMS) and iFMS.

- FMS monitors the production, dispatches, receipts and sales of DAP, MOP, SSP, NPK and Urea (Indigenous and Imported) fertilizers from point of production to district warehouses. To achieve more visibility and transparency in the fertilizer supply chain from production to receipt at the last point sale (retail point), the mFMS was introduced in the year 2012. iFMS is more comprehensive, all-inclusive system which integrated, incorporates and enhances the features of both earlier systems i.e. FMS and mFMS.

<http://fert.nic.in/page/fertilizer-monitoring-systems;>

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174111;>

2. The International Centre for Agriculture Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA)

- Is a part of the CGIAR consortium
- Runs a gene bank which holds accessions of, among others, wheat and lentil

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

ICARDA's focus: Drylands cover over 40% of the world's land surface and span globally 100 developing countries with a growing population of more than 2.5 billion people. Although farmers in drylands are major crop producers and half of the world's livestock is kept here, people are living in chronic poverty and facing challenges highly impacted by climate change. Scarce water resources, erratic precipitation, drought, salinization, land degradation, loss of traditional knowledge, unemployment, malnutrition and poor diets are new phenomena farmers in dry areas have to cope with.

- ICARDA combines scientific evidence and indigenous knowledge from dryland communities to address these challenges.
- Mandate:** Within the CGIAR consortium, ICARDA has a global mandate for the crop development of barley, lentil and faba bean and serves the non-tropical dry areas for the improvement of water-use efficiency in agriculture, rangeland issues and small-ruminant production. ICARDA also contributes to the improvement of bread and durum wheat, kabuli chickpea, pasture and forage legumes, and associated farming systems.
- Genebank Resources and Services:** Ranked among the top ten gene banks globally for barley, faba bean, durum wheat, chickpeas and lentils, ICARDA's genebanks are a globally rich resource for agrobiodiversity, holding a total of 151,000 accessions from the 'Fertile Crescent' in Western Asia, the Abyssinian highlands in Ethiopia and Nile Valley, where earliest known crop domestication practices were first recorded.

[http://www.cgiar.org/about-us/research-centers/international-center-for-agricultural-research-in-the-dry-areas-icarda/;](http://www.cgiar.org/about-us/research-centers/international-center-for-agricultural-research-in-the-dry-areas-icarda/)

<http://www.icarda.org/mission-and-vision;>

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174109;>

- Tropical cyclones originate and intensify over warm tropical oceans. The conditions favourable for the formation and intensification of such violent storms are
 - Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27°C
 - Large variations in the vertical wind speed
 - Upper divergence above the sea level system

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The conditions favourable for the formation and intensification of tropical storms are:

- (i) Large sea surface with temperature higher than 27° C;
- (ii) Presence of the Coriolis force;
- (iii) Small variations in the vertical wind speed;
- (iv) A pre-existing weak- low-pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation;
- (v) Upper divergence above the sea level system.

The place where a tropical cyclone crosses the coast is called the landfall of the cyclone. The cyclones, which cross 20°N latitude generally, recurve and they are more destructive.

Page 95, Fundamentals of Physical Geography, NCERT;

Improvisation:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/over-5000-shifted-as-gujarat-braces-for-cyclone/article21268531.ece>;

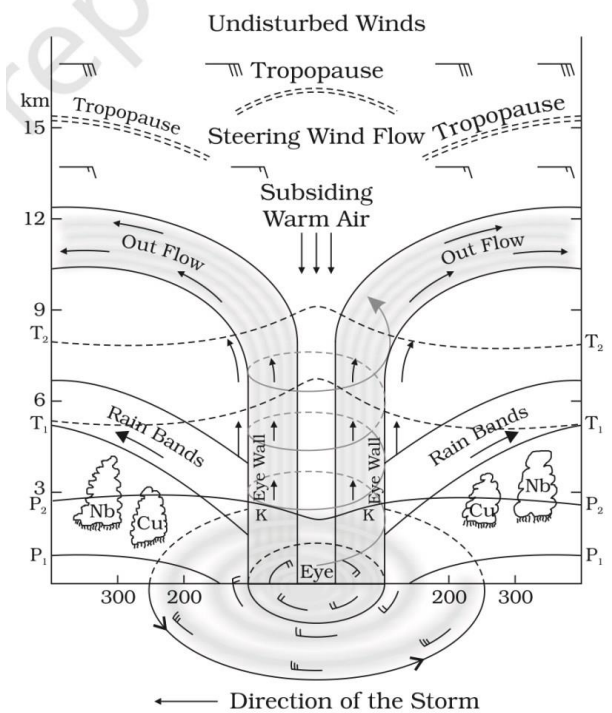


Figure 10.10 : Vertical section of the tropical cyclone (after Rama Sastry)

4. Which one of the following statements about the Finance Commission is correct?

- (a) It is constituted by the President of India every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary
- (b) The Constitution has specified the qualifications of the chairman but not of members of the commission
- (c) The Commission cannot be regarded as a quasi-judicial body
- (d) Recommendations made by the Commission are binding on the government

Solution: a.

The corrected statements b, c and d are:

- The Constitution authorises the Parliament to determine the qualifications of members of the commission and the manner in which they should be. Accordingly, the Parliament has specified the qualifications of the chairman and members of the commission
- The Commission is a quasi-judicial body
- The recommendations made by the Finance Commission are only of advisory nature and hence, not binding on the. It is up to the Union government to implement its recommendations on granting money to the states. As rightly observed by Dr. P.V. Rajamannar, the Chairman of the Fourth Finance Commission, "Since the Finance Commission is a constitutional body expected to be quasi-judicial, its

recommendations should not be turned down by the Government of India unless there are very compelling reasons”.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

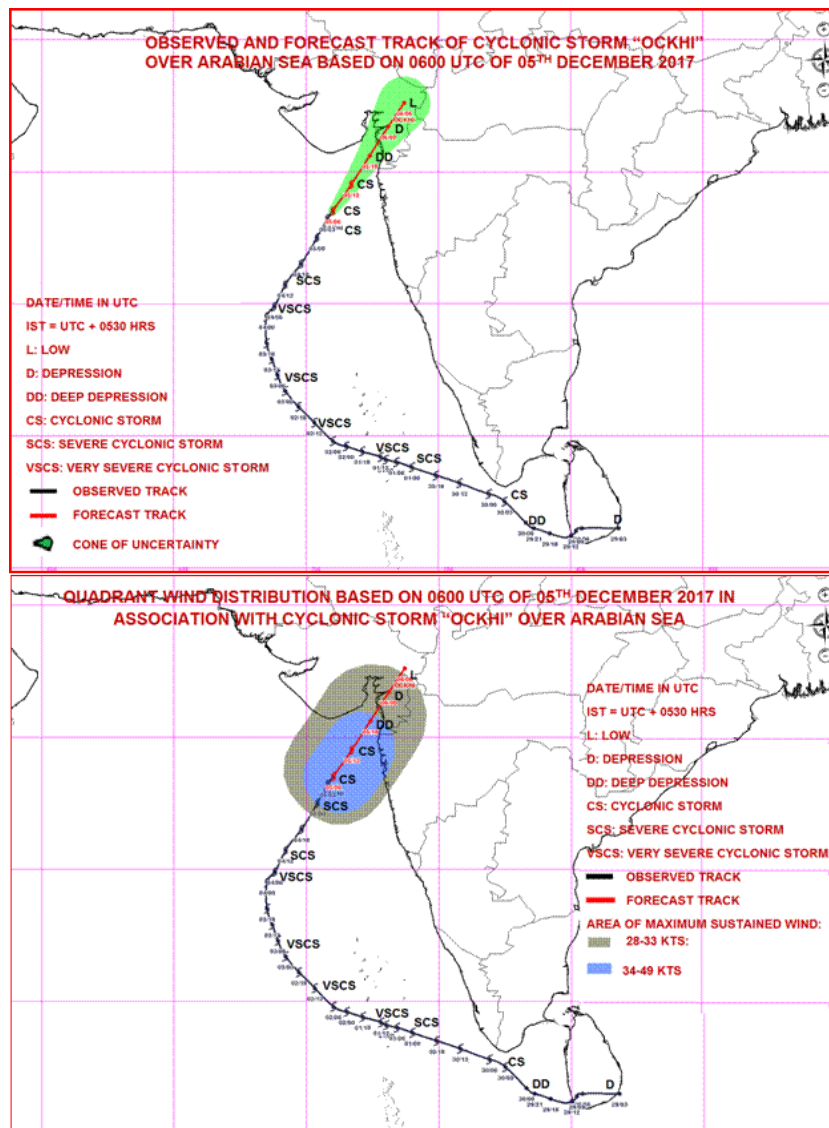
Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/new-india-formula/article21268622.ece>;

5. Cyclonic storm ‘Ockhi’ recurved once it crossed the latitude around which the southernmost portion of which one of the following states lies?
- Karnataka
 - Goa
 - Gujarat
 - Kerala

Solution: b.

The cyclones, which cross 20°N latitude generally, recurve and they are more destructive. Accordingly, the cyclone should have recurved around the same latitude where the southernmost portion of Gujarat lies.

Here, in the case of **Ockhi**, the recurving happened at around the 15°N latitude (perhaps, due to the movement of the ITCZ).



ITCZ: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z9yssbk/revision>; Class 9 Geography NCERT;

Source/Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174106>;

07 DECEMBER 2017

1. Kautilya, or Vishnugupta,
 1. Authored the Arthashastra which deals primarily with internal administration and spiritual well-being of the king and his subjects
 2. Helped Chandragupta Maurya overthrow the Nandas

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The term *Artha* stands for material well-being and is one of the *Purusharthas* (the legitimate goals of human existence). The Arthashastra states very categorically that *Artha* is superior to *Dharma* (spiritual well-being) and *Kama* (sensual pleasure). The Arthashastra is in effect the science of statecraft.
- Kautilya's work mainly deals with internal administration and inter-state relations.

Pg 322:

<https://books.google.co.in/books?id=GW5Gx0HSXKUC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q=Arthashastra&f=false>;

Improvisation (reference to Kautilya): <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174134>;

2. Adherence by public authorities to Section 4 of the Right to Information Act can ensure/lead to which one of the following outcomes?
 - (a) Non-disclosure of any information that is regarded as 'sensitive' by the Government of the day
 - (b) Every officer appointed as Chief Information Commission will have a five year tenure regardless of his or her age at the time of appointment
 - (c) Enhancement of citizens' participation in governance and lending transparency to Government functioning
 - (d) Timely designation of officers as Information Officers in all administrative units

Solution: c.

Section 4 of the RTI Act contains the proactive disclosure norms (suo moto disclosure).

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174134>;

3. Consider the following statements about the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):
 1. It is a specialised agency of the United Nations dedicated to eradicating rural poverty in developing countries
 2. India is a founder member of the IFAD

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

Solution: c.

The Agriculture Minister said that India has always had an active association with **IFAD** ever since it was set up in **1977** as the 13th specialized agency of the **United Nations**. **India is a founder member** of IFAD, a key contributor among the member Countries, participates actively in the Fund's governing bodies, and holds a permanent seat in IFAD Executive Board (oversees the general operations). It currently holds the chairmanship of the Governing Council (the highest decision-making authority of IFAD) and of the Evaluation Committee.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174150>;

<https://www.ifad.org/who/overview>;

4. Consider the following statements about the 'Output Gap':

1. It is an indicator of the difference between actual output and the maximum potential output of an economy
2. If the output gap in an economy is poised to rapidly close, the Monetary Policy Authority is likely to adopt either a neutral or hawkish stance

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

Solution: c.

A mains-oriented question.

- Output gap is the difference between the actual output of an economy and the potential output an economy can generate at full capacity.
- "In the latest policy resolution statement, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that MPC has kept the policy stance neutral 'keeping in mind the output gap dynamics'."
- "If we go by the RBI working paper's assessment, then the output gap is poised to close very soon after which demand pressures would be enough to warrant tightening of the monetary policy. It would become easier for RBI to adopt a hawkish tone (advocating higher interest rates) if inflation moves up as it expects it to, and the central government breaches its budgeted fiscal deficit target. The chances of both are getting higher by the day..."

<http://www.livemint.com/Money/6TI31yjNHVTyD39gOrHNRN/RBI-monetary-policy-Mind-the-output-gap.html>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/unwavering-caution/article21284624.ece>;

5. 'G4', which wants an increase in the number of permanent seats in the U.N. Security Council, does not include which one of the following countries?

- (a) South Africa
- (b) Japan
- (c) Germany
- (d) Brazil

Ans: a.

The G4 nations are – Brazil, Germany, India and Japan.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/let-us-be-realistic-about-the-unscc/article21284696.ece>;

08 DECEMBER 2017

1. Section 64 (1A) of the Income Tax Act of 1961

- (a) Exempts from taxation the interest accrued on maintenance money parents pay for their minor child
- (b) Plugs some loopholes to reduce the incidence of avoidance of tax
- (c) Both a and b
- (d) Neither a nor b

Solution: b.

Should maintenance money paid by parents for the welfare of their minor child be exempted from income tax?

- The plea taken in the case before the High Court in *Payal Mehta v. Sanjay Sarin (2016)* was that the interest on the amount of maintenance money deposited in the name of a minor child by the parent should not be subjected to tax, that is, such income should not be clubbed with the income of either of the parent for the purpose of imposing tax.
- Section 64 (1A), as it stands now, includes that “in computing the total income of any individual, there shall be included all such income as arises or accrues to his minor child...”
- The purpose of the tax provision in the Act is to plug-in loopholes to prevent the avoidance of tax, causing substantial loss or leakage of revenue. However, the High Court insisted that such an exemption (refer above) should be created.
- The Law Commission, in its 265th Report titled ‘Prospects of Exempting Income Arising Out Of The Maintenance Money of Minor’, shot down the High Court’s suggestion.

[http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/on-taxing-maintenance-money/article21291877.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/on-taxing-maintenance-money/article21291877.ece)

2. Consider the following statements about the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL):

- 1. Every member of the UN General Assembly is, by default, a member of it
- 2. It promotes the use and adoption only of legislative instruments in a number of key areas of commercial law such as dispute resolution

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

Solution: d.

In an increasingly economically interdependent world, the importance of an improved legal framework for the facilitation of international trade and investment is widely acknowledged. The **(UNCITRAL)**, established by the UNGA in **1966**, plays an important role in developing that framework in pursuance of its mandate to further the progressive harmonisation and modernisation of the law of international trade by preparing and promoting the use and adoption of legislative and non-legislative instruments in a number of key areas of commercial law. Those areas include dispute resolution, international contract practices, transport, insolvency, electronic commerce, international payments, secured transactions, procurement and sale of goods.

In the years since its establishment, UNCITRAL has been recognised as the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law.

The Commission is composed of 60 member States elected by the General Assembly. Membership is structured so as to be representative of the world's various geographic regions and its principal economic and legal systems. India is a member at present (will be until 2022).

No need to be read (we are just providing the source): <http://www.uncitral.org/pdf/english/texts/general/12-57491-Guide-to-UNCITRAL-e.pdf>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/nissan-motor-moves-arbitral-tribunal/article21291928.ece>;

<http://www.uncitral.org/uncitral/en/about/origin.html>;

3. In the process of the appointment of High Court judges,

1. The Chief Justice of India should consult a collegium of two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court
2. The governor of the state concerned is consulted

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The judges of a high court are appointed by the **President**. The **chief justice** is appointed by the President after consultation with the **chief justice of India** and the **governor of the state** concerned. For appointment of other judges, the chief justice of the concerned high court is also consulted. In case of a common high court for two or more states, the governors of all the states concerned are consulted by the president.

In the **Second Judges case (1993)**, the Supreme Court ruled that no appointment of a judge of the high court can be made, unless it is in conformity with the opinion of the chief justice of India. In the **Third Judges case (1998)**, the Supreme Court opined that in case of the appointment of high court judges, the chief justice of India should consult a collegium of two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court. Thus, the sole opinion of the chief justice of India alone does not constitute the 'consultation' process.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/hc-view-on-performance-of-judges-will-prevail-collegium/article21291885.ece>;

4. Consider the following statements:

1. Most of the fundamental rights conferred on us by our constitution are available against the arbitrary action of private individuals
2. Article 13 declares that all laws that are inconsistent with or in derogation of any of the fundamental rights shall be void

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- Fundamental Rights prevent the establishment of an authoritarian and despotic rule in the country, and protect the liberties and freedoms of the people against their invasion by the State. Most of the Fundamental Rights are available against the arbitrary action of the State, with a few exceptions like those against the State's action and against the action of private individuals. When the rights that are available against the State's action only are violated by the private individuals, there are no constitutional remedies but only ordinary legal remedies.
- **Article 13** declares that all laws that are inconsistent with or in derogation of any of the fundamental rights shall be void. In other words, it expressly provides for the doctrine of judicial review. This power has been conferred on the Supreme Court (**Article 32**) and the high courts (**Article 226**) that can declare a law unconstitutional and invalid on the ground of contravention of any of the Fundamental Rights.
- Further, Article 13 declares that a constitutional amendment is not a law and hence cannot be challenged. However, the Supreme Court held in the *Kesavananda Bharati case* (1973) that a Constitutional amendment can be challenged on the ground that it violates a fundamental right that forms a part of the 'basic structure' of the Constitution and hence, can be declared as void.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/a-woman-does-not-mortgage-herself-to-a-man-with-marriage-cji/article21290270.ece>;

5. The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 478

1. Declared null and void the Israeli claim that Jerusalem "complete and united" is its capital
2. Provided a roadmap for the two-state solution
3. Was adopted unanimously by the UNSC

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

America's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel could be viewed as illegal as the Israeli claim that Jerusalem "complete and united" is its capital has been declared "null and void" by UNSC Resolution 478, which also asks member-countries to "withdraw diplomatic missions from the Holy City".

This resolution was adopted by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention (USA).

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/DDE590C6FF232007852560DF0065FDDB>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/capital-crisis/article21291937.ece>;

6. That the presiding officer, while deciding a question under the Tenth Schedule, function as a tribunal was provided for by
 - (a) The 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1985
 - (b) The Supreme Court in the Kihoto Holohan case
 - (c) The 91st Constitutional Amendment Act of 2003
 - (d) The Supreme Court in the Krishna Kumar Singh case

Solution: b.

Any question regarding disqualification arising out of defection is to be decided by the presiding officer of the House. Originally, the act provided that the decision of the presiding officer is final and cannot be questioned in any court. However, in ***Kihoto Hollohan case (1993)***, the Supreme Court declared this provision as unconstitutional on the ground that it seeks to take away the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the high courts. It held that the presiding officer, while deciding a question under the Tenth Schedule, function as a tribunal. Hence, his decision like that of any other tribunal, is subject to judicial review on the grounds of mala fides, perversity, etc. But, the court rejected the contention that the vesting of adjudicatory powers in the presiding officer is by itself invalid on the ground of political bias.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/defection-disaffection/article21293419.ece>;

7. Consider the following statements about the Anti-Defection Law:

1. The President of India is constitutionally obliged to make rules for giving effect to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule
2. The law does not make a differentiation between dissent and defection

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

Solution: b.

- The presiding officer of a house is empowered to make rules to give effect to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule.

The law has come to be criticised on the following grounds:

- It does not make a differentiation between dissent and defection. It curbs the legislator's right to dissent and freedom of conscience.
- Its distinction between individual defection and group defection is irrational.
- It does not provide for the expulsion of a legislator from his party for his activities outside the legislature.
- Its discrimination between an independent member and a nominated member is illogical. If the former joins a party, he is disqualified while the latter is allowed to do the same.
- Its vesting of decision-making authority in the presiding officer is criticised on two. Firstly, he may not exercise this authority in an impartial and objective manner due to political exigencies. Secondly, he lacks the legal knowledge and experience to adjudicate upon the cases.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/defection-disaffection/article21293419.ece>;

09 DECEMBER 2017

1. In which one of the following declarations/conferences did the 'Polluter Pays Principle' first emerge (though not explicitly)?
 - (a) United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972
 - (b) 'Our Common Future' report, 1987
 - (c) Rio Earth Summit, 1992
 - (d) UN Conference on Earth and Development, 2002

Solution: a.

- According to this, those who pollute the environment must be made to pay not just for the costs of remedial action, but also for compensating victims of environmental damage.
- Some trace the Polluter Pays Principle's origin to the **Stockholm Declaration** made at the **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** in June **1972**, which asked signatory countries to develop international laws "regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage".
- The Principle emerges more strongly in the 1987 report of the **Brundtland Commission**, called **Our Common Future**. The Brundtland Commission, or the World Commission on Environment and Development, was established in 1983 to examine environmental issues resulting from rapid industrialisation. For the first time, "sustainable development" was defined. Alongside, the Polluter Pays Principle was emphasised.
- The 1987 report greatly influenced the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, which, for the first time, explicitly enshrined the Polluter Pays Principle.
- After Rio, the Polluter Pays Principle began to be applied explicitly in environmental jurisdictions.

[http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/ngt-sri-sri-ravishankar-art-of-living-polluter-pays-principle-4973065/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/ngt-sri-sri-ravishankar-art-of-living-polluter-pays-principle-4973065/)

2. In which one of the following states did the government recently announce reservation for the Kapu community?

- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
- (b) Assam
- (c) Andhra Pradesh
- (d) Tamil Nadu

Solution: c.

A plain fact-based, but mains-oriented question.

"Bowling to pressure from the Kapu community, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced 5 per cent reservation for them in education and jobs on December 2. This took total reservation in AP to 55 per cent — higher than the Supreme Court mandated ceiling of 50 per cent, in which case it has to be approved by the Centre, and included in Schedule 9 of the Constitution after it is passed by Parliament. (Even so, this will be subject to judicial review – a nine-judge constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court ruled on January 11, 2007 that all laws, including those in the Ninth Schedule, which originally put them beyond the jurisdiction of the courts, would be subject to judicial review if they were included in the Schedule after April 23, 1973, and if they violated the basic structure of the Constitution.)

[http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/simply-put-kapu-quota-in-andhra-pradesh-and-why-it-has-put-cm-chandrababu-naidu-in-quandary-as-polls-approach-4973054/;](http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/simply-put-kapu-quota-in-andhra-pradesh-and-why-it-has-put-cm-chandrababu-naidu-in-quandary-as-polls-approach-4973054/)

3. That Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code is discriminatory, was an argument dismissed by the Supreme Court in 1985 as the said section was found to be in tune with which one of the following articles of the Indian Constitution?

- (a) 15 (3) (exceptions to the general rule of non-discrimination)
- (b) 19 (2) (imposition of 'reasonable restrictions' on the right to freedom of speech and expression)
- (c) 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty)
- (d) 25 (Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion)

Solution: a.

About Section 497 of the IPC: The Supreme Court on Friday said the dusty Victorian provision of adultery in the Indian Penal Code treats a married woman as her husband's "subordinate."

- The court admitted a petition to drop adultery as a criminal offence from the statute book. Section 497 of the IPC mandates that "Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished."
- Issuing notice, the court would examine two aspects of the penal provision. One, why does Section 497 treat the man as the adulterer and the married woman as a victim.
- Relating to the above question (1985 SC Judgment): "Answering the question why a wife cannot be prosecuted as an abettor to adultery, Justice Vivian Bose, speaking for the Bench, said the protection from prosecution given to women under Section 497 is in tune with Article 15 (3) of the Constitution. Article 15 (3) allows the legislature to make "special provisions" which are "beneficial" for women and children."

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-agrees-to-examine-adultery-provision-in-ipc/article21296775.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/supreme-court-agrees-to-examine-adultery-provision-in-ipc/article21296775.ece)

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/scs-re-visit-of-adultery-law-signals-a-paradigm-shift-in-the-courts-sensibility/article21332156.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/scs-re-visit-of-adultery-law-signals-a-paradigm-shift-in-the-courts-sensibility/article21332156.ece)

4. Following its entry into which one of the following Multilateral Export Control Regimes can India participate in identifying those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread and development of chemical and biological weapons?
- Wassenaar Arrangement
 - Missile Technology Control Regime
 - Nuclear Suppliers Group
 - Australia Group

Solution: d.

- The Ministry of External Affairs on Friday welcomed the decision of the **Wassenaar Arrangement** to admit **India as the 42nd member** of the organisation which aims to regulate trade and use of dual use technology.
- Officials said that following admission into the club, **India will get access to high technology**, which will help address the demands of **Indian space and defence sectors**.

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-gets-admission-into-wassenaar-arrangement/article21347560.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-gets-admission-into-wassenaar-arrangement/article21347560.ece)

A shot in the arm

Founded in 1996, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) is an elite club of countries subscribing to arms export controls, similar to the NSG and the Missile Technology Control

- Headquartered in Vienna, it has 42 members, the latest entrant being India. Barring China, all permanent members of the U.N. Security Council are its signatories

- Its goal is to "promote transparency and greater

responsibility in transfer of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies"

- Since it's not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, India will look to the WA membership to boost its credentials to enter NSG

About the Australia Group: [http://www.australiagroup.net/en/;](http://www.australiagroup.net/en/)

5. The 'Taj Trapezium Zone' is spread over some districts belonging to the states of
- (a) Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
 - (b) Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan
 - (c) Karnataka and Telangana
 - (d) Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

Solution: b.

"A Bench led by Justice Madan B. Lokur frowned upon the State government's "haphazard" measures taken unilaterally and asked it to include experts in evolving a plan that will protect the Taj Trapezium Zone from the ill-effects of polluting gases and deforestation."

The **Taj Trapezium Zone** is spread over six districts of U.P. and Bharatpur in Rajasthan.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/prepare-detailed-plan-for-taj-mahal-conservation-sc-tells-up/article21341923.ece>;

<http://ttzplantations.org/about ttz.php>;

6. The 'Oslo Accords' and 'Camp David Accords', sometimes in the news, are seen in the context of which one of the following international issues?
- (a) Antibiotic resistance
 - (b) The pollinator crisis
 - (c) Melting Arctic ice cap
 - (d) Israel-Arab peace process

Solution: d.

- The **Oslo Accords (Israel-Palestine peace process)** marked the start of the **Oslo process**, a peace process aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on certain United Nations Security Council Resolutions, and at fulfilling the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination."
- The **Camp David Accords (Israel-Egypt peace process)** were signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on 17 September **1978**, following twelve days of secret negotiations at Camp David. Due to the agreement, **Sadat** and **Begin** received the shared **1978 Nobel Peace Prize**.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-stab-in-the-heart-of-a-peace-process/article21339833.ece>

10 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Acid attack victims can avail benefits of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
2. The Supreme Court guidelines on regulating the sale of acid mandate sellers to record the reason for purchase of acid by eligible customers

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

Solution: c.

Both statements are correct.

About the 2013 guidelines issued by the SC, making the sale of acid tougher:

- “The Supreme Court bench of justices R.M. Lodha and F.M.I. Kalifulla imposed strict restrictions on the sale of the chemicals on Thursday, castigated state governments for not providing enough compensation to victims and stipulated the amount of money that should be given to them. Apart from this, suspects can also be arrested without a warrant and bail will be up to the court (a cognizable and non-bailable offence). Anyone buying acid will need to furnish government-approved identity proof and state the reason for the purchase, which has to be recorded by the seller, the court said.”
- “The court said compensation by state governments was “grossly inadequate” and set this at Rs.3 lakh to facilitate immediate medical attention and relief. Out of this, Rs.1 lakh will be paid to the victim within 15 days of the incident and the rest will be paid “as expeditiously as possible” and possibly within two months, it added... The bench also banned the sale of acid to those below 18 years of age..”

<http://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/differently-abled-welfare/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-act-2016;>

[http://www.livemint.com/Politics/bEm133YJFrvCARbM55N4pM/Supreme-Court-ask-states-to-regulate-acid-sales.html;](http://www.livemint.com/Politics/bEm133YJFrvCARbM55N4pM/Supreme-Court-ask-states-to-regulate-acid-sales.html)

Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/crimes-against-women-at-alarming-levels-in-bengal/article21381399.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/crimes-against-women-at-alarming-levels-in-bengal/article21381399.ece)

2. The India State-Level Disease Burden report is a first-of-its-kind assessment of causes for diseases in each state for the period
- (a) 1947 to 2015
 - (b) 1990 to 2016
 - (c) 2005 to 2016
 - (d) 2014 to 2016

Solution: b.

A fact-based, mains-oriented question.

- The **India State-Level Disease Burden report**, a first-of-its-kind assessment of causes for diseases in each State from **1990 to 2016**, was released recently. It involved evaluation of the diseases causing the most premature deaths and ill-health in each State.
- The report indicated many health inequalities among States, noting that while there was a fall in the under-five mortality in every State there was also a four-fold difference in the rate of improvement among them.
- The report was the result of a collaboration between the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Public Health Foundation of India, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, and senior experts and stakeholders from about 100 institutions across India.

Additional Information: The report show that non-communicable disease and injuries have together overtaken infectious and childhood diseases in terms of disease burden in every State, but the magnitude of this transition varies markedly between the poor States and the more developed States.

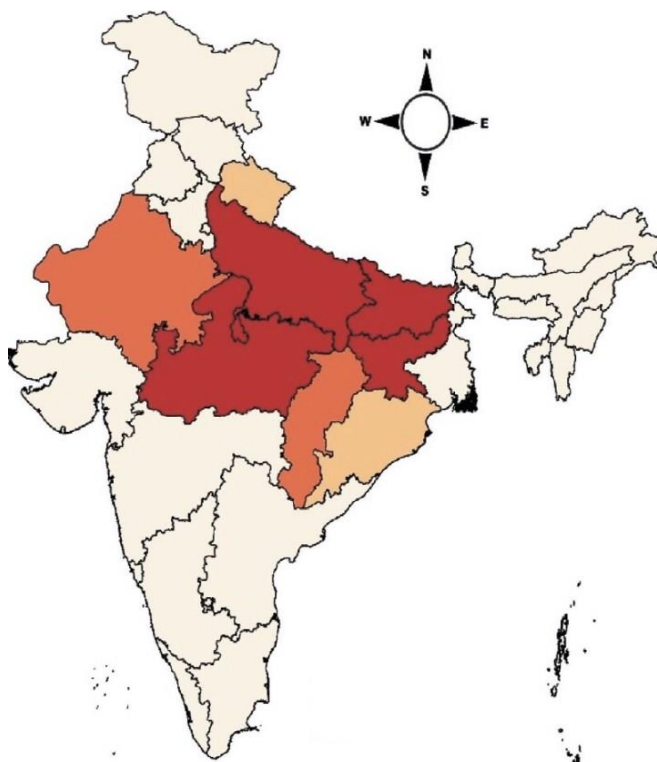
[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-are-there-disparities-between-states-on-diseases/article21381446.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-are-there-disparities-between-states-on-diseases/article21381446.ece)

3. Which one of the following states is not included in the ‘Empowered Action Group’ of states?
- (a) Uttarakhand
 - (b) Uttar Pradesh
 - (c) Bihar
 - (d) West Bengal

Solution: d.

There are **Eight Empowered Action Group States**: Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan; often, the mention of "**EAG States**" is followed by a mention of Assam. These **nine States**, which account for about 48 percent of the total population in the country, are the high focus States in view of their relatively higher fertility and mortality indicators.

In the news: The India State-Level Disease Burden report notes that infectious and childhood diseases continue to be significant problems in the poor Empowered Action Group States of north India which still contributes 37-43% of the total disease burden. These diseases are responsible for the inordinately high burden of premature deaths and morbidity suffered by children under five years of age in these States.



http://censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/AHSBulletins/files/AHSpr.pdf

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-are-there-disparities-between-states-on-diseases/article21381446.ece>;

4. Consider the following statements about the 'bail-in' feature, which has been in the news for its inclusion in the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017:
1. The Financial Stability Board recommends that its members allow the resolution of financial companies using such a provision
 2. The 'Resolution Corporation', an independent body proposed in the Bill, will have absolute discretion in invoking the bail-in clause

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

Solution: a.

A clause in the **Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017**, introduced in Parliament in August, has created unease. The clause lays the ground for a '**bail-in**' of failing financial institutions. Unlike a bail-out, which constitutes the injection of taxpayers' funds to shore up finances of a financial institution, a bail-in involves the use of depositors' funds to do the same.

International practises: The bail-in feature is in line with the best practices adopted around the world. For example, the **Financial Stability Board**, which has members comprising most **G20 countries** (including **India**), has recommended that its members allow the resolution of financial companies using bail-in. Similarly, the **European Union** has proposed bail-in as a resolution tool. So far, the bail-in has been used rarely, the most recent being in Cyprus in 2013.

The Resolution Corporation: The Bill proposes to replace the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), which guarantees deposits up to a value of ₹1 lakh, with a **Resolution Corporation** which will be empowered to collect the premium that banks pay to the DICGC as an insurance cover for deposits. The

Bill, however, does not specify the quantum of deposits that will be insured by the new corporation nor the amount of premium it will collect from banks. The ₹1 lakh limit has not been updated since 1993; even if one assumes a 5% annual average inflation rate since 1993, the equivalent value of a ₹1 lakh deposit would be well over ₹3 lakh in 2017.

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/the-lowdown-on-the-bail-in-clause/article21381452.ece>;

For those who want to read about the FSB: <http://www.fsb.org/about/>;

5. The basic cause of the warm temperate western margin climate is the shifting of the wind belts. The best developed form of this climate can be found in
- Area around the Mediterranean Sea
 - California
 - Central Chile
 - South-western tip of Africa

Solution: c.

- This type of climate is known commonly as the **Mediterranean Climate**; it is also known as the 'winter rain climate'; the best developed form of this peculiar climatic type is found in **Central Chile**.
- "California has a long history of fire catastrophes. San Francisco burned to the ground at least four times in the years immediately after the gold rush of the 1800s. The State's Mediterranean climate with its long, arid summers has made it an attractive destination for sun-seeking migrants from wetter and colder parts of the nation. It is also one of the reasons the State is so vulnerable to fire."

GLOBAL MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATES



California is one of the few places on Earth with a Mediterranean climate perfect for growing almonds. The Mediterranean climate is characterized by mild winters with a defined rainy season and hot, dry summers, all of which are important for almond orchards.

SOURCE: Kottek, M., et al. World Map of Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification. Updated 2006. Meteorol. Z., 15, 259-263.

Ch-19, Certificate Physical and Human Geography

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/a-test-of-strength-for-californias-firefighters/article21383845.ece>;

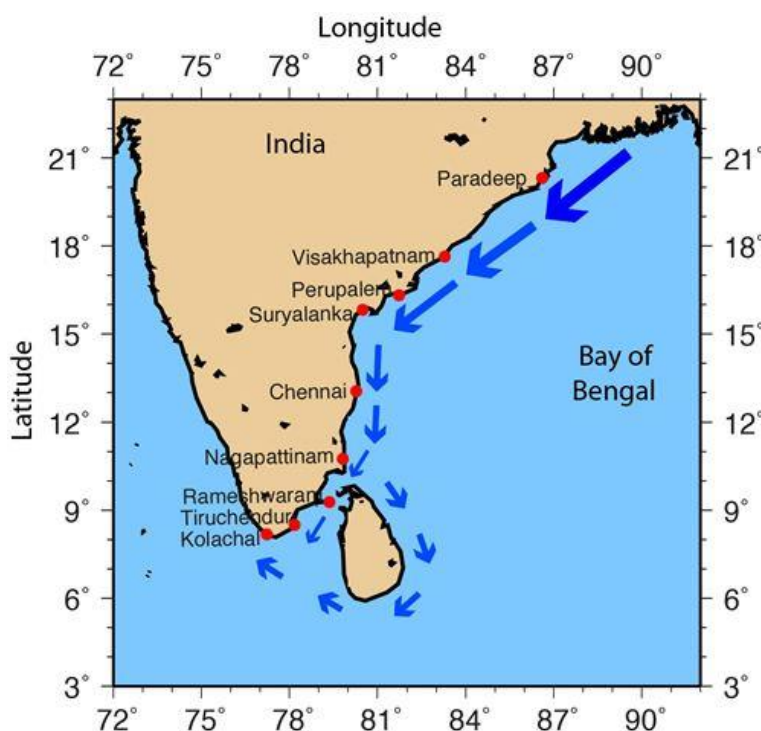
6. Which of the following statements about the river that meanders its way along the eastern coast in the Bay of Bengal is/are correct?
1. It is ephemeral
 2. It travels from northern Bay of Bengal to the southern-most tip of India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

- The movement of the freshwater mass begins at the end of the summer monsoon and survives for nearly two-and-a half months.
- The southwest monsoon roughly lasts from June to September. During this period, water vapour collected at the ocean surface by the powerful southwesterly winds is flushed over Indian continent and the BoB.
- A large fraction of the monsoon shower reaches the ocean in the form of runoff and contributes to the freshwater flux into the BoB in equal proportion with rainfall over the ocean.
- The large rivers — Ganges, Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy, and three small others — Mahanadi, Godavari, and Krishna — together contribute approximately 1100 km of continental freshwater into the BoB between July and September.
- This very intense freshwater flux into a relatively small and semi-enclosed basin results in an intense dilution of the salt contained in seawater.
- The over 100 km-wide freshwater mass that is formed from river discharges and runoffs is transported down south by the East Indian Coastal Current, the western boundary current of the BoB. The freshwater signal generally becomes smaller and occurs later while progressing toward the southern tip of India.



<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/fishermen-discover-river-in-bay-of-bengal/article7278515.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/knowning-our-rivers-better-before-changing-them/article21380137.ece>;

11 DECEMBER 2017

1. The Second Backward Classes Commission recommended for reservation of
1. 27 percent government jobs for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
 2. 10 percent government jobs for economically backward sections of higher castes who were not covered by any extant reservation schemes

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

- In 1979, the Morarji Desai Government appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of B P Mandal, a Member of Parliament, in terms of **Article 340** of the Constitution to investigate the conditions of the socially and educationally backward classes and suggest measures for their advancement. The commission submitted its report in 1980 and identified as many as 3743 castes as socially and educationally backward classes. They constitute nearly 52% component of the population, excluding the scheduled castes (SCs) and the scheduled tribes (STs). The commission recommended for reservation of 27% government jobs for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) so that the total reservation for all ((SCs, STs and OBCs) amounts to 50%. It was after ten years in 1990 that the V P Singh Government declared reservation of 27% government jobs for the OBCs. Again in 1991, the Narasimha Rao Government introduced two changes: (a) preference to the poorer sections among the OBCs in the 27% quota, i.e., adoption of the economic criteria in granting reservation, and (b) reservation of another 10% of jobs for poorer (economically backward) sections of higher castes who are not covered by any existing schemes of reservation.
- In the famous **Mandal case (1992)**, the scope and extent of Article 16(4), which provides for reservation of jobs in favour of backward classes, has been examined thoroughly by the Supreme Court. Though the Court has rejected the additional reservation of 10% for poorer sections of higher castes, it upheld the constitutional validity of 27% reservation for the OBCs with certain conditions.

Ch- Fundamental Rights, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/24-years-on-obc-workforce-in-centre-still-short-of-mandal-mark/article21382491.ece>;

2. The 86th (Constitutional Amendment) Act, 2002 amended/alterd which (one) of the following chapters of our constitution?
1. Fundamental Rights
 2. Directive Principles of State Policy
 3. Fundamental Rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) None of the above

Solution: c.

On December 8, 2017, a three-judge Bench led by the Chief Justice dismissed a petition filed by primary school teacher Neeta Upadhyay for 'one nation, one education board' to end disparity in knowledge dissemination during the formative years of a child.

Ms. Upadhyay said the current education under multiple boards did not provide equal opportunity to all. The fundamental right to free and compulsory education under Article 21A includes a common education system where the "rich and the poor are educated under one roof".

The 2011 judgment: The CJI Bench's cursory dismissal of Ms. Upadhyay's plea is starkly antithetical to the very tenets of the 2011 judgment by the Panchal Bench in the Tamil Nadu and Others versus K. Shyam Sunder and Others. The judgment had held that the "right of a child should not be restricted only to free and compulsory education, but should be extended to have quality education without any discrimination on the ground of their economic, social and cultural background".

Eighty-Sixth Amendment Act, 2002

1. Made elementary education a fundamental right. The newly-added Article 21-A declares that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may determine".
2. Changed the subject matter of Article 45 in Directive Principles. It now reads—"The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years".
3. Added a new fundamental duty under Article 51-A which reads—"It shall be the duty of every citizen of India who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of six and fourteen years".

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/education/schools/plea-for-one-nation-one-education-board-dismissed/article21385977.ece>;

3. Which one of the following security forces has been offering professional security consultancy services to organizations/institutions – both private and public – since 1999?

- (a) National Security Guard
- (b) Central Industrial Security Force
- (c) Central Reserve Police Force
- (d) Indian Armed Force

Solution: b.

- The CISF has written to schools across the country offering professional security consultancy services to ensure safe environment for children, a move that comes in the wake of the killing of a student in Gurugram. Some have responded and sought a professional security audit to be done of their school premises.
- The paramilitary, mandated as the nodal security agency to guard critical installations in the country including airports, has written dozens of letters to school authorities stating it can help create a "safe and secure" environment for school-going children which will come with a service fee (Rs 4 lakh for an average school).

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/ryan-killing-cisf-offers-consultancy-to-make-schools-safe/articleshow/61710975.cms>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/post-ryan-killing-14-schools-seek-cisfs-security-audit/article21386456.ece>;

4. According to a recent World Trade Organisation report, "the state of play in the services negotiations" covers which of the following areas?

1. Services related to e-commerce
2. Services trade facilitation

3. Domestic regulation
4. Gender equality

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

- Ahead of the December 10-13 meeting of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) highest decision-making body, India has highlighted the difficulties faced by services suppliers from developing economies in complying with rich countries' complex domestic regulations.
- India also rejected attempts by some WTO Members such as European Union and Canada to include 'gender equality' in the services trade negotiations agenda.
- According to a November 27 WTO report, "the state of play in the services negotiations covers four areas: services trade facilitation, services related to e-commerce, market access, and domestic regulation."

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/wto-india-battles-services-barriers/article21383784.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/crunch-time-at-wto/article21386424.ece>;

5. Where is the WTO's 11th biennial Ministerial Conference taking place?

- (a) Morocco
- (b) Nigeria
- (c) Brazil
- (d) Argentina

Solution: d.

The **Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11)** will take place from 10 to 13 December 2017 in **Buenos Aires, Argentina**.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/crunch-time-at-wto/article21386424.ece>

6. Under the WTO negotiations, the "Friends of Special Products" in agriculture refers to a coalition of
 - (a) Developing countries pressing for flexibility for developing countries to undertake limited market opening in agriculture
 - (b) Agricultural exporting nations lobbying for agricultural trade liberalization
 - (c) Countries lobbying for agriculture to be treated as diverse and special because of non-trade concerns
 - (d) Developing countries pressing for ambitious reforms of agriculture in developed countries with some flexibility for developing countries

Solution: a.

"The G-33 coalition — which includes Indonesia, China and India — seeks a complete exemption from commitments to reduce subsidies, such as minimum support prices, from this poverty-alleviation programme.

New Delhi has declined to negotiate any more trade-offs on this proposal at Buenos Aires, or accept calls for stringent transparency requirements to monitor these schemes..”

- Option ‘a’ is related to the above-quoted extract from today’s TH editorial (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/crunch-time-at-wto/article21386424.ece>). The **G-33 coalition** is also called “**friends of special products**” in agriculture. To repeat, it is a “coalition of developing countries pressing for flexibility for developing countries to undertake limited market opening in agriculture.”
- Option ‘d’ refers to the G20 coalition (within the WTO; this G20 is not to be confused with the G-20 group of finance ministers and central bank governors).

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/negotiating_groups_e.htm;

7. India’s Coromandel coast takes its name from which one of the following?

- The bird cormorant which once was found in abundance in this region but now is extinct
- The ancient dynasty of Kerala rulers known as the Cheras
- The first discovered coral islands of the world, off of this coast (what is now referred to as the Lakshadweep)
- None of the above

Solution: d.

“Coromandel, n.p. A name which has been long applied by Europeans to the Northern Tamil Country, or (more comprehensively) to the eastern coast of the Peninsula of India from Point Calimere to the mouth of the Kistna, sometimes to Orissa... The name is in fact Choramandala, the Realm of Chora; this being the Tamil form of the very ancient title of the Tamil Kings who reigned at Tanjore... The name occurs in the forms Choramandalam or Solamandalam on the great temple inscription of Tanjore.”

“So Coromandel takes its name from the ancient dynasty of Tamil rulers known as the Cholas. That word ‘Chola’ first appears on rock inscriptions that can be accurately dated to within a year or two either side of 260 BCE, carved by order of Emperor Ashoka, and it continues to reappear century after century on the walls and monuments of the great temple cities of Tamil country, right up to a final appearance in the year 1279 CE.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/books/how-a-coast-got-its-name/article21386207.ece>;

12 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements about Subramaniya Bharathiyar:

- He wrote poems on patriotic and devotional themes
- His weekly “India” had as its motto the slogan of the French Revolution – Liberty, Equality and Fraternity
- He participated in no Indian National Congress activities

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

- **Subramaniya Bharathiyar** was a poet, freedom fighter and social reformer from Tamil Nadu. He was known as **Mahakavi Bharathiyar** and the laudatory epithet **Mahakavi** means a great poet.
- A new age in Tamil literature began with Subramaniya Bharathi. Most part of his compositions are classifiable as short lyrical outpourings on patriotic, devotional and mystic themes.
- Many years of Bharathi's life were spent in the field of journalism, Bharathi, as a young man began his career as a journalist and as a sub-editor in "Swadesamitran" in November 1904. "India" saw the light of the day in May, 1906. It declared as its motto the three slogans of the French Revolution, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It blazed a new trail in Tamil Journalism. In order to proclaim its revolutionary ardour, Bharathi had the weekly printed in red paper. "India" was the first paper in Tamil Nadu to publish political cartoons.
- Bharathi was also against caste system. He declared that there were only two castes-men and women and nothing more than that. Above all, he himself had removed his sacred thread.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=148927;>

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174229;>

2. China is **not** a participating state of which of the following multilateral export control regimes?

1. Missile Technology Control Regime
2. Australia Group
3. Wassenaar Arrangement
4. Nuclear Suppliers Group

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

China is a participant only of the NSG and not the other three multilateral export control regimes.

List of participants: <http://mtcr.info/partners/>; <http://www.wassenaar.org/about-us/>;
<http://www.australiagroup.net/en/participants.html>;
<http://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/en/participants1>;

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/in-an-elite-club/article21419773.ece>;

3. The '123 Agreement', sometimes in the news, was signed by India with

- (a) The Nuclear Suppliers Group
- (b) P5 (UNSC)
- (c) USA
- (d) None of the above

Solution: c.

From 2008 ([https://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/19149 Frequently Asked Questions 01-11-2008.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/19149_Frequently_Asked_Questions_01-11-2008.pdf)):

Why is the India-US Agreement for Cooperation concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy called the '123 Agreement'? The bilateral "Agreement for Co-operation between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy" has been done in view of the

requirement for the US side under Section 123 of its Atomic Energy Act 1954. Hence it is also popularly known as the 123 Agreement.

What are its benefits to India?

The Agreement would end technology denial regimes against India that have been in place for three decades and end India's nuclear isolation. It will open the doors for India to have civil nuclear cooperation as an equal partner with the USA and the rest of the world. It will enable us to meet the twin challenges of energy security and environmental sustainability. It will also have major spin-offs for the development of our industries, both public and private. At the same time, it will bring India the recognition it deserves thanks to the outstanding achievements of our scientists.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/in-an-elite-club/article21419773.ece>;

4. Which of the following statements about the the UN Peacekeeping Forces (UNPKF) is/are correct?
1. The Charter of the United Nations (UN) assigns it primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security
 2. It is for the Security Council to determine when and where a UN Peacekeeping Operation should be deployed

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The UN Charter gives the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Council can establish a UN peacekeeping operation. UN peacekeeping operations are deployed on the basis of mandates from the United Nations Security Council.
- The Charter of the United Nations is the foundation document for all the UN work. The UN was established to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and one of its main purposes is to maintain international peace and security. Peacekeeping, although not explicitly provided for in the Charter, has evolved into one of the main tools used by the United Nations to achieve this purpose.

Additional Information:

- While not normally directly involved in political decisions on establishing or terminating UN Peacekeeping operations, the General Assembly does play a key role in peacekeeping financing.
- Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law.
- "Success is never guaranteed, because UN Peacekeeping almost by definition goes to the most physically and politically difficult environments. However, we have built up a demonstrable record of success over our 60 years of existence, including winning the Nobel Peace Prize."

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/pkmandates.shtml>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-power-play-in-peacekeeping/article21420388.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements about Department Standing Committees (DSCs) of the Parliament:
1. Their main objective is to secure more accountability – particularly financial – of the executive to the Parliament
 2. All DSCs work under the Lok Sabha
 3. Each DSC consists of members of both houses of the Parliament

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: c.

- There are 24 DSCs.
- Their main objective is to secure more accountability of the Executive (i.e., the Council of Ministers) to the Parliament, particularly financial accountability.
- They also assist the Parliament in debating the budget more effectively.
- The 24 standing committees cover under their jurisdiction all the ministries/departments of the Central Government. Each standing committee consists of 31 members (21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha).
- The term of office of each standing committee is one year from the date of its constitution.
- Out of the 24 standing committees, 8 work under the Rajya Sabha and 16 under the Lok Sabha.

Parliamentary Committees, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174253>;

Clarifications

Q4, 11th December Quiz (<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/12/12/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-11-december-2017/>): Typo; Answer will be option 'a', not 'd', as is clear from the explanation (India also rejected attempts by some WTO Members such as European Union and Canada to include 'gender equality' in the services trade negotiations agenda.. According to a November 27 WTO report, "the state of play in the services negotiations covers four areas: services trade facilitation, services related to e-commerce, market access, and domestic regulation.")

Q1, 12th December Quiz (<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/12/12/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-12-december-2017/>): Additional Information regarding Subramaniya Bharathiyar – Bharathi used to attend the Annual sessions of Indian National Congress and discuss national issues with extremist Indian National Leaders like **Bipin Chandra Pal** and **B.G. Tilak**. His participation and activities in **Benaras Session (1905)** and **Surat Session (1907)** of the Indian National Congress impressed many national leaders about his patriotic fervour. Bharathi had maintained good relations with some of the national leaders and shared his thoughts and views on the nation and offered his suggestions to strengthen the nationalist movement.

13 DECEMBER 2017

1. Upon enactment of the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017 if the 'bail-in' clause is invoked, it would have a similar effect as
1. A one-time tax being imposed on depositors
 2. Purchasing shares of the financial firm

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Either 1 or 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

- Under **bail-in**, the **Resolution Corporation** can internally restructure the firm's debt by: (i) cancelling liabilities that the firm owes to its creditors (statement 1), or (ii) converting its liabilities into any other instrument (e.g., converting debt into equity; statement 2), among others.
- Bail-in may be used in cases where it is necessary to continue the services of the firm, but the option of selling it is not feasible. This method allows for losses to be absorbed and consequently enables the firm to carry on business for a reasonable time period while maintaining market confidence. The Bill allows the Resolution Corporation to either resolve a firm by only using bail-in, or use bail-in as part of a larger resolution scheme in combination with other resolution methods like a merger or acquisition.

<http://www.prsindia.org/theprsblog/?p=3932>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/perils-of-going-cashless/article21535422.ece>;

2. As per Section 23 of the Right to Information Act, 2005, a court can entertain suits, applications or other proceedings in respect of any order made under the act only by way of
1. Filing a writ petition before the judiciary
 2. Presenting a special leave petition before the Supreme Court
 3. Applying in a High Court for a "certificate of fitness" for appeal to the Supreme Court of India

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) No court can entertain any such suits, applications or other proceedings

Solution: d.

As per Section 23 of the RTI Act, "No court shall entertain any suit, application or other proceeding in respect of any order made under this Act and no such order shall be called in question otherwise than by way of an appeal under this Act."

The "Registry filed a writ petition before the Delhi High Court in 2011, prolonging the matter. In essence, the Registry turned Mr. Misra's request into an *RTI v. Rules contest*, as it has done for others too... Justice S. Muralidhar of the High Court stayed Mr. Gandhi's decision immediately without addressing Section 23 of the RTI Act, which forbids courts from entertaining 'any suit, application or other proceeding in respect of any order made under this Act'. The High Court did not justify how its writ jurisdiction applies to an appeal against a CIC order..."

<http://rti.gov.in/webactrti.htm>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/information-at-the-courts-discretion/article21537137.ece>;

3. Consider the following statements:

1. The Chief Information Commission (CIC) is a quasi-judicial body
2. Within the institution of the Indian judiciary, the administrative rules of the Supreme Court have primacy over the Right to Information Act

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

Solution: c.

The Chief Information Commissioner had in 2011 held that the Supreme Court Rules are inconsistent with the RTI Act, and that the Supreme Court Registry must respond to applications within the RTI framework alone. The Commissioner noted that the Rules undermined the RTI in four key ways. Unlike the RTI Act, the Rules do not provide for:

- a time frame for furnishing information;
- an appeal mechanism, and
- penalties for delays or wrongful refusal of information.
- Finally, the Rules also make disclosures to citizens contingent upon “good cause shown”.

In sum, the Rules allowed the Registry to provide information at its unquestionable discretion, violating the text and spirit of the RTI. Consequently, the Commissioner held that the Supreme Court Rules are inconsistent with the RTI Act, and that the Registry must respond to applications within the RTI framework alone.

The SC Registry filed a writ petition before the Delhi High Court in 2011, prolonging the matter. Six years on, recently, the court overturned the Commissioner’s 2011 order. Therefore, the SC Administrative rules presently have primacy over the RTI Act.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/information-at-the-courts-discretion/article21537137.ece>

4. The Juno Mission of NASA will

- (a) Help answer questions about the origins of our solar system
- (b) Provide an understanding of the causes for the direction of rotation of planets, especially Venus and Uranus
- (c) Study comprehensively all Jovian planets’ weather systems
- (d) Determine the composition of the atmosphere of all moons of Jupiter

Solution: a.

- The Juno spacecraft, which successfully entered the orbit of Jupiter on July 4, 2016, will for the first time peer below the dense cover of clouds to answer questions about the gas giant and the origins of our solar system.
- Juno’s primary goal is to reveal the story of Jupiter’s formation and evolution. Using long-proven technologies on a spinning spacecraft placed in an elliptical polar orbit, Juno will observe Jupiter’s gravity and magnetic fields, atmospheric dynamics and composition, and evolution.

<https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/juno/>;

Q5, <http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/10/30/upsc-civil-services-mains-exam-2017-general-studies-paper-1-question-paper/>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/jupiters-great-red-spot-one-and-a-half-earths-wide-nasa/article21500000.ece>

5. Consider the following statements in the context of what constitutes a 'corrupt practice' under the Representation of the People Act, 1951:
1. In the *Abhiram Singh vs. C. D. Commachen* case the Supreme Court ruled that an appeal for votes during elections on the basis of language, even that of the electorate, will amount to a corrupt practice
 2. In interpreting Article 29 of our Constitution, the SC has earlier held that political speeches or promises made for the conservation of the language of a section of the citizens does not amount to a corrupt practice

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

Solution: c.

- **Abhiram Singh vs. C D Commachen case** (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/Seeking-votes-on-religious-basis-a-corrupt-act-SC/article16977220.ece>): The Supreme Court recently, in a majority judgment of 4:3, held that an appeal for votes during elections on the basis of religion, caste, race, community or language, even that of the electorate, will amount to a 'corrupt practice' and call for disqualification of the candidate.. The court was interpreting the pronoun 'his' used in Section 123 (3) of the Representation of the People Act.
- **Article 29** (<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1888152/>): Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
- The article grants protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities. However, the Supreme Court (has) held that the scope of this article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as it is commonly assumed to be. This is because of the use of words 'section of citizens' in the Article that include minorities as well as majority.
- The Supreme Court also held that the right to conserve the language includes the right to agitate for the protection of the language. Hence, the political speeches or promises made for the conservation of the language of a section of the citizens does not amount to corrupt practice under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Fundamental Rights, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation (reference to cultural right guaranteed under Article 29):

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/jallikattu-issue-to-go-to-constitution-bench/article21512807.ece>;

14 DECEMBER 2017

1. In the context of the role played by the Indian Capitalists in the Indian National Movement, consider the following statements:
 1. The signatories to the famous Bombay plan included only those capitalists who had joined the Indian National Congress
 2. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry was recognised by the British government as representing the overall consensus within the Indian capitalist class

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

Solution: b.

There were several individual capitalists who joined the Congress (Jamnalal Bajaj, Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta, among others). There were other individual capitalists who did not join the Congress but readily gave financial and other help to the movement (G.D. Birla, Ambalal Sarabhai, etc.).

- The signatories to the Bombay plan included capitalists who were not necessarily members of the Congress (G.D. Birla for instance).
- D. Birla and Purushottamdas Thakurdas, since the early 1920s were trying to establish a national level organisation of Indian commercial, industrial and financial interests to be able to effectively lobby with the colonial government. FICCI (1927) was the culmination of their efforts. It rapidly managed to include representation from all parts of India.
- The FICCI was soon recognised by the British government as well as the Indian public in general, as representing the dominant opinion as well as the overall consensus within the Indian capitalist class.
- The leaders of the capitalist class also clearly saw the role of the FICCI as being that of 'national guardians of trade, commerce and industry,' performing in the economic sphere in colonial India the functions of a national government.

CH-29 ('Indian Capitalists and the National Movement'), India's Struggle for Independence;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174298>;

2. Including the INS Kalvari – which is to be commissioned soon – five additional submarines belonging to the same class are being built by India with technology transfer from
 - (a) France
 - (b) Germany
 - (c) Russia
 - (d) USA

Solution: a.

Six Scorpene-class submarines are being built under Project-75 by Mumbai's Mazgaon Docks Limited (MDL) with technology transfer from France.

- Kalvari is named after a deep-sea tiger shark (in Malayalam).
- This type of submarine is designed to operate in all theatres including the Tropics.

- It can undertake various types of missions that are undertaken by any modern submarine including anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, mine laying, intelligence gathering, surveillance, etc.
- With its superior stealth capability, it can launch a crippling attack on the enemy using precision guided weapons. The attack can be launched with torpedoes, as well as tube launched anti-ship missiles, whilst underwater or on surface.

About INS Kalvari: <http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/09/22/insights-daily-current-affairs-22-september-2017/>;

Improvisation: [http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174299](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174299;);

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kalvari-to-be-inducted-into-navy/article21615792.ece>;

3. The selection of 'Institutes of Eminence', by the Government of India, is being done with the purpose to enable these universities to
- (a) Break into the top hundred of world university rankings
 - (b) Help transform India into a 'knowledge-based economy'
 - (c) Grant absolute autonomy in every respect
 - (d) All of the above

Solution: a.

While statement 'b' may be a potential outcome (the idea of 'Institutions of Eminence' can promote competition between universities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education across a number of such universities), it is not the stated purpose.

The Government had approved the enabling regulatory architecture for setting up/upgrading of 10 public and 10 private 'Institutions of Eminence' so as to enable them to reach amongst top 100 of world institutions ranking. Overall, 100 applications were received.

- The selection shall be made through challenge method mode (universities will have to give their commitment on fulfilling certain parameters before being awarded recognition and concomitant benefits) by the Empowered Expert Committee constituted for the purpose.
- The selected 20 institutions shall be named as "Institutions of Eminence" which will have freedom to choose their own path to become world class institutions.

These institutions shall be provided with greater (*not 'absolute'*) autonomy viz.

- to admit foreign students up to 30% of admitted students;
- to recruit foreign faculty upto 25% of faculty strength;
- to offer online courses upto 20% of its programmes;
- to enter into academic collaboration with top 500 in the world ranking Institutions without permission of UGC;
- free to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction;
- flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree;
- complete flexibility in fixing of curriculum and syllabus, etc.

The scheme will enable Indian students to get world class education and research facilities within the country.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174284>;

4. Every time you depart from India, if you are permitted only to travel by road and must traverse only one country to reach another, which of the following countries can you mark as your final destination? (Example: Afghanistan will be one such country because you can get to it by traversing just one other country, viz. Pakistan.)
1. Thailand
 2. Vietnam
 3. Myanmar

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

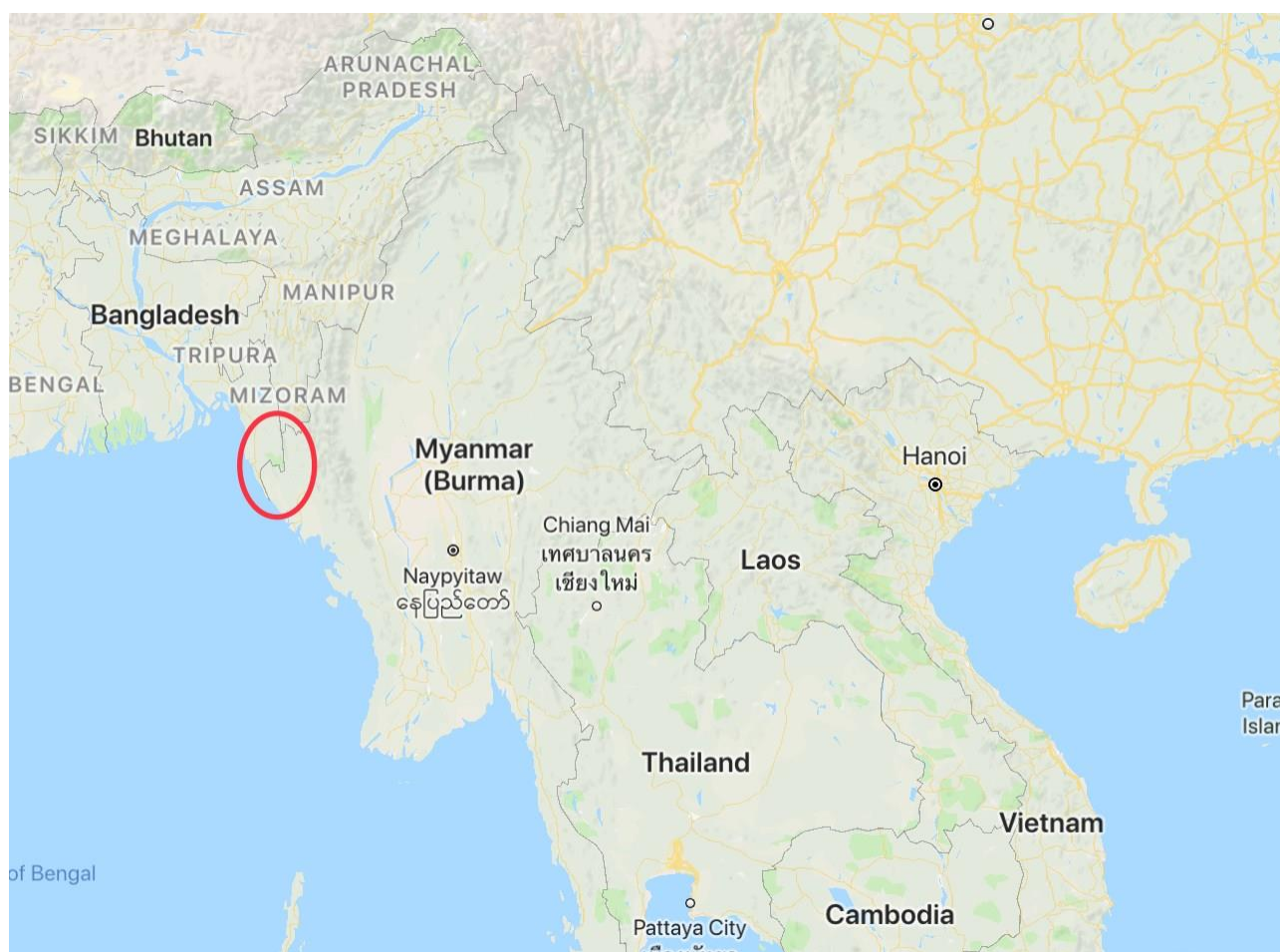
- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Solution: d.

This question was intended to be both – a logic-and-map-based question.

The directive of the question is, “which of the following countries can you mark as your final destination?”, with only two conditions attached – one, you’d have to travel by road and two, you must traverse only one country (and no other conditions such as ‘shortest distance’ or ‘as a bird would fly’, etc.)

Myanmar can be reached not just directly, but also via Bangladesh (As these two countries share borders). This means, we could have also given options such as Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh itself (because Nepal and Bhutan can be reached by traversing one other country, viz. China; also, Bangladesh can be reached by traversing Myanmar first!).



Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174272;>

5. Consider the following statements in the context of the rules made to give effect to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution:
1. The presiding officer of a House is empowered to make these rules
 2. According to the rules made so in the Rajya Sabha, the Chairman must refer the matter (defection case) to the committee of privileges for inquiry before deciding upon the question of their disqualification

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

Solution: a.

A similar question was posted here recently.

One of the provisions of the Tenth Schedule deals with 'rule-making power':

- The presiding officer of a House is empowered to make rules to give effect to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule. All such rules must be placed before the House for 30 days. The House may approve or modify or disapprove them. Further, he may direct that any willful contravention by any member of such rules may be dealt with in the same manner as a breach of privilege of the House.
- According to the rules made so, the presiding officer can take up a defection case only when he receives a complaint from a member of the House. Before taking the final decision, he must give the member (against whom the complaint has been made) a chance to submit his explanation. He may also refer the matter to the committee of privileges for inquiry. Hence, defection has no immediate and automatic effect.

Specifically, with reference to the rules of the Rajya Sabha, "A reading of the rules... show that the Chairman is required either to proceed to determine the question himself or refer it to the committee of privileges for a preliminary inquiry. But reference to the committee is contingent upon the Chairman satisfying himself that it is necessary or expedient to do so; it is not mandatory."

Chapter: Anti-Defection Law, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/disqualification-moves/article21615849.ece>;

6. Section 126 of Representation of the People Act, 1951, prohibits displaying any election matter by means, inter alia, of television or similar apparatus, for how long a duration before the hour fixed for conclusion of poll in a constituency?
- (a) From the time the Model Code of Conduct comes into force
 - (b) Ten days
 - (c) Two weeks
 - (d) 48 hours

Solution: d.

Section 126 of Representation of the People Act, 1951, prohibits displaying any election matter by means, inter alia, of television or similar apparatus, during the period of 48 hours before the hour fixed for conclusion of poll in a constituency.

Additional Information:

The ECI has earlier requested that print media should also be included in Section 126 of the RP Act. The provision currently prohibits publication of ads by political parties in electronic media — TV, radio and, more recently,

social media — 48 hours before voting ends. This request has also been endorsed by the Law Commission, but the government hasn't yet acted on it.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ec-directs-fir-against-tv-channels-for-airing-rahuls-interview/article21597935.ece>;

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174302>;

7. Kalamkari painting refers to

- (a) a hand-painted cotton textile in South India
- (b) a handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in North-East India
- (c) a block-painted woollen cloth in Western Himalayan region of India
- (d) a hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India

Solution: a.

Kalamkari or **vrathapani** from Andhra Pradesh demonstrates the variety of natural materials used to create a work of art. *Kalamkari* means “pen work” in Persian and refers to both printed and painted cloth. In the seventeenth century Persian influences led to artists experimenting with the depiction of trees, fruits, flowers and ornamental birds.

The painting is made exclusively with a pen, the kalam made out of a bamboo sliver wound at one section with wool and then dyed with natural colours. Black ink is used to make outlines, and jaggery, rusted iron filings and water are used for making colours to fill in details.

Chapter 9, Living craft traditions of India, NCERT Class 11 (<http://ncert.nic.in/NCERTS/l/keh109.pdf>);

Q46, CS(P) 2015: <http://www.insightsonindia.com/2015/08/27/answer-key-upsc-civil-services-preliminary-exam-2015-general-studies-paper-1/>;

In the news: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/museum-that-captures-kalamkari-art/article21615956.ece>;

15 DECEMBER 2017

1. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. The Organization focuses, in particular, on which two global priorities?

- 1. Latin America
- 2. Gender equality
- 3. Quality education
- 4. Africa

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

For the medium term period 2014-2021, Member States have confirmed two Global Priorities of UNESCO: Priority Africa and Gender Equality.

Recently in the news: US and Israel announced their withdrawal from UNESCO.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/africa-department/priority-africa/>;

Improvisation: Last question, <http://vikaspedia.in/education/current-affairs/October 2017 International CA.pdf>;

2. To safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning of the Election Commission, the Constitution
1. Provides the Chief Election Commissioner with security of tenure
 2. Specifies the term of the members of the Election Commission
 3. Debars retiring election commissioners from holding further office, either under the Government of India or of any state

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

Article 324 of the Constitution has made the following provisions to safeguard and ensure the independent and impartial functioning of the Election Commission:

1. The chief election commissioner is provided with the security of tenure. He cannot be removed from his office except in same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court. Thus, he does not hold his office till the pleasure of the president, though he is appointed by him.
2. The service conditions of the chief election commissioner cannot be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.
3. Any other election commissioner or a regional commissioner cannot be removed from office except on the recommendation of the chief election commissioner.

Though the constitution has sought to safeguard and ensure the independence and impartiality of the Election Commission, some flaws can be noted, viz., the Constitution has not

- prescribed the qualifications (legal, educational, administrative or judicial) of the members of the Election Commission.
- specified the term of the members of the Election Commission.
- debarred the retiring election commissioners from any further appointment by the government.

Election Commission of India, Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/cong-to-seek-modis-apology/article21667284.ece>;

3. Fjords, a form of coastline of submergence,
1. Provide a favourable location for ports due to their deep and sheltered waters
 2. Are almost entirely confined to the higher latitudes of the temperate regions which were once glaciated

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

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

Solution: b.

Statement 1: Off the fjord coasts are numerous islands which, with 'thresholds (ridges of rock)' complicate coastal navigation. Fjord coasts' mountainous background with poor accessibility inland, attract few settlements. Few large ports thus are located in fjords.

Statement 2: Are almost entirely confined to the higher latitudes of the temperate regions which were once glaciated e.g. Norway, Alaska, Southern Chile and the South Island of New Zealand.

Chapter 10, GC Leong's Certificate Physical and Human Geography;

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42260580>;

4. Which of the following languages is/are recognised by the Constitution?

1. Sanskrit
2. Urdu
3. Bengali

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) None of the above

Solution: c.

Eighth Schedule	Languages recognized by the Constitution. Originally, it had 14 languages but presently there are 22 languages. They are: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri (Dongri), Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Mathili (Maithili), Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Sindhi was added by the 21 st Amendment Act of 1967; Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added by the 71 st Amendment Act of 1992; and Bodo, Dongri, Maithili and Santhali were added by the 92 nd Amendment Act of 2003.
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In the news: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/bsp-corporator-takes-oath-in-urdu-is-charged-with-intent-to-hurt-religious-sentiments/article21665609.ece>;

5. The first and presently only state in India to have a department of happiness is

- (a) Karnataka
(b) Maharashtra
(c) Madhya Pradesh
(d) Himachal Pradesh

Solution: c.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-42349711>;

6. Consider the following pairs:

Article in the Constitution	mandate/subject
1. 136	: Special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court
2. 142	: Enforcement of decrees and orders of Supreme Court for doing complete justice
3. 144	: Civil and judicial authorities to act in aid of the Supreme Court

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

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

Solution: d.

Article 136: Special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court: the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant special leave to appeal from any judgment, decree, determination, sentence or order in any cause or matter passed or made by any court or tribunal in the territory of India.

Article 142: The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or orders so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe

Article 144: Civil and judicial authorities to act in aid of the Supreme Court All authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of India shall act in aid of the Supreme Court

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/aadhaar-linking-cji-frowns-upon-hyperbole/article21665735.ece>;

Refer indiakanon.org for articles of the Constitution.

16 DECEMBER 2017

1. The “North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme” will broadly cover creation of infrastructure related to
- 1. Education and health
 - 2. Projects promoting tourism
 - 3. Water supply

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of a new Central Sector Scheme of “**North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme**” (NESIDS) from 2017-18 with 100% funding from the Central Government to fill up the gaps in creation of infrastructure in specified sectors till March, 2020.

The new scheme will broadly cover creation of infrastructure under following sectors:-

- Physical infrastructure relating to water supply, power, connectivity and specially the projects promoting tourism;
- Infrastructure of social sectors of education and health.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174377;>

2. Implementation of the “Indian Footwear, Leather and Accessories Development Programme” will help India offer which two countries stiff competition in growth of the leather and footwear sectors?

1. China
2. Bangladesh
3. Vietnam
4. Ethiopia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The scheme would lead to development of infrastructure for the **leather sector**, address environment concerns specific to the leather sector, facilitate additional investments, employment generation and increase in production. **Enhanced Tax incentive** would attract large scale investments in the sector and reform in labour law in view of seasonal nature of the sector will support economies of scale. The Special Package has the potential to generate 3.24 lakhs new jobs in 3 years and assist in formalisation of 2 lakh jobs as cumulative impact in Footwear, Leather & Accessories Sector.
- Meeting the challenge of jobs may require paying attention to labor-intensive sectors. The apparel and leather sectors meet many desirable attributes for policy attention: bang- for- buck for creating jobs, especially for women, opportunities for exports and growth. Rising labor costs means that China is gradually vacating its dominant position in these sectors, affording India an opportunity. To not cede this space to competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh will require easing restrictions on labor regulations, negotiating FTAs with major partners such as the EU and UK, and ensuring that the GST rationalizes current tax policy that can discriminate against dynamic sectors.

Chapter 7, Economic Survey Volume 1 2016-17;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174375;>

3. The Union Cabinet recently approved an agreement on establishment of an “International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography” in Hyderabad with

- (a) NOAA (National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration), USA
- (b) CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research)
- (c) UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation)
- (d) IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources)

Solution: c.

- The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a training centre towards development of capacity for the countries on the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR), African countries bordering the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, small island countries under the framework of UNESCO.
- **Operational oceanography** is an activity of conducting systematic oceanographic studies towards providing information services to various sectors viz. fisherman, disaster management, shipping, ports, coastal states, navy, coast guard, environment, offshore industries for conducting their day-to-day operations.
- The **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**, a body with functional autonomy within UNESCO, is the only competent organization for marine science within the UN system.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174372>;

4. Which of the following systems of healthcare is **not** indigenous to India?

- (a) Ayurveda
- (b) Yoga
- (c) Siddha
- (d) Unani

Solution: d.

- Introduced by Arabs and Persians to India in the 12th century and with a rich literature, Unani medicine remains popular in parts of South and Central Asia. **Unani** shares many common principles with ayurveda, including the belief in the four humours.
- An ancient form of traditional medicine, **Siddha** originated in **Tamil Nadu** through the work of “*siddhars*” or scientist-saints. Siddha too shares many principles with ayurveda, including the belief in humours, elements and imbalance.

‘AYUSH, the six systems’, from 2015: <http://www.thehindu.com/sunday-anchor/medicine-wars-homeopathy-allopathy-ayurveda-unani-in-india/article7141754.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174371>;

5. The Commission of Railway Safety works under the administrative control of

- (a) Ministry of Civil Aviation
- (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
- (c) Ministry of Railways
- (d) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Solution: a.

- The Commission of Railway Safety working under the administrative control of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (Govt. of India), deals with the matters pertaining to safety of rail travel and train operation and is charged with certain statutory functions laid down in the **Railway Act’1989**. These functions are inspectorial, investigatory and advisory in nature. The Commission functions according to certain rules framed under the railways Act and executive instructions issued from time to time. The most important duty of the Commission is to ensure that any new railway line to be opened for passenger traffic should conform to the standard and specifications prescribed by the Ministry of Railways and the new line is safe in all respects for carrying the passenger traffic.
- **Why Ministry of Civil Aviation?** The principle of separation of the Railway Inspectorate from the Railway Board was endorsed in 1940 by the Central Legislature who recommended that “Senior Government

Inspectors of Railways should be placed under the Administrative control of some authority of the Govt. of India other than the Railway Board.” Accordingly, the Railway Inspectorate was placed under the administrative control of the Department of “Posts and Air” in May 1941 and continuously thereafter under whichever Ministry that held the portfolio of Civil Aviation.

<http://www.crs.gov.in/index.php>;

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174365>;

18 DECEMBER 2017

1. The ‘Sendai framework’ – the first intergovernmental agreement of the United Nations post-2015 sustainable development era – is a framework for
 - (a) Disaster risk reduction
 - (b) Building resilience for adaptation to climate change in the agriculture sector
 - (c) Mutual administrative assistance in refugee-related issues
 - (d) International Civil Aviation emissions reduction

Solution: a.

The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), 2015-2030**, is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and identifies targets and priority actions towards reducing disaster risks and implementing development that is both resilient and sustainable. India, being a signatory to the SFDRR, is committed to work towards achieving the targets enshrined in the Framework.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174409>;

2. Consider the following pairs:

<i>Distinct craft/painting</i>	<i>state</i>
1. Kavad	: Rajasthan
2. Patachitra	: Uttar Pradesh
3. Kalamkari	: West Bengal

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Kavad | : Rajasthan |
| 2. Patachitra | : Uttar Pradesh |
| 3. Kalamkari | : West Bengal |

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: a.

“Rare **chitrakathi paintings**, wooden and clay dolls of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh, **Kalamkaris**, **Patachitra** of Odisha, **Patua scrolls** of West Bengal, **Kavad**, the wooden story telling boxes of Rajasthan explore the multiplicity of Ramayana traditions..”

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174414>;

Chapter 9 – Living Craft Traditions of India, Class XI, NCERT;

3. Known as 'Pratap', these multi-role helicopters of the Indian Air Force were recently phased out. These helicopters were made by and imported from
- USA
 - United Kingdom
 - USSR
 - Brazil

Solution: c.

The Russian-made **Mi-8** entered India in 1971. These helicopters were part of **Operation Meghdoot** of 1989 in the Siachen Glacier and **Operation Pawan** in Sri Lanka. The craft operated extensively in humanitarian, rescue and disaster relief operations across the country including during the devastating 2015 Chennai floods of 2015, apart from ferrying many VIPs and VVIPs.

[http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iafs-mi-8-chopper-flies-into-history/article21827710.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iafs-mi-8-chopper-flies-into-history/article21827710.ece)

4. NASA's Kepler (now, the 'K2') Space Telescope utilises which one of the following methods to discover exoplanets?
- Wobble method
 - Direct imaging
 - Gravitational microlensing
 - Transit method

Solution: d.

In the transit method, the space telescope catches tiny dips in the amount of light coming from individual stars, caused by planets crossing in front of them.

In the news (<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42356305>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/a-measured-leap-on-planetary-system/article21827715.ece>):

- Scientists have announced the discovery of two new exoplanets, **Kepler-90i** and **Kepler-80g**. This announcement by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the U.S. is particularly significant. First, with the discovery of the planet Kepler 90i, orbiting the star Kepler 90, we now know of another star besides the Sun that has eight planets orbiting it. Second, Christopher Shallue, a software engineer at Google, and Andrew Vanderburg, of the University of Texas, Austin, have discovered it using a deep learning neural network — an artificial intelligence tool that mimics the workings of a human brain.

Additional Information: The Robotveter program is the first attempt at automating the process of rejecting false positives in signals detected by space telescopes that are used for discovering exoplanets (here, specifically the Kepler Space Telescope).

https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/kepler/main/index.html;

5. Consider the following statements:
- Growth in the number of Indian students studying abroad has outpaced China's in recent years
 - Keeping all other variables constant, an increasing number of Indian students opting to study abroad contributes negatively to the current account balance

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: c.

- Between 2013 and 2016, there was a 24% jump in the number (stock) of Indian students studying abroad. This growth outpaced that for China (which saw a 12% expansion).
- Growth rates apart, the other unusual facet of student migration from India is that it is largely a one-way street. While China had more than 8 lakh students lodged in varsities abroad in 2016, it had also half as many international students lodged at its own campuses. In Malaysia, inbound students pursuing college were neck-and-neck with outbound ones. But in India, the number of students lodged abroad is at more than four times the inbound numbers.

A more immediate problem than the brain drain though, is the dollar drain. As more Indian parents pack off their children right from undergraduation, foreign exchange remittances towards their support are growing by leaps and bounds.

The current account records exports and imports in goods and services and transfer payments.

- The trade balance is obtained by subtracting imports of goods from the exports of goods.
- Trade in services denoted as invisible trade (because they are not seen to cross national borders) includes both factor income and net non-factor income.
- Transfer payments are receipts which the residents of a country receive 'for free', without having to make any present or future payments in return. They consist of remittances, gifts and grants. They could be official or private.

The balance of exports and imports of goods is referred to as the trade balance. Adding trade in services and net transfers to the trade balance, we get the current account balance.

Chapter 6, Open Economy Macroeconomics;

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/what-indias-student-exodus-means/article21827549.ece;>

19 DECEMBER 2017

1. The negative impacts of urban heat islands include

1. Increased energy consumption
2. Elevated emissions of air pollutants
3. Lengthening of the plant-growing season

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

- Elevated temperatures from urban heat islands, particularly during the summer, can affect a community's environment and quality of life. While some impacts may be beneficial, such as lengthening the plant-growing season, the majority of them are negative.
- Elevated summertime temperatures in cities increase energy demand for cooling. Companies that supply electricity typically rely on fossil fuel power plants to meet much of this demand, which in turn leads to an increase in air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions.

<https://www.epa.gov/heat-islands/heat-island-impacts;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-urban-heat-island-effect/article21860626.ece;>

2. Consider the following statements:

1. Indian soils are deficient in micronutrients, especially zinc
2. Zinc deficiency is a condition characterised by stunting in children

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

Solution: c.

- It is well-known that urea prices in India are among the lowest in the world (hovering around \$ 86 per tonne). Urea prices in neighbouring countries in South and Southeast Asia, including China, are at least two to three-times higher.
- Also, the price ratio of urea to DAP and MOP is highly skewed. No wonder, Indian farmers are using higher doses of urea (nitrogen) compared to phosphate (DAP) and potash (MOP), and not getting the best results in terms of yields.
- Also Indian soils are deficient in micronutrients, especially zinc (about 48 per cent) — a fallout of which is zinc deficiency in wheat and rice, which, in turn, contributes to stunting in children.
- The imbalanced use of N, P and K, therefore, needs urgent correction. Extremely low prices of urea also lead to its diversion to non-agricultural uses — as well as smuggling to neighbouring countries — that needs to be checked.

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/from-plate-to-plough-for-farmers-the-next-big-idea-4987307/>;

For additional reading: <http://www.who.int/whr/2002/chapter4/en/index3.html>;

3. Why does the Government of India promote the use of 'Neem-coated Urea' in agriculture?

- (a) Release of Neem oil in the soil increases nitrogen fixation by the soil microorganisms
- (b) Neem coating slows down the rate of dissolution of urea in the soil
- (c) Nitrous oxide, which is a greenhouse gas, is not at all released into atmosphere by crop fields
- (d) It is a combination of a weedicide and a fertilizer for particular crops

Solution: b.

- Urea is an important supplier of nitrogen, which is necessary for the development of plants. But only 30-40 per cent of nitrogen present in the urea is utilised by crops.
- When farmers use conventional urea, about half the applied nitrogen is not assimilated by the plant and leaches into the soil, causing extensive groundwater contamination.
- Spraying urea with neem oil also slows the release of nitrogen, by about 10 to 15 per cent, concomitantly reducing consumption of the fertiliser.
- The neem-coating also precludes an age-old malpractice of this cheap fertiliser being diverted for use in the chemical industry and, most harmfully in states like Punjab and Haryana, as an additive in milk to whiten it.

Chapter 9: Economic Survey 2015-16: Volume I;

Q2, CS(P) 2016: <http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/08/13/71-7-questions-from-insights-test-series-2016-and-from-other-initiatives-of-insights-repeated-directlyindirectly-in-upsc-prelims-2016/>;

In the news: <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/from-plate-to-plough-for-farmers-the-next-big-idea-4987307/>;

4. World Inequality Reports, the first of which was recently published, is produced by
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
 - World Economic Forum
 - World Bank
 - World Inequality Lab

Solution: d.

The World Inequality Lab aims to promote research on global inequality dynamics. Its core mission is to maintain and expand the World Wealth and Income Database. It also produces inequality reports and working papers addressing substantive and methodological issues.

In addition to the year-round updates to the database and working papers, the World Inequality Lab publishes a biannual World Inequality Report. The objective is to highlight new findings and research analysis emanating from the database, and to draw implications for the global inequality debate. The World Inequality Report aims to become the reference global report on inequality and to attract extensive coverage in the international media.

About WID.world: <http://wid.world/wid-world/>;

About the World Inequality Lab: <http://wid.world/world-inequality-lab/>;

Improvisation: [http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/focus-on-income-mobility/article21859319.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/focus-on-income-mobility/article21859319.ece;);

5. The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), which measures the commitment of countries to cybersecurity, is released by
- European Cybersecurity Organisation (ECISO)
 - Symantec Corporation
 - International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
 - Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST)

Solution: c.

- The GCI strengthens the role of ITU in building confidence and security in the use of ICT. Specifically, Member States are invited “to support ITU initiatives on cybersecurity, including the GCI, in order to promote government strategies and the sharing of information on efforts across industries and sectors”.
- A first iteration of the GCI was conducted in 2013-2014. The second iteration was released in July 2017.

Additional Information:

- India is ranked 23rd out of 165 nations in the 2nd
- India has been listed in the “maturing” category, which refers to 77 countries that have developed complex commitments to cybersecurity and engage in cybersecurity programmes and initiatives.
- ITU is the UN Telecommunications agency.
- The ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda has five pillars: legal, technical, organisational, capacity building and international cooperation.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/india-ranks-23rd-among-165-nations-in-cybersecurity-index/articleshow/59478111.cms>;

<https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/GCI-2017.aspx>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/for-a-safe-cyberspace/article21864764.ece>;

20 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Inhabitants of the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture may have supplied copper to the Harappans
2. Globally, Chile has the largest reserves of copper followed by India

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

Statement 1: One strategy of the Harappans for procuring raw materials may have been to send expeditions to areas such as the Khetri region of Rajasthan (for copper) and south India (for gold). There is evidence in the Khetri area for what archaeologists call the Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture, with its distinctive non-Harappan pottery and an unusual wealth of copper objects. It is possible that the inhabitants of this region supplied copper to the Harappans.

Statement 2: India has very limited known reserves of copper ore exploitable for copper production. India's share of world reserve & resource is only 1.9%. Total known reserves and resource of copper (in metal terms) are estimated to be around 630 million metric tonnes. Globally, Chile has the largest reserves of copper accounting for about 24% of the total world reserves followed by Peru 14%, Australia 13%, USA 6%, Indonesia & Russia 5% each and other countries 33%.

Page 12, Themes in Indian History Part I, Class 12 NCERT;

Page 120, Annual Report Ministry of Mines 2016-17

(https://mines.gov.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/Mines_AR_2016-17_English.pdf) – we are just providing the source, you need not refer to this document for the purpose of this question.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/change-in-chile/article21946847.ece>;

2. The Laakso-Taagepara method is a technique for

- (a) Detecting exoplanets
- (b) Neutral Real Rate of Interest estimation
- (c) Determining the viability of moonshot urban transportation projects in developing countries
- (d) Calculations in electoral systems

Solution: d.

Is a large number of parties bound to destabilize a political system (Duverger, 1954) or is it not (e.g., Lijphart, 1968; Nilson, 1974)? Before this question can be answered, the number of parties must be operationally defined in a way that takes into account their relative size. Such a number is also needed if one wants to detect trends toward fewer or more numerous parties over time, or the effects of a proposed change in electoral rules. This article presents ways to calculate this important political variable, calculates it for 142 post-1944 elections in 15 West European countries, and analyzes its possible effect on stability.

We often talk of two-party and multiparty systems. We further distinguish three- or four-party systems in some countries, and even talk (e.g., Blondel, 1969: 535) of a two-and-a-half-party system when there is a third party of marginal size. Mexico could be viewed as a one-and-a-half-party system because the PRI is so much larger than all other parties. Rather than take the number of *all* existing parties, including even the very smallest, one visibly has a need for a number that takes into account their relative size. We will call this number the “effective number of parties,” using the word “effective” somewhat in the sense

Evaluating the NOTA effect

The None of the Above (NOTA) option polled 1.8% of the total votes in Gujarat. In a largely bipolar election, this did have an effect, but not as substantive as a preliminary look would indicate.

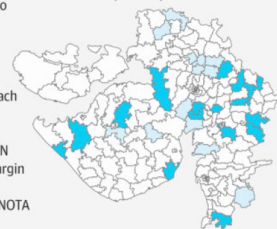
NOTA on a high: In 115 – nearly two-thirds of the 182 seats, the NOTA option was ranked third, a high number



Did NOTA matter?

In 30 seats, the votes polled on NOTA were greater than the difference of votes polled by the winner and the runner-up. The BJP won 15 of those seats, the Congress won 13 and Independents won 2. Arguably, NOTA was a factor in determining the victor in these seats.

Assessing the effect: It is not enough for NOTA to be greater than the win margin, for the NOTA votes could have been polled by the victor, runner-up or any other candidate. We need to evaluate if the NOTA vote share was substantive and affected the contest. We use the [Laakso-Taagepera](http://bit.ly/effparties) method (<http://bit.ly/effparties>) of calculating effective number of parties for each seat (Eff) and find out this figure by taking out the NOTA votes (EffN). The number of seats with the largest values of Eff minus EffN and where NOTA was higher than the win margin was **only 17** (BJP winning 5, Congress 10, Independents 2). These are the seats where NOTA was more likely to be effective



3. The 2015 National Security Strategy of the USA termed India as

- A leading global power
- A regional provider of security
- One of 21st century's centres of influence
- One of regional and global engines of growth

Solution: b.

A mains-oriented question.

Almost a year in office and after two bilateral meetings between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump, the US government marked out India's emergence as a “global power” in its first National Security Strategy — a significant upgrade in Washington's assessment of India in the last 15 years.

In 2015, in Obama administration's last NSS, India's role was described as a “regional provider of security” and in 2010, India was termed one of “21st century centers of influence”. In 2006, during George W Bush administration's NSS, it had called India as one of “regional and global engines of growth” and in 2002, it was viewed as a “potential great democratic power of 21st century”.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-a-leading-global-power-pakistan-needs-to-show-it-can-be-responsible-for-its-nukes-us-4990657/>;

Improvisation: The Hindu Front Page article (China a threat, India an ally: Trump);

4. Which of the following statements is/are correct with reference to the e-way bill system for inter-state movement of goods under the GST regime which is set for a nation-wide roll-out?

- the GST regime, which No good, as part of the consignment, is exempt from this transport permit
- Goods moved on non-motorised conveyance, such as carts, have been left out

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Solution: b.

"Starting February 1, all inter-State movement of goods worth over ₹50,000 will be tracked with the introduction of the e-way bill system under the GST regime. All consignments moving more than 10 km from their origin will require prior registration and generation of an e-way bill through the GST Network, which will be valid for varying durations depending on the distance travelled... Over 150 items of common use, including LPG cylinders, vegetables, foodgrain and jewellery, will be exempt from such transport permits, which can be checked by designated tax officials by intercepting a transporting vehicle. Goods moved on non-motorised conveyance, such as carts, have been left out."

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/transit-gambit/article21946522.ece;>

5. Consider the following statements with reference to the Indian Institutes of Management Bill, 2017:

1. The bill extends greater autonomy to the Board of Governors in the performance of functions such as appointment of its own Chairperson, and Director of the institute
2. The autonomy envisaged for IIMs exceeds the autonomy granted to other institutions of higher education such as IITs and AIIMS

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

Solution: c.

- Currently, the central government has a role in the functioning of IIMs which includes appointment of the Chairperson of their Boards, their Directors and pay to the Director. In contrast, the Bill extends greater autonomy to the Board in the performance of these functions.
- Under the Bill, the autonomy envisaged for IIMs exceeds the autonomy granted to other institutions of higher education such as IITs and AIIMS. For example, Directors of IITs and AIIMS are appointed by the central government. Introduction of new courses of study at AIIMS requires approval of the Medical Council of India.

[http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-indian-institutes-of-management-bill-2017-4607/;](http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-indian-institutes-of-management-bill-2017-4607/)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/parliament-gives-nod-to-iim-bill/article21955766.ece;>

21 DECEMBER 2017

1. The Uttar Pradesh Control of Organised Crime (UPCOC) Bill is modelled along the lines of

- (a) The Punjab Gangsters And Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act
- (b) The Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act
- (c) The Manipur Drug Abuse (Prevention) Act
- (d) a, b and c

Solution: b.

- Opposition parties have come together to oppose the Uttar Pradesh Control of Organized Crime (UPCOC) Bill, 2017 introduced by the State's BJP government. They say it could potentially be used as a tool to suppress rivals, settle political vendetta and target specific communities.
- The Bill was drafted by the BJP government after an "intensive study" of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in Maharashtra.

- While the Yogi Adityanath government has described the proposed law as a remedy against organised crime, the Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati demanded its rollback, claiming it could be used “as a political weapon” to “oppress” the poor, Dalits, OBCs and religious minorities. Incidentally, a similar law was passed by the Uttar Pradesh government during Ms. Mayawati’s rule in 2007-08, but it was withdrawn after the then President Pratibha Patil refused to give it her assent.
- Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also opposed the law, saying it was only being brought to “deceive the people (“UPCOCA will not improve law and order)” and “intimidate leaders of other political parties.”

[http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/upcoca-tabled-opposition-fumes/article22119811.ece;](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/upcoca-tabled-opposition-fumes/article22119811.ece)

2. Consider the following statements about the Law Commission of India:

1. India’s first Commission was established via the Charter Act of 1853 which paved the way for the enactment of the Penal Code of 1860
2. The Constitution authorises the Parliament to determine the qualifications of members of the Commission

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

Solution: d.

What is the Law Commission?

- Law Commission of India is neither a constitutional body nor a statutory body. It is truly an ad hoc and advisory body whose work is to do research and make recommendations for law reforms such as amendments and updations of prevalent and inherited laws. None of these recommendations is binding upon the Government.

Composition of the Law Commission

- It is a convention that a retired judge of Supreme Court heads India’s Law Commission. Apart from the Chairperson, its membership primarily comprises legal experts, who are entrusted a mandate by the Government.

[https://www.gktoday.in/gk/law-commission-of-india/;](https://www.gktoday.in/gk/law-commission-of-india/)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cleaning-up/article22084026.ece;>

3. On what basis is it that many legislations, enacted before our Constitution came into force, are still in force?
 - (a) All pre-Independence legislations have a clause in them that requires the ‘competent authority’ to repeal them only when the circumstances demand it
 - (b) Following India’s acceptance of Commonwealth membership, repealing them requires the Crown of England’s approval
 - (c) Article 372 of our Constitution provides for their continuance
 - (d) Our Constitution mandated the judiciary to review such legislations within ten years of the Constitution coming into force, a process which is yet to have commenced

Solution: c.

- Although Law Commission has not been provided by the Constitution, yet it is inspired by various parts of Constitution such as Fundamental Rights and DPSP particularly article 39A, which says that State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice.
- Further, one of the mandates of the Constitution was the continuation of pre-Constitution Laws (Article 372) till they are amended or repealed. This mandate necessitated the need of a Central Law Commission which could recommend repeal, revision and updating of the inherited laws to serve the changing needs of the country.

[https://indiankanoon.org/doc/74529/;](https://indiankanoon.org/doc/74529/)

[https://www.gktoday.in/gk/law-commission-of-india/;](https://www.gktoday.in/gk/law-commission-of-india/)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/cleaning-up/article22084026.ece;>

4. Which one of the following states does **not** have a legislative council presently?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Telangana
- (c) Andhra Pradesh
- (d) Karnataka

Solution: a.

As of today, seven states have Legislative Councils. These are Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

<http://www.thehindu.com/elections/himachal-pradesh-2017/though-defeated-dhumal-in-contention/article22077477.ece;>

5. What are the 'White Helmets', sometimes seen in the news?

- (a) A self-help group of women, who protect and create awareness among locals about the endangered Greater Adjutant Stork of Assam
- (b) A segment of hard-left non-violent activist-protestors who usually mark their presence within larger anti-government demonstrations across the world
- (c) A volunteer workforce who help people from all sides of the conflict in war-torn Syria
- (d) None of the above

Solution: c.

The White Helmets, officially known as Syria Civil Defence, is a volunteer organisation that operates in parts of rebel-controlled Syria and in Turkey.

<https://www.whitehelmets.org/en;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/syrian-baby-becomes-symbol-of-siege/article22084841.ece;>

22 DECEMBER 2017

1. 'Breakthrough Listen' is a/an
- (a) Platform for indigenous peoples to actively participate in UN Climate Conferences
 - (b) Project of the Ministries of Culture, Human Resource Development and External Affairs to catalogue the untold experiences of British Asians and the Colonial British who witnessed India's Partition
 - (c) Initiative to find signs of intelligent life in the universe
 - (d) Awareness campaign by acid attack survivors to protect the rights of and ensure justice for acid attack victims

Solution: c.

The **Breakthrough Initiatives** are a program of scientific and technological exploration, probing the big questions of life in the Universe: Are we alone? Are there habitable worlds in our galactic neighborhood? Can we make the great leap to the stars? And can we think and act together – as one world in the cosmos?

- **Breakthrough Listen** is a \$100 million program of astronomical observations in search of evidence of intelligent life beyond Earth.
- **Breakthrough Message** is a \$1 million competition to design a message representing Earth, life and humanity that could potentially be understood by another civilization.
- **Breakthrough Watch** is multi-million dollar astronomical program to develop Earth- and space-based technologies that can find Earth-like planets in our cosmic neighborhood – and try to establish whether they host life.
- **Breakthrough Starshot** is a \$100 million research and engineering program aiming to demonstrate proof of concept for a new technology, enabling ultra-light unmanned space flight at 20% of the speed of light; and to lay the foundations for a flyby mission to Alpha Centauri within a generation.

<https://breakthroughinitiatives.org/about>;

Improvisation: <http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-42397398>;

2. Consider the following statements about the Andrei Sakharov Prize:
- 1. It recognises outstanding contribution of journalists and non-governmental organisations in promoting and protecting human rights and freedoms
 - 2. The Association for India's Development is a recipient of the prize

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

This prize recognizes outstanding leadership and/or achievements of scientists in upholding human rights.

The Sakharov Prize is named in recognition of the courageous and effective work of Andrei Sakharov (a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate) on behalf of human rights, to the detriment of his own scientific career and despite the loss of his own personal freedom.

http://www.aps.org/programs/honors/prizes/prizerecipient.cfm?last_nm=Kuchimanchi&first_nm=Ravi&year=2018;

About the Prize: <http://www.aps.org/programs/honors/prizes/sakharov.cfm>;
<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/an-award-for-a-physicist/article22119783.ece>;

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Being overweight is a form of malnutrition
2. The number of overweight urban men and women in India outnumber their underweight counterparts

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

Solution: c.

- **Malnutrition**, in every form, presents significant threats to human health. Today the world faces a double burden of malnutrition that includes both undernutrition and overweight, especially in developing countries.
- As per the recent findings of the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16), the Body Mass Index (BMI) of 15.5% of urban women was found to be less than 18.5 kg/m², whereas 31.3% of urban women were in the category of overweight or obese (BMI of or more than 25.0 kg/m²). Around 15% of urban men were underweight, while 26.3% belonged to the category of overweight and obese.

<http://www.who.int/nutrition/challenges/en/>;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/for-a-wider-food-basket/article22177419.ece>;

4. Malnutrition means less productive individuals, who are more prone to disease and thus often unable to earn more and improve their livelihoods. Which one among the following UN Sustainable Development Goals include achieving “improved nutrition”?

- (a) SDG 1 (No Poverty)
- (b) SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)
- (c) SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)
- (d) SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

Solution: b.

- **The Sustainable Development Goal-2**, which aims to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, is a priority area for India.
- To ensure food and nutrition security, there is a growing need for a multi-sectoral approach.
- The policies and programmes of various ministries should be converged for better results.
- This will not only transform India’s agricultural practices, but also spread awareness about nutritious food among key target groups, including tribals, women and children.

What’s the goal here?

To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Why?

Extreme hunger and malnutrition remains a barrier to sustainable development and creates a trap

from which people cannot easily escape. Hunger and malnutrition mean less productive individuals, who are more prone to disease and thus often unable to earn more and improve their livelihoods. There are nearly 800 million people who suffer from hunger worldwide, the vast majority in developing countries.

http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2_Why-it-Matters_ZeroHunger_2p.pdf;

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/for-a-wider-food-basket/article22177419.ece>;

5. Austria opens out to the
- (a) Tyrrhenian Sea
 - (b) Balearic Sea
 - (c) Sea of Azov
 - (d) It is a land-locked country

Solution: d.



Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/right-turn-in-austria-too/article21942418.ece>;

23 DECEMBER 2017

1. 'Prompt Corrective Action', a term sometimes seen in the news, is related to
- (a) Handling of unruly and disruptive air passengers
 - (b) Financial health of banks
 - (c) The Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) platform
 - (d) The Aadhaar Act, 2016

Solution: b.

- **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)** norms allow the regulator to place certain restrictions such as halting branch expansion and stopping dividend payment. It can even cap a bank's lending limit to one entity or sector.
- Other corrective action that can be imposed on banks include special audit, restructuring operations and activation of recovery plan. Banks' promoters can be asked to bring in new management, too. The RBI can also supersede the bank's board, under PCA.
- Capital, asset quality and profitability continue to be the key areas for monitoring in the revised PCA framework. There are a few indicators for these key areas. Breaching of any risk threshold (as defined for each of the indicators) would result in invocation of PCA.

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/prompt-corrective-action-for-banks/article18519755.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/pca-only-to-improve-banks-financial-health/article22261335.ece>;

2. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is increasingly seen as a counterweight to the

- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- Organisation of American States
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
- Gulf Cooperation Council

Solution: c.

Comparisons have been drawn, time and again, between SCO and NATO.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indo-russian-cooperation-on-afghanistan-has-increased-with-sco-membership-nikolay/article22148475.ece>;

From earlier this year: <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/oKjzmgrZN8GvBcjDUzujFN/SCO-Astana-Summit-2017-India-Pakistan-become-full-members.html>;

3. Consider the following statements:

1. There were several archaeological cultures in North-western region of the Indian subcontinent prior to the Mature Harappan culture
2. Mature Harappan culture developed in some of the areas occupied by the Early Harappan cultures

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

Solution: c.

- There were several archaeological cultures in the region prior to the Mature Harappan. These cultures were associated with distinctive pottery, evidence of agriculture and pastoralism, and some crafts. Settlements were generally small, and there were virtually no large buildings.
- The Mature Harappan culture developed in some of the areas occupied by the Early Harappan cultures. These cultures also shared certain common elements including subsistence strategies. The Harappans ate a wide range of plant and animal products, including fish.

Theme One: Bricks, Beads and Bones; Class XII NCERT;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/who-built-the-indus-valley-civilisation/article22261315.ece>;

4. Regional conferences on “good governance and replication of best practices” are organised under the aegis of
- The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
 - NITI Aayog
 - The Ministry of Home Affairs
 - The Prime Minister’s Office

Solution: a.

Self-explanatory.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174791>;

5. **Assertion (A):** Frequent price spikes are observed in pulses, despite substantial imports of these commodities

Reasons (R): Public procurement at MSP has disproportionately focused on certain crops perhaps even at the expense of other crops such as pulses

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A and R both are true, and R is the correct explanation for A
- A and R both are true, and R is the NOT the correct explanation for A
- A is correct, R is incorrect
- A and R both are incorrect

Solution: a.

- While in principle MSP exists for most farmers for most crops, its realistic impact is quite limited for most farmers in the country. Public procurement at MSP has disproportionately focused on wheat, rice and sugarcane and perhaps even at the expense of other crops such as pulses and oilseeds. This has resulted in buffer stocks of paddy and wheat to be above the required norms, but also caused frequent price spikes in pulses and edible oils, despite substantial imports of these commodities.
- The absence of MSP procurement for most crops in most states implies either that farmers are selling their products to private intermediaries above the MSP or the converse, i.e., farmers have little option but to sell their produce at prices below the MSP, resulting in a regional bias in farm incomes.

Agriculture: More from Less; Economic Survey 2015-16 Volume 1;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/missing-the-pulse/article22261351.ece>;

24 DECEMBER 2017

1. The Doyang reservoir was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) following the fulfilment of which one of the following criteria?
- The site holds significant numbers of a globally threatened species
 - The site holds a significant component of a group of species whose breeding distributions occur in an area of less than 20,000 square kms
 - The site holds a significant component of the group of species whose distributions are largely or wholly confined to one biome
 - The site holds migratory congregations of $\geq 1\%$ of the global population of one or more species on a regular or predictable basis

Solution: d.

- According to the Wildlife Institute of India's website (http://wiienviis.nic.in/Database/IBA_8463.aspx), **Doyang reservoir** is designated as a '**Potential IBA**' (but the Hindu article mentions otherwise). Nevertheless, if and when it is designated as an IBA, it will in all likelihood be under the criteria mentioned in option 'd', as this reservoir is associated with the migratory bird Amur falcon (designated by IUCN as a species of 'least concern')..
- The IBAs (<http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/programme-additional-info/important-bird-and-biodiversity-areas-ibas>) are "places of international significance for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity" and are "distinct areas amenable to practical conservation action," according to BirdLife International.
- Declaring a site as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area does not ensure that the site gets legal protection or becomes inaccessible to people. Instead BirdLife International encourages national and State governments to recognise the areas as sites of vital importance for conservation of wildlife and to empower local community-based conservation initiatives.

Global IBA criteria: <http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/ibacritglob>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/the-amur-falcon-goes-to-school/article22239227.ece>

2. Which one among the following Inter-State Water Dispute (ISWD) tribunals has **not** been set-up under the ISWD Act?
- Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal
 - Mahadayi WDT
 - Godavari WDT
 - Cauvery WDT

Solution: a.

Table 15.1 *Inter-State Water Dispute Tribunals Set-up So Far*

Sl. No.	Name	Set-up in	State Involved
1.	Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal	1969	Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
2.	Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal	1969	Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa
3.	Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal	1969	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra
4.	Ravi and Beas Water Disputes Tribunal	1986	Punjab and Haryana
5.	Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal	1990	Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry
6.	Second Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal	2004	Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
7.	Vansadhara Water Disputes Tribunal	2010	Odisha and Andhra Pradesh
8.	Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal	2010	Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra

"The Biju Janata Dal today accused the NDA government of compromising its neutrality in Odisha's dispute with Chhattisgarh over Mahanadi river water-sharing and sought an urgent debate in the Lok Sabha over setting up of a tribunal to resolve differences between the two states. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab alleged that the BJP-led government has gone back on its word on establishing a tribunal as it had promised over a year ago. Mahtab said the central government has conveyed to the Supreme Court that no tribunal would be set up to resolve the Mahanadi water dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh."

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/centres-neutrality-compromised-in-mahanadi-water-dispute-bjd/articleshow/62171922.cms>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/mahadayi-farmers-up-pressure/article22269483.ece>;

3. The Central Coordinating authority for oil-spill response in the Maritime Zones of India is

- (a) The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services
- (b) The Indian Coast Guard
- (c) The Indian Navy
- (d) The National Disaster Response Force

Solution: b.

- The ICG has been accordingly nominated in 1986 as the Central Coordinating Authority for oil-spill response in the Maritime Zones of India.
- The ports are responsible for oil-spill clean-up within port limits, and oil-handling agencies are responsible for oil-spill clean-up upto 500 meters around the oil-handling installations.
- The Coastal States and Union Territories are responsible for shoreline clean-up, whenever the oil-spill reaches the shore, and threatens the shoreline.

http://www.indiancoastguard.gov.in/content/246_3_MarineEnvironmentProtection.aspx;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/disposing-of-toxic-chocolate-mousse-scooped-in-buckets-safely/article22268042.ece>;

4. The 'National Health Service' is the health care system of which one of the following countries?

- (a) Britain
- (b) Canada
- (c) Singapore
- (d) Australia

Solution: a.

A GK Question.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/in-defence-of-national-health-service/article22267403.ece>;

5. The Liaodong Peninsula partly separates

- (a) Sulu Sea from the Celebes Sea
- (b) Bo Hai (Gulf of Chihli) from the Korea Bay
- (c) Gulf of Thailand from the South China Sea
- (d) Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific Oceana

Solution: b.

It is a large peninsula jutting out in a southwesterly direction from the southern coastline of Liaoning province, northeastern China. It partly separates the Bo Hai (**Gulf of Chihli**) to the west from Korea Bay to the east, and, with the Shandong Peninsula to the south, it forms the Bo Hai Strait.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Liaodong-Peninsula;>



Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/platform-created-to-connect-chinese-hardware-with-indian-software/article22080815.ece;>

6. 'The Arctic' is the northernmost region of Earth. Most scientists' definition of the region include parts of

1. The Arctic Ocean Basin
2. Northern part of Scandinavia
3. Northern part of Greenland
4. Alaska (USA)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Most scientists define the Arctic as the area within the Arctic Circle, a line of latitude about 66.5° north of the Equator. Within this circle are the Arctic Ocean basin and the northern parts of Scandinavia, Russia, Canada, Greenland, and the U.S. state of Alaska.

Additional Information:

- The **Arctic Report Card** (hereafter 'ARC') has been issued annually since 2006. It is a timely and peer-reviewed source for clear, reliable and concise environmental information on the current state of different components of the Arctic environmental system relative to historical records.
- Despite relatively cool summer temperatures, observations in 2017 continue to indicate that the Arctic environmental system has reached a 'new normal', characterized by long-term losses in the extent and thickness of the sea ice cover, the extent and duration of the winter snow cover and the mass of ice in the Greenland Ice Sheet and Arctic glaciers, and warming sea surface and permafrost temperatures.

[https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/arctic/;](https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/arctic/)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/frozen-no-more/article22269187.ece;>

7. The 'Conservation of Asiatic Cheetah Project' is run by

- (a) The World Wide Fund for Nature
- (b) The International Tiger Project
- (c) The UN Development Programme
- (d) The Nature Conservancy

Solution: c.

- **Asiatic cheetahs** were once widespread across the continent but were eradicated in India, where they were hunted for sport. The spread of farming also greatly reduced numbers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Eventually the animal was wiped out in all the nations of Asia to which it was once native – with the exception of a few areas of Iran.
- It is on the verge of extinction, according to conservationists, with less than 50 of the critically endangered species still alive. Iran, home to all these cheetah, has already witnessed the extinction of the Asiatic lion and the Caspian tiger. The warning comes in the wake of the United Nation's decision (UNDP) to pull funding from the protection of the second-rarest cat species.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/dec/16/asiatic-cheetah-brink-extinction-iran-un-funding>;

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/asiatic-cheetah-on-verge-of-extinction/article22269183.ece>;

25 DECEMBER 2017

1. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 seeks to give effect to the judgment of the Supreme Court in which one among the following cases?

- (a) K. S. Puttaswamy case
- (b) Shah Bano case
- (c) Shayara Bano case
- (d) Danial Latifi case

Solution: c.

- Shayara Bano, a 35-year-old woman from Uttarakhand, emerged as the defining persona in the legal battle against the patriarchal custom that, though not as commonly followed, was judged unconstitutional by the Supreme Court recently.
- Ms. Bano was the original petitioner in the case after she approached the court in 2016 demanding that the talaq-e-biddat pronounced by her husband be declared as void. She also contended that such unilateral, abrupt and irrevocable form of divorce be declared unconstitutional, arguing that the practice of triple talaq violated the fundamental rights of Muslim women.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/who-is-shayara-bano-the-triple-talaq-crusader/article19611402.ece>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/withdraw-triple-talaq-bill-aimplb/article22271622.ece>;

2. Match the following:

<i>Term</i>	<i>Feature</i>
1. TRAPPIST-1	: Interstellar asteroid
2. Oumuamua	: Ice shelf
3. Larsen C	: Planetary system

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

The correct pairs are:

1. TRAPPIST-1: Planetary System
2. Oumuamua: Interstellar asteroid
3. Larsen C: Iceshelf

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-41972289>;

3. Consider the following statements:

1. The railway station in this town 'Karmatar' – it has emerged as one of the biggest hubs of cybercrime in the country – is named after him/her
2. His/her suggestions were adopted by British officials who passed a law in 1856 permitting widow remarriage

The statements given above refer to which one of the following social reformers?

- (a) Raja Rammohan Roy
- (b) Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar
- (c) Pandita Ramabai
- (d) Tarabai Shinde

Solution: b.

- One of the most famous reformers, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, used the ancient texts to suggest that widows could remarry. His suggestion was adopted by British officials, and a law was passed in 1856 permitting widow remarriage.
- The quiet railway station in the heart of Karmatar draws its name from one of the country's greatest social reformers, but today hardly anyone seems to be aware of the connection of this place to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.
- Instead, this nondescript little town in Jharkhand's Jamtara district is often frequented by police from different States: it has emerged as one of the biggest hubs of cybercrime in the country.

Our Pasts – II, Class 8 NCERT;

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/the-cyber-con-artists-of-jamtara/article19476173.ece>;

In the news: The Hindu Front Page 25th December, "Online fraud: Four held";

4. The objective of the 'Awakened Citizen Programme' is to

- (a) Strengthen, promote and develop cooperation in promoting values education
- (b) Have every eligible Indian on the electoral roll and get everyone on the electoral roll to voluntarily vote
- (c) Instill a sense of nationalism and patriotism among students irrespective of their caste, creed and religion
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

The Central Board of Secondary Education has tied up with the Ramakrishna mission to impart value education to its students and make them “awakened” citizens with values of peace, harmony, humility and cooperation.

“Values such as harmony, peace, compassion and humility have for centuries been a part of the discourse of every society of the world and their need and importance is universally accepted and felt. With the objective to strengthen, promote and develop cooperation in promoting values education, the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi has prepared ‘Awakened Citizen Programme’ for teachers and students,” the board said in a letter sent to schools. However, the implementation of the programme by schools is voluntary.

<http://www.thehindu.com/education/schools/cbse-envisages-to-teach-value-education-to-students/article22271464.ece>;

5. The ‘Mughal Road’ links

- (a) Firozabad with Lahore
- (b) Agra with Farrukhabad
- (c) Surat with Mandu
- (d) Poonch with Rajouri

Solution: d.

Intermittent snowfall is hampering efforts to restore Mughal road, which links the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region with south Kashmir’s Shopian district, an official said.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/snowfall-mughal-road-jammu-kashmir-link-4997012/>;

‘Nation’ Page, The Hindu;

6. Which one among the following groups of countries have generally been the victims of what is referred to in Economics as a ‘Sudden stop’?

- (a) Developed Economies
- (b) Emerging Market Economies
- (c) Small Island States
- (d) G-20

Solution: b.

This refers to the abrupt stop in the flow of foreign capital into an economy, which imperils its ability to pay for its external trade and financial needs. The sudden stop usually comes in the aftermath of a financial or economic crisis that causes investors to turn cautious about investing in an economy, which in turn further aggravates the severity of the ongoing crisis. It is emerging market economies that have generally been the victims of sudden stops when foreign investors as a whole abruptly stop the supply of capital.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/in-economics-what-does-sudden-stop-mean/article22271429.ece>;

26 DECEMBER 2017

1. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency of the World Bank Group
 1. Finances cross-border investments into developing countries
 2. Promotes foreign direct investment into developing countries

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- MIGA's mission is to promote foreign direct investment (FDI) into developing countries to help support economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve people's lives.
- MIGA provides non-commercial guarantees (insurance) for cross-border investments into developing countries. MIGA's guarantees protect investors against the risks of transfer restriction (including inconvertibility), expropriation, war and civil disturbance, breach of contract, and non-honoring of financial obligations. MIGA is an insurer, not a lender (it does NOT finance projects).

Additional Information:

- MIGA's guarantees can trigger about five times as much in FDI, says its CEO.

The World Bank Group consists of five organizations:

- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- The International Development Association
- The International Finance Corporation
- The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

<https://www.miga.org/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions/>;

Source/Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/business/can-commit-2-bn-in-guarantees-for-india/article22277388.ece>;

2. Adherence to the letter and spirit of the 'Astana consensus' will ensure that
 - (a) China will abandon the OBOR economic corridor project in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir
 - (b) All countries, including China, will respect the principles of freedom of navigation and over-flight in the South China Sea
 - (c) Global economic governance systems are reformed to increase the representation and voice of emerging market and developing countries
 - (d) At a time of global uncertainty, India-China relations will remain a factor of stability

Solution: d.

Both sides agree that progress in bilateral relations should be guided by the Astana consensus which is that (i) at a time of global uncertainty, India-China relations are a factor of stability and (ii) India and China, in their relationship, must not allow differences to become disputes.

<http://mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/28739/QUESTION+NO1287+REVIEW+OF+INDIAS+RELATION+WITH+CHINA;>

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/on-the-line/article22277318.ece;>

3. Consider the following statements:

1. In the context of South Asia, India is a neighbour to all countries though none of the others actually share borders
2. India is not one of the founding members of SAARC

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

Solution: d.

In the context of South Asia, India has a certain added responsibility because India is a neighbour to all though none of the others actually share borders – except Myanmar and Bangladesh.

As a founding member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and as part of its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, deepening engagement with the countries of South Asia is a main priority for India.

[http://mea.gov.in/india-and-neighbours.htm;](http://mea.gov.in/india-and-neighbours.htm)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/parliament-panel-questions-centre-on-neighbourhood-first-policy/article22276888.ece;>

4. The WTO General Council

1. Is the WTO's highest-level decision-making body
2. Has representatives from all member governments
3. Convenes as the WTO Dispute Settlement Body

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

Self-explanatory statements.

Additional Information: Settling disputes is the responsibility of the Dispute Settlement Body (the General Council in another guise), which consists of all WTO members. The Dispute Settlement Body has the sole authority to establish "panels" of experts to consider the case, and to accept or reject the panels' findings or the results of an appeal. It monitors the implementation of the rulings and recommendations, and has the power to authorize retaliation when a country does not comply with a ruling.

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_body_e.htm;](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_body_e.htm)

[https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/disp1_e.htm;](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/disp1_e.htm)

[https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/gcounc_e/gcounc_e.htm;](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/gcounc_e/gcounc_e.htm)

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-wto/article22277345.ece>;

5. Consider the following statements:

1. All countries of Asia became members of the WTO in 1995
2. Issues such as investment facilitation and e-commerce have been a part of WTO negotiations since the launch of the Doha Development Agenda

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

Solution: d.

Statement 1 is wrong, as China has been a member of the WTO since 2001.

Investment facilitation and e-commerce among others are new issues being brought under WTO negotiations.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-wto/article22277345.ece>;

Clarifications:

Q3 (<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/12/26/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-26-december-2017/>): Regarding Statement 1, whose explanation is provided in the solution – we have copy-pasted this line from the MEA website, whose link has been provided.

Q4 (<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2017/12/26/quiz-2017-insights-current-affairs-quiz-26-december-2017/>): Regarding the WTO General Council and WTO Ministerial Conference: According to the WTO website, “The topmost decision-making body of the WTO is the Ministerial Conference, which usually meets every two years...” and “The Ministerial Conference is the topmost body of the WTO under the governance structure set up by the “Agreement establishing the WTO”. On the other hand, “The General Council is the WTO’s highest-level decision-making body *in Geneva*, meeting regularly to carry out the functions of the WTO.” We should have included the words “*in Geneva*” in the first statement.

27 DECEMBER 2017

1. What is the correct sequence of occurrence of the following lands/isthmus in the Indian Ocean region as one proceeds from east to west?

1. Isthmus of Kra
2. Seychelles
3. Diego Garcia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

- The **Isthmus of Kra** (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Isthmus-of-Kra>) is a narrow neck of southern Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand, connecting the Malay Peninsula to the Asian mainland. The isthmus lies between the Gulf of Thailand to the east and the Andaman Sea to the west. It is 40–48 km wide at its narrowest point, between Chumphon and Kra Buri (both in Thailand).
- **Diego Garcia** (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Diego-Garcia-island-Indian-Ocean>) is a coral atoll in the Central Indian Ocean and is a part of the British Indian Ocean Territory.
- **Seychelles** (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Seychelles>) is an island republic in the western Indian Ocean, comprising about 115 islands, and located about 1,600 kms east of Kenya.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/there-isnt-going-to-be-a-war-between-india-and-china-today/article22282428.ece>;

2. Which one of the following statements is **not** correct about Section 3(d) of the Indian Patents Act?

- It does not allow evergreening of patents
- It is in compliance with the WTO TRIPS agreement
- The US Trade Representative's 'Special 301 Report' was prepared to understand the implications of this section on US's pharmaceutical industry
- It has survived challenges to its constitutionality before the Indian judiciary

Solution: c.

Traditionally, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), which is an agency that is part of the executive office of the President, has the twin task of negotiating trade agreements and overseeing enforcement of U.S. trade policy, including IP policy. As part of its duties, the USTR creates an annual list of countries, known as the Special 301 list. Countries featured on this list are those that the USTR believes have either national laws or regulations that detrimentally affect U.S. trade or the rights of IP holders. Essentially, if a trading partner is on this list, the USTR report indicates to it that the U.S. believes that the country is providing inadequate "IPR protection, enforcement, or market access for persons relying on intellectual property."

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/how-india-rejects-bad-patents/article22282403.ece>;

From 2016: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/Trading-charges/article14246068.ece>;

3. The Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, 1992, which aims at promoting the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country, provides for which of the following?

- Constitution of District Planning Committees
- State Election Commissions to conduct all panchayat elections
- Establishment of State Finance Commissions

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Solution: c.

Salient features of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 include:

- The super-intendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of all elections to the panchayats shall be vested in the state election commission.

- The governor of a state shall, after every five years, constitute a finance commission to review the financial position of the panchayats.
- According to the official key (2011 CS(P)), the answer is option 'd', but district planning committees are established under the 74th Amendment (Article 243ZD), not 73rd.

<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2012/06/09/upsc-declares-official-cut-off-and-answer-keys-for-civil-services-prelims-csat-2011-examination/>;

'Salient Features of the Act', Chapter 'Panchayati Raj' and 'Municipalities', Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/panchayat-polls-in-jk-in-february/article22282297.ece>;

4. India's first pod taxi project is being implemented under the aegis of

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- The Ministry of Railways
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Solution: a.

The projected ₹4,000-crore pod taxi scheme — also known as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) — is a dream project of Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, and the NHAI has been mandated to execute it on Delhi-Gurgaon pilot corridor (12.3 km) from Delhi-Haryana border to Rajiv Chowk in Gurgaon on a PPP (public-private partnership) basis.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indias-1st-pod-taxi-on-the-way-to-follow-us-safety-norms/article22282385.ece>;

5. Which among the following words were **not** included in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution when adopted by the Constituent Assembly?

- Socialist
- Sovereign
- Secular
- Integrity

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- 1, 2 and 3
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 only
- 1, 3 and 4

Solution: d.

The Preamble to the Indian Constitution is based on the '**Objectives Resolution**', drafted and moved by Pandit Nehru, and adopted by the Constituent Assembly. It has been amended by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1976)**, which added three new words — *socialist*, *secular* and *integrity*.

Indian Polity by M Laxmikanth;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ananth-kumar-hegde-deriding-constitution-cong/article22282395.ece>;

28 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following pairs:

ISRO Space Science Project	International Collaborator/Contributors
1. SARAL	: CNES (French Space Agency)
2. NISAR	: ESA (European Space Agency)
3. ASTROSAT	: CSA (Canadian Space Agency)

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

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

Solution: c.

International cooperation is a part of India's space programme since its inception. In the past, ISRO has developed Meghatropiques and SARAL satellites in cooperation with French space agency CNES. Currently ISRO and NASA are working jointly on NISAR (NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) project.

Of the five scientific payloads of ASTROSAT, the Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (UVIT) is jointly developed by Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) at Bangalore and Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) at Pune in collaboration with ISRO and the Canadian Space Agency. This instrument is capable of observing the sky in the visible, near Ultraviolet and far Ultraviolet regions of the electromagnetic spectrum. The two telescopes of the UVIT payload are designed to achieve an excellent image resolution and they also have a large field of view.

Source/Improvisation: <http://pibregional.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1514399>;
<https://www.isro.gov.in/sites/default/files/PSLV-C30Brochure.compressed.pdf>;

2. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research is a constituent unit of the Department of Atomic Energy
- 2. Rajasthan has the largest reserves of uranium resources

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

Solution: a.

- Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) has a mandate to identify, evaluate and augment mineral resources such as uranium, thorium and rare metals.

- Andhra Pradesh has the largest reserves of uranium resources.

See table: <http://pibregional.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1514396>;

3. FAME India Scheme is being implemented by

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
- Ministry of Science and Technology
- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

Solution: b.

Objective of the **FAME India Scheme** [Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India] is to support hybrid/electric vehicles market development and Manufacturing eco-system. The scheme has 4 focus areas i.e. Technology development, Demand Creation, Pilot Projects and Charging Infrastructure.

The scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments i.e. 2 Wheeler, 3 Wheeler Auto, Passenger 4 Wheeler Vehicle, Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses... "The Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Shri Anant Geete has announced today that the Government is providing Rs 437 crore subsidy to 11 cities under FAME India, for launching electric buses, taxis and three-wheelers."

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174902>;

4. Consider the following statements:

- Majuli Island is the nerve centre of the unique Vaishnava Sattras system founded by the saint Mahapurusha Sankaradeva
- Sattriya is associated with Vaishnava Sattras and serves as a medium for propagation of the Vaishnava faith
- Sattriya has forever remained distinct in the sense that it has not been influenced by any other dance form

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: a.

- Majuli Island is the nerve centre of *Vaishnavite* culture developed during the unique Vaishnava *Satra* system founded by the great saint **Srimanta Sankaradeva** in the 15th century. It is the cultural heritage centre of Vaishnavite culture of Assam. There are at present 22 Sattras in Majuli.
- The **Sattriya dance** form was introduced in the 15th century A.D by the great Vaishnava saint and reformer of Assam, **Mahapurusha Sankaradeva** as a powerful medium for propagation of the Vaishnava faith. The dance form evolved and expanded as a distinctive style of dance later on. This neo-Vaishnava treasure of Assamese dance and drama has been, for centuries, nurtured and preserved with great commitment by the Sattras i.e. Vaishnava maths or monasteries.
- Sankaradeva introduced this dance form by incorporating different elements from various treatises, local folk dances with his own rare outlook.

Source/Improvisation: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=174833>;

<http://ccrtindia.gov.in/sattriya.php>;

5. Harmful effects due to consumption of food containing anthraquinones can be avoided if

- (a) Individuals are well-fed and receive adequate nutrition
- (b) An individual is immunised against the JE (Japanese Encephalitis) virus
- (c) An individual regularly engages in physical activity
- (d) None of the above

Solution: a.

“A paper in the Indian journal Current Science suggests an unexpected cause for the inflammatory brain disease — encephalitis — found in Malkangiri district of Odisha. For many years, this recurring outbreak, which killed over 100 children last year, was thought to be due to the Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus. Now researchers say it was likely due to the consumption of a wild bean, called Bada Chakunda, which grows freely in the region. Like several natural toxins, the anthraquinones in the bean don't harm healthy people, but cause fatal dysfunction of the liver, heart and brain in underfed children. This finding draws on the researchers' previous work in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district, where too a recurrent encephalitis outbreak was traced to this bean.”

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-diagnostic-lens-encephalitis/article22288594.ece>;

29 DECEMBER 2017

1. Consider the following statements about the 'Clean Seas Campaign':

- 1. The UN Environment Programme launched this campaign in 1995
- 2. Mumbai's Versova beach clean up project was initiated under this campaign

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

Solution: d.

The Versova Beach Clean Up project was initiated in 2015. On the other hand, UN Environment launched **#CleanSeas campaign** in February 2017. It has the aim of engaging governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic litter; it aims to increase global awareness of the need to reduce marine litter.

The campaign contributes to the goals of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (the next question is related to this), a voluntary open-ended partnership for international agencies, governments, businesses, academia, local authorities and non-governmental organizations hosted by UN Environment.

<https://cleanseas.org/about>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bali-declares-garbage-emergency-amid-sea-of-waste/article22291714.ece>;

2. With reference to the 'Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (GPA)', consider the following statements:
1. It was created through the Washington Declaration
 2. It is the only global intergovernmental mechanism which directly addresses the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems
 3. It has established the Global Partnership on Marine Litter

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Solution: b.

- The GPA is the only global intergovernmental mechanism directly addressing the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.
- It was created in 1995 when over 108 governments declared "their commitment to protect and preserve the marine environment from the impacts of land-based activities, through the Washington Declaration.
- UNEP hosts the GPA Coordinating Unit and coordinates some activities in support of the programme.
- *Intergovernmental Review Meetings (IGR)* are organised every 5 years, it is a forum where Governments and other stakeholders meet to review the status of the implementation of the GPA and decide on action to be taken to strengthen its implementation. Three such meetings have been held so far, none have been hosted by India.
- The GPA secretariat has established and is strengthening three global multi-stakeholder partnerships: the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM), the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) and the Global Wastewater Initiative (GWI).

<http://web.unep.org/gpa/who-we-are/overview>;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bali-declares-garbage-emergency-amid-sea-of-waste/article22291714.ece>; <https://cleanseas.org/about>;

3. According to the RBI's latest Financial Stability Report,
1. NPAs are expected to decline over the next few months due to recent reforms initiated by the Government
 2. Private sector banks have seen their asset quality deteriorate at a faster pace than public sector banks in the recent past

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: b.

The RBI's FSR is a biannual publication. It reflects the overall assessment on the stability of India's financial system and its resilience to risks emanating from global and domestic factors. The Report also discusses issues relating to development and regulation of the financial sector.

<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/testing-times/article22320376.ece;>

https://m.rbi.org.in/SCRIPTS/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=42642;

4. The term 'Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA)', often seen in the news, includes such assets as those of
1. Foreign Banks
 2. Regional Rural Banks
 3. Non-Banking Financial Companies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: d.

"According to the report released last week, gross non-performing assets (NPAs) in the banking system as a whole (Scheduled Commercial Banks) rose to 10.2% at the end of September, from 9.6% at the end of March... The RBI stated further that it expects NPAs to continue to rise to as high as 11.1% of total outstanding loans by September 2018, so the end to the bad loans mess seems nowhere near. The bad loans problem has also not spared private sector banks – these lenders have seen their asset quality deteriorate at a faster pace than public sector banks. Private bank NPAs increased by almost 41%, as compared to 17% in the case of public sector banks at the end of September. Non-banking financial companies that compete against banks also saw a jump in NPAs."

Scheduled Commercial Banks (these are regulated under Banking Regulation Act, 1949) include:

- State Bank of India and its Associates (PSBs)
- Nationalised Banks (PSBs)
- Foreign Banks
- Regional Rural Banks
- Other Scheduled Commercial Banks (this refers to Private Sector Banks)

NBFCs lend and make investments and hence their activities are akin to that of banks; however there are a few differences as given below:

1. NBFC cannot accept demand deposits;
2. NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself;
3. Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs, unlike in case of banks.

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/testing-times/article22320376.ece;>

The report:

[https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/PublicationReport/Pdfs/0FSR201730210986ADDA44E2A946A3F6C4408581.PDF;](https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/PublicationReport/Pdfs/0FSR201730210986ADDA44E2A946A3F6C4408581.PDF)

5. Tribunals that have been mandated by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 to adjudicate insolvency resolution cases include ones that have been set up under
1. The Companies Act, 2013
 2. The Banking Regulation Act, 1949
 3. The Recovery of Debt due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Solution: c.

Adjudicatory Authorities

(<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Bankruptcy/Bankruptcy%20Code%20As%20Reported%20by%20Committee%20Bill%20Summary.pdf>): The Code proposes two to adjudicate insolvency resolution cases: (i) the National Company Law Tribunal will adjudicate companies and limited liability partnerships i) the Debt Recovery Tribunal will adjudicate and partnership firms.

- The Central Government constituted the **National Company Law Tribunal** (<http://nclt.gov.in>) under the Companies Act, 2013 (18 of 2013).
- The **Debts Recovery Tribunals (DRTs)** and **Debts Recovery Appellate Tribunal (DRATs)** (<https://www.drt.gov.in/Home.aspx>) were established under the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDDBFI Act), 1993 with the specific objective of providing expeditious adjudication and recovery of debts due to Banks and Financial Institution. Presently 38 DRT's and 5 DRAT's are functioning in India.

Improvisation (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/testing-times/article22320376.ece>):

"The resolution of bankruptcy cases, particularly against large borrowers that contribute a major share of bank NPAs, under the new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code should help bring the NPA situation under some control. In fact, despite its many imperfections and the slow pace of resolutions by the National Company Law Tribunal, the Code can be helpful in cleaning up bank books in future credit cycles.."

30 DECEMBER 2017

1. Which one among the following states is the only one to have a National Registry of Citizens (NRC), first prepared in 1951?
 - (a) Jammu and Kashmir
 - (b) Punjab
 - (c) Assam
 - (d) Tamil Nadu

Solution: c.

Assam, which faced influx from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only State having an NRC, first prepared in 1951.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/assams-first-citizens-list-will-have-2-crore-names/article22327777.ece>;

2. Consider the following statements:

1. The anti-foreigner movement in Assam from 1979 to 1985 mobilised all sections of Assamese people
2. In North-East India, the issue of the 'outsiders' plagues only the state of Assam

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

Solution: a.

The anti-foreigner movement in Assam from 1979 to 1985 mobilised all sections of Assamese people, drawing support across the state... eventually after six years of turmoil, the Rajiv Gandhi-led government entered into negotiations with the AASU leaders, leading to the signing of an accord in 1985. According to this agreement those foreigners who migrated into Assam during and after Bangladesh war and since, were to be identified and deported.

The Assam accord ... did not solve the problem of immigration. The issue of the 'outsiders' continues to be a live issue in the politics of Assam and many other places in the North-East. This problem is particularly acute, for example, in Tripura as the original inhabitants have been reduced to being a minority in their own land. (Statement 2 can be eliminated if you know the map of north-east Indian region).

NCERT: Politics in India since Independence, Page 165-166;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/assams-first-citizens-list-will-have-2-crore-names/article22327777.ece>;

3. River Tsangpo enters India as

- (a) River Sikang
- (b) River Siang
- (c) River Dibang
- (d) River Lohit

Solution: b.

The Brahmaputra, one of the largest rivers of the world, has its origin in the Chemayungdung glacier of the Kailash range near the Mansarovar lake. From here, it traverses eastward longitudinally for a distance of nearly 1,200 km in a dry and flat region of southern Tibet, where it is known as the Tsangpo, which means 'the purifier.' The Rango Tsangpo is the major right bank tributary of this river in Tibet. It emerges as a turbulent and dynamic river after carving out a deep gorge in the Central Himalayas near Namcha Barwa (7,755 m). The river emerges from the foothills under the name of Siang or Dihang. It enters India west of Sadiya town in Arunachal Pradesh. Flowing southwest, it receives its main left bank tributaries, viz., Dibang or Sikang and Lohit; thereafter, it is known as the Brahmaputra.

India: Physical Environment Class 11 NCERT;

Improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-yet-to-find-reason-for-darkening-siang/article22328834.ece>;

4. With reference to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, consider the following statements:
1. A Muslim man accused of declaration of 'talaq', resulting in instant and irrevocable divorce, can be arrested by a police officer without warrant
 2. An independent corpus will be created by the government to pay the subsistence allowance to victims of the practice of 'talaq'

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

Solution: a.

Offence and penalty: The Bill makes declaration of talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence. (A cognizable offence is one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without warrant.) A husband declaring talaq can be imprisoned for up to three years along with a fine.

Allowance: A Muslim woman against whom talaq has been declared, is entitled to seek subsistence allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children. The amount of the allowance will be decided by a First Class Magistrate.

[http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Muslim%20Women%20\(Protection%20of%20Rights%20on%20Marriage\)/Bill%20Summary%20-%20Talaq%20bill.pdf](http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Muslim%20Women%20(Protection%20of%20Rights%20on%20Marriage)/Bill%20Summary%20-%20Talaq%20bill.pdf);

Source/improvisation: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rs-likely-to-send-talaq-bill-to-select-panel/article22329025.ece>;

5. Which one of the following countries does **not** lie in the northern hemisphere?

- (a) Liberia
- (b) Venezuela
- (c) Egypt
- (d) Zimbabwe

Solution: d.

All countries (including Venezuela) except Zimbabwe (from the given options) lie completely in the northern hemisphere.

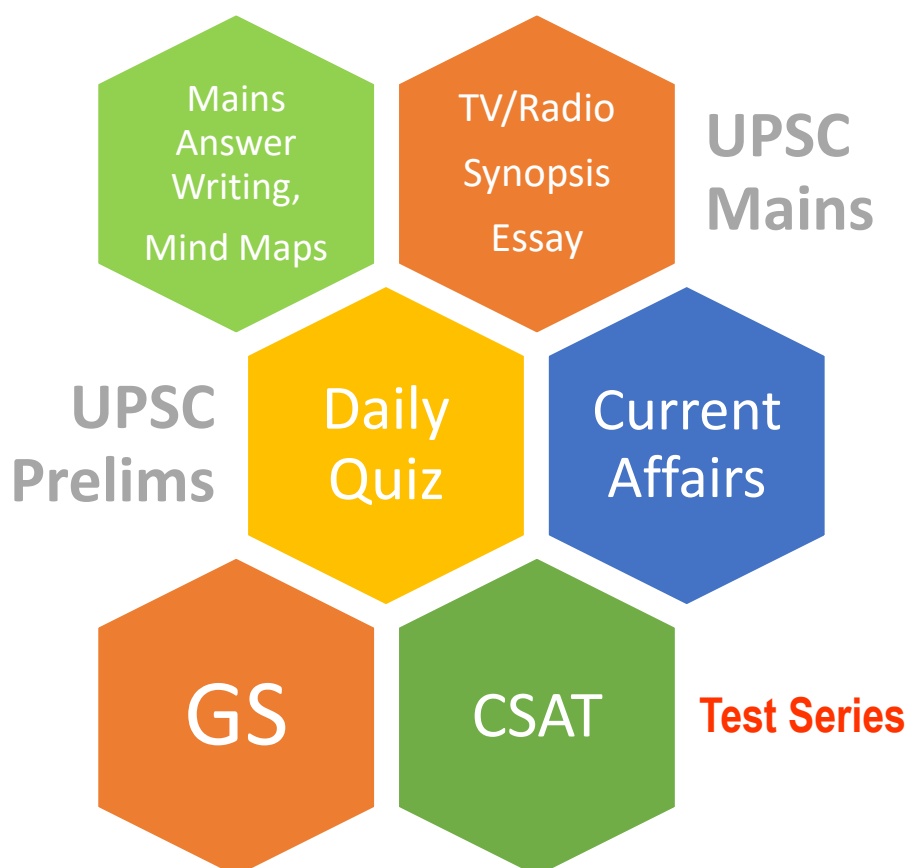
Improvisation: World Page, The Hindu;

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